

Problems in Learning Uzbek for Asian Language Learners

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Annotation: This study examines the challenges faced by Asian language learners when acquiring Uzbek. It highlights phonetic, grammatical, and lexical difficulties influenced by structural differences between Uzbek and languages such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. Key obstacles include Uzbek's vowel harmony, agglutinative morphology, and case system, which may differ from or partially align with learners' native linguistic structures. Additionally, cultural and sociolinguistic factors, such as exposure to Uzbek and interaction with native speakers, are considered. The findings aim to improve Uzbek language learning methodologies for Asian learners.

Keywords: Uzbek language, Asian learners, phonetic challenges, grammatical difficulties, agglutinative structure, vowel harmony, case system, second language acquisition, language learning strategies.

When Uzbek is spoken at a fast pace, European language learners may misunderstand the sentence “I am going to the market” as “I am going to the market,” making grammatical errors.

Solutions: Use audio materials that are pronounced slowly and clearly.

Teach listening to different dialects and accents. Teach listening to understand context (e.g., guessing, distinguishing key words).

2. Reasons for speaking competence problems: Some phonetic sounds in Uzbek are not found in European languages (e.g., “q”, “g”, “x”).

Word order and sentence structure are different from European languages.

Pragmatic speech errors may occur due to cultural differences.

Example: Pronunciation problem: Mispronouncing the sentence “Red brick house” as “Red brick house”.

Word order problem: Saying “I am reading a book” instead of “I am reading a book.”

Cultural problem: In Uzbek culture, saying “no” directly can be considered rude, but a European student may respond directly with “No.” In Uzbek, soft expressions such as “Next time, God willing” or “Not yet, we will talk later” are usually used.

Solutions: Phonetic exercises and special pronunciation lessons.

Developing natural speech through dialogue and role-playing.

Advising students in advance about cultural differences and reinforcing them with practical exercises.

3. Written speech competence problems: Since the Uzbek language is agglutinative, it can be difficult for Europeans to use the correct order of suffixes.

Some grammatical rules differ from those in European languages (for example, possessive pronouns, the structure of word combinations).

In written speech, stylistically incompatible sentences can be formed. In particular: writing the sentence “My brother has a book” as “I have a brother’s book”.

Writing “I went to my friend’s house” instead of “I went to my friend’s house”.

Difficulties in understanding formal texts in Uzbek: The sentence “This resolution was adopted in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan” may be difficult to understand, since it uses formal language.

Solutions: Do more grammar and writing exercises.

Develop written speech through text analysis.

Teach formal and informal writing styles in Uzbek.

4. Reasons for problems in reading comprehension: There are Arabic, Persian and old Turkic words in the Uzbek language, which can cause difficulties for Europeans in understanding these words.

Some phrases and phraseological units can be misunderstood if translated directly.

In particular: the phrase “Hush kelibiz!” can be translated by a European reader as “Yakhshi kelibiz”.

The phrase “Nega unday deysan?” can be understood and translated not as “Why do you say so?” but as “Why do you say like that?”.

Arabic and Persian words: Words such as “Muhim”, “tashabbus”, “himmat”, “rukhsat” are forced to be memorized as new words, since they do not exist in other languages or are rarely used.

Solutions: Prepare special teaching materials to increase Uzbek vocabulary.

Read and study newly learned words in context.

Explain phraseological expressions separately and do exercises with contextual examples.

In conclusion, European language learners face various difficulties in listening comprehension, speaking, writing, and reading competencies when learning Uzbek. To overcome these problems:

1. Explain cultural and linguistic differences.
2. Develop step-by-step curricula.
3. Facilitate the learning process through practical exercises.
4. Use communicative methods close to real life.

Thus, an integrative and context-based educational approach makes learning Uzbek effective for European language learners.

For Asian language learners, the environment, religious beliefs, and cultural differences also create their own obstacles in learning Uzbek as a foreign language. These obstacles are especially evident in the development of the following speech competencies:

1. Causes of problems in listening comprehension: Asian countries, such as China, Korea, and Japan, do not have phonetic systems similar to Uzbek, which can lead to difficulties in hearing and distinguishing sounds in Uzbek.

Some words may be new to Asian language learners because they have different meanings and pronunciations in their languages.

Unlike European languages, some Asian languages have a different stress system (for example, China has a tonal system), which can create difficulties in understanding the stress of the Uzbek language.

The pronunciation of the word "good" may be unfamiliar to Asians.

Since the sounds “Q” and “G” are not present in Korean, these sounds can be pronounced ambiguously or incorrectly in Uzbek.

A Chinese learner may have difficulty understanding the stress on the last syllable of a word in Uzbek.

Solutions: Regularly repeat and teach phonetic exercises.

Use special materials to learn the pronunciation and stress system of the Uzbek language.

Initial listening exercises should focus on slow, clear pronunciation.

2. Reasons for problems in speaking competence: Some grammatical rules and word order in Uzbek are different from those in Asian languages.

Some words and phrases that exist in Uzbek may have different meanings or contexts of use in Asian cultures.

Asian languages have a multi-layered (tonal) way of communicating, whether formal or informal, which makes it difficult to understand the similarity to direct speech in Uzbek.

For example: instead of “I am reading”, a Korean learner may vaguely say “I am reading”.

Culturally, while direct speech is the norm in Uzbek, it is customary to soften the statement and not give a direct answer in Korean or Chinese culture.

Some expressions, such as “Thank you” or “Good day”, may not be used correctly in different situations, because Asian language learners often use them outside of a certain context.

Solutions: Introduce Japanese or Korean learners to the pragmatic features of Uzbek.

Teaching speaking in a variety of contexts through practical dialogue and role-playing. Teaching formal and informal forms of speech in Uzbek.

3. Causes of problems in written speech competence: The written system and word order of the Uzbek language are different from some Asian languages. Asian language learners sometimes have difficulty understanding grammatical rules and morphology in Uzbek, as they have a different structure in their own language.

Abbreviations, word combinations, and suffixes in Uzbek can be confusing for Asians. In particular: Writing the sentence "I am preparing for change" incorrectly as "I am preparing for change." Writing "My friend has a new car" instead of "My friend is going to his new car."

Some Asian students may use "I" and "myself" interchangeably in written speech because Korean or Chinese do not have possessive forms or use them differently.

Solutions: Provide more written exercises and teaching of grammar basics.

More examples and practical exercises to teach correct word order and morphology in writing.

Teaching stylistic aspects in written work, especially formal and informal forms.

4. Reasons for the problem in reading comprehension: Uzbek has Arabic and Persian words, and it can be difficult for Asians to learn these words because many Asian languages do not use the Arabic alphabet.

Some old Turkic or archaic words can cause problems in reading and comprehension.

Uzbek phraseological units or expressions can be ambiguous for Asian language learners.

Specifically: Misreading or misunderstanding the phrase "to stand in a permitted place". Misunderstanding the phrase "InshaAllah" as "to intend".

Persian and Arabic words: Phrases like "Alhamdulillah" and "Bismillah" can cause difficulty in reading, as these words are not common in other Asian languages.

Solutions: Learn Arabic, Persian and old Turkic words to increase vocabulary.

Do reading exercises with contextual understanding at the right time.

Teach phraseological units and expressions through clear explanations and practical exercises.

In conclusion, the obstacles to learning Uzbek for Asian language learners are mainly manifested in phonetic, grammatical, writing and reading competencies. To overcome them, the following are necessary:

1. Provide a deep understanding of cultural and linguistic differences.

2. Use step-by-step teaching methods.

Develop speaking competencies through a contextual approach.

4. Clearly distinguish and teach formal and informal forms of the Uzbek language.

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