LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCE IN ACQUIRING THE PASSIVE VOICE: CHALLENGES AND METHODOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

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Abstract. *This study examines the phenomenon of linguistic interference in the acquisition of the English passive voice by Uzbek-speaking learners. The primary objective is to identify grammatical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic mechanisms of interference and to propose effective methodological approaches for minimizing their impact. The research integrates the theoretical foundations of contrastive linguistics, interlanguage theory, error analysis, functional grammar, and communicative language teaching. The findings indicate that mastering the passive voice is not merely a matter of learning grammatical rules but also involves cognitive and linguistic restructuring. Therefore, successful instruction requires an integrated methodology that combines contrastive analysis, communicative practice, cognitive learning strategies, and systematic error analysis.*

Keywords: *passive voice, linguistic interference, contrastive linguistics, communicative approach, error analysis, cognitive model, typological differences, English grammar, Uzbek grammar.*

Introduction. Modern language pedagogy regards second language acquisition as a complex and multidimensional process. Among the grammatical structures of English, the passive voice remains one of the most difficult categories for learners whose native language is Uzbek.

The English passive voice is not merely a grammatical transformation; it is also an important communicative strategy. It allows speakers and writers to redistribute information, conceal or omit the agent, and focus attention on the result or recipient of an action. These pragmatic functions differ significantly from those of the Uzbek voice system.

In Uzbek, voice is primarily expressed through morphological suffixes such as *-il*, *-in*, *-tir*, and *-ish*, whereas English employs the analytical structure be + past participle. Consequently, learners encounter two fundamentally different grammatical systems, often resulting in linguistic interference.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that passive voice instruction is frequently based on memorization of grammatical rules rather than communicative

application. Such an approach limits the development of genuine communicative competence.

The aim of this research is to investigate the linguistic mechanisms of interference in the acquisition of the English passive voice and to propose effective pedagogical solutions.

In contemporary linguistics, the English passive voice is viewed not only as a grammatical category but also as a complex semantic and pragmatic phenomenon. Although its surface structure follows the pattern be + past participle, this construction reflects a deeper syntactic transformation.

Quirk et al. (1985) describe passive constructions as mechanisms that reorganize the argument structure of a sentence by promoting the object to the subject position while demoting the agent to an optional element. This process is known as valency reduction or agent demotion.

From the perspective of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1994), the passive voice serves an important discourse function by organizing thematic progression. The element carrying the greatest informational value is positioned at the beginning of the sentence, thereby shifting communicative focus. Thus, the passive voice functions as both a grammatical and communicative device.

Development of the Theory of Linguistic Interference. Weinreich (1953) defined linguistic interference as structural changes resulting from language contact. Later, Selinker (1972) expanded this concept through the theory of interlanguage, arguing that second language learners develop an independent linguistic system situated between the native language and the target language.

According to Selinker, interference should not simply be regarded as an error but as a natural developmental stage in language acquisition. Modern linguistic studies distinguish three principal levels of interference:

- Phonetic and phonological interference;
- Morphological and syntactic interference;
- Semantic and pragmatic interference.

Phonetic interference results from transferring native pronunciation patterns into the target language.

Morphological and syntactic interference is particularly significant in mastering the English passive voice. Since Uzbek expresses voice through morphological suffixes while English relies on a fixed analytical structure (*be + past participle*), learners frequently experience structural confusion.

Semantic and pragmatic interference represents the most complex level because the communicative functions of passive constructions differ considerably across languages. In English, passive constructions often emphasize information focus,

objectivity, and agent suppression, whereas these functions are less systematically realized in Uzbek.

Consequently, learners often produce incorrect passive constructions or attempt literal translations from Uzbek into English, reducing grammatical accuracy and communicative effectiveness.

Typological Characteristics of the Voice Category. The category of voice expresses the relationship between the subject, object, and action. Typologically, English and Uzbek belong to different language families and represent distinct grammatical systems.

Language	Typological System	Voice Formation
Uzbek	Agglutinative	Morphological suffixes
English	Analytical	Auxiliary verb + past participle

Uzbek employs morphological markers to express passive meaning:

Active: The teacher explained the lesson.

Passive: The lesson was explained by the teacher.

English forms the passive analytically:

Active: The teacher explains the lesson.

Passive: The lesson is explained by the teacher.

Unlike Uzbek, the English passive frequently omits the agent when it is unknown, irrelevant, or intentionally concealed.

These typological differences often result in learner errors such as:

Incorrect: *The lesson was explained from the teacher.*

Correct: *The lesson was explained by the teacher.*

Similarly, literal translation from English into Uzbek may produce unnatural constructions instead of idiomatic Uzbek expressions.

Furthermore, English passive constructions play an important role in academic discourse:

- *The experiment was conducted under controlled conditions.*
- *The data were analyzed using statistical methods.*

Such constructions contribute to objectivity and formal style, whereas Uzbek often conveys similar meanings through active constructions.

Morphological Interference. Learners frequently equate the English passive solely with Uzbek passive suffixes. As a result, they overlook the grammatical function of auxiliary verbs and simplify passive constructions into direct morphological equivalents.

This leads to incomplete mental representations of English passive structures and increases grammatical errors.

Syntactic Interference. Since Uzbek word order is relatively flexible, learners often assume similar flexibility exists in English. Consequently, they produce sentences such as:

Yesterday the letter written was.

Such errors demonstrate insufficient understanding of English transformational grammar and fixed syntactic patterns.

Semantic and Pragmatic Interference. Many learners perceive the passive voice only as a grammatical structure indicating that an object receives an action. Consequently, they fail to recognize its broader discourse functions, including:

- shifting communicative focus;
- concealing or omitting the agent;
- creating an objective academic style.

According to Selinker's interlanguage theory, the passive voice is particularly susceptible to fossilization because learners tend to retain incorrect forms over extended periods.

Three major developmental processes are observed:

1. Transfer of native language structures.
2. Overgeneralization of grammatical rules.
3. Fossilization of persistent errors.

Linguodidactic Challenges. Current instructional practices reveal several shortcomings:

- teaching grammar without communicative context;
- excessive dependence on translation;
- insufficient communicative activities;
- limited exposure to authentic discourse;
- inadequate distinction between grammatical structure and communicative function.

As a result, learners often memorize passive voice formulas but remain unable to apply them effectively in real communication.

Methodological Solutions. Several pedagogical approaches can significantly reduce interference.

Contrastive Analysis. Parallel comparison of English and Uzbek grammatical systems enables learners to recognize structural differences and adapt more efficiently.

Communicative Language Teaching. Passive constructions should be introduced through authentic materials such as research articles, news reports, scientific texts, and academic writing rather than isolated grammar exercises.

Error Analysis. Learners' errors should be systematically classified into morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic categories, enabling targeted instructional intervention.

Cognitive Approach. Instead of concentrating exclusively on the question *"Who performs the action?"*, learners should understand *"What information is emphasized?"* This cognitive shift facilitates a deeper understanding of passive constructions as discourse devices rather than mechanical grammatical formulas.

Conclusion. Linguistic interference remains one of the principal obstacles in acquiring the English passive voice among Uzbek-speaking learners. The typological differences between Uzbek and English encourage learners to transfer native grammatical patterns into the target language, resulting in structural inaccuracies, inappropriate agent expression, and misuse of passive constructions.

Effective instruction therefore requires an integrated methodological framework. Contrastive linguistics helps learners recognize cross-linguistic differences; communicative teaching promotes authentic language use; error analysis identifies recurring learner difficulties; and cognitive approaches facilitate conceptual understanding of grammatical structures.

The combined implementation of these approaches significantly improves learners' mastery of the English passive voice while reducing the negative effects of linguistic interference. Ultimately, successful acquisition of the passive voice should be viewed not simply as memorization of grammatical rules but as the development of communicative and cognitive competence within a second language.

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