BEHAVIORAL AND COMMUNICATIVE CHANGES IN UZBEK LEARNERS DURING THE TRANSITION FROM UZBEK TO ENGLISH SPEECH

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Annotation: This article examines the behavioral and communicative changes observed among Uzbek learners while they switch from Uzbek to English. The study focuses on variations in voice volume, speaking confidence, hesitation, code-switching, and nonverbal communication. The tendency of learners to speak either unusually loudly or quietly because of language anxiety and differences in willingness to communicate is particularly considered. The article also discusses how cognitive and sociocultural factors affect speech behavior in a second language. As a result, the findings are expected to contribute to a better understanding of communication patterns among English language learners and may help teachers create more effective language-learning environments.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются поведенческие и коммуникативные изменения, наблюдаемые у узбекских учащихся при переходе с узбекского языка на английский. Исследование сосредоточено на изменениях громкости речи, уверенности при говорении, колебаниях, переключении кодов и невербальной коммуникации. Особое внимание уделяется тенденции учащихся говорить либо необычно громко, либо слишком тихо вследствие языковой тревожности и различий в готовности к коммуникации. В статье также обсуждается влияние когнитивных и социокультурных факторов на речевое поведение при использовании второго языка. В результате полученные данные, как ожидается, будут способствовать более глубокому пониманию коммуникативных особенностей изучающих английский язык и помогут преподавателям создавать более эффективную языковую среду обучения.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada o‘zbek tilidan ingliz tiliga o‘tish jarayonida o‘zbek o‘quvchilarida kuzatiladigan xulq-atvor va kommunikativ o‘zgarishlar tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot nutq balandligi, gapirishdagi ishonch, ikkilanish, kod almashinuvi hamda noverbal muloqotdagi o‘zgarishlarga qaratilgan. Ayniqsa, til xavotiri va muloqotga kirishish istagidagi farqlar tufayli o‘quvchilarning odatdagidan balandroq yoki juda past ovozda gapirish tendensiyasiga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Maqolada, shuningdek, kognitiv va sotsiomadaniy omillarning ikkinchi tildagi nutqiy xatti-harakatlarga ta’siri muhokama qilinadi. Natijada, olingan ma’lumotlar ingliz tilini o‘rganuvchilarning kommunikativ xususiyatlarini chuqurroq tushunishga xizmat qilishi va o‘qituvchilarga yanada samarali til o‘rganish muhitini yaratishda yordam berishi kutilmoqda.

Keywords: language switching, Uzbek learners, English language learning, communication behavior, language anxiety, code-switching, bilingualism.

Ключевые слова: переключение языков, узбекские учащиеся, изучение английского языка, коммуникативное поведение, языковая тревожность, переключение кодов, билингвизм.

Kalit so‘zlar: til almashinuvi, o‘zbek o‘quvchilari, ingliz tilini o‘rganish, kommunikativ xulq-atvor, til xavotiri, kod almashinuvi, bilingvizm.

One of the most noticeable changes observed among Uzbek learners when speaking English is a change in voice volume and confidence. Many students tend to speak more quietly than usual because they are afraid of making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes. This anxiety may prevent learners from expressing their ideas freely and can negatively affect their overall communication performance. Or otherwise, when students are exposed to speak in another language, they are prone to speak loudly, even without realizing. For example, in a classroom setting there may be different students and their

confidence level may vary from one another. In this case, one of the main roles of a teacher would be to encourage learners to express their ideas clearly and with confidence – making sure that they will not feel embarrassed and are not mocked by their peers. Over time, they become more open to speak up, which will rectify their volume as a consequence.

Another factor that influences learners' speech behavior is their willingness to communicate. Students who feel confident in their language abilities are generally more active in conversations, while those with lower confidence often avoid speaking. As a result, different levels of participation can be observed even among learners with similar language proficiency. Take group discussions as an example, through which students share their opinions as they have enough grammar and vocabulary base. However, the ones with weaker grammar knowledge tend to lag behind because they are afraid of making mistakes even though they have good ideas.

Learners often have hesitation during speech when switching from Uzbek to English. The reason is that they need more time to process the information, to choose the right words and to construct grammatically correct sentences. Some students also tend to translate questions and answers to their own language before answering them. As a result, communication is slower and less spontaneous than in their first language. The learners often know what they want to say, but they have problems expressing their thoughts spontaneously in English. This mental process adds to cognitive load and frequently breaks flow of speech.

Consequently, their speech may contain pauses, repetitions, self-corrections, and filler words such as “um,” “well,” or “let me think.” For example, when asked the question, “What did you do last weekend?”, a learner may first mentally translate the question into Uzbek, formulate an answer in Uzbek, and then attempt to translate it back into English. Instead of responding fluently, the student may say, “Last weekend I... um... I went... no, I mean, I visited my grandmother and then... uh... helped my parents.” Such hesitation does not necessarily indicate a lack of knowledge; rather, it reflects the additional cognitive effort required to operate in a second language. As learners gain more exposure to English and become more confident in their language abilities, the need for constant translation gradually decreases, leading to greater fluency and more natural communication.

Code-switching is another common phenomenon among Uzbek learners of English. When students cannot immediately recall a word or expression in English, they often insert Uzbek words into their speech. This strategy helps maintain communication and allows speakers to continue expressing their ideas without significant interruption. Code-switching is especially common among intermediate learners who possess sufficient knowledge to communicate in English but still experience vocabulary gaps in certain situations. Rather than stopping the conversation completely, learners use familiar words from their native language to bridge these gaps. This behavior can be observed both inside and outside the classroom and is often influenced by the speaker's level of proficiency, confidence, and the linguistic background of the listeners. For many learners, code-switching occurs unconsciously and serves as a practical communication strategy rather than a deliberate choice. For example, a student might say, “Yesterday I went to the *bozor* with my mother,” or “Our teacher gave us a difficult *topshiriq* to complete at home.” In these examples, Uzbek words are inserted into otherwise English sentences because the speaker either does not know the English equivalent or cannot recall it quickly enough during conversation. While excessive code-switching may limit opportunities to practice English vocabulary, it also demonstrates learners' ability to draw on all available linguistic resources to sustain communication. Therefore, code-switching should not always be viewed as a weakness; rather, it can be considered a natural and effective strategy used by bilingual and multilingual speakers during language production.

Interestingly, some learners speak unusually loudly when using English, while others become noticeably quieter. Such differences may reflect individual personality traits, confidence levels, or perceptions of English as a foreign language. In many cases, learners subconsciously modify their speaking style when communicating in English. For some students, speaking English creates a sense of excitement and self-awareness, leading them to raise their voice and emphasize words more strongly than they would in their native language. They may associate English with public speaking, classroom performance, or native-speaker pronunciation and therefore attempt to sound more confident or

expressive. In contrast, other learners become quieter because they fear making mistakes, being judged by their peers, or mispronouncing words. As a result, their speech may lack the volume and confidence that they normally display when speaking Uzbek. For example, a student who actively participates in discussions in Uzbek may suddenly speak very softly when asked to answer a question in English, despite knowing the correct answer. On the other hand, another student may speak unusually loudly and with exaggerated pronunciation when introducing themselves in English, believing that this makes their speech sound more authentic. These variations demonstrate that language learning is influenced not only by linguistic competence but also by psychological and social factors. Therefore, changes in voice volume can be viewed as an important indicator of learners' emotional state and confidence during second-language communication.

This situation may be observed not only during English classes but also while learning other foreign languages. For example, during my experience of learning Turkish, both my teacher and friends frequently pointed out that I was speaking too loudly during conversations and speaking activities. Interestingly, I was often unaware of this change in my voice volume. It appears that the additional effort required to communicate in a foreign language can influence learners' speaking behavior in unexpected ways. In my case, speaking loudly may have reflected a desire to pronounce words clearly and ensure that I was understood by others. However, this tendency gradually disappeared as I gained more experience and became accustomed to using Turkish in front of other people. Over time, increased confidence and familiarity with the language helped me develop a more natural speaking style. This example suggests that variations in voice volume are often temporary and may decrease as learners become more comfortable communicating in a second language.

Language switching may also influence nonverbal behavior. Learners often become more reserved and use fewer gestures when speaking English because they concentrate heavily on language production. This increased cognitive effort can affect eye contact, facial expressions, and body language. While communicating in their native language, students usually express themselves more naturally through hand movements, facial expressions, and other nonverbal cues. However, when speaking English, much of their attention is directed toward choosing the correct words, remembering grammatical structures, and maintaining accurate pronunciation. As a result, nonverbal communication may become limited or less expressive. For example, a student who is normally energetic and expressive in Uzbek may appear more serious, tense, or reserved during an English discussion. Some learners avoid eye contact because they are focused on formulating their next sentence, while others reduce the use of gestures in order to concentrate on speaking accurately. These changes do not necessarily reflect a person's actual personality; rather, they are often a consequence of the mental effort involved in using a second language. As learners become more fluent and confident, their nonverbal behavior tends to become more natural, allowing them to communicate more effectively and express themselves more freely.

Speech behavior is not determined solely by language proficiency. Sociocultural factors also play an important role. Exposure to English-language media, films, and social networks may influence how learners speak, interact, and express themselves when using English. Through continuous contact with English-speaking content, learners are often exposed to different communication styles, accents, gestures, and patterns of social interaction. As a result, they may consciously or unconsciously imitate certain behaviors they observe in movies, television series, YouTube videos, or social media platforms. For example, some learners adopt common English expressions, informal greetings, or conversational habits that are uncommon in their native language. Others may attempt to imitate the pronunciation, intonation, or speaking style of native speakers. In some cases, students even adjust their body language or facial expressions to align with what they perceive as typical English-speaking behavior. Such influences demonstrate that language learning involves not only acquiring vocabulary and grammar but also adapting to new cultural norms and communication practices. Therefore, sociocultural exposure plays a significant role in shaping learners' speech behavior and overall communicative competence in a second language.

Finally, switching between languages creates additional cognitive demands. Learners often think in Uzbek and then translate their thoughts into English before speaking. This process requires mental effort and may result in slower responses and reduced fluency during communication. In many cases, learners

are not only focusing on what they want to say, but also on how to structure their sentences correctly in English, which increases the overall cognitive load. This dual processing can lead to interruptions in speech flow, as learners pause to search for appropriate vocabulary or grammatical forms. For example, when asked to express an opinion in English, a student may first formulate the idea in Uzbek, mentally translate it into English, and then reorganize the sentence to fit English word order. During this process, speech may become hesitant, fragmented, or less spontaneous. However, with increased practice and exposure, learners gradually begin to think more directly in English, reducing the need for constant translation. This shift contributes to greater fluency, faster response time, and more natural communication in the second language.

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