Language Interference in Teaching English Diphthongs to Uzbek Learners

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Abstract
The interference of vowels in teaching English has been studied on the examples of languages such as Urdu, Russian, and Sundan, in which the causes of the interference of vowels have been revealed. This research is devoted to the problem of linguistic interference in the process of teaching the pronunciation of English diphthongs and their written expressions to Uzbek native speakers. The aim of the study is to identify the interference of diphthongs caused by the interaction of the Uzbek and English languages and develop a method to eliminate them. The comparative-contrastive method has been used to determine the interference of diphthongs. The research distinguishes two types of linguistic interference associated with teaching diphthongs. They are the phonetic-phonological and orthographic interference of diphthongs. The reasons for appearing of these types of interference are explained by convincing examples. The research proposes a new method to eliminate the phonetic-phonological and orthographic interference of diphthongs in teaching English to Uzbek native speakers. This method is called Vowel Spelling and Pronunciation. The application of new method and its advantages are explained in detail. The research is concluded that the use of the Vowel Spelling and Pronunciation method is fruitful in the effective teaching of English diphthongs to the Uzbek audience.

Key words: a vowel system, vowels, diphthongs, phonemes, linguistic interference, phonetic-phonological interference, orthographic interference, comparative-contrastive method

Introduction
The term ‘interference’ was first introduced to the field of linguistics by representatives of the Prague Linguistic School [5, 147] and is one of the most important factors to be considered in the process of foreign language teaching. Indeed, the identification and overcoming of the linguistic interference that may occur due to the peculiarities of the mother tongue and the foreign language which is being studied is important in making the language teaching process more effective. The linguistic interference resulting from the contact of two languages can be observed in any layer of language. Depending on which language layer it occurs in, different types of linguistic interference, such as phonetic and phonological interference, lexical interference, grammatical interference are distinguished. Among these types of interference, the phonetic and phonological interference is important as a range of difficulties occurring in teaching the sound system of a language. The phonetic and phonological interference of English vowels, in particular, diphthongs is manifested in a peculiar way in the mastery of English pronunciation by Uzbek learners.

MATERIALS AND METHODS. The interference of diphthongs in teaching English has been studied from different perspectives in different languages. In particular, the interference of diphthongs in English was studied on the example of Francophone learners, in which the difficulties associated with mastering the writing of diphthongs were analyzed [3, 23-24]. Yu.A. Tregubova studied the factors that cause the vowel interference in the English speech of Russian speakers [9, 171-173]. Muhammad Akram and Abror Hussain analyzed the interference of vowels that occurs in teaching English to the people of Pakistan [7, 43-48]. K.P. Setyaningsih and others studied the vowel interference in teaching English on the example of sundan language in which they interpreted the long-short features of vowels as the main problem [1, 571].

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phonetic and phonological interference of vowels in learning English has also been studied on the example of the Uzbek language. The research deals the linguistic factors that lead to the interference of vowels resulting from the interaction of the Uzbek and English languages [2]. Although the interference of vowels in the Uzbek and English languages has been studied theoretically from the linguistic point of view, the problem of overcoming the phonetic interference in teaching the pronunciation of English vowels, especially diphthongs to Uzbek learners has not been solved from the point of methodology. This research is devoted to the problem of linguistic interference occurring in teaching the pronunciation of English diphthongs to Uzbek learners and deals with its solution.

In the process of teaching English to Uzbek learners, it is more difficult to master the pronunciation of diphthongs than other vowels. The main reason for this is that the speech organs of Uzbek speakers are not adapted to pronounce such sounds as diphthongs due to the absence of them in the Uzbek language. According to N. Trubetskoy, when a person hears speech in an unfamiliar language, he involuntarily analyzes it based on the phonological features of his native language. As a result, the more the phonological system of the native language is disproportionate to the phonological system of the foreign language, the more errors are made in the pronunciation of its sounds [10, 57]. It is natural that there are some distinctions between the sound systems of the Uzbek and English languages because of their belonging to genetically different systems. These differences cause a number of difficulties in teaching the pronunciation of English diphthongs to Uzbek learners. Overcoming these difficulties requires, first of all, a scientific study of the linguistic factors that cause the phonetic and phonological interference of vowels in the English and Uzbek languages. Two types of linguistic factors that lead to the phonetic and phonological interference of vowels are differentiated in the Uzbek and English languages: 1) linguistic factors directly related to the vowel system, 2) linguistic factors indirectly related to the vowel system [2, 19]. Linguistic factors that cause the phonetic and phonological interference of vowels in direct connection with the vowel system include a) difference in the structure of the vowel systems; b) specific peculiarities of vowels from articulatory-acoustic point of view; c) occurring of the state of being unstressed differently; d) disproportion in the positional variants of vowel phonemes. The linguistic factor that leads to the interference of vowels in indirect connection with the vowel system is the distinction in the vowel phoneme orthography in the contrasted languages [2, 19]. From this point of view, the following two types of linguistic interference occur in teaching the pronunciation of English diphthongs to Uzbek learners:

A. the phonetic and phonological interference of diphthongs,

B. the orthographic interference of diphthongs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS. The phonetic and phonological interference of diphthongs includes the difficulties associated with their pronunciation in the stressed and unstressed positions. The qualitative and quantitative features of diphthongs are preserved fully when they are pronounced in the stressed position. However, they are uttered with varying degrees of variations in their qualitative and quantitative features in the unstressed positions. Although English diphthongs preserve their qualitative and quantitative features in the stressed positions, their pronunciation is difficult for Uzbek learners to master. This is due to the fact that the speech organs of Uzbek native speakers are not adapted to pronounce alien sounds such as diphthongs. It is known that there are no diphthongs in the vowel system of the Uzbek language. In spite of this fact, two-vowel sound combinations occur in the Uzbek literary language [6, 22]. However, these vowel sound combinations cannot be diphthongs even if they consist of two elements. This is because these vowel combinations are split in two parts at the syllable division or at the morpheme boundary. The diphthongs are usually not divided into two parts at the syllable division or at the morpheme boundary [4, 80]. Thus, vowel sound combinations are divisible in pronunciation, while diphthongs are indivisible.
The position of the speech organs in the articulation of diphthongs is completely different from their position in the pronunciation of monophthongs. Since the speech organs of Uzbek speakers are adapted only to the pronunciation of monophthongs, they move involuntarily as they do in the articulation of Uzbek vowels when articulating English diphthongs. As a result, some errors occur in the pronunciation of diphthongs in English. An example of this is the fact that Uzbek learners, in the process of learning English, automatically transfer the phenomenon of division, which is characteristic of the pronunciation of Uzbek vowel combinations, to the pronunciation of English diphthongs.

The different variations of diphthong pronunciation due to the degree of change in their qualitative and quantitative features in the unstressed position also leads to the phonetic and phonological interference in teaching English pronunciation to the Uzbek learners. The most important feature of the state of being unstressed in the Uzbek and English languages is determined by whether the vowel changes to another sound or not because of the modifications in their qualitative and quantitative features in the unstressed positions. English vowels often turn other sounds as a result of being unstressed. This feature of English vowels does not exist in Uzbek and it leads to the phonetic interference in the acquisition of unstressed English vowels by Uzbek learners. In particular, Uzbek learners, being accustomed to the peculiarities of unstressed vowels in their native language, make a mistake by pronouncing English diphthongs as stressed in the unstressed positions where they need to be changed to a completely different sound due to the change of their articulatory-acoustic features. As a result, the negative effect of the mother tongue is clearly manifested in the pronunciation of diphthongs in the stressed and unstressed positions of the English word pairs such as causation [kəˈzeifən] n. → causative [ˈkə: zətɪv] adj., Nationalise [ˌneɪʃənalɪz] v. → nationality [ˌneɪʃəˈnaləti] n., Colonial [kəˈləʊnɪəl] adj. → colony [ˈkələni] n., Managerial [mænəˈdʒərɪəl] adj. → manager [ˈmænɪdʒə(r)] n., Librarian [ˈlaɪbrəriən] n. → library [ˈlaɪbrəri] n.

The orthographic interference of diphthongs also poses specific challenges in teaching English pronunciation to Uzbek learners. The orthographic interference of diphthongs appears in the mastery of their spelling by Uzbek native speakers. The writing system of the Uzbek literary language is based on the principle of "One phoneme - one letter" which means one vowel phoneme is expressed only with one letter whereas the literary English writing system is based on the principle of "One phoneme - several letters" that means one vowel phoneme may be represented with more than one letter or letter combinations in writing [8, 139]. This fact leads to the orthographic interference of diphthongs in teaching English to the Uzbek learners. On the basis of the principle of "One phoneme - several letters" English diphthongs are expressed with a few letters and letter combinations [8, 160-161] (see Table 1).

Table 1 The expression of English diphthongs in writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diphthongs</th>
<th>Diphthongs are mainly expressed with the following letters and letter combinations in writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ei/</td>
<td>“a”: make [meɪk], “ai”: plain [plɛɪn], “ay”: day [deɪ], “ei”: veil [veɪl], “ea”: great [ɡreɪt], “ey”: grey [ɡreɪ], “eigh”: neighbor [ˈnɜːbə], “ua”: antiquated [ˈentɪkwətɪd], “ue”: applique [ˈæplɪ.ket].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/au/</td>
<td>“i”: hire [hɑːr], “y”: type [tɑːp], “ie”: die [dɑːi], “ei”: height [haɪt], “uy”: buy [bɑːi], “ye”: rye [reɪ], “igh”: light [lɑːt].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɔɪ/</td>
<td>“oi”: boil [bɔɪl], “oy”: enjoy [ɪnˈdʒɔɪ].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/æʊ/</td>
<td>“ou”: sound [sɑʊnd], “ow”: now [nɑʊ], “ough”: bough [bɔʊ].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɔʊ/</td>
<td>“o”: home [həʊm], “ou”: poultry [ˈpɔʊltri], “ow”: sow [sɔʊ], “oa”: road [rɔʊd], “oo”: broth [brɔʊθ], “ew”: sew [sɔʊ].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/əʊ/</td>
<td>“eer”: deer [dɪər], “ear”: clear [klɪər], “ere”: here [hɪər], “eur”: weird [wɪər], “ier”: fierce [fɜɛr], “ea”: idea [ˈɪdɪə].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fact that diphthongs are expressed with several letters and letter combinations in writing makes the process of learning English even more difficult for Uzbek learners, whose mother tongue writing system is based on the principle of "One phoneme - one letter". Uzbek learners, who are accustomed to express one vowel phoneme with a single letter in writing, often make a mistake of expressing diphthongs with only one letter or letter combination in all words when learning English due to the influence of their mother tongue.

To overcome the problems mentioned above assuredly depends on effective teaching methods. That is to say, using the fruitful methods of teaching pronunciation plays an important role in overcoming the phonetic-phonological and orthographic interference of diphthongs that occur in the process of teaching English pronunciation to the Uzbek learners. In order to teach English diphthongs successfully, we have developed the teaching method “Vowel Spelling and Pronunciation”, taking into account both phonetic-phonological and orthographic interference of diphthongs. When we applied this method in teaching process, it worked well. Thanks to this method the students achieved a gradual increase in learning English diphthongs.

According to this method, a teacher teaches the pronunciation of English diphthongs and their spelling by directing students to communicate with each other using the following ‘Question-answer sentence stems’ whose spaces are filled with the new words planned for a lesson (see Table 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can you spell this word …?</td>
<td>Yes, I can. This word is spelt as…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is this word pronounced?</td>
<td>This word is pronounced as…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you identify the stressed and unstressed syllables of this word?</td>
<td>Yes, I can. The … syllable is stressed and the … syllable(s) is (are) unstressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there Schwa in this word?</td>
<td>Yes, there is Schwa in this word. The … syllable(s) contains (contain) it (them).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What letter is the Schwa expressed with in this word?</td>
<td>The Schwa is expressed with the letter … in this word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know the meaning of this word?</td>
<td>Yes, this word means …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the time limitation and the problem of not having coincidence between the new words of a lesson and diphthongs all the time, it is impossible to teach all the diphthongs in one lesson. Therefore, the Vowel Spelling and Pronunciation method in teaching diphthongs is intended to be used in several lessons.

In order to use this method in class, the teacher duplicates two copies of the ‘Question-answer sentence stems’ sample and prepares ten or twelve copies of handouts including the topic-based new words with their definitions in advance. Each new word is given with its transcription to make it easy for students to pronounce. During the lesson, the leaners are split into two subgroups and each subgroup is given a copy of a ‘Question-answer sentence stems’ sample. And the handout including the topic-based new words with their definitions is given to each group member separately. Students are provided with minimum three and maximum ten minutes, depending on their level of knowing English, to get acquainted with the ‘Question-answer sentence stems’ sample and the new words. During this time each student learns the meaning of the new words and then practises the ‘Question-answer sentence stems’ sample. When the teacher distributes the handouts to students, s/he explains that the sub-groups will compete with
each other by checking their knowledge on the new words and says that turn by turn one member from each sub-group will communicate with each other by using the ‘Question-answer sentence stems’. The teacher mentions that the first group member, in order to begin the activity, should choose any member of the second group and ask the questions given in the ‘Question-answer sentence stems’ sample one by one using one of the new words and the student, who is chosen, will answer the questions using the ‘Question-answer sentence stems’ given in answer sample. When the first pair of students finish their communication, the member of the second sub-group chooses any member of the first sub-group and starts communicating just like the first pair. This process continues until the last members of both sub-groups have a communication. The teacher makes a note of any language mistakes of each pair during the activity and gives a feedback including each pair’s mistake at the end of it. The importance of this method is that it does not lose its essence even if it is used in every lesson. That is to say, this method does not make students feel bored as "the old method" even if they are involved in it many times. Because the purpose of this method includes not only teaching the pronunciation of diphthongs and their spelling, but also learning and strengthening the new words related to the topic. Having the mentioned purposes make this method be updated in a particular way from lesson to lesson.

CONCLUSION. The pronunciation of diphthongs poses specific difficulties in teaching English to Uzbek learners. These difficulties appear as the phonetic-phonological and orthographic interference of diphthongs in learning English. One of the effective ways of solving this problem is to apply the Vowel Spelling and Pronunciation method in teaching. Using of this method in the process of teaching English vowels to Uzbek learners is very fruitful to overcome the phonetic-phonological and orthographic interference of diphthongs. This method involves not only the pronunciation of diphthongs, but also their expressions in writing. Besides teaching the pronunciation of diphthongs effectively, the Spelling and Pronunciation method plays an important role in learning the topic-based new words of each lesson. Therefore, it is desirable to teach English diphthongs to Uzbek learners by using the method of Vowel Spelling and Pronunciation during the lessons.

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