

First Language Interference in Acquiring Korean as a Foreign Language for Uzbek Speaking Students

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Abstract:

Acquiring languages is important aspect in human life. When a foreign language is acquired there can be observed first language interference and this process is also known as a first language transfer. This article brings types of interference in acquiring Korean as a foreign language by Uzbek speaking learners of Korean. In the process of learning Korean by Uzbek learners there are observed interference of the first or Uzbek language in the following features; phonetic, phonological interference, orthographic interference, grammar interference, lexical interference, semantic interference, stylistic interference. In this article we try to analyze the above types of interferences with the examples.

Keywords: acquiring, aspect, first language interference, language transfer, Korean, phonetic, phonological interference, orthographic interference, grammar interference, lexical interference, semantic interference, stylistic interference

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool of communication in common life. People begin to learn languages from their early childhood about the age of three and the language acquired in this period is known as a first language. There have been a lot of researches about first language interference in second language acquisition. For instance, Karim and Nasaji (2013) researched about the first language interference in second language writing and they found that first language (L1) influence in second language (L2) writing. Ali Derakhsan (2015) investigated similarities and differences in first and second language and its influence in acquiring L2. This article investigates L1 interference in acquiring Korean language by Uzbek speaking learners of Korean.

2. THE MAIN RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

Korean is known as 한국어 (hangugeo) in South Korea and 조선말 (Choseonmal) in North Korea and it is the official language

of both South and North Korea. Korean is considered to be from the “Altaic” languages family that includes Turkic, Mongolian languages. Uzbek is also known as one of the language of Turkic sub family of “Altaic” languages group. Thus, these two languages have some similarities. These languages have the same word order ‘Subject + Object + Verb’.

For example: 저 - 는 한국어 - 를 공부해요.

Men Koreys tili - ni o’rganaman.

*I Korean learn.¹ (I learn Korean.)

Above example shows the similarities between Korean and Uzbek, as they have the same sentence structure. Though there are many similarities, there are many differences between these two languages. Therefore, L1 interference is observed when Korean is acquired by Uzbek speaking learners of Korean.

¹ *Indicates that the sentence is grammatically incorrect.

V. Alimov offered the following types of influence in his research “Interference in translation”;

- Sound (phonetic, phonological and sound – making) interference
- Orthographic interference
- Grammatik interference
- Lexical interference
- Semantic interference
- Stylistic interference

Sound interference

Korean phonetic or phonological system is more complicated than Uzbek. Thus, Uzbek learners of Korean find some Korean sounds difficult to produce. They have the same vowel system categorized as high – mid – low vowels and front – central – back vowels based on the tongue position. Therefore, pronunciation of Korean vowels can be acquired easily by Uzbek speakers.

However, Uzbek students struggle to distinguish Korean vowels ‘ㅓ (eo)’ and ‘ㅗ (o)’. Vertical ‘ㅓ (eo)’ is pronounced with widely opened mouth, as if pronouncing sound ‘a’. When horizontal ‘ㅗ (o)’ is pronounced the shape of mouth turns round. In Uzbek, there is only one sound for ‘o’ and it is pronounced as horizontal ‘ㅗ (o)’ in Korean. Uzbek learners of Korean can produce these

sounds properly when they pronounce them solely, but when these sounds come in a word they tend to pronounce them as the same sound or horizontal ‘o’ for both vertical and horizontal ‘o’ in Korean.

Orthographic interference

As it is mentioned above Korean and Uzbek languages share similarities, but these languages have totally different writing system. Uzbek use Latin based Uzbek alphabet which consists of 31 letters. Furthermore, one letter gives only one sound and the words are written as they are heard. In contrast, Korean letters give different sounds depending on the replacement and following letter. For instance, If Korean letter ‘ㄹ(m)’ and ‘ㅇ(η)’ are followed by ‘ㄹ(r)’ then the ‘ㄹ(r)’ is pronounced as ‘ㄴ(n)’. The word ‘음료’ (drink) is pronounced as ‘im-nyo’ or ‘정로’(cheong-ro) is pronounced as ‘cheong – no’.

Furthermore, some Korean letters produce almost similar sounds because they are produced in the same location inside the mouth but distinguished based on the force of the sound. Thus, most of foreign learners of Korean cannot notice any difference between these sounds

Table 1: Comparison of the force behind consonant sounds. [4:42]

Lenis ²	ㄱ – g, k	ㄷ – d, t	ㅂ – b, p	ㅅ – s, ㅆ	ㅈ – ch, j
Fortis ³	ㄱㄱ – kk	ㄷㄷ – tt	ㅂㅂ – pp	ㅅㅅ – ss, ㅆ	ㅈㅈ – chch
Aspirated ⁴	ㅋ – kx	ㅌ – tx	ㅍ – px	-	ㅊ – ch’

² When the lenis consonants are produced speech organs keep a normal state without tension.

³ When the fortis consonants are produced the muscles of speech organs maintain tension and block the airflow, then release the sound with force.

Contrary, in Uzbek there is only lenis type of these letters. Therefore, it is difficult for Uzbek speaking learners of Korean to differentiate these Korean sounds. Subsequently, Uzbek learners of Korean try to memorize the written form of Korean words. Otherwise, they apply lenis letter in many cases when required fortis or aspirated letters as in their L1.

Grammar interference

As mentioned above, Uzbek and Korean share the same sentence patterns, so Korean grammar is acquired more easily by Uzbek students.

Example: 저-는 책-을 읽-었어요.

Men kitob-ni o'qi-dim.

I the book read.* (I read the book)

Above example shows the positive effect of L1 transfer in acquiring Korean by Uzbek speaking learners of Korean. However, in the same example, there is a particle – 는 which is used after the subject 저 (I). In Uzbek subjects in nominative case do not take any particles. Thus, there are observed the cases when the particle – 는 is totally omitted by Uzbek learners of Korean.

Lexical interference

Lexical choice is important to produce a proper sentence and communicate in this language. Applying wrong word would result in producing awkward sentence or make the sentence incomprehensible. For instance, ‘키가 크다’ (키 – height, 크다 – big) and ‘키가 높다’ (키 – height, 높다 – high), in Uzbek the adjective ‘baland’ (high) is used when one is talking about the people’s height ‘bo’yi baland’ (bo’yi – height, baland – high) which interprets into Korean as ‘키가 높다’. Contrary, there should be used adjective ‘big’ in Korean when one is talking about height of people, as ‘키가 크다’ (height high).

Moreover, the word ‘ish’ in Uzbek (work) (‘일’ (il) in Korean) can be used in the meaning working place or office, but not in Korean. Referring L1 rule Uzbek students apply the word “일” in Korean when they want to talk about the workplace not the work itself, as in example below:

저 - 는 일 - 에 갑니다.*

Men ish – ga boraman.

I work to go.* (I go to work.)

In the meaning of workplace, there should be used the word ‘회사’(office) instead of ‘일’ (work), see the following example;

저 - 는 회사 - 에 갑니다.

Men ish- ga boraman.

I office go.* (I go to the office)

Semantic interference

I.Bloem and La – Heij (2003) researched semantic interference in acquiring second language. Moreover, they suggested that semantic interference can be observed when interpreting a word in a context in second language. This type of interference is also observed in acquiring Korean by Uzbek speaking learners.

For instance, the verb ‘보다’ (boda) – to see, to watch can be used in many cases, and changes the meaning depending the word which follows .

저 - 는 영화 - 를 봐요.

Men kino ko’raman.

I movie watch.* (I watch movie.)

In above example the verb “보다” is used in direct meaning which means to watch or to see.

시험을 보다.

Imtixon topshirmoq.

Exam to see.* (To take an exam)

In the example the verb “보다” is used with the word ‘시험’ which means “exam” and it is translated as ‘to take an exam’ but not ‘to see an exam’. Most Uzbek

learners of Korean hesitate and they prefer to apply verb ‘받다’ (padta) – to receive which is incorrect in this case.

장을 보다.

Bozorlik qilmoq.

Market to see.* (To do shopping)

One more example with verb ‘보다’ with the word ‘장’ (jang) – market and they together mean ‘to do shopping’.

Most Uzbek students consider the verb ‘보다’ – ‘to see’ separately, as a result they misuse other verbs instead of ‘보다’ when required.

Stylistic interference

The same as in Korean in Uzbek used specific endings, particles to produce honorific form, when talking with the elder or higher rank person. Therefore, honorific endings and particles do not cause any problem for Uzbek speaking learners of Korean. In other hand, in Korean to produce honorific style some words and phrases are replaced with more polite or formal equivalents. However, in Uzbek there are not any replacements as in Korean, which makes Korean stylistics complicated for Uzbek speaking learners of Korean and they apply the same word for both stylistics. For example;

교실-에 학생이 있어요.

Auditoriya –da talaba bor.

Classroom student there is.* (There is a student in the classroom)

In this example, there is used verb ‘있다’ (itta) in common style. When one is talking about the elder, there should be used honorific form of the verb ‘계시다’. Mostly, Uzbek learners of Korean misuse the common form of verb ‘있다’, which results in stylistic interference as in example below;

교실- 에 선생님이 있어요.*

Auditoriya – da ustoz bor.

Classroom teacher there is.*(there is a teacher in the classroom.)

In order to make stylistic correct sentence, there should be used verb ‘계시다’

교실- 에 교수님이 계세요.

Auditoriya – da ustoz bor.

Classroom teacher there is. (There is a teacher in the classroom.)

If we compare the sentences in Uzbek in both style used the verb ‘bor’ which means “there is”, it does not change the form according to the style. Thus, stylistic interference as in example frequently occurred by Uzbek speaking learners of Korean.

3. CONCLUSION

This article aimed to discuss difficulties Uzbek speaking learners of Korean have in acquiring Korean. Coming from the same languages families, Uzbek and Korean share some similarities as sentence structure, usage of particles and endings. That makes the Korean grammar easier to understand. As mentioned above some features as writing system, pronunciation are totally differing from each other, which leads Uzbek speaking learners of Korean applying first language patterns in acquiring Korean called L1 interference.

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