

## LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCE IN TEACHING GERMAN AS A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE

### ЛІНГВІСТИЧНА ІНТЕРФЕРЕНЦІЯ ПРИ ВИКЛАДАННІ НІМЕЦЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ДРУГОЇ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ

Makukhina S.V.,

*orcid.org/0000-0001-6269-8406*

*Senior Lecturer at the Department of Public Administration, Law and Humanities  
Kherson State Agrarian and Economic University*

This article deals with linguistic interference, influence of Ukrainian as a native language and English as a first foreign language on the acquisition of German as a second foreign language. The author found that the effect of the English language on the process of learning German was greater than that of Ukrainian. The English and German languages as genetically related systems, on the one hand, demonstrate many similarities resulting in the transfer of forms and structures, which has a positive effect on the acquisition of the new language. On the other hand, they have a number of differences that provoke interference based on likening and false analogies. The Ukrainian language learned in a natural environment affects the process of mastering all new language systems that follow. The interference of Ukrainian with foreign languages is most clearly manifested in prosody and intonation, which is primarily due to the methods of acquisition of these languages. As a rule, one does not start learning English or German before reaching the age of reason. Thus, instead of simply imitating, as in the case of one's mother tongue, the person starts likening the language systems. At the same time, the first foreign language begins to produce a major influence on the second. It should be noted that the interference of English with German is clearly manifested in grammar and vocabulary. Graphic interference between these languages is due to psychological factors. The Latin alphabet creates an illusion of sameness of these different language systems. The degree of interference largely depends on the level of individual linguistic proficiency. Thus, increasing one's linguistic proficiency is an effective way to prevent interference. It would also be of benefit to develop the ability to switch language codes. Common errors produced by a person where the languages are the most similar can be overcome by a targeted reinforcement of the foreign language material learnt.

**Key words:** interference, language contacts, bilingualism, second foreign language, interaction.

У статті розглядаються питання інтерференції, впливу української мови як рідної та англійської як першої іноземної на освоєння німецької мови як другої іноземної здобувачами немовних спеціальностей. Встановлено, що в процесі навчання на німецьку мовну систему більший вплив має англійська мова, ніж українська. Англійська та німецька мови як генетично споріднені системи, з одного боку, виявляють багато подібностей, що призводять до трансферу форм і структур, що позитивно впливає на освоєння нової мовної системи. З іншого боку, вони мають багато відмінностей, що провокують виникнення інтерференції, заснованої на ототожненні та хибної аналогії. Українська мова як система, освоєна у природному середовищі, впливає на процес оволодіння всіма наступними мовними системами. Інтерференція української та іноземних мов найбільш яскраво проявляється у просодії та інтонації, і це пов'язано насамперед зі способами оволодіння цими мовами. Вивчення англійської та німецької мов відбувається, як правило, у свідомому віці, тому на зміну простої імітації, з якої починається освоєння рідної мови, приходять ототожнення мовних систем. При цьому перша іноземна мова починає впливати на другу. Інтерференції англійської та німецької мов найбільшою мірою виявляють себе в граматиці та лексиці. Графічна інтерференція цих мов пояснюється психологічними чинниками. Єдність алфавіту створює ілюзію тотожності різних мовних систем. Ступінь інтерференції мов великою мірою залежить від рівня мовної компетенції індивідів. Підвищення мовної компетенції є дієвим способом запобігання інтерференції. Для зниження ступеня впливу один на одного слід також розвивати здатність індивідів перемикати мовні коди. Універсальні помилки, що виникають у точці найбільшого наближення мов, коригуються шляхом цілеспрямованого закріплення іншомовного матеріалу.

**Ключові слова:** інтерференція, мовні контакти, білінгвізм, друга іноземна мова, взаємодія.

**Problem statement.** In the context of developing international relations, English has become a language that facilitates intercultural communication at all levels: from personal to business communication. Bilingualism is seen as an everyday phenomenon, and knowledge of English is a prerequisite for successful human activity. However, in modern society, multilingualism is becoming the norm. Proficiency in English allows you to create a basis for mastering a second foreign language.

It should be noted that one of the forms of multilingual communication is interference. The term "interference" was borrowed by linguists from the field of physics and was first introduced by members of the Prague Linguistic Circle (1926–1953). The term became widely used in linguistics after the publication in 1953 of the work of the famous American linguist W. Weinreich, "Languages in Contact". The mutual influence of the native language system and the systems of the languages

being studied and deviation from the norms of any of these systems inevitably gives rise to interference.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.**

The problems of interference, the reasons for its occurrence and its influence on the communication process, have attracted the attention of all scientists who study language contacts. E. Haugen defines interference as “a linguistic partial coincidence in which a linguistic unit appears to be an element of two systems simultaneously, or as a superposition of two linguistic systems”. According to some researchers, errors under the influence of interlingual interference most often appear at the initial stage of learning. Without distinguishing the distinctive features of a foreign language, students mechanically transfer the usual norms of their native language to a foreign language, use operations known to them in a new situation and continue to think in the categories of their native language, clothing them in a foreign language material form.

**The aim of this study** is to describe cases of interference in the speech of students of non-linguistic fields studying German as a second foreign language after English, and to determine the degree of interfering influence of the native language and the first foreign language.

**Presentation of the main material.** In the process of learning a second foreign language, three languages come into contact: native language, first foreign language, second foreign language. Despite the fact that English and German languages represent one language group and both languages have much in common, it is quite difficult for non-linguistic students to draw analogies and consciously compare language structures due to insufficient foreign language competence. In this paper, interference is considered as the interference of the norms of one language into the system of another language, which results in graphic, phonetic, lexical, grammatical and other errors. The specificity of errors and their number are associated with linguistic and extralinguistic factors that influence the process of mastering foreign languages. It is known that not all errors are based on interference; there are a large number of other sources of errors, such as basic ignorance, insufficient maturity of skills, and inattention. It is important to separate the errors caused by interference and find ways to prevent and overcome them. Moreover, this can be done by both the teacher and the student [1, p. 60].

It should be emphasized that in interlingual contact, the occurrence of interference is also influenced by such non-structural factors as general proficiency in the means of verbal expression, the degree of proficiency in each language, the method of studying each language, and specialization in the use of

each language depending on the topic and interlocutors. The higher the level of proficiency in the native language, the better the result of learning a foreign language. Developed memory, the ability to verbalize thoughts, analytical thinking significantly increase the success rate in mastering a foreign language [2, p. 102]. These and other extralinguistic factors must be taken into account when studying and teaching foreign languages and viewed as a guide to actively improving the native language, increasing the linguistic competence of the individual and developing his or her mental activity.

When studying several foreign languages, they interact closely and the question arises about the degree of their influence on each other. The native language has an undeniable advantage due to the natural way of its acquisition within the language environment and the primary use. However, the question of the influence of English on the acquisition of German as a second foreign language is open. English interferes with the process of mastering a new language system. It should be noted that when two related languages interact, automatic conversion occurs. This term is mentioned in the work of W. Weinreich on language contacts: “... between genetically related systems there is often a special type of relationship that can be represented as a formula for automatic conversion” [3, p. 202].

From a psychological point of view, the student identifies the German language system with the English system, since both languages are based on the Latin alphabet. Based on this, English and German languages are opposed to the Ukrainian language, and the interference of Ukrainian and English, as well as the interference of Ukrainian and German languages, occurs according to the same rules. In the English-German relationship, German, as a less mastered system, is strongly influenced by English, in which the individual has more competence. Automatic conversion can explain the graphic interference of both languages. For example, at the initial stage of learning German, students often use forms such as *deutsh* instead of *deutsch*, *Shule* instead of *Schule*.

Thus, teaching practice confirms that even basic knowledge of English ensures faster and more effective mastery of the German language. This is due to the following linguistic features of the languages being studied, due to their genetic closeness:

- 1) use of Latin script;
- 2) similarity of some phonetic phenomena;
- 3) grammatical phenomena similar in structure and semantics;
- 4) presence of a common layer of vocabulary of Germanic origin;

5) similar speech patterns studied at the initial stage.

The interaction of the co-studied English and German languages requires special attention, since along with the unifying characteristics, one cannot fail to note a number of characteristic differences, most clearly expressed at the following levels:

- at the phonetic level: word stress, intonation in sentences, spelling;

- at the grammatical level: article, frame construction of sentences, word order in complex sentences, etc.;

- at the lexical level: "false friends" (German *falsche Freunde*) – words similar in spelling or pronunciation, but different in meaning (for example, English *become* and German *bekommen*).

When learning German as a second foreign language, the student nevertheless reproduces the intonation patterns of the Ukrainian language, not English. Prosodic and intonational interference are the most complex types of interference and manifest themselves in the form of a foreign language accent [4, p. 30]. Prosodic interference refers to changes in the implementation of the prosodic system of a non-native language by an individual under the influence of the native language, causing deviations in the prosodic norm of the non-native language. Intonation interference is "the interaction of intonation systems in the speech of a bilingual in a situation of natural or artificial language contact, manifested in modifications of intonation units and intonation means of expression, including melodic, accentuation, rhythmic, temporal and other changes in the sounding utterance". Prosodic and intonational interference of the Ukrainian and German languages is a phenomenon that requires constant work throughout the entire course of learning German. The strong influence of the Ukrainian language on the individual's German speech is explained by the lack of a language environment and poorly developed pronunciation skills. However, in the case of partial graphic and semantic coincidence of words in Ukrainian, German and English, the English pronunciation variant is used in German speech. For example, instead of pronouncing a word with the stress on the last syllable, as is customary in the native language, the English version is used: not *Präsident*, but *Präsident* (from the English *president*), not *Salat*, but *Salat* (from the English *salad*), etc. Thus, interference is presented at all linguistic levels: phonetic, grammatical (morphological, syntactic and punctuation), lexical.

Phonetic interference between English and German occurs when the first language violates the basic phonetic rules of the second foreign language.

For example, at the end of a word or syllable, the voiced consonants *b, d, g* are not devoiced, although such devoicing is typical for the Ukrainian language (instead of *unt, vnd* is pronounced) or assimilation by voicing is used (*daz ba:d* instead of *das ba:t*).

The grammatical system of a language is also subject to external influences. Let us consider grammatical interference as the most characteristic for students studying German after English. An analysis of essays and questionnaires suggests that the most painful point in syntax is the stable word order of a German sentence, both simple and complex, including the frame construction. Obviously, when introducing a new grammatical construction, such as compound verb tenses, modal verbs with infinitives, reflexive verbs, passive voice and all types of German complex sentences, it is necessary, first of all, to turn to visual metaphors to clearly represent the framework construction. It should be noted that at the training stage of each design, sufficient attention should be paid to transformation exercises. For example, you can change the direct word order to the reverse, put a subordinate clause after or before the main sentence, and teach how to ask questions of all types with modal verbs. The interference in the use of verbs with separable prefixes can be considered mixed from the point of view of morphology and syntax. There are three types of errors here: ignoring a separable prefix (*holen* instead of *nachholen*), using a separable prefix as an inseparable one when forming the 2nd and 3rd forms of the verb (*nachholen* – *nachholte* – *nachholt*) and violating word order when the prefix is placed in the middle rather than at the end of the sentence [5, p. 67].

It should be noted that the German language is a living, constantly evolving phenomenon: recently, in the spoken language of Germans, the prefix is increasingly placed closer to the middle of the sentence in order to quickly convey the meaning to the interlocutor, and, in the same way, the frame of other types of sentences with a frame construction is also lost. Therefore, in dialogic speech such an error may not be considered gross, but in a monologue or business letter, students must correctly use verbs with separable prefixes. When explaining this topic, you can also use a visual metaphor or diagram, return to it when necessary, and carefully develop the skill of using verbs, including using contrastive exercises on verbs with separable and non-separable prefixes [6, p. 87]. Among the errors in individual tense forms, students noted the use of the auxiliary verb "haben" instead of "sein" in the past tense *Perfekt*. This error is caused by overdifferentiation of mixed origin, that is, intralingual interference obviously has an interlingual influence. In English, the Past Perfect uses

only one auxiliary verb, "to have", and students who have mastered English find it difficult to understand why verbs of motion and change of state require a different auxiliary verb.

Under the influence of already mastered languages, the vocabulary of the language being studied also undergoes some changes and lexical interference arises, which refers to all changes in the vocabulary and meanings of lexical units that arise as a result of interlingual contacts. A.Yu. Zhluktenko identifies 3 types of lexical interference: 1) borrowing, 2) calque, 3) semantic interference.

In our understanding, borrowing and calques have a positive character and they are one of the ways to enrich the vocabulary of the recipient language. However, semantic interference leads to a narrowing or expansion of the meanings of words in the source language [7, p. 15]. According to some scientists, such interference leads to literalisms. Often, partial graphic similarity of words leads to their false use in the recipient language. For example, the English verb to become is identified with the similarly spelled German verb bekommen (to receive) and is used instead of the verb werden (to become). Taking into account the difficulties of learning German grammatical phenomena, the most common grammar mistakes when learning German as the second foreign language are:

- wrong word order: Ich gut lerne (correct: Ich lerne gut);
- improper use or complete absence of the copular verb sein: Ich Student (correct: Ich bin Student);
- use of the wrong article or its complete omission: Er liest Text (correct: Er liest einen Text);
- improper use of reflexive verbs: Ich erhole am Wochenende (correct: Ich erhole mich am Wochenende – I relax at the weekends);
- preposition errors in prepositional verbs: Wir warten für Sie im Konferenzraum (correct: Wir warten auf Sie im Konferenzraum. – We're waiting for you in the conference room);

- errors in translating the interrogative word when and the conjunction when: Ich rufe dich an, wann ich frei werde (correct: Ich rufe dich an, wenn ich frei werde. – I'll call you when I'll get free);

- verb-forms and tense errors: Er hat gegangen (correct: Er ist gegangen. – He has gone.).

However, the comparative analysis of the grammatical phenomena in German and English shows the possibilities for transference:

- formation of comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives: clean – cleaner, rein – reiner;
- existence of articles and rules of using definite and indefinite articles: It is a table. – Das ist ein Tisch;
- use of modal verbs: I can swim. – Ich kann schwimmen;
- analytical formation of verb forms: I have bought a car. – Ich habe ein Auto gekauft;
- inverted word order in interrogative sentences: Can you swim? – Kannst du schwimmen?

Thus, the specific features of German grammar should be taken into account by teachers and constitute the basis of teaching grammatical phenomena in German as the second foreign language.

**Conclusions.** Thus, when turning to a new language system, an individual uses his previous linguistic experience, and this inevitably entails a violation of linguistic norms. Multilingualism naturally leads to interference. The dominant position in the trinity "Ukrainian – English – German" is occupied by the native language. Although knowledge of both English and German is the result of conscious, motivated learning, usually outside the language environment, both languages are in a relationship of inequality: German is secondary in use and level of proficiency. Interference is an integral part of the process of mastering a foreign language. Universal errors associated with the peculiarities of the language being studied are predicted and corrected already at the initial stage of learning a foreign language. However, individual errors should be corrected as they occur, taking into account the characteristics of each individual.

#### REFERENCES:

1. Aktaş H. Interferenzfehler bei den türkischen Deutschlernenden. *Unveröffentlichte Magisterarbeit*. Konya : Selçuk Universität, Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften. 2011. S. 62.
2. Hufeisen B., Neuner G. Mehrsprachigkeitskonzept – Tertiärsprachenlernen – Deutsch nach Englisch. Strasbourg, 2003. S. 180.
3. Weinreich Uriel. Sprachen in Kontakt. *Ergebnisse und Probleme der Zweisprachigkeitsforschung*. München: Beck. 1976. S. 211.
4. Krumm, H. Sprachenpolitik und Mehrsprachigkeit. Europäisches Fremdsprachenzentrum. Strasbourg, 2003. S.35.
5. Gerbert M. Syntaktisch-lexikalische Interferenz im Englischunterricht. In: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*. 1973. S. 196.
6. Lauterbach E. Sprechfehler und Interferenzprozesse beim Dolmetschen. Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe XXI. Linguistik. Bd. 338. Frankfurt am Main, 2009. S. 145.
7. Adibnia F. Comparison of cognitive inhibition in monolingual and bilingual students. *Language Related Research*. 2020. Vol. 11. P. 1–23.