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NATIVE LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE IN LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Native language interference plays a significant role in second language acquisition, affecting learners' ability to communicate effectively in their target language. This interference, defined as the influence of a learner's first language (L1) on the learning and use of a second language (L2), encompasses various mechanisms through which linguistic, phonological, and syntactic elements are erroneously transferred. Common types of native language interference include pronunciation difficulties, grammatical errors, and lexical confusion, each stemming from differing linguistic structures and rules between L1 and L2. Understanding these types is crucial for educators and learners alike, as it lays the groundwork for addressing potential pitfalls in language learning. To minimize native language interference, several strategies can be employed, including contrastive analysis, the use of authentic materials, fostering cognitive flexibility, focused practice, self-monitoring, and integration of technology. By actively addressing the challenges posed by native language interference through tailored approaches, learners can enhance their proficiency in the target language, ultimately leading to more effective and confident communication. This comprehensive exploration of native language interference not only elucidates its implications in language acquisition but also provides actionable strategies that promote successful learning outcomes.

Key words: native language, difference, interference, equivalent, learners, difficulties, error.

İKİNCİ DİLİN ÖYRƏNİLMƏSİNDƏ ANA DİLİNİN TƏSİRİ

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Xülasə

İkinci dilin mənimsənilməsinə, öyrənənlərin hədəf dillərində səmərəli ünsiyyət qurma qabiliyyətinə ana dilinin müdaxiləsi təsir göstərir. Öyrənənin birinci dilinin (L1) ikinci dilin öyrənilməsinə və istifadəsinə (L2) təsiri kimi müəyyən edilən bu müdaxilə linqvistik, fonoloji və sintaktik elementlərin səhv şəkildə ötürülməsinin müxtəlif mexanizmlərini əhatə edir. Doğma dil müdaxiləsinin ümumi növlərinə tələffüz çətinlikləri, qrammatik və leksik səhvlər daxildir, bunların hər biri L1 və L2 arasında fərqli dil strukturları və qaydalardan irəli gəlir.

Bu növləri başa düşmək həm pedaqoqlar, həm də öyrənənlər üçün çox vacibdir, çünki bu, dil öyrənilməsində səhvlərin aradan qaldırılması üçün zəmin yaradır. Ana dilinin müdaxiləsini minimuma endirmək üçün bir neçə strategiyadan istifadə edilə bilər, o cümlədən təzadlı təhlil, orijinal materiallardan istifadə, idrak çevikliyini təşviq etmək, özünə nəzarət və texnologiya inteqrasiyası. Fərdi yanaşmalar vasitəsilə ana dilinin müdaxiləsinin qarşısını almaqla, öyrənənlər hədəf dildə bacarıqlarını təkmilləşdirə və nəticədə daha effektiv və inamlı ünsiyyətə nail ola bilərlər. Doğma dil müdaxiləsinin bu hərtərəfli tədqiqi təkcə onun dil mənimsənilməsi üçün təsirlərini aydınlaşdırmaqla yanaşı, həm də uğurlu öyrənmə nəticələrini təşviq edən təsirli strategiyalar təqdim edir.

Açar sözlər: ana dili, fərq, müdaxilə, ekvivalent, öyrənənlər, çətinlik, səhv.

ВЛИЯНИЕ РОДНОГО ЯЗЫКА ПРИ ИЗУЧЕНИИ ВТОРОГО ЯЗЫКА

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Резюме

Интерференция родного языка играет важную роль в освоении второго языка, влияя на способность учащихся эффективно общаться на целевом языке. Это вмешательство, определяемое как влияние первого языка (L1) на изучение и использование второго языка (L2), охватывает различные механизмы неправильной передачи лингвистических, фонологических и синтаксических элементов. Распространёнными видами интерференции родного языка являются трудности в произношении, грамматические и лексические ошибки, обусловленные различиями в языковых структурах и правилах между L1 и L2. Понимание этих типов имеет решающее значение как для педагогов, так и для учащихся, поскольку оно закладывает основу для устранения потенциальных ловушек в изучении языка. Чтобы минимизировать помехи родного языка, можно использовать несколько стратегий, включая

сопоставительный анализ, использование аутентичных материалов, поощрение когнитивной гибкости, целенаправленную практику, самоконтроль и интеграцию технологий. Активно решая проблемы, связанные с помехами родного языка, с помощью индивидуальных подходов, учащиеся могут повысить уровень своего владения целевым языком, что в конечном итоге приведет к более эффективному и уверенному общению. Это всестороннее исследование помех родного языка не только проясняет их последствия для усвоения языка, но и предоставляет действенные стратегии, которые способствуют успешным результатам обучения.

Ключевые слова: родной язык, различие, помехи, эквивалент, учащиеся, трудности, ошибка.

Introduction

Native language interference, often referred to as linguistic interference or language transfer, occurs when a learner's first language (L1) affects their use and understanding of a second language (L2). This phenomenon is a common challenge faced by language learners and can manifest in various ways, impacting pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and overall communication.

At its core, native language interference arises due to the inherent differences between an individual's first and second languages. Factors such as phonetics, syntax, and semantics play crucial roles in determining how one language can impede the acquisition of another. For example, if a learner's native language has a different set of phonetic sounds than those present in the second language, they may struggle to produce or differentiate sounds that do not exist in their L1, leading to the development of a pronounced accent or miscommunication.

One prominent mechanism of native language interference is transfer, whereby characteristics of the L1 are carried over to the L2 [Khansir, 2012:1027]. This transfer can be either positive or negative. Positive transfer occurs when similarities between the two languages facilitate learning, making it easier for the learner to apply their existing linguistic knowledge. On the other hand, negative transfer occurs when differences between the languages lead to errors.

Here are some examples of native language interference (or transfer) that Azerbaijani speakers might experience when learning English.

1. Phonological Interference:

– Pronunciation Errors: Azerbaijani has certain sounds that do not exist in English, leading to pronunciation challenges. For example, the English "w" sound may be difficult, resulting in "we" pronounced as "vi".

–Vowel Length: Azerbaijani vowels can be long or short, and this distinction might lead to troubles with English vowel sounds. For instance, a learner might pronounce "ship" and "sheep" with the same vowel length, making them sound similar.

2. Grammatical Interference:

– Article Usage: Azerbaijani does not have definite or indefinite articles (like "the" or "a"), so speakers might omit them in English, saying "I saw dog" instead of "I saw a dog" [Qurbanova, 2025:31].

– Word Order: Azerbaijani typically follows a subject-object-verb (SOV) order, which might lead to errors in English, a subject-verb-object (SVO) language. For example, they might say "I the book read" instead of "I read the book".

3. Lexical Interference:

– Direct Translation: An Azerbaijani speaker might directly translate phrases from Azerbaijani, resulting in awkward English expressions. For example, saying "I am in the class" instead of "I am at school" if they translate "məktəb" directly as "classroom".

– False Friends: Some borrowings that are used in many languages, including Azerbaijani and English, may differ in meaning. For instance, "artist, benzene, carton, fabric, marmalade, mayor" This may lead to incorrect assumptions about its use.

4. Sentence Structure:

– Negation: The structure for negation in Azerbaijani involves a different format. As a result, an Azerbaijani speaker might say "I no want" instead of "I don't want".

– Tense Usage: The concept of tense can be less rigid in Azerbaijani. An Azerbaijani speaker might mix future and present tenses, saying "I go to the store tomorrow." instead of "I will go to the store tomorrow".

5. Preposition Use:

– Prepositional Errors: Azerbaijani prepositional phrases differ significantly from English, leading to errors. For example, a speaker might say "good in English" instead of "good at English," since they may not differentiate between these prepositions in their native language [<https://exhibition.glc.az/ingilis-dilinde-umumi-sehvler>].

6. Use of Plural Forms:

– Pluralization Confusion: Azerbaijani typically marks plurals differently (often through suffixes). An Azerbaijani speaker might say "many book" instead of

“many books” due to the rules of plural forms’ usage after words “many, few, a lot, etc” in their native structure.

These examples highlight how characteristics of the Azerbaijani language can influence English learning. Awareness of these potential interferences can help educators create strategies to assist Azerbaijani speakers in becoming more proficient in English.

Another contributing factor to native language interference is the cognitive load experienced by language learners. As individuals attempt to learn a new language, their brains work to process and store new information while simultaneously trying to navigate the complexities of their L1. This cognitive juggling can result in reliance on familiar structures and vocabulary from the L1, leading to errors and misunderstandings in L2 usage [Norton, Toohey, 2011:418].

Cultural context also plays a significant role in linguistic interference. Language is not only a system of communication but also a reflection of cultural identity. Thus, cultural references and expressions that are deeply rooted in a learner’s native language may not translate effectively to a second language, leading to further confusion or misinterpretation. For instance, idiomatic expressions that thrive in one language may hold no equivalent in another, complicating the learner’s ability to understand or convey ideas accurately.

Idiomatic expressions often carry cultural nuances that can be challenging for language learners, as they may not have direct equivalents in another language. Here are some idioms from Azerbaijani that lack direct equivalents in English, potentially complicating understanding for learners.

1. Gözü yolda qalmaq

Literal translation: Have eyes remained on the road

Meaning: This expression is used to convey the meaning that a person has been waiting for somebody to come for a long time.

2. Qulaq asmaq

Literal translation: hang an ear

Meaning: to listen to smb/smt

3. Göz verib işıq verməmək

Literal translation: to give an eye, but not to give light

Meaning: abuse, insult, not to leave in peace.

4. Başı daşdan-daşa dəymək

Literal translation: to hit one’s head against stones

Meaning: This expression is used to mean that a person saw many tough periods, hardships in life.

To combat native language interference, language educators often employ explicit teaching strategies that raise learners' awareness of potential pitfalls stemming from their L1. By highlighting specific areas where interference is likely to occur, such as pronunciation or grammar rules, instructors can help learners identify and correct errors more effectively [Hasyim, 2002:1]. Additionally, immersive language experiences that prioritize exposure to the L2 can foster more intuitive learning, enabling learners to internalize the language without over-relying on their native language structures.

Conclusion

Understanding native language interference is crucial for both language learners and educators alike. By recognizing the various mechanisms through which L1 can impact L2 learning – such as transfer, cognitive load, and cultural context – learners can develop strategies to mitigate errors and enhance their proficiency. As language acquisition is a complex process, appreciating these challenges can lead to a more effective and enjoyable language-learning experience.

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Məqalə tarixçəsi

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