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THE ROLE OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND IN ENGLISH–UZBEK FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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ANNOTATION

This article explores how cultural background influences English-Uzbek foreign language acquisition. It highlights the role of social norms, communication styles, educational traditions, and shared cultural scripts in shaping the learning process for both Uzbek learners of English and English-speaking learners of Uzbek.

Keywords: *Cultural background, bilingualism, foreign language acquisition, intercultural communication, pragmatics, sociocultural theory.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье рассматривается, как культурный бэкграунд влияет на процесс овладения английским и узбекским как иностранными языками. Подчеркивается роль социальных норм, коммуникативных стилей, образовательных традиций и общих культурных сценариев в формировании процесса изучения как для узбекских изучающих английский язык, так и для англоязычных изучающих узбекский язык.

Ключевые слова: *культурный бэкграунд; билингвизм; освоение иностранного языка; межкультурная коммуникация; прагматика; социокультурная теория.*

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqola ingliz-o‘zbek xorijiy til o‘rganish jarayonida madaniy muhitning ta’sirini tahlil qiladi. O‘zbek va ingliz tilini o‘rganayotgan o‘quvchilarda madaniy qadriyatlar, kommunikativ uslublar va ta’lim an’analari qanday rol o‘ynashi yoritiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: *Madaniy muhit, ikki tillilik, xorijiy til o‘rganish, intermadaniy kommunikatsiya, pragmatika, sotsiomadaniy nazariya.*

Introduction.

Language learning is not just about memorizing vocabulary or mastering grammar; it is deeply intertwined with cultural experiences and worldviews. For learners of English and Uzbek, cultural differences play a critical role in shaping how they communicate, what motivates them, and how they interpret social cues. Communication styles such as directness, politeness strategies, or the use of humor can vary widely between cultures, influencing how learners participate in conversations and express themselves. Motivation is also culturally mediated: some learners are driven by career goals, others by social belonging, and yet others by a desire to connect with a global community. [1]Pragmatic competence, or the ability to use language appropriately in context, is similarly influenced by cultural norms, affecting everything from turn-taking in conversation to the interpretation of indirect requests. Ultimately, understanding these cultural dimensions is essential for effective language learning, as it enables learners to not only acquire linguistic forms but also navigate the social and cultural landscapes in which the language is used.

[11] Byram, M. (1997). Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Literature review.

Sociocultural theory, intercultural pragmatics, and cultural schema theory offer valuable frameworks for understanding how cultural values and communication norms shape foreign language acquisition. Sociocultural theory emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction, suggesting that language learners develop not only linguistic competence but also cultural understanding by engaging with others in meaningful contexts. [1]Intercultural pragmatics examines how speakers interpret and produce language according to culturally shaped norms, highlighting the role of politeness strategies, indirectness, humor, and context-specific speech acts in effective communication. Meanwhile, cultural schema theory posits that individuals carry mental frameworks derived from their own culture, which influence how they perceive, process, and produce language in a foreign context. Together, these perspectives show that mastering a language is inseparable from understanding the cultural values, expectations, and communication conventions that guide its use, and they underscore the importance of culturally informed teaching and learning strategies for both English and Uzbek learners.

Research methodology.

Uzbek learners of foreign languages, particularly English, often encounter a range of challenges that go beyond grammar and vocabulary. One key area is communication style: Uzbek culture tends to favor indirectness and context-sensitive expression, while English often emphasizes clarity and directness. This difference can lead to misunderstandings in both spoken and written communication, as learners struggle to navigate expectations in intercultural interactions. Classroom behaviors present another challenge. In some Uzbek educational settings, students may be accustomed to teacher-centered instruction and may feel hesitant to speak up or question ideas, whereas many English-language learning environments encourage active participation, debate, and collaborative learning.

[1] Brusov State University, A. G. & Madatyan, K. (2023). Sociocultural Theory of Learning to Promote Communicative Language Teaching. Education in the 21st Century.

Metaphor interpretation is another hurdle. Idiomatic expressions and culturally bound metaphors in English may not have direct equivalents in Uzbek, requiring learners to infer meaning from context a task that can be cognitively and linguistically demanding. Finally, politeness strategies differ between cultures. [1]What is considered appropriately polite or respectful in Uzbek may not align with English norms, and vice versa, affecting how learners phrase requests, apologies, or compliments. These challenges highlight that language learning is not purely about mastering linguistic forms; it is also about understanding the cultural expectations, social cues, and pragmatic conventions that guide effective communication. For Uzbek learners, bridging these cultural gaps requires both explicit instruction in cross-cultural norms and opportunities to engage in authentic intercultural exchanges.

Cultural Influence on English Speakers Learning Uzbek.

English speakers learning Uzbek often face significant challenges because of the language's hierarchical politeness forms, high-context communication, and culturally embedded social expectations. Uzbek employs a range of honorifics, verb forms, and pronouns that reflect age, social status, and respect, requiring learners to constantly adjust their language depending on the relationship between interlocutors. This can be particularly difficult for English speakers, whose language generally relies less on hierarchical distinctions in everyday speech.

High-context communication adds another layer of complexity. In Uzbek culture, much of the meaning in conversation is conveyed indirectly, relying on shared background knowledge, tone, and nonverbal cues. English speakers, accustomed to more explicit communication, may struggle to interpret implied meanings or subtle hints, leading to misunderstandings or social faux pas. Finally, sociocultural expectations embedded in daily interactions from greeting rituals to norms around offering hospitality, expressing disagreement, or managing group dynamics require learners to navigate social behaviors that are often implicit rather than explicitly

[1] Jackson, D. (2023). The Influence of Sociocultural Factors on Language Acquisition. Frontiers of Language and Communication Studies, 5(1), 38.

taught. Successfully mastering Uzbek, therefore, demands not only linguistic competence but also an understanding of the cultural frameworks that shape everyday communication, highlighting the inseparability of language and culture.

Analysis and results.

Effective language teaching goes far beyond teaching vocabulary and grammar; it must integrate cultural knowledge, authentic materials, interactive activities, and AI-based tools to fully develop learners' communicative competence. Incorporating cultural knowledge helps learners understand the social norms, values, and pragmatic conventions that govern real-world interactions, enabling them to communicate appropriately and confidently. Using authentic materials such as social media posts, news articles, videos, and podcasts exposes learners to language as it is naturally used, bridging the gap between classroom instruction and real-life communication. Role-plays and simulations provide a safe environment for practicing speech acts, politeness strategies, and intercultural exchanges, allowing learners to experiment with language and receive feedback on cultural appropriateness.[1]

Additionally, AI-based intercultural tools including adaptive language apps, chatbots, and virtual tutors offer personalized opportunities for practice, instant feedback, and exposure to global linguistic trends. For example, AI can simulate conversations with native speakers, suggest contextually appropriate expressions, and even highlight cultural nuances in real time. By combining these approaches, teachers can foster learners' ability not only to produce grammatically correct sentences but also to navigate social and cultural contexts effectively, preparing them for authentic, meaningful communication in both Uzbek and English.

Conclusion.

Cultural background plays a crucial role in shaping how learners acquire and use a foreign language, particularly in English-Uzbek contexts. Learners bring their own social norms, values, and communicative habits into the classroom, which influence

[1] Kramsch, C. (1998). Language and Culture.

how they interpret meaning, produce speech, and respond to pragmatic cues. For instance, an Uzbek learner of English may rely on indirectness and high-context strategies, while an English learner of Uzbek must navigate hierarchical politeness forms and context-dependent social cues. Understanding these cultural norms and scripts the shared patterns of behavior and expected communication in a society is therefore essential for achieving true communicative success. Without this knowledge, learners may produce grammatically correct sentences but fail to convey the intended meaning or navigate social interactions appropriately. [1] By integrating cultural awareness into language instruction, educators can help learners bridge the gap between linguistic competence and social competence, enabling them to communicate effectively, confidently, and appropriately across cultural boundaries.

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