



### CROSS-LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT B1+ AND B2 LEVELS

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**Abstract:** This article explains the language interference that occurs in English learners at B1+ and B2 levels due to the influence of their native language (L1) and previously acquired languages (L2). The main focus is on grammatical, phonological, and lexical errors. The empirical analysis is conducted on the basis of written and oral tasks, the causes of errors are identified, and methodological recommendations are developed. The results of the study are of practical importance for ESL teachers and suggest approaches to reduce interference.

**Keywords:** language interference, negative transfer, positive transfer, language learning, English, B1+ and B2 levels, Uzbek speakers, grammatical errors, phonological interference, lexical errors, interlanguage.

**Аннотация:** Ушбу мақолада B1+ ва B2 даражасидаги инглиз тилини ўрганувчиларда она тили (L1) ва аввал ўрганилган тиллар (L2) таъсири натижасида юзага келадиган тиллараро аралашув — интерференция ҳолати таҳлил қилинади. Асосий эътибор грамматик, фонологик ва лексик хатоларга қаратилган. Эмпирик таҳлил ёзма ва оғзаки топшириқлар асосида амалга оширилган, хатоларнинг сабаблари аниқланган ва методик тавсиялар ишлаб чиқилган. Тадқиқот натижалари инглиз тилини хориж тили сифатида ўқитувчи педагоглар учун амалий аҳамият касб этади ва интерференцияни камайтиришга қаратилган ёндашувларни таклиф қилади.

**Калим сўзлар:** тиллараро интерференция, манфий трансфер, ижобий трансфер, тил ўрганиши, инглиз тили, B1+ ва B2 даражалар, ўзбек тили ўрганувчилар, грамматик хатолар, фонологик интерференция, лексик хатолар, интертил.

### Introduction

Acquiring language, especially second language acquisition (SLA), is a complex cognitive process that has been widely studied in several disciplines, including linguistics, psychology, and education. Main challenges faced by second language learners is native language (L1) interference, the strong influence of the first language on the acquisition of a new language. This is especially true for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, because of the grammatical structure, vocabulary, and phonetic peculiarities of their native language can interfere with their acquisition of English. Studying English as a Second Language (ESL) is the process of learning English in a country where English is not the official or native language [1]. In this process, learners often make mistakes by relying on the grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation of their native language. However, the acquisition of English at these levels can be highly influenced by learners' first language (L1) or other



previously learned foreign languages (L2). This phenomenon is referred to as *interference* or *cross-linguistic influence* in second language acquisition.

There are great number of factors that successful English language acquisition, and one of the most significant among them is the interference from the learner's first language (L1). According to Chaer and Agustina [2], interference is defined as the intrusion of elements from one language into the system of another language, which leads to deviations from the norms of the target language and is regarded as an error. Ellis describes "first language transfer" as the influence of a learner's L1 on the process of acquiring a second language (L2)[3]. This influence is often referred to as "negative transfer" or interference, and the resulting errors are considered direct outcomes of this interference. These errors—instances of incorrect usage—occur when the learner's L1 influences their production in the target language.

Weinreich defines interference as the deviation from language norms caused by the influence of one language on another in bilingual speakers [4]. The term "interference" was first used by Weinreich to describe the intrusion of one language into the speech of another in bilingual contexts. It commonly arises during foreign language use, where the speaker's native language interferes with their second or foreign language.

Nababan argues that interference occurs when a person writes or speaks in a second or foreign language [5]. He distinguishes two types: receptive interference, which refers to the influence of L1 elements in the comprehension of L2, and productive interference, where the speaker uses L2 elements and structures shaped by their L1. These forms of interference emerge when both languages are simultaneously activated. A bilingual individual is defined as someone capable of communicating in a second language at varying levels of proficiency. L1 interference results from the transfer of linguistic habits developed in the learner's native language into the second language. When a learner speaks or writes in English, they often bring patterns and structures from their mother tongue into the new language, affecting their accuracy and fluency. Hanna states that interference is a language form used by learners of a foreign language but that has been distorted by the influence of their mother tongue [6].

According to Odlin [7], transfer or interference is an effect that occurs as a result of similarities and differences between the target language and the previously (or incompletely) acquired language. Interference is sometimes seen as an adaptation strategy: in this case, the speaker tries to speak the language of the interlocutor, even if he does not know it perfectly. Based on the above considerations, it can be said that interference or language transfer is a phenomenon that occurs under the influence of the



learner's native language. This occurs due to differences between language systems. Any learner's native language constantly influences the foreign language he is learning.

### Methods

When learning a foreign language, it is necessary to constantly adapt the forms of the native language to the foreign language. Because their grammatical structures are different. When learning a foreign language, students often “get confused” with the elements of the first language and make mistakes in mastering the new language.

According to James (1998:12), a “lexical error” is the use of linguistic units (words, grammatical units, or speech acts) in the speech or writing of a foreign language learner based on incorrect or insufficient knowledge of the native speaker. Usually, errors are the result of incomplete knowledge, while an error is an action of the learner in writing or speaking due to inattention, fatigue, carelessness, or other psychological factors.

Recent research has shown that L1 interference is particularly common at the B1 and B2 levels, affecting areas such as grammar (e.g., verb tenses, articles, word order), phonology (e.g., pronunciation, stress), and lexis (e.g., word choice, collocations). For instance, learners whose L1 is Uzbek, Russian or Turkish often struggle with the use of English articles, sentence structure, and tense systems. These difficulties can hinder their overall language competence and communicative fluency.

Moreover, the growing number of learners studying two or more foreign languages has introduced new dimensions to the study of interference. Cognitive and linguistic strategies developed while learning a first foreign language (L2) may positively influence the acquisition of a second foreign language (L3—in this case, English). This is referred to as *positive transfer* in multilingual contexts.

This paper aims to examine the phenomenon of cross-linguistic interference in teaching English at the B1+ and B2 levels, with a particular focus on how L1 and L2 contribute to grammatical and lexical errors. It also seeks to identify effective methodological approaches to minimize such interference. The findings of this study are of practical value for English language instructors, helping them develop more individualized and effective teaching strategies tailored to their learners' linguistic backgrounds.

### Factors of Language Interference

There are main factors that cause language interference:

#### 1. Interlingual factor

Interlingual transfer is the most important and common source of error for language learners. This concept comes from the behaviorist school of contrastive analysis, which sees negative transfer from the native language as the main cause of errors.



For example, in Uzbek, the sentence structure is "Men kitobo'qiman", and the verb always comes at the end of the sentence. Therefore, when speaking in English, some students may use the incorrect structure, such as "I a book read". The correct form is: "I read a book." This error is the result of interlingual transfer of the syntactic structure of the first language (Uzbek) to English. Sometimes students use incorrect words due to the formal similarity of words in the dictionary. In this case, the form of the words may be the same or similar, but their meaning or function is different. Such words are called cognates. For example, in Uzbek, the word "aktual" means topical. In English, the word "actual" is used in the same sense: When a student says "This is an actual problem.", he actually means "This is a real problem," not urgent.

The correct option is:

"This is a current (or urgent) issue/problem."

Another example: in Uzbek, "magazin" means a store, but in English, "magazine" means a magazine. Some students make the mistake of saying "I go to magazine," when the correct form is "I go to the shop/store."

## 2. Types of interference

### 1. Phonological Interference (Pronunciation Errors)

Error: "*I vant togo.*"

"Correct form: "*I want to go.*"

Since the Uzbek language lacks the /w/ phoneme, learners often substitute it with /v/, the closest sound in their native phonology. This results in phonological interference, commonly observed in ESL learners from Uzbek backgrounds.

### 2. Morphological Interference (Word Formation Errors)

Error: "*I am understand.*"

Correct form: "*I understand.*"

In Uzbek, grammatical tense and person are expressed through affixes (e.g., *o'qiyman* – "I read"). This morphological habit is transferred into English, where learners incorrectly use auxiliary verbs in declarative sentences.

### 3. Syntactic Interference (Sentence Structure Errors)

Error: "*He to school goes.*"

Correct form: "*He goes to school.*"

In Uzbek sentence structure, the verb typically comes at the end of the sentence. This word order is sometimes transferred to English, resulting in syntactic errors caused by L1 interference.

### 4. Lexical Interference (Vocabulary Errors)

Error: "*Eye doctor.*"

Correct form: "*Ophthalmologist*" or "*optician.*"



In Uzbek, the phrase "*ko 'zdoktori*" (eye doctor) is widely accepted and understandable. Learners often directly translate this into English. However, specific professional terms exist in English, and literal translation results in lexical interference.

### 5. Semantic Interference (Meaning Errors)

Error: "*He is my cousin brother.*"

Correct form: "*He is my cousin.*"

In Uzbek, cousin relationships are categorized by gender and side of the family (e.g., uncle's son, aunt's daughter). When learners try to replicate this semantic distinction in English, it leads to incorrect expressions, as the word "*cousin*" in English does not reflect gender.

In particular, at a time when there is a growing global demand for individualized and differentiated approaches in language education, the methodology applied in this research provides ESL instructors with practical tools for identifying and mitigating interference. It also sheds light on the underlying cognitive processes of language acquisition and the mechanisms of knowledge transfer from previously acquired languages.

In conclusion, the methodological tools and approaches used in this study not only allow for a deep analysis of cross-linguistic interference but also offer practical value for ESL educators, linguists, methodologists, and learners. Furthermore, this approach can be extended to other language combinations, making it widely applicable in modern language education contexts.

### Conclusion

To sum up, it is noted that the interference in second language acquisition, specifically focusing on linguistic errors that emerge in B1+ and B2 level English learning environments as a result of the influence of learners' first language (L1) and previously acquired second languages (L2). Based on empirical analysis, the findings reveal that learners with Uzbek as their native language consistently exhibit interference at grammatical, phonological, and lexical levels, most of which stem from structural features of Uzbek.

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