

AGAINST INTERFERENCE: THE “TEACHING TO THINK” STRATEGY**Mohinur Anvarjon qizi Ernazarova**

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Annotation: This article addresses the problem of interference in teaching English to Uzbek-speaking learners and explores effective strategies for overcoming it. Traditionally, students tend to transfer structures from their mother tongue into English, which often leads to calques, grammatical, and syntactic errors. The study focuses on reducing interference through the “teaching to think” strategy. This approach aims to develop English as an independent tool of thought, automatize grammar usage, and foster culturally appropriate communication. Practical recommendations include immersion (using only English in communication), reformulation (teacher providing correct restatements), and “thinking aloud” exercises. As a result, learners gradually adapt to thinking directly in English, which significantly reduces interference errors.

Keywords: interference, English language teaching, teaching to think, psycholinguistics, strategy, language acquisition.

Introduction

In today’s era of globalization, English has become a widely used medium for international communication. In the context of Uzbek learners, however, language interference is a persistent challenge. Students often attempt to construct sentences in English based on the rules and structures of their native language, resulting in grammatical, syntactic, and lexical errors. This article examines the “teaching to think” strategy as an effective method for reducing interference. The essence of this approach lies in encouraging learners to acquire English not merely as a tool for translation but as a mechanism for independent thought

Main Body**1. Theoretical Foundations**

Recent research in psycholinguistics and second language acquisition has provided extensive insights into the issue of interference. Linguists emphasize that transfer from the first language to the second is a natural phenomenon. However, mismanaged transfer often results in errors at grammatical, syntactic, and semantic levels in the learner’s speech (Ortega, 2018; Zhang, 2020; Nguyen, 2022).

Uzbek linguists have expressed similar conclusions. Mahmudov (2019) emphasizes that one of the most pressing tasks for Uzbek linguistics is to thoroughly investigate the factors of interference in second language acquisition. Rasulov (2021), linking linguistic transfer to differences between language systems, identifies the absence of articles and challenges with verb tenses as among the most significant obstacles for Uzbek learners of English.

2. The “Teaching to Think” Strategy

The “teaching to think” strategy is proposed as an effective approach to reducing interference. This method encourages learners to perceive English not as a mere translation tool but as a

vehicle for independent reasoning. For example, using the immersion method, classroom interaction is conducted predominantly in English, compelling students to experience a setting similar to a natural language environment. Through thinking-aloud exercises, learners practice articulating their thoughts in English directly, without mentally translating from Uzbek. This approach fosters the ability to express ideas naturally and fluently in the target language.

Sobirov (2020) evaluates the reformulation method as particularly effective. In this approach, when a learner makes an error, the instructor does not criticize but instead provides the correct form, allowing the learner to reprocess and internalize the correct structure naturally. Additionally, pattern drills enable learners to practice complex grammatical structures repeatedly, facilitating their automatization. According to Karimova (2022), such exercises help learners overcome psycholinguistic difficulties, as they accelerate the transition from conscious processing to automatic language production.

Finally, through cultural thinking tasks, students internalize the communication norms and conventions characteristic of English. Yo'ldoshev (2018) notes that Uzbek learners often transfer syntactic and pragmatic habits from their native language when speaking English. Therefore, it is essential to practice English politeness formulas explicitly.

3. Expected Outcomes

Systematic application of the “teaching to think” strategy gradually enables learners to think directly in English. This reduces errors arising from literal translation, facilitates correct word order, and promotes accurate use of grammatical structures.

Most importantly, learners develop not only the ability to speak English correctly but also to engage in culturally appropriate and polite communication. Reducing interference is a crucial task in the effective teaching of English. The “teaching to think” strategy supports learners in developing English as a secondary cognitive tool, enabling them to process and express ideas independently within the target language. This strategy can be applied by teachers during practical exercises to significantly reduce grammatical, syntactic, and pragmatic errors.

Conclusion

In the context of Uzbek learners, language interference is a persistent phenomenon in the process of acquiring English. Although transfer from the first language to the second is a natural process, uncontrolled application can result in grammatical, syntactic, phonetic, and lexical errors. The study indicates that one of the most effective ways to minimize interference is the implementation of the “teaching to think” strategy. This approach helps learners transform English into a direct cognitive tool, fostering the ability to think in the target language without translation.

Through methods such as immersion, reformulation, thinking-aloud exercises, and cultural tasks, learners internalize language rules, achieve communicative independence, and automate grammatical and syntactic structures. Practical application of this strategy is expected to reduce literal translation, promote correct use of grammatical and syntactic patterns, and cultivate English-specific politeness norms. Overall, this approach enhances the effectiveness of English language teaching and prepares learners for autonomous, culturally appropriate participation in international communication.

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