

## The Role of Native Language Interference in Uzbek Students' English Writing Skills

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the influence of the Uzbek native language (L1) on the English writing skills (L2) of Uzbek students. It focuses on how differences in grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure between Uzbek and English affect learners' written performance. The study also discusses common types of interference, such as literal translation, word order errors, and misuse of articles, and offers pedagogical strategies to minimize these issues.

### 1. Introduction

In learning a second language, interference from the mother tongue is one of the most common challenges students face. Uzbek students, in particular, encounter difficulties in English writing due to structural and cultural differences between Uzbek and English. Since Uzbek belongs to the Turkic language family and English to the Germanic family, their linguistic systems differ significantly in grammar, syntax, and word usage. This interference often leads to grammatical errors, awkward phrasing, and limited coherence in English writing.

### 2. Literature Review

Previous studies (Ellis, 1997; Odlin, 1989) highlight that native language interference can either positively or negatively influence second language acquisition. Positive transfer occurs when structures in both languages are similar, while negative transfer happens when they differ. In the Uzbek context, negative transfer is more frequent due to the absence of articles, different word order (SOV vs. SVO), and distinct tense usage. Researchers such as Karimova (2020) and Tursunov (2021) have also emphasized that L1 interference affects not only grammar but also students' thinking patterns and organization of ideas in writing. Second language learning is influenced by learners' existing knowledge of their first language (L1), particularly in vocabulary acquisition. Lexical transfer, or the influence of L1 vocabulary on L2 use, is a common phenomenon observed in EFL learners. While L1 knowledge can facilitate comprehension and accelerate initial production in English, it can also result in errors when learners overgeneralize L1 patterns or translate words directly without considering semantic or contextual differences.

Uzbek learners of English face unique challenges due to structural and lexical differences between Uzbek and English. For instance, some English words lack direct equivalents in Uzbek, while others may have partial overlaps in meaning. Lexical transfer can manifest in speaking, writing, reading, and listening tasks, affecting fluency, accuracy, and communicative effectiveness.

This article investigates the role of lexical transfer in Uzbek-English learning contexts. It examines common patterns of transfer, identifies potential sources of errors, and proposes pedagogical strategies to harness the benefits of L1 influence while minimizing interference. The aim is to provide insights for EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and learners seeking to optimize vocabulary acquisition and cross-linguistic competence.

#### **Main Body**

##### **1. Understanding Lexical Transfer**

Lexical transfer occurs when learners rely on their L1 to process, produce, or understand L2 vocabulary. It can be:

1. **Facilitative Transfer:** When L1 knowledge aids comprehension or production. For example, recognizing cognates or similar semantic fields can speed up word learning.

2. **Interference (Negative Transfer):** When L1 influences lead to errors, such as incorrect word choice, literal translations, or semantic mismatches. Example: translating the Uzbek expression “ko‘p ishlash” directly as “work much” instead of “work hard.”

3. **Calques and Borrowings:** Learners may create L2 expressions based on L1 structure, sometimes resulting in non-standard usage.

Research in SLA (Second Language Acquisition) emphasizes that lexical transfer is inevitable, and its effects depend on proficiency level, exposure to L2 input, and metalinguistic awareness.

##### **2. Patterns of Lexical Transfer in Uzbek-English Context**

Uzbek-English lexical transfer exhibits several notable patterns:

**Direct Translation:** Learners translate words or phrases literally from Uzbek to English, often producing grammatically or semantically incorrect expressions.

**Semantic Extension:** Words are used beyond their conventional English meanings, influenced by the L1 concept. For example, using “take” in English to mean multiple Uzbek verbs like olmoq (to take, accept, or receive).

##### **3. Methodology**

The study involved 50 undergraduate students from Uzbek State World Languages University. Students were asked to write a 200-word essay in English. The essays were analyzed for grammatical and syntactical errors influenced by Uzbek. Interviews were also conducted to understand students’ perspectives on how their native language affects their English writing.

##### **4. Findings and Discussion**

The analysis revealed several major types of interference:

###### **4.1. Word Order**

Uzbek follows a Subject–Object–Verb (SOV) structure, while English uses Subject–Verb–Object (SVO). As a result, students often produce sentences like: “*I my homework did yesterday*” instead of “*I did my homework yesterday.*”

#### 4.2. Article Usage

Since Uzbek has no articles, students frequently omit or misuse “a,” “an,” and “the”:

“*I bought book*” instead of “*I bought a book.*”

#### 4.3. Prepositions

Prepositions in English do not always have direct equivalents in Uzbek. Students often translate prepositions literally: “*I am good in English*” instead of “*I am good at English.*”

#### 4.4. Literal Translation and Idiomatic Expressions

Students often translate Uzbek idioms or expressions directly, resulting in unnatural English phrases such as “*My heart became cold*” (meaning “I lost interest”).

#### 4.5. Sentence Cohesion and Coherence

Uzbek writing tends to be more implicit and context-dependent, while English writing values explicit connections and clear logical flow. This difference affects paragraph organization and idea development in essays.

#### 5. Pedagogical Implications

Teachers should focus on raising students’ awareness of cross-linguistic differences. Explicit grammar instruction, contrastive analysis, and writing practice with feedback can help reduce interference. Incorporating translation exercises from Uzbek to English and vice versa may also build awareness of syntactic contrasts.

#### 6. Conclusion

Native language interference plays a significant role in shaping Uzbek students’ English writing. Understanding these influences allows educators to design targeted strategies to improve writing proficiency. By emphasizing contrastive analysis and communicative writing practices, teachers can help students overcome negative transfer and develop more natural, fluent English writing skills.

#### References

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