

PHONEMIC INTERFERENCE: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL BASIS

Khudoyorov Omon Tursunovich
Senior Teacher of the Department “G’arb tillari”
of the Oriental University

Abstract

This article examines the general concept and theoretical foundations of phonemic interference, analyzing its linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects. Phonemic interference is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs due to the influence of one phonemic system on another, particularly noticeable in bilingual and multilingual environments. The article discusses the causes, main types, and manifestations of interference. Additionally, it explores strategies for preventing and minimizing phonemic interference. This research has significant practical value in linguistics and language acquisition studies.

Keywords: Phonemic interference, bilingualism, multilingualism, phonology, phonetic system, pronunciation errors, phonemic contrast, linguistic interference, psycholinguistics.

Introduction

Phonemic interference is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs as a result of the influence of the phonetic system of one language on the phonetic system of another language. In societies where bilingualism and multilingualism are widespread, this process manifests itself in specific forms. Interference is observed, in particular, through the pronunciation of phonemes and systematic phonological changes. This article analyzes the general concepts, theoretical foundations and features of phonemic interference.[1]

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The Concept of Phonemic Interference

Phonemic interference is a type of linguistic interference that occurs as a result of the phonemic systems of two languages interacting with each other. This process occurs mainly for the following reasons:

- ☐ The difference in the phonemic systems of the native language and the language being studied.
- ☐ Insufficient phonetic adaptation in a bilingual and multilingual environment.
- ☐ Individual perception of the phonetic system of the language being learned.



Phonemic interference is studied in linguistics, in particular, as a linguistic phenomenon that occurs in the process of learning and using two or more languages. This phenomenon occurs as a result of the phonemic system of one language influencing the phonemic system of another language, resulting in errors in pronunciation, perception or interpretation of phonemic differences. Phonemic interference is often observed in conditions of bilingualism or multilingualism, as well as in the process of learning a foreign language. This article examines the general concept of phonemic interference, its causes, types, and consequences.[3]

Phonemic interference is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs when the phonemic structure of a word (i.e., a meaningful sound unit - phoneme) is influenced by the phonemic system of one language on the phonemic system of another language. Phonemes are the smallest meaningful sound units of a language, and their differentiation can change the meaning of a word (for example, the phonemes /p/ and /b/ in Uzbek: pul - “money” and bul - “be”). Interference occurs when the phonemic system of one language does not match or differs from the phonemic system of another language.[4]

For example, although the phonemes /q/ and /x/ are distinguished in Uzbek (e.g., qol - “stay” and xol - “mole”), there is no such distinction in English. Therefore, an English speaker learning Uzbek may have difficulty distinguishing these phonemes from each other and may pronounce them as the same. This is a clear example of phonemic interference.[5]

Phonemic interference is often observed in the speech of bilinguals or in the pronunciation of foreign language learners. This phenomenon causes errors not only in the perception of phonemic differences, but also in the pronunciation of phonemic contrasts. Phonemic interference occupies an important place in linguistics as one of the factors affecting the phonological system of a language.

Phonemic interference can occur in conjunction with other types of linguistic interference, including lexical, grammatical, and syntactic interference. This plays a particularly important role in the formation of speech culture and pronunciation norms.[6]

Theoretical foundations of phonemic interference

The study of phonemic interference is based on the theories of phonology and psycholinguistics. The linguistic foundations of interference are as follows:

- Structuralism theory (Trubetskoy, Jakobson) - the phonological system of the language and its interaction are analyzed.
- Generative phonology (Chomsky, Halle) - the development of speech sounds and the processes of conscious and unconscious interference are analyzed.
- Psycholinguistic approach - the effect of interference on subconscious processes in the process of learning a second language is studied.

One of the most common manifestations of phonemic interference is the adaptation of phonetic elements of a foreign language to the sound system of the native language. For example, the soft consonants existing in Russian have difficulties in pronouncing them due to the lack of a corresponding equivalent in Uzbek.[7]



Causes of Phonemic Interference

There are several reasons why phonemic interference occurs:

1. Differences in phonemic systems: Each language has its own phonemic system. A phoneme that exists in one language may not exist in another language or may be pronounced differently. For example, Uzbek has the phoneme /g'/ (e.g., "goose"), but English does not, so English speakers have difficulty pronouncing this sound.
2. Pronunciation habits: The pronunciation habits of the first language (native language) affect the learning of a second language. For example, Uzbek speakers have difficulty pronouncing the English sounds /θ/ (e.g., think) and /ð/ (e.g., this) because Uzbek does not have such sounds. As a result, they may replace these sounds with /s/ or /z/.
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Types and manifestations of phonemic interference

The main types of phonemic interference can be manifested in several ways:

1. Substitution: A phoneme of one language is replaced by a similar but different phoneme of another language. For example, 1) Uzbek speakers can replace the English /w/ sound (e.g., water) with the Uzbek /v/ sound, pronouncing it as "vater". 2) The English /θ/ sound is replaced by /s/ or /t/ in Uzbek (think → sink or tink).
2. Sound lengthening or shortening - in some languages, long vowels are pronounced as short vowels. For example, we can take the English words ship and sheep. Fonemik interferensiyaning asosiy turlari bir necha shaklda namoyon bo'lishi mumkin:
 1. Substitution: A phoneme in one language is replaced by a similar but different phoneme in another language. For example, 1) Uzbek speakers may replace the English /w/ sound (e.g., water) with the Uzbek /v/ sound, pronouncing it as "vater". 2) The English /θ/ sound is replaced by /s/ or /t/ in Uzbek (think → sink or tink).[9]
 2. Lengthening or shortening of sound – in some languages, long vowels are pronounced as short vowels. For example, we can take the English words ship and sheep.
 3. Dropping or gaining of sound – for example, the addition of extra /y/ or /i/ sounds when pronouncing Uzbek words in Russian.
 4. Underdifferentiation: Phonemes that are perceived as meaningful differences in one language are not differentiated in another language. For example, although the phonemes /k/ and /q/ are differentiated in Uzbek (e.g., кол – "lake" and кол – "hand"), Russian speakers may pronounce these sounds as the same.
 5. Overdifferentiation: Sounds that are not differentiated in one language are differentiated in another language, but the learner overuses this distinction. For example, although /p/ and /b/



are differentiated in English, some Uzbek speakers may overuse this distinction and use it in the wrong context.

6. Reinterpretation: A phoneme from one language is adapted to the phonemic system of another language, but is misinterpreted. For example, Russian speakers may pronounce the French /ʁ/ sound (e.g. Paris) as the Russian (p) - /r/ sound.

Consequences of phonemic interference

Phonemic interference affects speech intelligibility and communicative effectiveness. The following consequences can be observed:

1. Pronunciation errors: Phonemic interference causes pronunciation errors, which make it difficult to understand the speaker's speech. For example, an Uzbek speaker may pronounce the English word ship as sheep, because the sounds /ɪ/ and /i:/ are not distinguished in Uzbek.
2. Communication barriers: Phonemic interference can cause misunderstandings between speakers. This is especially problematic in formal or professional settings.
3. Accent formation: Phonemic interference causes an accent to appear in the speaker's speech. For example, Uzbek speakers may have an Uzbek accent when speaking English.
4. Difficulties in language learning: Phonemic interference creates difficulties in the process of learning a foreign language, as students have problems adapting to the new phonemic system.

Conclusion

Phonemic interference is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs when the phonemic system of one language affects the phonemic system of another language. This phenomenon leads to pronunciation errors, communication barriers, and accent formation in a bilingual environment or during the process of learning a foreign language. The main causes of phonemic interference are differences in phonemic systems, pronunciation habits, and problems in distinguishing phonemic contrasts. Methods such as phonetic exercises, contrastive analysis, and listening exercises are used to reduce this phenomenon. The study of phonemic interference is of great importance in linguistics and serves as an important tool in language learning and analyzing bilingualism.

Phonemic interference is a linguistic phenomenon that is widespread in bilingual and multilingual settings, affecting phonetic systems. Studying the causes and consequences of its occurrence is important for the fields of linguistics and pedagogy. It is necessary to use scientifically based approaches to reduce phonemic interference. Future research in this area should include more in-depth linguistic and experimental analyses.

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