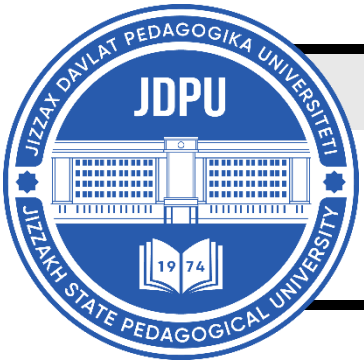
DOI: https://doi.org/10.37547/mesmj-V5-I2-25 Pages: 177-182

MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC – METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL

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# ANALYSIS OF TYPICAL ERRORS IN THE GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 5-9 IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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## ABOUT ARTICLE

**Key words:** inter-language, grammatical errors, L1 interference, stabilization, fossilization, transfer, target language, interlanguage system, grammatical competence, learners.

**Received:** 15.02.24
**Accepted:** 17.02.24
**Published:** 19.02.24

**Abstract:** Interlanguage is a natural language and learners come across with it while learning L2. Nowadays' literatures consider errors not only deviations but also as a source for studying strategies used by the student in learning foreign language. Errors can illustrate knowledge of the learners and of the rules used by them at a particular stage in learning course. Therefore, if we are willing to study the learners' interlanguage system, we have to find clues to the study by analyzing errors they make. Dealing with such errors, Schachter (1990), Han (2005) note that non-native language learners are not able to use target language grammar completely, the errors become essential components of their interlanguage, because they are fossilized. Pedagogical guide to learner's interlanguage has almost no value; learners cannot benefited from the teachers' instruction.

## INTRODUCTION

Each learner makes errors while learning a new language. In fact, these errors define unavoidable weaknesses of individuals, for instance, it can be result of poor memory, lack of concentration, inappropriate learning strategies or inadequacy of teachers' approach. Such language

errors can be the source for researching learners' interlanguage. As a separate linguistic system, interlanguage has some distinctive features: fossilization, systematicity and permeability (Saville-Troike, 2006, p.41). Although there have been many studies dealing with the insight whether interlanguage is fossilized, the matter still needs exact response.

Lenneberg (1967), Long (1990) believe that post puberty learners are unable to attain native-like morpohology and syntax no matter how much opportunity they may have. Because their interlanguage errors are fossilized. However, opponents of this view Steinberg (2004) argues there is no limited age for learning target language grammar. Dealing with these, in the scope of this study I will address the language learner's interlanguage and an error fossilization stages with mainly focusing on grammatical errors. The subject of the present study is an Uzbek high school student grade nine who is learning English as a foreign language. This study is very important as it can give language teachers real images of the common phenomenon usually happen in learning foreign languages.

The viewpoints revealed in this study can contribute to the improvement of the theory of applied linguistics, especially to the phenomenon of interlanguage, error fossilization in SLA. Through the study results it can be evident that how Uzbek impacts on student's learning English and what kind of language errors they make. Once we become familiar with various features of interlanguage, we can guide learners to overcome their native language interference.

**Main body**

The subject of my present study is Ulugbek Abdumutalov secondary school student grade eight who is learning English as a foreign language. His age is 15. He has been learning English for 6 months through formal instruction, but he has been studying English from the 1 st grade as a compulsory school subject. This learner is bilingual, he is Uzbek but fluent in Russian as well, at home and outside of the home he sometimes uses Russian. From his childhood parents motivated him to learn more foreign languages. This can be also result of the influence of Russian to our country.

The reason why I chose this subject is that although I am his English teacher at school since September, I have known Ulugbek for 3 months, prior to being his assigned English teacher at school I taught him General English individually. And this period gave me a chance to know my participants' knowledge, character and attitude towards Languages individually. While conducting their English classes as an assigned teacher, I discovered Ulugbek as a hardworking, intelligent, responsible and active pupil that eager to learn any new topic in the class.

Thus, I want to analyse his interlanguage by defining language errors and help him to acquire the target language. Our English classes meet four times in a week. Ulugbek studies in a specialized class so we have one more an academic English hour compared to ordinary classes. The participant's average grade from English is B+. Even though Ulugbek highly motivated to learn, sometimes he

becomes reserved and introverted. He has poor memorization; it was noticeable when I encouraged the group to play memory game.

Ulugbek is visual and kinaesthetic learner at the same time. From the psychological point of view, he is phlegmatic person. Because he does each task accurately, carefully, and makes decision after thinking deeply. This participant's group doesn't know how to work collaboratively, as I gave a task to make group presentations, they barely fulfilled the task. Ulugbek had some pronunciation, lexical, and grammatical errors. So that, I wanted to study his interlanguage system through finding clues to the systems by analysing the errors he made. From the beginning of my one-on-one private lessons, I wanted to help Ulugbek to reduce language errors and achieve native like language competence because of his willingness to learn English. In this study, I will analyse the L2 learner's reaction to grammar instruction whether he is able to lose interlanguage errors or they have already fossilized. His process includes the following phases:

STAGE 1 In the initial stage of my study I took questionnaire from the subject to identify background information about the participant's language use. The first part of the questionnaire covers 10 general questions about the subject, his nationality, occupation, language or dialect he spoke, received language courses. The second part of the questionnaire focuses on the amount of courses taken in English as a subject.

Furthermore, as we can see from the table, the participant should grade with 1-4 points the English skills which he has focused more. And write the number of teachers who were native speakers of English, the time in the class he and the teacher spoke in English, the time when he started to learn English. The third part of the questionnaire reveals how the participant has been learning English including the criteria: – by attending classes at the language centre – by attending classes at school – by watching TV – by listening to the radio, audios – by reading newspapers – by other means. Finally, the last section of the questionnaire contains languages of participant's surrounding people, what languages the subject use to communicate with them. The questionnaire was taken at school, I gave some minutes to the participant to complete the questionnaire out of the lesson.

STAGE 2 In the next step of my study, I required from my participant Ulugbek to write a free composition on the topic "About myself" and asked him to include information regarding his daily routine, study, family, hobby, experiences and future plans. The main aim of this approach that I should analyse his composition and identify grammatical errors or problems that he is facing. After defining his usage of grammar, I started to give instructions based on his errors. The procedure constituted 3 weeks (12 meetings). Each session was devoted to cover one grammar topic. Round–up 4 English grammar book published by Virginia Evans, (Longman) was used for presenting and practicing grammar skills. The lessons conducted not only relying on grammar translation method, through involving linguistic forms I provided opportunities for communication as well. There are

several oral activities for the interaction of students in the course book, but I used them as a teacher student interaction. So, this course book is well suited to my participant as he practiced grammar by lively, highly illustrated quizzes and activities.

We know that in the case of first language acquisition, the learner starts from no prior linguistic knowledge and attains adult knowledge. We also know that the learner starts from the knowledge of a language and constantly constructs a system of second language rules. However, it would be wrong to presume that the learner starts with zero knowledge. There is evidence in current research, Flynn (1995), for example, that the learner has some grammar before he begins learning his second language, which may not have any bearing on his prior linguistic knowledge.

We know that, One of the most difficult aspects of learning English as a foreign language is the grammar rules. English grammar is regarded as a system of syntax that decides the order and patterns in which words are arranged in sentences. Mastering grammar is a complex process that requires a series of decisions when and why to use one form rather than the other" (Celce-Murcia, 2002). In speaking or writing using English as a second language (L2), one needs grammatical proficiency. Shanklin (1994) suggested that "grammatical proficiency is both an important pedagogical skill and an important part in learning the target language. Basically, there are two kinds of grammar. First is descriptive grammar which refers to the structure of English used by speakers and writers and second is the prescriptive grammar which deals with the syntax and word structures of a language usually intended in learning the target language. The study of grammar all by itself doesn't make one a better writer. English grammar is considered a separate part of the educational experience. Most English teachers try to integrate the teaching of grammar in the four elements of the General English language courses at the secondary level. Memorization of grammar rules is necessary to master the language form and its functions. People associate grammar with errors and correctness. Knowledge of grammar helps us understand what makes sentences and paragraphs clear, interesting, and precise. Knowing about grammar means finding out that all languages and all dialects follow grammatical patterns. Every school wants to build its name based on good performance at any level of secondary education more precisely at grade 9 and 12 levels. During examinations at the two mentioned levels, pupils are tested in composition writing which carries the highest marks in the whole paper. It is because of this fact that pupils are trained comprehensively to develop their communication and writing skills. When pupils enter grade eight (8), they are trained in four core skills at the foundation level which include: Listening, reading, speaking, and writing. However, pupils' level of communication using the English language is definitely a problem due to their insufficient knowledge of grammar. Grammar has been a very delicate issue in the English Language. While modern technology and social media have less formal forms of communication, employers still expect perfect grammar in professional settings. Glaring errors in sentence constructions are judged before the content of the work. To prepare the

pupils for excellent communication, all schools need to enhance their grammar skills and familiarize the rules associated with it. The researcher came up with this study to analyze the types of grammatical errors pupils make and establish the rules that are broken for such errors to occur so that pupils can be grammatically prepared for entering the tertiary level. Since pupils need to be examined at grade nine (9) and twelve (12) levels, it is a must that they develop and enhance their writing skills with correct grammatical structures. Therefore, identifying the grammar difficulties and then establishing rules that are violated for such errors to occur is a must. For those with a particular interest in second language acquisition, language transfer, interlanguage, and fossilization, "Rediscovering Interlanguage" is a rich source of reference. However, readers should keep in mind that the book should not be used as a primary source for an SLA course because of its unreliable and misleading methodology of 'purposeful misreading. Fossilization in Adult Second Language Acquisition is an important resource for anybody interested in comprehending fossilization theoretically and investigating it experimentally. There is little doubt that native-like mastery of a second language (L2) by adult non-native speakers is hard to attain (Bley-Vroman, 1989; Schachter, 1988). Failure in some aspects of the language is to be expected, and this is the reason why the nature of this failure has to be investigated thoroughly. Fossilization in Adult Second Language Acquisition takes a long step toward shedding light on the nature of failure. This book offers a systematic analysis of fossilization, a phenomenon that occurs despite continuous exposure to the target language input, sufficient motivation to improve, and ample opportunity to practice.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, from this study I discovered that my participant's grammatical errors are not static (fossilized) but dynamic. They can be disappeare through pedagogical grammar instructions. At a certain step of language learning, these errors appear. As a result of instructions, some errors stabilized. Other new types of errors are prone to appear when learners use new grammatical items. Grammatical errors maintain dynamic as the learners continue learning foreign languages.

In this way, the learners' interlanguage system improves into target language structure. Furthermore, grammar instruction helps to destabilization of errors because it comprises grammar explanation, feedback and the learner given a chance to practice. The stabilized errors are more likely to fossilize if the learner stops learning the language or limit exposure of target language. Then errors become permanent characteristic of the learners' interlanguage system. In contrast, when learners continue learning target language, the process of destabilization also continues, interlanguage alters its state and finally can constitute part of the target language.

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