



Writing Challenges Of Uzbek Learners Of English

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ABSTRACT

Writing is often considered one of the most demanding skills for learners of English as a foreign language. For Uzbek learners, developing effective writing skills can be particularly challenging because of differences between Uzbek and English in grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary use, and academic conventions. This paper discusses the main difficulties commonly experienced by Uzbek learners when writing in English. Particular attention is given to grammatical accuracy, vocabulary selection, sentence structure, coherence and cohesion, and the influence of the learners' first language. The paper also considers classroom practices that can help learners become more confident and independent writers. It is argued that writing instruction should go beyond correcting grammatical errors and should provide learners with opportunities to plan, draft, receive feedback, revise, and reflect on their writing.

KEYWORDS: English writing, Uzbek learners, EFL, writing difficulties, grammar, vocabulary, language interference, academic writing.

INTRODUCTION

English has become increasingly important in education, employment, international communication, and academic research. As the demand for English continues to grow in Uzbekistan, learners are expected not only to communicate orally but also to express their ideas effectively in written English. Writing is particularly important for university students and other learners who need to produce essays, reports, assignments, and research papers in English.

However, writing is not an easy skill to develop. Unlike speaking, where learners can often communicate successfully even when their language is not completely accurate, writing requires greater attention to grammar, vocabulary, organization, punctuation, and the logical development of ideas. A successful piece of writing should communicate a clear message and should also be appropriate for its purpose and intended audience (Hyland, 2019).

For Uzbek learners of English, some of these difficulties may be related to differences between Uzbek and English. Learners may sometimes rely on patterns from their first language when constructing English sentences or expressing ideas. At the same time, not all writing problems can be explained by first-language interference. Limited vocabulary, insufficient practice, unfamiliarity with academic writing conventions, and a lack of confidence may also affect learners' performance. This paper focuses on the main challenges faced by Uzbek learners when writing in English and considers how English teachers can address these difficulties in the classroom.

This study is situated within applied and comparative philology, the branch of language study concerned with how the structural and lexical systems of two languages interact and how that interaction shapes learners' production. The contrastive observations discussed below – differences in article systems, word order, and tense-aspect marking between Uzbek and English – draw on the tradition of contrastive linguistics established by Lado (1957), while the discussion of cohesion and paragraph-level organization engages with text linguistics, another core area of philological inquiry. Because many Uzbek learners write against the background of Uzbek-Russian bilingualism, the paper also touches on questions of language contact and multilingual competence that are of long-standing interest to philologists working in Central Asia. Read in this light, the difficulties examined here are not simply a pedagogical checklist but a case study in how comparative and text-linguistic analysis can inform the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Main Writing Difficulties among Uzbek Learners

One of the most noticeable difficulties experienced by English language learners is grammatical accuracy. Uzbek learners may have problems with English articles, verb tenses, prepositions, plural forms, and subject-verb agreement. These areas can be difficult partly because the grammatical systems of Uzbek and English are different. Research on second-language writing also shows that grammatical accuracy remains an important concern for learners and teachers, particularly when students are expected to produce formal academic texts (Ferris, 2014).

The use of articles is a good example. English requires learners to distinguish between a/an, the, and zero article in contexts where Uzbek does not have an equivalent article system. As a result, learners may omit articles or use them unnecessarily. Although such an error may not prevent the reader from understanding the message, repeated grammatical problems can affect the overall quality of academic writing.

Verb tenses can also cause difficulties. English has a relatively complex tense and aspect system, and learners may have difficulty choosing the appropriate form when describing past experiences, ongoing situations, or completed actions. In written work, these problems can become particularly noticeable because learners have more time to formulate their ideas but may still lack a clear understanding of how different tense forms function in context.

Another important area is sentence structure. English generally follows a Subject-Verb-Object word order, while Uzbek has a different basic word-order pattern. As a result, learners may occasionally transfer the structure of Uzbek sentences into English. Such transfer can produce sentences that are grammatically inaccurate or sound unnatural to an English-speaking reader. Vocabulary is another major challenge. Knowing individual English words does not necessarily mean that learners know how to use them naturally. Learners may choose a word that is technically correct but inappropriate for the context or may translate expressions directly from Uzbek or another language they know. They may also rely heavily on a small number of familiar words, resulting in repetition and limited lexical variety. Nation (2009) emphasizes that effective writing development requires learners to build both vocabulary knowledge and strategies for using language appropriately.

Coherence, Cohesion and Organization

Grammar and vocabulary are not the only problems faced by learners. Many students who can produce grammatically acceptable sentences still find it difficult to organize these sentences into a well-developed piece of writing. Academic writing requires ideas to be presented in a logical order. Each paragraph should normally have a clear central idea, while supporting details should be connected to that idea (Hyland, 2019).

Coherence and cohesion are therefore important aspects of writing development. Cohesion refers to linguistic devices that connect different parts of a text, while coherence concerns the overall logical relationship between ideas. Learners may have difficulty using linking expressions such as however, therefore, in addition, and as a result appropriately. In some cases, students may even use too many linking words because they have been taught to believe that academic writing requires a large number of connectors.

Good writing, however, is not simply a collection of linking words. The ideas themselves need to be logically connected. Teachers therefore need to help learners understand how paragraphs are developed rather than focusing only on individual grammatical errors.

The Influence of the First Language

The influence of a learner's first language is another factor that deserves attention. The idea of language transfer has long been discussed in second-language learning. Lado (1957), for example, argued that differences between a learner's first language and the target language could create areas of difficulty. Although later research has shown that language transfer is only one of several factors influencing learner errors, it remains relevant when considering differences in sentence structure and grammatical patterns.

For Uzbek learners, differences in word order, grammatical structures, and the expression of certain meanings may contribute to errors in English writing. However, it would be too simple to assume that every error is caused by Uzbek. Learners are also influenced by the English input they receive, their previous learning experiences, their level of proficiency, the type of writing task, and the amount of practice they have had (Ferris, 2014).

The multilingual background of many Uzbek learners should also be taken into consideration. Some learners use Uzbek as their first language and Russian as another language before learning English. This means that their writing may reflect the influence of more than one language. Such multilingualism should not necessarily be viewed as a problem. Instead, teachers can recognize learners' existing linguistic resources and help them develop strategies for moving between languages appropriately.

Possible Approaches to Improving Writing

Because writing involves several different skills, simply asking students to write more essays may not be enough to improve their performance. Learners need guidance throughout the writing process. A process-oriented approach treats writing as a series of stages rather than a single product. Students can plan their ideas, produce a first draft, receive feedback, revise the text, and edit the final version (Hyland, 2019).

Feedback is also an important part of writing instruction. Teacher feedback can help learners identify recurring problems and understand how their writing can be improved. However, correcting every error in a piece of writing may sometimes overwhelm learners. Ferris (2014) notes the importance of making written corrective feedback meaningful and connected to

learners' development. It can therefore be useful to focus on a manageable number of important areas and encourage students to notice and correct some problems themselves.

Peer feedback can also be valuable. When students read their classmates' writing, they are exposed to different ways of organizing ideas and expressing meaning. They can also become more aware of problems in their own writing. For peer review to be effective, however, learners need clear criteria and guidance rather than simply being asked whether they like a piece of writing.

Writing models and scaffolding can provide additional support. Students can examine a model paragraph, identify its structure, and then use the same principles to produce their own text. Sentence starters, useful expressions, vocabulary banks, and paragraph frameworks can also be helpful, particularly for lower-level learners. These supports should gradually be reduced as learners become more independent (Nation, 2009).

Conclusion

Writing in English can be challenging for Uzbek learners for a variety of linguistic and educational reasons. Grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, organization, coherence, cohesion, and first-language influence can all affect the quality of learners' written work. At the same time, writing difficulties should not be viewed simply as a collection of grammatical mistakes. Effective writing requires learners to develop ideas, organize information, select appropriate language, consider their audience, and revise their work.

For this reason, English writing instruction should provide learners with regular opportunities to write and improve their texts through several stages. Process writing, focused teacher feedback, peer review, writing models, and appropriate scaffolding can help learners become more confident and independent writers (Hyland, 2019; Ferris, 2014).

Further research could examine authentic samples of writing produced by Uzbek learners at different proficiency levels. Such research could identify the most frequent types of errors and explore whether particular difficulties are related to learners' proficiency, the type of writing task, or their previous language-learning experience. A better understanding of these issues could help English teachers in Uzbekistan design writing instruction that responds more effectively to the actual needs of their learners.

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