*IJAS*

# Difficulties That Occur In The Process Of Teaching Foreign Language Grammar

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*Abstract: The aim of this article is to present and analyse the errors made by the first -year students of the Uzbek State Foreign Languages University. The author listed the most frequent errors made by the students: in using some perfect tenses, Articles, difficulties with word order in the sentence and Subject-Verb Agreement. Mother tongue interference is shown as a reason for these errors. At the end of the article the author suggests some ways for minimizing the problems in teaching/learning grammatical phenomenon.*

*Index Terms: grammar, interference, grammatical phenomena, difficulty, mother tongue, confuse, error, inflection, minimize*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A language's grammar is a crucial component. The mastering of a language's syntax has an impact on the mastery of its skills. As a result, grammar is an important subject to study in depth while learning a language formally. To have good language skills, students must be given proper grammar instruction. Because they dislike learning grammar, they will struggle to master it. Even individuals who have studied grammar in college for several years still struggle to generate decent and correct sentences. Some students continue to make grammar errors when writing their graduation papers, and instructors must work diligently to assist them in fixing their errors.

Foreign language learners frequently experience interference as a result of the degree to which their first language differs from the target language. Language learners frequently make mistakes in syntax, word diction, and pronunciation as a result of their first language. Interference occurs due to the process and result of language system intercommunication in bilingualism condition [1].

Many obstacles can obstruct the use of English by bilingual or multilingual people. The most fundamental issue is the incorporation of the first language into English usage. This interference has a significant impact on the language that is created. When a speaker makes a linguistic pattern error, such as speech sound, grammatical structures, or meaning, it appears strange. As a result, the listener is unlikely to grasp the concept or perhaps arrive to the incorrect conclusion. As a result, language learners must understand the intended language norms in order to effectively communicate their ideas.

As any person begins to learn any language, the language experience he/she has accumulated so far can play a positive and negative role. We want to say that the experience of a student learning English in the Uzbek audience in his native language will be taken into account. Because it is clear that the student will face various difficulties in the other language being studied according to his/her language experience [2].

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There's a distinction between an error and a mistake. However, EFL students continue to make errors and mistakes on a regular basis. Learners who lack a deep comprehension of the subject sometimes can't find the difference between an error and a mistake.

According to Ellis [3] the difficulty in learning grammar can be grouped into three, namely: the difficulties associated with environmental factors of language, with linguistic factors, and psychological difficulties. Factors related to language environment are how often the input obtained from the environment. Linguistic factor refers to the nature of the grammar of a language and psychological factors refer to the ability to learn.

Brown [4] suggested that all native speakers make mistakes, or have a "performance lapse"; they are classified as non-systematic errors. He also mentioned that a mistake is basically an error in performance. It could be a random guess or a "slip".

According to Harmer [5] there are three groups of grammatical mistakes. Two of them are "slips", and "errors". When it is a "slip", students usually understand that they have made a mistake and are therefore able to correct themselves.

Uzbek Professor J. Jalolov [2] divided such difficulties from the methodological point of view into two: interference difficulties and difficulties in the organizational spirit.
The first occurs as a result of interlanguage interference and the second occurs due to the student's distraction, truancy, or inconsistent experience in the native language

Special exercises are done to overcome the interference difficulties. Overcoming such kind of difficulties requires special time and mental effort. Interference problems cause the student to make a mistake. It is noted in didactics, including lingvodidactics that in order to overcome difficulties it is necessary to avoid possible errors.

It is worth noting that another important scientific idea is that the difficulty also occurs due to intralanguage interference. This means that the study of a particular phenomenon of English grammar has a negative or positive effect on the study of another grammatical phenomenon.
For example: studying *the Present Perfect tense* can have a positive or negative impact on learning *the Past Perfect tense*. Because there is a significant difference in the construction and application of these two verb tenses. Transference (transposition; facilitation) can occur at a glance. But in practice, interference difficulty also occurs. At the first blush, *have + past participle* is similar to a grammatical phenomena that can be easily studied, in fact in *the present tense* form the present form of the verb *have – "have" or "has" is used* and *in the past perfect tense* forms the past form of *have – "had"* is used. This process can be an obstacle in students` speech. But the use of past participle in this situation can be the basis for transference of skill. Therefore, both *present* and *past perfect* are taught separately in the course of applied grammar.

Interlingual comparisons help to identify a system of difficulties, and the study of students' mistakes also helps to identify difficulties.

When we talk about interference, of course, we must not forget about the phenomena of transposition (transference, facilitation). These terms represent a positive shift in a student's linguistic experience, in other words, their grammatical ability. In short, as many linguodidactics have chosen the wrong way, it is important to identify the phenomenon of transfer between a foreign language and mother tongue and prioritize the idea of a positive transition of native language skills to a foreign language speech process before overcoming an interference problem. It should be noted that the definition of transfer zones is a suitable method.

Any Interference difficulty occurs in the process of studying linguistic phenomena in a given language. Hence, interference is an event that occurs when the study of speech activity begins, including the study of a grammatical phenomenon, and which interferes with the formation of a skill in another language. They can be compared when comparing grammatical phenomena in the native language and the foreign language.

In overcoming the phenomenon of interference, it is known that two linguistic factors occur, the first is a positive transference process that promotes or accelerates the formation of a skill in a foreign language. We have to reiterate the above point that it is the right way to study the positive transfer cases of a skill in the first place. Consequently, the task of comparison on the topics in the grammar list given in English is primary.      In this case, grammatical events of a foreign language that do not cause absolute or relative difficulty are selected, for instance, functions of *the Present Indefinite* or *the Present continuous tense* or degrees of adjectives can be a typical example of this. Some articles and manuals explain the phenomenon of interference in a simple and understandable language: "Interference is a serious obstacle to the successful acquisition of communication skills in a foreign language, so language teaching methods and linguistics pay special attention to this problem" [6]

Interlingual and intralingual interference are recognized in the classification of grammatical difficulties. The source of interlingual difficulties can be found in the following cases: e.g. *Two-member Sentences* in English, the necessity of the use of the verb in a sentence, the stability of the word structure, the structure of verb forms. Interlingual interference has also been studied, e.g. formative (in English - the suffix -ed is used to express the past participle, the adjective derived from noun); polysemy (verbs similar to the verbs *to be, to have* came in European languages and are used as auxiliary verbs and modal verbs in the forming of complex tenses); grammatical phenomena that sound and are spelled the same, but have different meaning, e.g., auxiliary verbs used in *the perfect tense – "have"* [7].

The role of the mother tongue in learning a foreign language may be different: in the first case the mother tongue facilitates the learning of a foreign language, in the second case it makes it difficult, and in the third case it neither facilitates nor complicates it. The first case is called "interlingual facilitation", the second case is called "interlingual interference". The terms "facilitation" and "interference" are derived from English [8].

Since it is impossible to avoid the negative effects of the mother tongue in learning a foreign language, the teacher must anticipate such effects and develop a prevention strategy (or error minimization). To do this, it is necessary to understand whether it is necessary to correct all the mistakes made by the student, and if so, how to correct them.

Depending on the effect of speech comprehension in communicative-oriented teaching, speech errors are distinguished as follows: communicative- significant errors ("strong" errors, global errors) and communicative -insignificant errors ("weak" errors, local errors). The errors which violate the meaning of a certain phrase, the conversation as a whole, making it difficult or impossible to continue the communication is considered as communicative-significant errors [9].

Errors, that are currently considered as communicative-significant, such as:

1) violation of the word order in the sentence;

2) the errors in the use of verb tenses in active and passive voices;

3) not using the subject or the predicate in the sentence;

 4) violation of subject and predicate agreement in the sentence;

5) the omission or misuse of prepositions;

6) misuse of adverbs;

Errors, that are currently considered as communicative-insignificant, such as:

1) omission or misuse of articles;
2) the use of uncountable nouns in plural;
3) errors in the inflection process.

There are internal and external inflections. In the process of internal inflection, changes occur in the stem of the word (noun or verb): sing - s**a**ng - s**u**ng, drink - dr**a**nk - dr**u**nk, tooth - t**ee**th, foot - f**ee**t, mouse - m**ice**, etc.

External inflection is the change of a word (noun, verb and adjective) using external inflections: table - table**s**, house - house**s**; boy - boy**'s**, Peter - Peter**'s**; big - bigg**er** - the bigg**est**; large - larg**er** - the larg**est**; know - know**s**; walk - walk**ed**; speak – speak**ing**, etc.

## 3. METHOD AND MATERIALS

The method used in this study is qualitative research. Our aim is analyze English grammar lessons at the faculties of Uzbek State Foreign Languages University and evaluate the problems occurring during teaching/learning grammar. The participants of this study were the first year students at various faculties. Technique which we used includes observations in the classrooms, testing, and questionaring. In this study we found error types made by Uzbek students. In order to collect the data we took notes of the errors during two years.

In this study we are going to analyze errors made by students in using some perfect tenses, Articles, difficulties in word order in the sentence and Subject-Verb Agreement.
The following sections discuss four most frequent types of errors in the data.
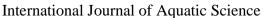
### I. The Present Perfect tense.
The students misuse the Present Perfect, the Past perfect, and the Future Perfect tenses. The reason is the following: students encounter mother tongue interference. In the following charts you can see typical mistakes that the students make while using the Present Perfect and Past perfect:

| Errors by Uzbek students | Correct form |
|---|---|
| My father *__came__* home already. **Uzbek:** "Менинг отам аллақачон уйга келдилар. - Here the Past Indefinite tense (Ўтган ноаниқ замон) is used). | My father *__has come__* home already. **Uzbek:** "Менинг отам аллақачон уйга келдилар. - Here the Past Indefinite tense (Ўтган ноаниқ замон) is used). |
| We *__didn`t do__* our tasks yet. **Uzbek:** "Биз ҳали вазифани бажармадик. - Here the Past Indefinite tense (Ўтган ноаниқ замон) is used). | We *__haven`t done__* our tasks yet. **Uzbek:** "Биз ҳали вазифани бажармадик. - Here the Past Indefinite tense (Ўтган ноаниқ замон) is used). |

In Uzbek there are two present tenses in usage: the Present Indefinite and the Present Continuous. As the Present Perfect in English expresses a finished action with a result in the present or something that happened recently, students use instead of it the Past Indefinite tense (Ўтган ноаниқ замон) as they do in their mother tongue.

### II. The Past Perfect tense.
2) Uzbek learners confuse the Past Perfect with the Past Indefinite (Ўтган ноаниқ замон). They produce the sentences as they do them in their mother tongue. The Past Perfect expresses the action something that started in the past and continued up to another action or time in the past. This is the reason why learners decide to use the Past Indefinite instead of it:

| Errors by Uzbek students | Correct form |
|---|---|
| Olim *finished* his work by 6 o`clock in the evening yesterday.<br>**Uzbek:** "Кеча кечқурун соат 6 га қадар Олим ишини тугатди- Here the Past Indefinite tense (Ўтган ноаниқ замон) is used. | Olim *had finished* his work by 6 o`clock in the evening yesterday.<br>**Uzbek**: "Кеча кечқурун соат 6 га қадар Олим ишини тугатди- Here the Past Indefinite tense (Ўтган ноаниқ замон) is used. |
| Children *played* foofball before their mother came home.<br>**Uzbek:** Болалар оналари ишдан келгунига қадар футбол ўйнадилар - Here the Past Indefinite tense (Ўтган ноаниқ замон) is used. | Children *had played* foofball before their mother came home.<br>**Uzbek:** Болалар оналари ишдан келгунига қадар футбол ўйнадилар - Here the Past Indefinite tense (Ўтган ноаниқ замон) is used. |

## III.    The Future Perfect tense.

Uzbek learners have problems in using the Future Perfect. The Future perfect is used with a future time word, (and often with 'by') to talk about an action that will finish before a certain time in the future. Therefore, they use the Future perfect.
They make the following errors:

| Errors by Uzbek students | Correct form |
|---|---|
| Salim *will translate* the article by next Sunday.<br>**Uzbek:** Салим келаси якшанбага қадар мақолани таржима қилади (қилиб тугатади). - Here the Future Indefinite tense (Келаси ноаниқ замон) is used. | Salim *will have translated* the article by next Sunday.<br>**Uzbek:** Салим келаси якшанбага қадар мақолани таржима қилади (қилиб тугатади). - Here the Future Indefinite tense (Келаси ноаниқ замон) is used. |
| Students *will pass* their exams by July.<br>**Uzbek:** Талабалар имтиҳоларни июль ойига қадар топширадилар (топшириб бўладилар) - Here the Future Indefinite tense (Келаси ноаниқ замон) is used. | Students *will have passed* their exams by July.<br>**Uzbek:** Талабалар имтиҳоларни июль ойига қадар топширадилар (топшириб бўладилар) - Here the Future Indefinite tense (Келаси ноаниқ замон) is used. |

## IV.    Articles.

Uzbek students have obstacles in using English articles. In this case we can see interlanguage and intralanguage interference. In Uzbek we have no so-called grammatical phenomena "Article". Some students don`t use any articles. This is the reason for interlanguage interference. There are two articles in Modern English: definite and indefinite articles, and one more usage of articles: omission of articles. Here intralanguage interference occurs. They usually misuse articles in this way:

| **Errors by Uzbek students** | **Correct form** |
|---|---|
| Give me  book. | Give me **a** book. |
| My mother likes **a** milk. | My mother _ likes milk. |
| She is good teacher. | She is **a** good teacher. |
| Mavluda is best in the group. | Mavluda is **the** best in the group. |

| You have to tell truth. | You have to tell **the** truth. |
|---|---|
| Atlantic Ocean stretches from the north to the south. | **The** Atlantic Ocean stretches from the north to the south. |
| Caucasus is a name for both a mountain chain and a region. | **The** Caucasus is a name for both a mountain chain and a region. |
| "Hospitality" hotel isn't very comfortable. | **The** "Hospitality" hotel isn't very comfortable. |

### V. Word order.

Uzbek learners has great difficulties while making up sentences in English. The problem is word order. The usual word order for declarative sentences in English is the following: subject + predicate + object + place + time. For example, *Our neighbor + walk + their dogs+ in the park + on Sundays.*

In Uzbek we can see the following word order: subject + object (time, place) + predicate: Мен *(subject) +* шу китобни *(object)* + сотиб олдим *(predicate).* Биз *(subject) +* кеча *(time) +* театрга *(place) +* бордик *(predicate).*

Below, we can see Uzbek learners` errors in making up sentences in English:

| *Errors by Uzbek students* | *Correct form* |
|---|---|
| We yesterday to you sent clothes. | We sent you clothes yesterday. |
| Jack every day plays football. | Jack plays football every day. |
| They to the cinema not go. | They don`t go to the cinema. |
| My parents with me not live. | My parents don`t live with me. |

One more obstacle Uzbek learners usually have. This is the making up interrogative sentences. It is clear that in English in order to produce interrogative sentences auxiliary and link verbs are used: *Will* you go with us? **Is** she at home now? In Uzbek instead of auxiliaries and link verbs special endings are used:

| *Interrogative sentences in English* | *Interrogative sentences in Uzbek* |
|---|---|
| **Will** you go with us? | Биз билан кутубхонага бор**асизми**? |
| **Is** she at home now? | У ҳозир уйда**ми**? |
| **Can** you swim? | Сузишни билас**изми**? (Суза оласизми?) |
| **Did** she come home? | У уйга келд**ими**? |

We can present the errors that learners usually make:

| *Errors by Uzbek students* | *Correct form* |
|---|---|
| You live in Tashkent? | **Do** you live in Tashkent? |
| Where you work? | **Where** do you work? |
| They watched TV? | **Did** they watch TV? |
| They at the stadium now? | **Are** they at the stadium now? |
| She a doctor? | **Is** she a doctor? |

### VI. Subject-Verb Agreement
**Omission of third person singular –s.**

In English the subject and verb agree in number. This problem occur in the present tense: learners must add an **-s** or **-es** at the end of the verb when the subjects is a singular third person: *he, she, it,* or words for which these pronouns could substitute. Other forms, do not take the ending **–s.** This rule in English causes Uzbek learners` confusion, because in Uzbek the verb does not inflect a verb based on the subject's status.

Omission of third person singular inflection in English by Uzbek learners.

| *Errors by Uzbek students* | *Correct form* |
|---|---|
| Salima *__like__* to eat an ice cream. *Uzbek: Салима музқаймоқ ейишни яхши кўради.* | Salima *__likes__* to eat an ice cream. |
| She *__clean__* the house every Sunday. *Uzbek: У ҳар якшанба уй тозалайди.* | She *__cleans__* the house every Sunday. |
| Farid *__go__* to football practice every Wednesday. *Uzbek: Фарид ҳар чоршанба футбол машғуолтига боради.* | Farid *__goes__* to football practice every Tuesday. |
| The sun *__set__* in the west. *Uzbek: Куёш ғарбда ботади.* | 1. The sun *__sets__* in the west. |
| David *__work__* on Fridays. *Uzbek: Давид жума кунлари ишлайди.* | Jim *__works__* on Fridays |
| Luiza *__speak__* Spanish very well. *Uzbek: Луиза испан тилида яхши сўзлашади.* | Luiza *__speaks__* Spanish very well. |
| She *__have__* a dog. *Uzbek: Унинг кучуги бор.* | She *__has__* a dog. |

## 4. CONCLUSION

This study is aimed at identifying and analyzing the grammatical errors made by the first -year students of the Uzbek State World Languages University and present some suggestions to overcome the difficulties. As we presented in the data, errors in teaching/learning the Present Perfect, the Past Perfect, the Future Perfect tenses, Articles, word order in the sentence and Subject-Verb Agreement were analyzed.

Teachers should observe the students and identify the problems while teaching grammar, present some solutions to eliminate these errors. In this way they will implement effective teaching methods in order to help learners to minimize their errors. We can say that not all errors are due to mother tongue interference. Some scientists [10, 11, 12, 13, 14] suggest communicative approach, testing approach [15, 16, 17], teaching grammar in context [18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24] in helping students to overcome problems in learning grammar. It is the fact that using modern technology can also help to minimize the chances of occurrence of the errors in teaching/learning English grammar.

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