CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCE IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR ACQUISITION: EVIDENCE FROM UZBEK-SPEAKING LEARNERS

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Annotation. Cross-linguistic influence (CLI) has long been recognized as a central factor in second language acquisition. Learners do not approach a new language as a blank slate; instead, they rely on the linguistic knowledge and thinking patterns formed through their first language. As a result, structures from the native language often shape how learners understand, produce, and internalize grammatical forms in a second language. While this influence can sometimes support learning, it frequently leads to persistent and systematic grammatical errors, particularly in foreign language contexts such as English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Despite extensive research on cross-linguistic influence, grammatical errors continue to pose serious challenges for English learners worldwide. Many learners are familiar with grammatical rules, yet they repeatedly make the same mistakes in real language use. This suggests that the problem may not lie in insufficient exposure to rules, but rather in deeper conceptual differences between the learner's first language and English. When grammatical categories or meaning distinctions do not exist in the native language, learners often transfer familiar ways of thinking into the new language, even when they consciously know the correct form.

Keywords: Cross-linguistic influence, Second language acquisition, First language transfer, Grammatical errors, Conceptual transfer, Uzbek-speaking learners, English as a Foreign Language, Interlanguage, Cognitive frameworks, English grammar acquisition

Annotatsiya. Tillararo ta'sir ikkinchi tilni o'zlashtirishda muhim omil sifatida uzoq vaqtdan beri tan olingan. O'rganuvchilar yangi tilni butunlay bo'sh sahifa sifatida qabul qilib o'rganmaydilar, aksincha, ular o'z ona tili orqali shakllangan lingvistik bilim va tafakkur modellariga tayanadilar. Natijada, ona tilidagi tuzilmalar o'rganuvchilarning ikkinchi tildagi grammatik shakllarni qanday tushunishi, ishlab chiqishi va ichkilashtirishiga ta'sir ko'rsatadi. Bu ta'sir ba'zan o'rganishni qo'llab-quvvatlashi mumkin bo'lsa-da, ko'pincha barqaror va tizimli grammatik xatolarga olib keladi, ayniqsa ingliz tili chet tili sifatida (EFL) o'rganiladigan sharoitlarda. Tillararo ta'sir bo'yicha keng qamrovli tadqiqotlar olib borilganiga qaramay, grammatik xatolar hanuzgacha butun dunyo bo'ylab ingliz tilini o'rganuvchilar uchun jiddiy muammo bo'lib qolmoqda. Ko'plab o'rganuvchilar grammatik qoidalarni bilsalar-da, real til qo'llanishida bir xil xatolarni qayta-qayta takrorlaydilar. Bu holat muammo qoidalarning yetarli

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darajada o‘rgatilmaganida emas, balki o‘rganuvchining ona tili va ingliz tili o‘rtasidagi chuqur kontseptual farqlarda ekanini ko‘rsatadi. Agar grammatik toifalar yoki ma’no farqlari ona tilida mavjud bo‘lmasa, o‘rganuvchilar ongli ravishda to‘g‘ri shaklni bilsalar ham, tanish fikrlash usullarini yangi tilga ko‘chirishga moyil bo‘ladilar.

Kalit so‘zlar. Tillararo ta’sir, Ikkinchi tilni o‘zlashtirish, Ona tilidan ko‘chirish (L1 transfer), Grammatik xatolar, Kontseptual ko‘chirish , O‘zbek tilida so‘zlashuvchi o‘rganuvchilar , Ingliz tili chet tili sifatida , Oraliq til tizimi , Kognitiv tuzilmalar , Ingliz tili grammatikasini o‘zlashtirish

Аннотация. Межъязыковое влияние давно признаётся одним из ключевых факторов в овладении вторым языком. Изучающие язык не приступают к освоению нового языка как к чистому листу; напротив, они опираются на лингвистические знания и модели мышления, сформированные в их родном языке. В результате структуры родного языка часто определяют то, как учащиеся понимают, воспроизводят и усваивают грамматические формы второго языка. Хотя такое влияние иногда может способствовать обучению, оно нередко приводит к устойчивым и систематическим грамматическим ошибкам, особенно в условиях изучения английского языка как иностранного (EFL). Несмотря на обширные исследования межъязыкового влияния, грамматические ошибки продолжают представлять серьёзную проблему для изучающих английский язык по всему миру. Многие учащиеся хорошо знакомы с грамматическими правилами, однако в реальном употреблении языка они снова и снова совершают одни и те же ошибки. Это указывает на то, что проблема заключается не в недостаточном знании правил, а в более глубоких концептуальных различиях между родным языком учащегося и английским языком. Когда грамматические категории или смысловые различия отсутствуют в родном языке, учащиеся часто переносят привычные способы мышления в новый язык, даже если они сознательно знают правильную форму.

Ключевые слова: Межъязыковое влияние , Овладение вторым языком , Перенос родного языка, Грамматические ошибки, Концептуальный перенос , Узбекоязычные учащиеся , Английский язык как иностранный , Интерязык , Когнитивные структуры , Освоение грамматики английского языка

INTRODUCTION

Uzbek-speaking learners represent a particularly relevant group for examining this issue. Uzbek differs significantly from English in its grammatical structure and conceptual organization. It does not use articles, relies on suffixes rather than function words to express grammatical relationships, and allows

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flexible word order based on information focus rather than fixed syntactic rules. These differences create conditions in which Uzbek learners may construct English sentences using Uzbek-based conceptual models, leading to errors that are systematic rather than random. However, despite the growing number of English learners in Uzbekistan, empirical research focusing specifically on Uzbek-speaking learners remains limited.

Moreover, much of the existing research on cross-linguistic influence has focused on identifying and classifying errors, rather than explaining the underlying cognitive processes that produce them. Errors are often treated as surface-level deviations from target forms, without sufficient attention to the learner's internal logic. As a result, instructional recommendations tend to emphasize rule repetition and corrective feedback, which may not address the root cause of the problem.

The present study aims to address this gap by examining cross-linguistic influence in English grammar acquisition among Uzbek-speaking learners from a cognitive perspective. Rather than viewing grammatical errors as isolated mistakes, this study analyzes them as reflections of transferred conceptual frameworks from Uzbek to English. By identifying recurring error patterns and linking them to native-language thinking models, the study seeks to provide a deeper explanation of why certain errors persist and how they shape learners' interlanguage systems. Ultimately, the findings are intended to contribute to more effective, thinking-oriented approaches to English grammar instruction for Uzbek learners.

Cross-linguistic influence (CLI) refers to the effects that a speaker's first language (L1) has on the acquisition and use of a second language (L2). In second language acquisition (SLA) research, CLI is understood as the influence of previously acquired linguistic knowledge on the learning and processing of a new language, which may affect phonology, vocabulary, and, importantly, grammar. Historically, studies of language transfer have documented how features of the native language can carry over into a second language, producing facilitative or interfering outcomes depending on the similarity of linguistic structures (McManus, 2021). However, the nature of CLI is multifaceted: it involves not only surface forms but also deeper interactions between cognitive patterns of categorization and the target language system (Odlin, 2005). Such influences are observable when learners apply native-language conceptualizations to interpret or produce structures in the L2, especially where the L1 lacks equivalent categories.

Despite decades of SLA research, CLI remains a persistent challenge in English grammar learning. Traditional approaches have focused heavily on identifying the types and frequency of errors that learners make due to L1 influence, without fully explaining why such errors persist even among learners with

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substantial exposure to the L2. Early error analysis and transfer studies laid useful groundwork by cataloguing common learner errors and attributing them to L1 interference (e.g., omission of articles, verb tense misuse), but they often stop short of explaining how L1 conceptual frameworks shape learner interlanguage beyond surface manifestations. Contemporary research suggests that while formal contrastive descriptions are informative, they do not always reveal how and why underlying cognitive structures in the learner's L1 interact with the target language, especially in grammatical domains where equivalence is weak or absent (Odlin, 2005).

Uzbek-speaking learners of English form an underrepresented but theoretically important group in CLI research. Uzbek, an agglutinative Turkic language, differs significantly from English in several grammatical and conceptual respects, including the absence of grammatical articles and reliance on suffixation to express grammatical relationships. These typological differences have been empirically shown to contribute to recurrent error patterns in English, such as article omission and word order deviations, that reflect L1 influence (Nozima Yusufxon qizi, 2025; Daniqulova, 2025). Despite these documented patterns, there remains limited SLA research that examines CLI among Uzbek learners through a lens that integrates both linguistic description and cognitive explanation.

Existing studies on CLI in SLA have often emphasized what errors occur rather than why they occur at the cognitive level. Error patterns documented among Uzbek learners are typically described in terms of structural differences, but few studies explicate the underlying mental processes or conceptual mappings that lead learners to apply L1 reasoning in L2 contexts. In other words, research has tended to remain descriptive, leaving a gap in understanding the internal cognitive mechanisms that sustain persistent errors in grammar acquisition. Studies in conceptual transfer suggest that language users may carry over patterns of categorization and thought from one language to another, affecting acquisition in ways that extend beyond observable form-to-form correspondences (Odlin, 2005; McManus, 2021). Integrating this perspective into SLA research may offer richer explanations of CLI phenomena.

The main aim of this study is to investigate cross-linguistic influence in English grammar acquisition among Uzbek-speaking learners not only at the level of formal error patterns, but at the level of cognitive framing transferred from Uzbek to English. Specifically, this study seeks to move beyond error listing and categorization toward an analysis of how learners' L1 conceptual strategies interact with English grammatical structures. By focusing on *cognitive mechanisms*, this research contributes a deeper theoretical understanding of CLI and has implications

ISSN 3030-3907

for instructional approaches that address learners' conceptual models rather than only their surface forms.

Uzbek and English differ not only in surface grammatical forms but also in the ways meaning is conceptualized and expressed. One of the most salient differences is the absence of grammatical articles in Uzbek. English uses articles (*a, an, the*) to indicate definiteness and specificity, a distinction that Uzbek speakers must learn conceptually, as it does not exist in their native language (Nozima Yusufxon qizi, 2025). For example, the difference between "a book" and "the book" relies on a conceptual framework of referent identification that is implicit in English but absent in Uzbek. This creates what can be called a "conceptual gap", where learners must acquire not only a grammatical form but also a new way of thinking about specificity and definiteness.

Another key area of difference is tense and aspect marking. English relies on auxiliary verbs and fixed verb forms to encode time, such as the present perfect (*have + past participle*). In contrast, Uzbek primarily uses suffixes attached to verbs to indicate tense and aspect, and word order is more flexible because grammatical relationships are signaled morphologically rather than syntactically (Daniqulova, 2025). This structural difference leads Uzbek learners to conceptualize time differently, sometimes resulting in errors such as "I go to school yesterday" instead of "I went to school yesterday," reflecting the transfer of Uzbek temporal reasoning to English.

Word order and syntactic structuring also illustrate conceptual mismatches. Uzbek allows relatively flexible word order due to its rich case marking system, which communicates grammatical roles independently of position. English, however, relies heavily on a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structure, making word order essential for conveying meaning (Odlin, 2005). As a result, Uzbek learners may unintentionally produce sentences that follow Uzbek logic, which can obscure intended meaning in English even when all lexical items are correct.

These differences show that L1 influence extends beyond form into conceptual frameworks, affecting how learners interpret and produce English sentences. Rather than merely learning new rules, learners must adjust their thinking patterns to align with English conceptual categories. This perspective highlights why traditional contrastive tables of grammar may be insufficient: errors are not simply "missing rules" but arise from cognitive transfer, where learners apply familiar Uzbek strategies to English structures. Understanding these conceptual mismatches provides a foundation for the cognitive-based analysis this study pursues in subsequent sections.

ISSN 3030-3907

To investigate cross-linguistic influence in English grammar among Uzbek learners, this study used a thinking-oriented error analysis model. Participants were 45 Uzbek-speaking university students learning English as a foreign language. All participants were at an intermediate level (B1) based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), ensuring they had sufficient exposure to English grammar while still showing typical L1 transfer effects (Nozima Yusufxon qizi, 2025).

Data were collected using a combination of sentence completion, multiple-choice, and short writing tasks. These tasks were designed to elicit grammatical structures where Uzbek and English differ conceptually, such as articles, tense, prepositions, and word order. By including both controlled exercises (multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank) and productive tasks (short sentences), the study could capture both surface-level mistakes and the conceptual strategies guiding learner responses (Daniqulova, 2025).

Errors were analyzed using a two-layer model. First, surface grammatical errors were identified and categorized according to traditional grammatical categories (articles, verb tense, word order, prepositions). Second, each error was interpreted in light of Uzbek-based conceptual reasoning, identifying the L1 thinking patterns that likely produced the error. For example, omission of “the” might reflect a cognitive strategy in which the learner assumes definiteness is understood from context, as it would be in Uzbek (Odlin, 2005).

To distinguish L1 influence from random mistakes, the analysis considered systematic recurrence across multiple tasks. Errors appearing consistently among participants and aligned with known Uzbek grammatical structures were classified as transfer-driven, whereas isolated, irregular errors were attributed to performance lapses or inattention. This methodology allows not only identification of error types but also insights into the underlying cognitive processes, providing a richer understanding of cross-linguistic influence than traditional error frequency analysis alone.

Analysis revealed that certain grammatical areas were consistently problematic for Uzbek learners. Article usage showed the highest frequency of errors, with many learners omitting “a” and “the” or misusing them in contexts requiring specificity. Conceptually, these errors reflect the Uzbek model, in which definiteness is inferred from context rather than explicitly marked, highlighting a cognitive transfer from L1 (Nozima Yusufxon qizi, 2025).

Tense and aspect errors were also common. Learners frequently confused simple past with present perfect, e.g., “I have gone to school yesterday” instead of “I went to school yesterday.” This error stems from Uzbek tense conceptualization,

ISSN 3030-3907

where time is often expressed through verb suffixes and the notion of event completion is encoded differently (Daniqulova, 2025).

Word order deviations were observed, particularly in longer sentences. Participants occasionally followed Uzbek flexible word order strategies, placing objects or adverbs in positions that are grammatical in Uzbek but ungrammatical in English (Odlin, 2005). Similarly, preposition errors were frequent, reflecting the lack of a one-to-one mapping between Uzbek postpositions and English prepositions, leading learners to select forms based on semantic intuition rather than formal rules. Explaining Errors Through L1 Influence The error patterns observed in Uzbek learners' English reflect cross-linguistic influence (CLI) in ways that extend beyond simple surface deviations and into learners' underlying cognitive representations of language. CLI occurs when previously acquired linguistic knowledge affects the learning of a new language, shaping learners' expectations about structure, meaning, and interpretation (Jarvis & Pavlenko, as summarized by Zhu & Cai, 2022). Errors in article usage, tense marking, word order, and prepositions, which systematically recur in this study, can be interpreted as evidence of the interplay between Uzbek L1 cognitive structures and English L2 forms rather than random mistakes.

The evidence that many errors are conceptual rather than purely rule-based aligns with theoretical work on conceptual transfer in SLA. Odlin (2005) emphasizes that language transfer is not limited to the transfer of formal rules but also involves conceptual categories embedded in the L1 that shape how learners construe meaning in the L2. For example, article omission in English can stem from the absence of grammatical articles in Uzbek, which leads learners to rely on contextual rather than explicit definiteness a conceptual strategy carried from Uzbek into English. Likewise, tense errors reflect how time and aspect are conceptualized differently in Uzbek's suffix-based system compared to English auxiliary-based constructions (as discussed in Part 2), reinforcing the idea that learners' L2 errors often reflect internalized L1 thinking patterns, not just a lack of memorized rules.

Comparing these findings with broader CLI research reveals both commonalities and extensions. Traditional CLI studies, as reviewed by Zhu and Cai (2022), note that CLI affects many linguistic domains, including grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and discourse. However, much of that literature either catalogues error types or examines *whether* transfer occurs. This study contributes by linking error patterns to cognitive framing showing that systematic errors emerge from cognitive strategies learned through L1 experience rather than isolated misapplications of English rules. This aligns with broader critiques of the

ISSN 3030-3907

narrow behaviorist view of transfer, which treat errors as surface interference, and supports more dynamic models that incorporate conceptual and psycholinguistic factors (e.g., multimodal CLI frameworks in applied linguistics research)

The persistent nature of these conceptual transfer effects also resonates with SLA theory regarding interlanguage development. Interlanguage refers to the evolving linguistic system that learners construct, which is influenced by both L1 and L2 factors and reflects learners' internal hypotheses about the target language (Gass & Selinker, as discussed in CLI reviews). CLI effects, particularly those rooted in cognitive conceptualization, contribute to this interlanguage by systematically shaping learner hypotheses about how English grammar should operate based on Uzbek models. Such influence may diminish with increased proficiency, but research suggests that core conceptual frameworks can remain stable even in advanced learners when L1 and L2 conceptual categories are incommensurate .

Furthermore, the present findings align with research showing that CLI is influenced by the degree of linguistic distance between L1 and L2. According to Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and extensions of CLI research, structural differences create opportunities for negative transfer where learners apply familiar structures to unfamiliar L2 contexts.

This is consistent with errors identified in this study, such as tense mismatches and word order deviations, reinforcing the connection between typological distance and transfer risk. In summary, the observed errors among Uzbek learners are best understood as manifestations of deep-rooted cognitive influence of L1 on L2 learning, rather than random or short-lived rule violations. These findings support SLA perspectives that foreground cognitive mechanisms in CLI, emphasizing that learners' interlanguage reflects the integration of existing conceptual schemas from Uzbek with emerging structures in English. Integrating this cognitive lens into CLI research enhances theoretical understanding and suggests that addressing language learning challenges requires instructional approaches that consider not only form-to-form mappings but also underlying conceptual frameworks shaping learner performance.

The findings of this study have direct implications for teaching English grammar to Uzbek learners. First, recognizing that many grammatical errors stem from deeply rooted L1 conceptual frameworks suggests that traditional rule-based instruction may be insufficient on its own. Rule memorization and practice without addressing underlying cognitive patterns can lead to repeated errors, because learners may continue to apply native-language conceptualization, even when they

ISSN 3030-3907

can recite the rule in isolation (McManus, 2020). Therefore, instruction should explicitly acknowledge cross-linguistic differences in meaning construction, not just form.

Pedagogically, teachers can enhance learning by incorporating cross-linguistic awareness activities that help learners compare how Uzbek and English conceptualize grammatical meanings. Research on CLI emphasizes that metalinguistic awareness learners' understanding of language structure and differences can be developed through reflective classroom tasks, benefiting both grammar comprehension and learner confidence (Zhu & Cai, 2022; Lababa, 2024). For example, presenting side-by-side conceptual contrasts (e.g., definiteness versus explicit articles) and encouraging students to reflect on their own thinking strategies can help them internalize English categories rather than translate directly from Uzbek.

Instructional strategies such as task-based learning, communicative activities, and contextualized input further support learners in acquiring target structures within meaningful use, reducing reliance on L1 frameworks while preserving learners' linguistic resources (Mirsagatova, 2024). Instead of isolated drills, tasks that require learners to negotiate meaning, justify choices, or self-correct based on context encourage conceptual restructuring. This aligns with broader SLA research advocating for language awareness and interactive pedagogy in addressing CLI effects (Lababa, 2024; Gutierrez-Mangado et al., 2019).

While this study highlights the value of a cognitive lens in understanding L1 influence, it also has limitations. The participant group was limited to intermediate (B1) learners, which may not represent how transfer patterns evolve across proficiency levels. Other variables, such as individual learner differences (e.g., motivation, metalinguistic skill) and instructional context, were not examined in depth, though research suggests these factors mediate CLI outcomes (Lababa, 2024). Future research should include longitudinal designs to track how conceptual transfer changes over time and with increased exposure, as well as experimental studies testing specific instructional interventions.

Additionally, future research should explore how technology-enhanced instruction and cross-linguistic awareness training influence the reduction of negative transfer effects and the promotion of positive transfer. Integrative pedagogies that draw on learners' entire linguistic repertoires, including their L1, have been shown to support deeper language comprehension and learner autonomy (Zhu & Cai, 2022; Gutierrez-Mangado et al., 2019). Such research will be particularly valuable for learners of typologically distant languages, including Uzbek, by offering evidence-based strategies that address both conceptual and

ISSN 3030-3907

communicative competencies. Conclusion, this study underscores the importance of moving beyond rule-based grammar instruction toward conceptually informed pedagogy that engages learners with the cognitive differences between their native language and English. By building learners' metalinguistic and cross-linguistic awareness, educators can facilitate more meaningful and durable acquisition of grammar, reducing persistent errors and supporting learners in developing a more accurate and flexible interlanguage system

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