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INTERLINGUAL PHONETIC INTERFERENCE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BASED ON MATERIAL FROM THE UZBEK, ENGLISH, AND FRENCH LANGUAGES

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of comparative linguistics, its role in modern linguistics, and certain issues related to the phenomenon of interlingual interference. Particular attention is paid to the problems of interlingual interference, its manifestations in bilingual and multilingual contexts, and its positive and negative aspects. The concepts of interference, bilingualism, transfer, language contact, phonetic interference, and grammatical interference are examined through illustrative examples. The article also presents examples demonstrating the various forms of interference in bilingual and multilingual contexts, as well as its positive and negative effects.

Introduction. In the contemporary era of globalization, interaction among different languages is becoming increasingly intensive. This process necessitates a deeper study of comparative linguistics and interlingual interference, which constitute important areas of modern linguistics. In particular, the influence of elements of one language on another is one of the most relevant problems in multilingual societies.

The comparative study of typologically different languages for linguodidactic purposes involves not only identifying similarities and differences between languages, but also determining correspondences and discrepancies between them, examining the methodological

significance of these similarities and differences, and clarifying the nature of interlingual interference. Addressing these complex issues represents one of the major objectives of comparative linguistics. Consequently, effective foreign-language teaching requires identifying similarities and differences between structurally different languages and developing teaching approaches based on such contrasts.

The term interference is also widely used in linguistics to describe the influence of the rules of one language on the acquisition or use of another language. Linguistic interference refers to errors or deviations that arise under conditions of bilingualism when one language exerts an influence on the system of another language. In foreign-language learning, this phenomenon is particularly evident when learners transfer the pronunciation patterns, grammatical structures, vocabulary, or meanings of their native language into the foreign language.

Interference may occur at several linguistic levels. These include phonetic, grammatical, lexical, and graphic interference. Phonetic interference occurs when foreign-language sounds are pronounced according to the phonetic patterns of the learner's native language. For example, Uzbek learners may pronounce the English th sounds /θ/ and /ð/ as sounds closer to /t/, /s/, /z/, or /d/. Grammatical interference involves transferring grammatical rules from the native language to the target language. Lexical interference occurs when words are selected or interpreted incorrectly, while graphic interference involves the transfer or mixing of writing conventions between languages.

Interlingual interference is an important problem in linguistics, sociolinguistics, and foreign-language teaching methodology. Its emergence may be caused by the strong influence of the native language, insufficient awareness of similarities and differences between languages, limited communicative practice, inappropriate teaching methods, and excessive reliance on direct translation.

Interest in interlingual interference increased considerably during the second half of the twentieth century, resulting in numerous studies devoted to interference between two or more structurally different languages. Nevertheless, many aspects of the phenomenon remain insufficiently investigated, particularly the precise nature and consequences of interlingual interference. It may be understood as deviations from the norms of one or more languages involved in communication that emerge in the speech of bilingual individuals as a result of their knowledge and use of several languages.

From this perspective, interference should not necessarily be regarded as a completely independent “third system.” Rather, it can be viewed as a continuously changing and developing

distortion of the target-language system that is gradually corrected as the learner's proficiency in the target language increases.

Methodology. The study employed a comparative-contrastive approach to examine interlingual phonetic interference among Uzbek, English, and French. The analysis focused primarily on the phonetic and phonological differences among the three languages and their potential influence on foreign-language pronunciation.

The analysis considered several major areas in which phonetic interference may occur: consonant pronunciation, vowel pronunciation, nasal vowels, stress, intonation, rhythm, tempo, articulation, and phoneme discrimination. Particular attention was given to difficulties experienced by Uzbek-speaking learners of English and French, as well as possible interference between English and French.

Examples of pronunciation patterns were analyzed comparatively to identify the sources of interference. These included the English /θ/ and /ð/ sounds, the French /ʁ/, rounded front vowels such as /y/, /ø/, and /œ/, French nasal vowels, and differences in stress and intonation patterns.

The study also used contrastive analysis to identify areas of correspondence and discrepancy between the phonetic systems of Uzbek, English, and French. This approach made it possible to determine potentially problematic phonetic features and to establish the relative strength of interference across different language combinations.

In addition, methodological approaches for reducing phonetic interference were examined, including articulatory exercises, minimal-pair practice, authentic audio materials, imitation of native speech patterns, and systematic comparison of the phonetic systems of the native and target languages.

Results. The comparative analysis demonstrates that Uzbek learners of English and French encounter a number of significant phonetic difficulties resulting from differences between the phonological systems of their native and target languages.

One of the major sources of Uzbek–English phonetic interference is the absence of the English dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ in the Uzbek phonological system. For example, the English words think /θɪŋk/ and this /ðɪs/ may be pronounced by Uzbek learners as forms resembling sink, tink, zis, or dis. Such substitutions occur because Uzbek does not have equivalent interdental fricative phonemes.

Significant interference is also observed in Uzbek–French pronunciation. The French uvular /ʁ/ does not have a direct equivalent in Uzbek, where /r/ is realized as a trill.

Consequently, Uzbek learners may pronounce French words such as rue, Paris, and regarder using a pronunciation closer to the Uzbek /r/.

English–French phonetic interaction may also present difficulties. English-speaking learners of French may experience problems distinguishing the French rounded vowels /u/ and /y/. For instance, tout [tu] and tu [ty] may sound relatively similar to learners whose native phonological system does not contain the corresponding contrast.

Vowel differences constitute another major source of interference. Uzbek has a relatively limited vowel system compared with English, whose vowel system contains numerous qualitative and quantitative distinctions. As a result, Uzbek learners may have difficulty distinguishing English ship /ʃɪp/ from sheep /ʃiːp/, particularly because the short–long vowel opposition is not structurally developed in the same way in Uzbek.

Uzbek learners of French may also encounter difficulties with the French rounded front vowels /y/, /ø/, and /œ/, which are absent from Uzbek. Thus, French words such as tu, peu, and sœur may be pronounced using sounds that are closer to familiar Uzbek vowels.

French nasal vowels constitute another significant area of difficulty. Since nasal vowels do not function as independent phonemes in Uzbek and English in the same manner as they do in French, learners may pronounce forms such as sans [sɑ̃] and vin [vɛ̃] with an oral vowel followed by a consonantal element.

Stress represents another important area of interference. Uzbek stress frequently occurs on the final syllable, whereas English has a relatively free and lexically variable stress system. Consequently, Uzbek learners may produce pronunciations such as docTOR instead of the standard English stress pattern in DOctor. Such interference can negatively affect the naturalness and intelligibility of speech.

In French, stress generally occurs toward the end of a rhythmic or intonational group. Under the influence of Uzbek, learners may attempt to assign separate stress to individual words, thereby disrupting the characteristic rhythmic organization of French speech.

Intonation is also affected by cross-linguistic influence. English makes extensive use of intonation for communicative and pragmatic purposes. For example, the distinction between Really? with rising intonation and Really. with falling intonation may not always be reproduced accurately by Uzbek learners. Similarly, interference from Uzbek may lead French learners to use inappropriate pauses or voice movements within French intonational groups.

The comparative findings can be summarized as follows:

Phonetic feature	Uzbek → English	Uzbek → French	English → French
Dental/interdental sounds	Strong	None	None
French /ʁ/	None	Strong	Moderate
Rounded vowels	None	Strong	Moderate
Nasal vowels	None	Strong	Moderate
Stress	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
Intonation	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Vowel distinctions	Strong	Strong	Moderate

The results indicate that the strongest areas of difficulty for Uzbek learners are English interdental consonants, English vowel distinctions, the French uvular /ʁ/, French rounded vowels, and French nasal vowels. Stress and intonation also require systematic attention during foreign-language instruction.

Discussion. The findings confirm that interlingual phonetic interference is primarily associated with differences between the phonetic and phonological systems of the languages involved. Learners naturally tend to transfer familiar articulatory patterns, phonemic categories, stress patterns, and intonation models from their native language to the target language. This transfer may result in deviations from target-language pronunciation norms.

The Uzbek–English and Uzbek–French comparisons demonstrate that the absence of corresponding phonemes in the Uzbek phonological system is one of the principal causes of pronunciation difficulties. English /θ/ and /ð/, French /ʁ/, French rounded front vowels, and French nasal vowels represent particularly problematic areas. These difficulties demonstrate the importance of identifying phonological contrasts before or during foreign-language instruction.

Interference does not always have exclusively negative consequences. Similarities between languages may produce positive transfer and facilitate language acquisition. However, when learners fail to recognize significant structural differences, negative transfer may lead to persistent pronunciation errors, reduced speech accuracy, communication difficulties, and slower language development.

The consequences of uncontrolled interference may include incorrect interpretation of words and meanings, violations of literary and standard-language norms, reduced

communicative effectiveness, difficulties in foreign-language learning, and decreased confidence in oral communication. In professional contexts such as translation and language teaching, persistent interference may also negatively affect the quality of professional communication.

The findings suggest that contrastive analysis should occupy an important place in foreign-language teaching. Comparing the phonetic systems of Uzbek, English, and French enables teachers to predict potential pronunciation problems and develop targeted instructional materials. Phonetic exercises, audio and video materials, articulatory training, minimal pairs, and imitation of authentic speech can help learners overcome problematic pronunciation patterns.

For example, minimal-pair exercises such as think–sink, sheep–ship, and tout–tu can help learners distinguish phonemes that do not have direct equivalents in their native language. Regular exposure to authentic speech can improve learners' perception of stress, rhythm, and intonation, while articulatory exercises can help establish more accurate pronunciation habits.

It is therefore important to approach interlingual interference not simply as an error phenomenon but as a natural component of multilingual language development. Its effects can be substantially reduced through systematic contrastive analysis, targeted phonetic training, communicative practice, and continuous corrective feedback.

Conclusion. The comparative analysis of Uzbek, English, and French demonstrates that interlingual phonetic interference is a natural consequence of language contact and bilingual or multilingual language learning. It occurs when the phonetic and phonological patterns of one language influence the production and perception of another language. For Uzbek-speaking learners, the most significant difficulties are associated with English /θ/ and /ð/, English vowel distinctions and stress patterns, as well as the French /ʁ/, rounded front vowels, nasal vowels, and specific rhythmic and intonational features.

The study confirms that differences between the phonological systems of the native and target languages should be systematically considered in foreign-language education. Contrastive phonetic analysis provides an effective basis for identifying predictable pronunciation difficulties and designing appropriate instructional materials and exercises.

The use of articulatory training, minimal-pair exercises, authentic audio and video materials, imitation of native speech, communicative activities, and systematic corrective feedback can significantly reduce the negative effects of phonetic interference. At the same time, similarities between languages should be used to promote positive transfer and facilitate language acquisition.

Thus, interlingual phonetic interference should be regarded not only as a source of errors but also as an important phenomenon for understanding the mechanisms of multilingual language acquisition. A systematic combination of comparative analysis and practical phonetic training can contribute to more accurate and fluent pronunciation, improved communicative competence, and more effective foreign-language learning among Uzbek-speaking learners of English and French.

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