



## PROBLEMS IN LEARNING UZBEK FOR NATIVE LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Umurzakova Sevara Abdugarimovna  
Toshkent davlat til va adabiyoti universiteti,  
ToshDO'TAU 1-kurs magistranti  
abdugarimsevara@gmail.com

### Abstract

This study explores the challenges faced by native Uzbek speakers in fully mastering their language, focusing on phonetic, grammatical, and lexical difficulties. Despite being native learners, issues such as dialectal variations, influence from Russian and other foreign languages, and literacy development in standard Uzbek pose challenges. Additionally, the shift from Cyrillic to Latin script affects reading and writing proficiency. Sociolinguistic factors, such as urban-rural language differences and the impact of digital communication, are also considered. The study aims to identify key difficulties and suggest strategies for improving Uzbek language proficiency among native speakers.

**Keywords:** Uzbek language, native learners, dialectal variations, language influence, script transition, literacy development, phonetic challenges, grammatical difficulties, sociolinguistics.

### Introduction

Language acquisition is often considered a natural process for native speakers. However, mastering one's own mother tongue involves continuous learning, particularly in formal and academic contexts. Uzbek, a Turkic language spoken by millions, presents several challenges even for its native speakers. These challenges arise due to dialectal diversity, foreign language influence, script transitions, and sociolinguistic factors. This essay explores the key difficulties native Uzbek speakers face in fully mastering their language and offers insights into potential solutions.

### Dialectal Variations

One of the most significant issues in learning Uzbek as a native speaker is the existence of multiple dialects. Uzbek has several regional dialects, including Tashkent, Fergana, Khorezm, and Qarluq varieties. These dialects differ in



pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, making it difficult for speakers from different regions to understand each other fully.

For instance, a speaker from Tashkent may use words and sentence structures unfamiliar to someone from Khorezm. While dialectal diversity enriches the language, it also creates confusion when native speakers transition to standard Uzbek used in education and media. Students who grow up speaking a regional dialect may struggle with writing in literary Uzbek, which is based on the Tashkent dialect but has standardized rules different from colloquial speech.

### **Influence of Foreign Languages**

The historical and social context of Uzbekistan has led to significant influence from foreign languages, particularly Russian and, more recently, English. During the Soviet era, Russian was the dominant language in education, administration, and media. As a result, many Uzbek speakers still use Russian words and phrases in daily communication, sometimes without realizing that they are not native Uzbek terms.

For example, in informal speech, many Uzbeks use Russian-derived words like "вопрос" (vopros, meaning "question") instead of the Uzbek equivalent "savol." This linguistic borrowing sometimes leads to a weakening of native Uzbek vocabulary among younger generations.

In recent years, English has also started influencing Uzbek, especially in business, technology, and youth culture. Words like "internet," "manager," and "marketing" are often used directly in Uzbek conversations without adaptation. While linguistic borrowing is a natural process, excessive reliance on foreign terms can dilute the purity of the Uzbek language and make it harder for native speakers to maintain a strong grasp of their linguistic heritage.

### **Script Transition Challenges**

Uzbek has undergone multiple script changes in the past century, transitioning from Arabic to Latin, then Cyrillic, and back to Latin. This constant change has created confusion, especially among different generations.

Older generations, who were educated in Cyrillic, may struggle with the modern Latin-based Uzbek script, leading to difficulties in reading and writing official documents or digital content. Younger generations, on the other hand, may not be fully proficient in the Cyrillic script, which is still widely used in historical texts and media archives.



Additionally, the Latin script itself has undergone modifications, leading to inconsistencies in spelling and pronunciation rules. For example, some people write "o'qituvchi" (teacher) with an apostrophe, while others use different variations like "oqituvchi," making standardization difficult.

### **Literacy and Standardization Issues**

Despite being native speakers, many Uzbeks face challenges in reading and writing standard Uzbek. This problem is more pronounced in rural areas, where formal education in Uzbek may be limited. Many people speak fluent Uzbek but struggle with proper grammar and spelling when writing.

Furthermore, official documents, media, and textbooks sometimes contain inconsistencies in grammar and spelling, making it difficult for learners to identify the correct usage of words and structures. The lack of strict language policies and educational reforms contributes to these challenges.

Although the living environment, religious beliefs and cultural differences create some obstacles for language learners of the fraternal people in learning Uzbek as a foreign language, these obstacles are different from those encountered by European or Asian language learners, since there are more similarities between the languages, cultures and religious beliefs of the fraternal peoples. Such language learners may encounter more grammatical and semantic problems.

1. Causes of problems in listening comprehension competence: Although there are languages close to the Uzbek language among the fraternal peoples, dialectal differences and changes in pronunciation can create obstacles. Although the Uzbek language is phonetically and intonally adapted to the languages of the fraternal peoples, some words or word combinations may be misunderstood.

In particular, although grammatical differences and word usage are similar among Turkish-speaking fraternal peoples, some features of the Uzbek language may be difficult to hear.

For example: Similar words such as "Bizning oila" and "Bizning uy" are also used in Turkish or fraternal languages, but their nuances may differ.

Synonyms such as "uzoq" and "yiroq" can be understood the same, but their context of use in Uzbek is different.

Fully understanding fast-spoken Uzbek speech, especially when hearing dialects or different styles of speech, can cause some problems.

Solutions: Audio materials for fraternal peoples, explaining dialectal differences and effectively teaching listening.



Studying the general and dialectal styles of the Uzbek language, eliminating ambiguities in pronunciation.

## **2. Reasons for problems in speaking competence:**

Although there are similarities in speech between Uzbek and other related languages, some grammar, word order, and pronunciation have their own differences.

Pragmatic aspects of speech (for example, the style of speech in social situations) often change among related peoples, which makes it difficult to express oneself correctly in Uzbek.

Culture and religious views can lead to the incorrect use of some expressions in Uzbek.

For example: “What’s up?”, not understanding the formal form of speech in Uzbek, which is also often used in Turkish or other related peoples.

When speaking in Uzbek, in a formal setting, words such as “Assalamu alaykum” or “Khush kelibiz” can be expressed in a different way in Turkish or Kazakh.

Short greetings in Uzbek, such as “Salom” or “Khayr”, can sometimes be used incorrectly due to cultural differences.

Solutions: Learn formal and informal language in conversation, pay special attention to pragmatic issues.

Repeat examples and practice regularly in face-to-face and telephone conversations.

## **3. Causes of problems in written speech competence:**

Although the composition of vocabulary in Uzbek is similar to that of related languages, the phonetics of vowels, word order and suffixes are unique.

Grammatical errors in writing can be easily understood by learners of related languages, because although the general rules of the language are similar, some aspects differ.

Some formal words or phrases in Uzbek, such as “Huzurimizda”, can be used incorrectly in related languages.

For example: instead of "I am reading a book", the phrase in Kazakh or Turkish can be written as "I am reading a book".

Instead of “I love this place”, it can be written as “Men bu jos sevaman”, which does not correspond to the formal style of writing in Uzbek.



Some Uzbek phrases or sentences, for example, “Uning fikri sevtulun” can change the interpretation in Turkish or Kazakh.

Solutions: Many exercises for correct use of grammar in writing.

Teaching the difference between formal and informal style in written speech.

#### **4. Causes of problems in reading comprehension competence**

There are Arabic, Persian and old Turkic words in the Uzbek language, which can be difficult to learn for these fraternal peoples, because these words are rarely used in many fraternal languages. Some old Turkic or Arabic words can cause problems in reading and understanding.

Uzbek phrases or words may be unfamiliar in the languages of the fraternal peoples. For example: Arabic phrases such as “Alhamdulillah” and “Bismillah”, in particular, may be understood differently when reading.

Old Turkic words used in the Uzbek language, such as the words “Ruhiyat” or “Fikr”, may be misinterpreted. Understanding Arabic or Persian words, such as the words “Muqaddima” or “Tarih”, may cause difficulties when reading.

Solutions: Introduce Arabic, Persian and Old Turkic words in the Uzbek language. Use a contextual approach in reading exercises.

Summarizing the above information, the obstacles to learning the Uzbek language for fraternal peoples are mainly based on grammatical, pragmatic and semantic differences. To eliminate them:

1. Organize the learning process, taking into account the living environment and cultural differences.
2. Prepare educational materials adapted to the languages of fraternal peoples.
3. Teach languages better through practical exercises and communication methods.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. Csato, É. Á., & Johanson, L. (1998). *The Turkic Languages*. Routledge.
2. Sjoberg, A. (1963). *Uzbek Structural Grammar*. Indiana University Press.
3. Landau, J. M., & Kellner-Heinkele, B. (2001). *Politics of Language in the Ex-Soviet Muslim States: Azeri, Kazakh, Uzbek, and Turkmen*. C. Hurst & Co.
4. Grenoble, L. A. (2003). *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*. Kluwer Academic Publishers.



5. Fierman, W. (2009). Language Shift, Literacy, and Ideology in the Former USSR: The Case of Uzbekistan. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2009(198), 105-146.
6. Kadirova, G. (2016). Challenges in the Standardization of Uzbek: Historical and Modern Perspectives. *Journal of Central Asian Studies*, 23(1), 45-60.
7. Johanson, L. (2006). Code-copying in Turkic: The Case of Uzbek and Russian Influence. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 9(2), 123-138.
8. Akiner, S. (1997). *Uzbekistan: Culture and Language in Transition*. Royal Institute of International Affairs.