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INTERLANGUAGE ANALYSIS: A STUDY OF UZBEK STUDENT LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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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. Dealin 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.

Keywords: inter-language, grammatical errors, L1 interference, stabilization, fossilization

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

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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.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

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 1st 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

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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. This procedure involves three 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

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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.

Lesson 1: Ulugbek wrote his 1st composition entitled "About myself." There was quick discussion of grammar acquisition, grammatical features of English.

Lesson 2: Having analysed his errors, firstly, I explained him the difference between "to be" and "to do." The main topic was Revision of Present Simple and Present Continuous. Oral activity: according to the given newspaper picture the participant told what they were doing at that moment. **Lesson 3:** In order to revise the previous topic an online application "quizlet" was used as a favourite tool of learners. Specific features of past simple and present perfect were disclosed.

RESULTS

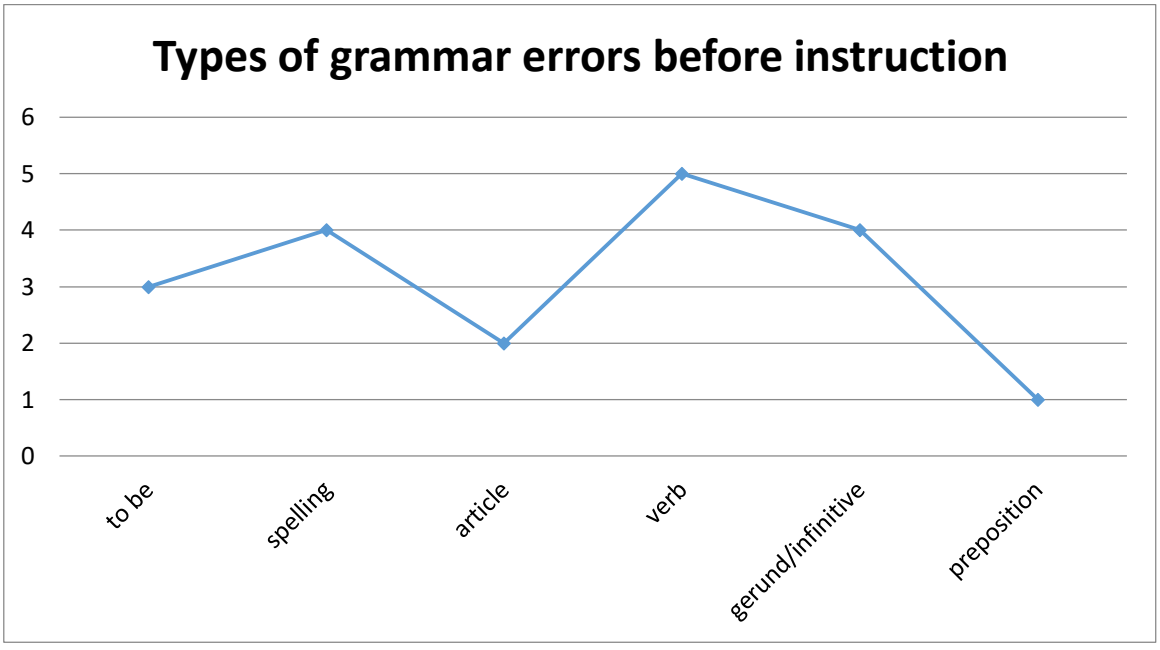
After 3 instructional lessons, I announced the result of my participant's 1st written work "About myself." And I required him to rewrite on the same topic again as the second composition. The purpose of giving the same task is to compare the grammatical errors of pre and post instruction compositions. Having covered other three lessons including the topics Adjectives-Adverb-Comparisons, Will-Be going to, on the 8th lesson I asked from the participant to write another new piece of writing about his unusual visit to a certain place. It would be his 3rd written work and I expected that he would do new errors as he did some progress and would try to use different grammatical forms. The following lessons the participant revised present perfect continuous and past continuous, the function of used to. In the last lesson, my participant wrote his 4th piece of writing on the same topic as the 3rd work about his visit. I believed that although Ulugbek wrote about only 2 topics, four compositions have different grammatical structure.

Relying on the collected data through questionnaire, Ulugbek mainly uses Uzbek at home, school and while communicating with friends sometimes he speaks in Russian. He has some knowledge of French. French is taught as an additional

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language subject at his school. Ulugbek seriously take learning English 4 months before and he chose to learn English through attending classes at the language center. He sometimes listens to audios but never used TV, newspapers or other means to improve his language. According to the emphasis of language skills, he mostly focuses on listening, speaking and the third place is grammar. Moreover, questionnaire shows that in a certain part of the lesson he speaks English. From this questionnaire I discovered that, the participant's L1 is Uzbek and he is not aware of his language errors himself, because he started learning English mo more than 4 months. He is not an autonomous learner to work on his grammatical errors by practicing. But according to his opinions he lost some errors through developing his language. The result of his first writing named as " About myself" illustrates that Ulugbek made considerable amount of grammatical errors, which were categorized into: to be (3 cases), spelling (4 cases), article (2 cases), syntactic structure (5cases), verb: gerund, infinitive (4 cases), preposition (1 case).

Diagram1: The classification and frequency of errors prior to the instruction



Based on the results, I can summarize that the learners' English is defined as interlanguage. His language structure is neither that of Uzbek or English but includes the features of both languages.

DISCUSSION

My participant had difficulties while using verbs in different tenses and appropriate usage of to be and to do. Furthermore Uzbek and English have different

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word order. Therefore, Ulugbek tried to put object after the subject but not verb in the sentence. In some places participant's interlanguage was influenced by his native language:

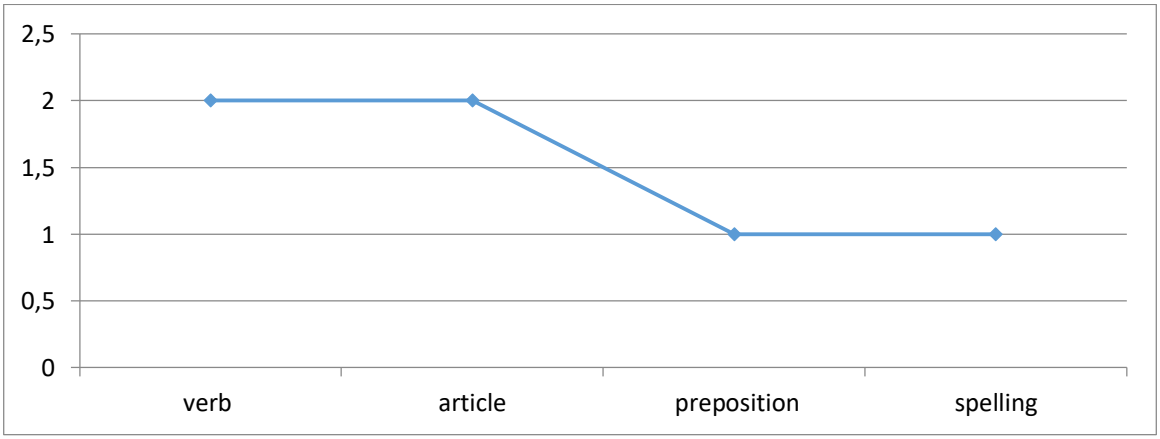
Interlanguage: Reading the text after I answered the questions.
Native language: Matnni o'qib bo'lganimdan keyin savollarga javob berdim.
Interlanguage: Nobody didn't go to the exhibition.

In some cases the learner influenced by English and overgeneralized some rules:

Interlanguage: She is studies at school.
Target language: She studies at school.
Interlanguage: I am speak Uzbek Russian and English.
Target language: I speak Uzbek, Russian and English.
Interlanguage: I don't want to going there again.
Interlanguage: I like swim and play football.
Target language: I like swimming and playing football.

After taking the result of the first composition, I started giving grammar instructions on the six types of errors noted above. In addition, I began to teach him through Round-up 4. Grammar instructions had positive impact on student's language learning. As we can see from the graph, the number of errors decreased in his second composition.

Frequency of errors after the instruction:



This result supports the ideas of White (1996), Muranoi (2000), Spada and Lightbrown (1993). According to their view, foreign language learners can benefit from the teacher's instruction. It can help learner's interlanguage development. Nevertheless, this outcome also demonstrated that his errors were not disappeared entirely. To some extent, I am agree with Thep-Ackrapong (1990) who mentioned that even with constant pedagogical instruction, the learner can't lose some errors. Based on this phenomenon, he argues that interlanguage is fossilized. This study illustrates that grammar instruction could disappear approximately 60% of grammar

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errors but there 40% errors still exist. We can consider them as stabilized errors and these errors could be the results of learner's strategy use.

Furthermore, I required the learner to write another piece of writing with a new topic, because I guessed that he would make new errors that he began to learn new grammar structures. According to the result, the learner made 5 other types of mistakes (degrees of comparison in adjective, preposition of time, non action verb). Gathered data from the compositions indicated that errors altered their state, some of them were persistent, others weren't persistent and the rest were decreased.

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.

In addition, the learner aged 15 has the ability to acquire grammar. This study supports the hypothesis that states there is no critical period , optimal age for the acquisition of L2 syntax. Finally, I would say that my participant's grammatical errors are not fossilized. They may appeared in some stages of learning due to the learner's individual differences. Interlanguage and stabilization commonly exist in language learning because learners have not reached target language. Interlanguage is unavoidable part of learning process. Learners can overcome it through further practice of grammatical items.

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