

MORPHOSYNTACTIC ERRORS IN ENGLISH WRITING BY UZBEK LEARNERS: A CORPUS-BASED INVESTIGATION

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Abstract. *The present study investigates morphosyntactic errors in the English writing of Uzbek learners using a corpus-based approach. A learner corpus of essays written by Uzbek university students was compiled and analyzed to identify error patterns in tense usage, subject-verb agreement, article application, plural forms, and word order. The findings reveal that the majority of errors stem from cross-linguistic influence of Uzbek and inadequate mastery of English grammatical rules. This study not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of error analysis but also provides empirical evidence for improving EFL pedagogy in Uzbekistan.*

1. Introduction

The accurate use of grammar, particularly morphosyntactic structures, plays a crucial role in second language (L2) writing proficiency. Despite years of English instruction, Uzbek learners frequently produce systematic grammatical errors in academic and non-academic writing. Such errors, if not identified and analyzed, may hinder learners' communicative competence and academic success.

Error analysis, initiated by Corder (1967), remains a fundamental field in applied linguistics. With the advancement of corpus linguistics, error studies have become more data-driven, reliable, and generalizable. However, research on Uzbek EFL learners is scarce, and little is known about the morphosyntactic error patterns specific to this group.

This study aims to fill the gap by conducting a corpus-based investigation of morphosyntactic errors in English writing by Uzbek learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Error Analysis in SLA

Error analysis emerged in the 1960s as a response to the limitations of contrastive analysis (Corder, 1967). Unlike contrastive analysis, which predicted errors based on language differences, error analysis focused on the actual language produced by learners. Subsequent studies (Ellis, 1994; Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982) highlighted that errors are not merely mistakes but evidence of interlanguage development.

2.2. Corpus Linguistics in Error Studies

The introduction of learner corpora such as the **International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE)** and the **Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC)** has revolutionized second language acquisition research. Corpus-based error analysis enables large-scale, systematic identification of frequent error types, their contexts, and linguistic causes (Granger, 2009).

2.3. Morphosyntactic Errors in EFL Learners

Studies across various linguistic backgrounds report persistent errors in subject-verb agreement, tense consistency, article usage, and word order (Izumi, 2003; Dagneaux, Denness & Granger, 1998). Research on Turkic languages such as Turkish and Kazakh EFL learners shows similar patterns (Demir, 2017), suggesting that agglutinative language backgrounds may influence English morphosyntax acquisition. However, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research on Uzbek learners.

3. Research Objectives and Questions

Objectives:

1. To identify the most frequent morphosyntactic errors in English writing by Uzbek learners.
2. To classify these errors systematically using corpus-based methods.
3. To analyze the linguistic causes of these errors, particularly cross-linguistic influence from Uzbek.

Research Questions:

1. What are the most common morphosyntactic errors made by Uzbek learners in English writing?
2. How can these errors be classified and quantified using corpus-based analysis?
3. What linguistic factors account for these errors?

4. Methodology

4.1. Corpus Compilation

A learner corpus consisting of 120 essays (approx. 60,000 words) was compiled from undergraduate students majoring in English Philology at Uzbek universities. The essays covered academic topics such as culture, education, and technology.

4.2. Error Identification and Annotation

Errors were identified manually and cross-verified by two trained annotators. Error tags were adapted from the **Error Tagging System of the Louvain International Database of Errors (LINDSEI)**.

4.3. Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis was conducted using AntConc software. Errors were categorized into the following subgroups:

- **Tense and aspect errors**
- **Subject-verb agreement errors**
- **Article misuse (a, an, the)**
- **Plural and countability errors**
- **Word order errors**

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Frequency of Error Types

- **Tense and aspect errors:** 34% (e.g., "*Yesterday I go to school*").
- **Subject-verb agreement:** 25% (e.g., "*He go to class every day*").
- **Article misuse:** 18% (e.g., "*She bought book*").
- **Plural errors:** 12% (e.g., "*two student*").
- **Word order errors:** 11% (e.g., "*Always I study at night*").

5.2. Causes of Errors

- **Transfer from Uzbek:** Lack of articles in Uzbek explains article omission; flexible word order in Uzbek explains misplacement in English.
- **Developmental factors:** Overgeneralization of L2 rules (e.g., adding -s where unnecessary).
- **Instructional gaps:** Insufficient focus on writing accuracy in the Uzbek EFL curriculum.

5.3. Comparative Insights

Findings are consistent with research on other agglutinative language learners (Demir, 2017), but unique to Uzbek learners is the **high frequency of article omission and word order interference**, reflecting Uzbek's typological features.

6. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence of morphosyntactic error patterns in the English writing of Uzbek learners, using a learner corpus as the primary data source. The results demonstrate that tense errors, subject-verb agreement, and article misuse are the most prevalent error types, largely attributable to cross-linguistic interference from Uzbek.

Theoretical Implications: The findings enrich error analysis literature by highlighting unique patterns in agglutinative language contexts.

Practical Implications: The results can guide curriculum designers and teachers to address the most persistent error areas in EFL writing instruction.

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