

## On Using Background Knowledge in Teaching/ Learning Foreign Language

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**Annotation:** The article deals with problems of using background knowledge in teaching/learning foreign language. The background knowledge means language experience of the students who learns this or that foreign language. The constituents of the notion “language experience” are analyzed in the text: language/linguistic/speech experiences. Secondly, the issues mother tongue/second/foreign language we redefined as well. Thirdly, by the term background knowledge the authors mean not only language experience, but also they define ways of using language experience by the help of transference, that is positive transposition of previous knowledge in the process of learning foreign language. While discussing the problem put in the text of the report, additionally were included such themes as interference/ interference/ transference/ transposition/ facilitation and so on.

**Keywords:** background knowledge, language experience, interference/intraference/transference/transposition/facilitation, lingvodidactics, teaching methodology.

**Introduction.** In the history of teaching foreign languages practical teachers and methodological theorists use the following terminological vocabulary: taking the mother tongue into account (учётродногоязыка) [7], supporting target language with the help of native tongue (опоранароднойязык) [4] and some others. In this case specialists agree with the opinion of lingvodidacts who use innovative technological word “language experience”. This thesis may be proved because of the fact that students beginning learning foreign language have already experience not only in the native language, but also in the second/third languages. That’s why we justify that in teaching/learning foreign language we may use the language experience as a whole and instead of those terms which were above mentioned.

At the present time, foreign language methodologists agree to use the only terms language experience or background knowledge [2; 3]. In both cases we mean the experience in learning 3 or more languages that should be taken into account while teaching/learning any foreign language. Further, we may discuss the techniques of using background knowledge in the process of teaching/learning foreign language, about it we shall write in the body part of the article.

**Body part.** Many didactic terms have been changed for the last time, for example, together with the text linguistics there appeared very modern term discourse analyses [6]. As we have noted above, and nowadays language experience has become stable terminological vocabulary. As a rule, vocabulary of the language consists of 2 strata (groups): everyday used words and technical words (terminology). Just now we have analyzed technical words often used in teaching theory. Having discussed the main terminological vocabulary we have used in the text, we shall consider the techniques of using so-called transference and interference/interference [9:98].

In the world of linguistics there are many technical terms which are used as the previous experience of language learners: language experience, background knowledge, linguistic experience, speech experience et al [3].

By the term language experience methodological theorists imply the following three parts: linguistic/language/speech constituents. The first one is theoretical knowledge on the language and the second – language habits (in the modern didactic term “sub skills”), the third word is connected with the speech activities which linguistics call “language skills”.

When we say “linguistics”, we usually understand 3 aspects of the phenomenon that is vocabulary, grammar, phonetics (phonology) in their systematic form. So, these 3 phenomena comprise language material, which may be included into the language sub skill. Besides, there is a component so-called language unit, which consists of, as we mentioned before, vocabulary, grammar and phonetic/ pronunciation units. Thus, we have briefly analyzed the linguistic and language components of the above-mentioned language experience. Now, we shall go ahead and write about speech activities. Linguistics differ the following language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing. They are main types of speech activity in any language.

The second thing which should be analyzed is that every subcomponent of the language experience must be shown through those languages that were learned by the student. Students in our region, for example, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and etc. learn minimum 3 languages: mother tongue, Russian language and foreign language. The term mother tongue denotes that language in which students’ thinking is developed. In one word, everybody’s thought is developed only on the basis of the language which was learned first.

What about the second language? Language teachers and methodologists have 2 different senses concerning this question: (1) that language which is learned after the mother tongue; (2) the foreign language which is learned in the native speakers’ country i.e. in the natural language atmosphere. To our mind, the second definition is absolutely true. If a student studies in the native speakers’ country and learns their language, we call it the second language; when the student learns that language in his own country, it will be a foreign language for him.

Now, some words about the foreign language. Foreign language as a strangers’ tongue which is learned in the third turn after the first and one more languages. If this language is studied at the foreign language university faculty of a person who lives in, it will be the language of specialty. In other cases, for example, when the English language is studied at the technical, medical or architectural institutions students learn Eastern, European or Oriental languages as an additional professional academic subject.

In short, foreign languages being studied in the Republic of Uzbekistan are aimed at (1) general education, (2) special education and (3) professional education.

The problems of interference were investigated in the theory of teaching languages [1]. That’s why we pay less attention to interference/ intraference and -- more attention to the phenomenon “transference”. Below we shall list the English language units which may be transferred from the Uzbek language as theoretical items.

Illustrated examples will be given from the 3 aspects of the language: vocabulary, grammar, phonetics. Every linguistic unit has 3 characteristic features – form, meaning (semantics), function. These 3 features need some theoretical interpretations: (1) form may be graphic, phonetic and morphological; morphological form deals with word formation – simple, compound, etc. (2) semantic feature means monosemantic and polysemantic words. Meanings of root and derived words, meaning of the morpheme and whole word; (3) functional feature – notions expressed by

the vocabulary unit (it is known that any word helps to develop the unit of the thought – called “notion” or “concept”). So, the notion is kept in the thought, but the word which expresses it usually may be kept in the memory.

Some words about grammar units which should be transferred from language to language. They are morphological and syntactical units. When we say morphological units we mean parts of speech in English and mother tongue, syntactic structures deal with the word order in various sentences. Thus, we shall give the names of morphological and syntactic categories, for example, noun, verb, adjective, adverb and so on. Syntactic material — simple and compound sentences, word order in the types of various sentences. Every part of speech in syntactic phenomenon may be transferred or may be subject of interference/ interference.

It is time to give commentaries to the pronunciation units: this system is seriously differentiated from language to language, in our case from Uzbek to English. Examples: in the English language there not only monophthongs but diphthongs and triphthongs, long/ short vowels, specific characteristics of the English language include initial and final consonant clusters, voiced consonants at the end of the word and so on. All these and other differences of the English language cause typical difficulties which should be overcome while fulfilling training exercises.

In the field of vocabulary Uzbek students often meet many difficulties in understanding polysemantic words. For example, the word “to go” has 36 meanings (according to the English – Russian dictionary edited by I.R.Galperin), beginning from the meaning “*идти/ ходитъ*” up to the meaning it goes without saying. There are many illustrations in the vocabulary system of the English language. One of the meanings of this word may be transferred from the mother tongue (Uzbek) *go* – “*бормоқ*” or from the Russian language “*ходить/ идти/ ехать*”. It’s necessary to note that cognate words from the English language may be transferred into Uzbek or vice versa: “*tennis – теннис, university – университет...*”

One may observe many cases of transference from the mother tongue into the target language. Some examples from the English grammar: when we teach English practical grammar to students, we find many differences and similarities in the native/ relative second/ target languages. As we know, differences between language system demand much time and effort to develop subskill and skill in the target language. But, we don’t concern the phenomenon interference because of the fact that we are not going to investigate interference, our research is dedicated to the problems of transference.

We shall give some examples: the verb in the present indefinite tense may be met difficulties by the side of students if they learn third person singular (only third person singular may cause difficulties in the Uzbek auditorium). The forms such as I/ we/ you/ they *speak* (-) English may be learned easily because there is no suffix “-es” as in the third person singular. Here, we don’t deal with the grammar notion because the word *speak* comes in the sentence for the vocabulary unit (the form *speaks* is a grammar unit, because of its final “-s”). One more example: when we teach the future indefinite tense in the Uzbek academic groups there may be transference from the Russian language experience – I *shall go* to ... -- *ябудуходитьв...* We have observed 2 illustrations concerning the English grammar.

We shall move ahead analyzing the problems of transference in the pronunciation area. We have noticed above that English and Uzbek pronunciation systems differ very much. Language differences may cause interference and intraference. Now we are discussing how to transfer language experience at the English lessons. Some examples: English consonant sounds [k], [m], [n], [ŋ], [tʃ] etc. are very similar with the Uzbek equivalents, others are learned very easily according to

the approximation idea of the outstanding English professor Harold Palmer, who taught English to the Japanese students [5].

There are some consonant sounds that may be transferred or interfered with native sounds: when communicants speak English in order to interchange opinions using the following consonants depending on the initial or final positions may or may not cause difficulty, that is in the initial position [g], [b], [d], [dʒ], in short all voiced consonants are pronounced related to approximation principle. Though, these consonants in the final position of the word are very difficult for Turkic languages students. In this position, they pronounce not the voiced consonant but instead of them they utter unvoiced ones which may lead to violation of communication among/ between people. Instead of the voiced consonants our students pronounce the following sounds: [k], [p], [t], [tʃ]: bag – back, cab – cap, had – hatted, age – h.

The vowel sounds are also pronounced wrong: instead of the long [i:], [o:], [u:], [ə:] they pronounce short vowels [ɪ], [ɒ], [ʊ], [ə]. The diphthongs of the English language are pronounced according to the Received Pronunciation (RP) rules. Indeed, nuclear and glide of the diphthongs must be pronounced together, not separately, as our students do.

It is known that stress in the English language is put on the first syllable if the word is real English origin. The Uzbek language experience will not help in this case. Some examples: студѐнт → студентлар → студентларга -- student. At the same time, in the Uzbek language the stress is usually on the last syllable of the word. When we teach English stress to our students, we may use the linguistic experience from the language which was learned after the mother tongue. i.e. the Russian language. It will be called transference of the Russian language phenomena while learning the foreign language (English). When we compare our mother tongue and the target language we find out differences between them.

This thesis concerns problems of intonation as well. Intonation with falling and rising tones may be transferred from the Russian language experience of the Uzbek students. It is because in the Uzbek speakers' intonation is often may be raising tone. Irrespectively, what type of sentence is being uttered?

Finally, we shall try to give some methodological recommendations concerning the orthographic subskill. The English men and Uzbeks use Latin alphabets in writing. But the letters of the two languages do not give the sounds similarly. For example: English vowels are to be read in 4 types of syllables. There is no such rule/ instruction in the Uzbek writing system. In spite of the differences in reading the vowel letters, the graphic forms are of the same. Even this formally similarity may help to transfer Uzbek letters to the English ones. We should say that, there is more differences than similarities.

Studying all characteristic features of the language similarities and differences linguists and lingvodidacts try to establish typology of language material. As a rule, typology is based on the materials of comparative linguistics [1] and contrastive linguistics [10]. We know that comparison is made when languages of one group is investigated. For example: Turkic languages (Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz...). Contrastive investigations are made on the materials of different group languages. For example: Uzbek and English.

**Conclusion.** Fundamental ideas of the article/ report are how to use students' background knowledge in teaching/ learning the English language. The notion knowledge, as we noticed above, designates the previous language experience which may be transferred in the target language. We have discussed background knowledge combined in 3 languages – Uzbek, Russian, and English.

Background knowledge may be called linguistic language and speech components of the students who are studying the foreign languages. From the other side, background knowledge may be the combination of knowledge, habit and skill in these three languages.

Background knowledge which should be transferred in the teaching process may be of 2 kinds: (1) the first part which causes interference, (2) other part of the language experience may be easily transferred from language to language. Namely we investigate the process and product of transference from Uzbek and Russian to English. The problem of transference is one of the most complicated lingvodidactic problems which was not under the special research.

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