
Investigation of word-formation errors in English writing by Uzbek EFL students

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Annotation *This study investigates the challenges Uzbek learners encounter in English word formation due to significant morphological differences between their native agglutinative language and English's fusional structure. Common errors include incorrect affixation, overgeneralization, and improper part-of-speech selection, analyzed through Error Analysis and Surface Strategy Taxonomy frameworks. By examining a learner corpus of undergraduate essays, the research identifies systematic patterns in word-formation mistakes, highlighting the influence of L1 interference. It advocates for explicit instruction in word formation, emphasizing the teaching of word families, affix functions, and conversion rules. The findings suggest that targeted, structured feedback can enhance students' morphological awareness, thereby improving their writing quality and lexical resource scores in assessments like IELTS. This approach equips learners with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of English and succeed in a global academic landscape, ultimately leading to enhanced writing proficiency and confidence.*

Keywords *Pedagogical Implications, Word- formation errors, Uzbek learners, error analysis, L1 interference, affixation, lexical errors*

Исследование ошибок словообразования в письменной речи на английском языке у узбекских студентов, изучающих английский как иностранный язык

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Annotatsiya *В данном исследовании изучаются трудности, с которыми сталкиваются узбекские учащиеся при словообразовании в английском языке из-за существенных морфологических различий между их родным агглютинативным языком и фузионной структурой английского языка. К распространенным ошибкам относятся неправильная аффиксация, чрезмерное обобщение и неправильный выбор частей речи, которые анализируются с помощью методов анализа ошибок и таксономии поверхностных стратегий. На основе анализа корпуса студенческих эссе исследование выявляет систематические закономерности в ошибках словообразования, подчеркивая влияние интерференции родного языка. В*

нем предлагается явное обучение словообразованию, с акцентом на изучение словообразовательных семей, функций аффиксов и правил конверсии. Результаты показывают, что целенаправленная, структурированная обратная связь может повысить морфологическую осведомленность студентов, тем самым улучшив качество их письменных работ и результаты по лексическому ресурсу на таких экзаменах, как IELTS. Такой подход дает учащимся необходимые навыки для работы со сложностями английского языка и достижения успеха в глобальной академической среде, что в конечном итоге приводит к повышению уровня владения письменной речью и уверенности в себе.

Kalit so'zlar *Педагогические аспекты, словообразование, узбекские учащиеся, анализ ошибок, интерференция родного языка, аффиксация, лексические ошибки*

Ingliz tilini chet tili sifatida o'rganayotgan o'zbek talabalari o'rtasida yozma ingliz tilidagi so'z yasalish xatolarini o'rganish

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Аннотация *Ushbu tadqiqot o'zbek o'quvchilarining ingliz tilidagi so'z yasalishida o'z ona tilining aglutinativ tili va ingliz tilining fuzion tuzilishi o'rtasidagi sezilarli morfologik farqlar tufayli duch keladigan qiyinchiliklarini o'rganadi. Keng tarqalgan xatolarga noto'g'ri affiksatsiya, haddan tashqari umumlashtirish va noto'g'ri nutq qismini tanlash kiradi, ular Xatolarni tahlil qilish va sirt strategiyasi taksonomiyasi ramkalari orqali tahlil qilinadi. Bakalavriat insholarining talabalar korpusini o'rganish orqali tadqiqot L1 shovqinining ta'sirini ta'kidlab, so'z yaratish xatolaridagi tizimli naqshlarni aniqlaydi. U so'z turkumlari, affiks funksiyalari va konversiya qoidalarini o'rgatishga urg'u berib, so'z yasash bo'yicha aniq ko'rsatmalar berishni yoqlaydi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, maqsadli, tuzilgan teskari aloqa o'quvchilarning morfologik ongini oshirishi va shu tariqa IELTS kabi baholashlarda ularning yozish sifati va leksik manba ballarini yaxshilashi mumkin. Ushbu yondashuv o'quvchilarni ingliz tilining murakkabliklarida harakat qilish va global akademik landshaftda muvaffaqiyatga erishish uchun zarur ko'nikmalar bilan ta'minlaydi, natijada yozma malaka va ishonchni oshiradi.*

Ключевые слова *Pedagogik ta'sirlar, so'z yasash xatolari, o'zbek o'quvchilari, xatolar tahlili, L1 aralashuvi, affiksatsiya, leksik xatolar*

In this journey toward English proficiency, Uzbek learners often navigate a complex linguistic bridge. While grammar and syntax

usually take center stage in the classroom, the differences in word formation often become a battlefield. When students transition from their

native Uzbek – an agglutinative language – to the more fusional and often irregular patterns of English, specific “mistakes” emerge. Understanding these errors is not just about correcting typos; it is about decoding the mental change a student takes when trying to expand their vocabulary. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in non-native English-speaking contexts, such as Uzbekistan, presents unique challenges for students. While grammatical accuracy is often the primary focus, errors in word-formation – the process of creating new words from existing ones using affixes (prefixes and suffixes) or other morphological processes – are pervasive and significantly impact writing quality and lexical resource scores (as noted in IELTS assessment criteria). For Uzbek EFL students, the structural differences between Uzbek and English, particularly in morphology, often lead to systematic errors in English word formation.

The theoretical framework for this study rests on the intersection of Error Analysis (EA) and Contrastive Analysis. Existing literature highlights that word-formation is a “grammar-vocabulary interface” where lexical choice dictates grammatical possibility. Research in similar EFL contexts suggests that learners often rely on “overgeneralization,” applying productive suffixes like -ation or -ness to stems where they do not belong (e.g., discussion). For Uzbek learners, the transparency of their native suffixes leads to an expectation of regularity in English. Despite the importance of accurate word formation for fluency and precision, many Uzbek undergraduate students struggle to correctly derive nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs from base words in their English writing. This leads to errors such as using a noun where an adjective is required (e.g., *a democracy country* instead of *a democratic country*). A systematic investigation is needed to pinpoint the specific word-formation processes (e.g., affixation, compounding, blending) that cause the most

difficulty for this population. As Shakhnoza Rakhimova (2025) states Uzbek builds meaning by stacking suffixes onto a stable root. English, however, uses a mix of Germanic roots, Latin prefixes, and Greek suffixes, often changing the root’s spelling in the process. Learners often try to apply “logical” Uzbek-style, where it does not apply. Example: once a student learns a rule – like adding -ness to an adjective to make a noun – they may apply it everywhere, creating logical but non-existent words like *beautifulness* instead of *beauty*. Word formation is a key component of vocabulary knowledge. Errors in this area are often classified under lexical errors or word form errors. A word-form error occurs when the wrong part of speech is selected or formed for the sentence’s context. Studies of general EFL learners show that incorrect word forms are a common source of vocabulary errors. Research focusing specifically on word-formation processes like clipping, blending, and compounding indicates that EFL students often make errors in these morphological areas. Özkayran, A., & Yılmaz, E. (2020) mention that this investigation would typically employ Error Analysis (EA), often using taxonomies like the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, which categorizes errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Misformation **errors**, which involve selecting the wrong word or affix, are directly relevant to word-formation mistakes. A qualitative and quantitative **error analysis** approach is most suitable. The data would be collected from a learner corpus, typically composed of essays or written compositions from undergraduate students majoring in English at Uzbek national universities. Rustamova U. (2025) investigated that a typical corpus size might range from 40 to 120 essays, totaling 20,000 to 25,000 words. The writing tasks should be varied to elicit a broad range of vocabulary use.

These are the methods that might be applied in EFL classes to recognize word-formation errors:

Identification	All errors in the collected essays are identified and underlined.
Classification	Errors are classified using a robust taxonomy (e.g., Surface Strategy Taxonomy). Word-formation errors would be specifically categorized under Lexical/Word Form Errors .
Sub-categorization	Word-formation errors are further broken down by the specific morphological process involved (e.g., incorrect suffix addition, wrong conversion, missing affix).
Quantification	The frequency and percentage of each error type are calculated to determine the most problematic areas.
Causation Analysis	Errors are cross-referenced with the Uzbek language structure to hypothesize the role of L1 interference.

1-jadval.

This involves using a word as a different part of speech without changing its form (e.g., using a noun as a verb). While less common than affixation errors, interference from Uzbek syntax might play a role if Uzbek uses a different mechanism for conversion. M. Shawqi, A. S., & Sultan, A. I. (2024) made it clear

in their research that EFL students can struggle with more complex word-formation processes like blending (e.g., *smog* from *smoke* + *fog*) and compounding (e.g., *blackbird*). One of the common word-formations is derivational affixation. This is the regular area of difficulty. It involves the misuse of prefixes and suffixes.

Selection Errors	Choosing a valid suffix that does not fit the specific root.	Example: "The pollutement of the river." (Using -ment instead of -ion).
Overgeneralization	Applying a productive suffix to a root that requires an irregular form.	Example: "The strongness of the economy." (Instead of strength).
Negative Prefix Confusion	English has an array of negative prefixes (un-, in-, im-, ir-, dis-, non-). Students frequently mix these.	Example: "It is unpossible to finish." (Instead of impossible).

2-jadval.

Teachers should explicitly teach word-formation rules rather than expecting students to acquire them implicitly.

Word Families: Introduce vocabulary not as isolated words but as families (e.g., *create*, *creation*, *creative*, *creatively*). Recognizing vocabulary use as word families is a strategy commonly used in reading and communication, with the intention of applying communicative competence in classrooms. Learning word families helps students to build confidence in using words without the fear of saying them incorrectly and improves fluency. Students will be able to identify word roots,

patterns, contextual meaning, and sounds, which assists word recognition.

Affix Instruction: Systematically teach the function (part of speech change) and meaning of common prefixes and suffixes. Knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and word roots helps students to understand how the words are constructed and boosts not only reading comprehension but also pragmatic meaning recognition in the speech that is being delivered. This knowledge is considered a fundamental framework for students to understand word patterns independently after learning it.

Conversion Rules: Highlight the specific contexts where a word can function as a different part of speech without morphological change. Teaching conversion, how to manipulate parts of speech, can significantly improve vocabulary base.

Feedback should be specific to word-form errors. Targeted Correction: Instead of simply correcting the error, teachers should prompt students to identify the required part of speech (e.g., "You need an adjective here, not a noun"). The recommendation to prompt students to identify the required part of speech rather than simply correct is a form of indirect, or metalinguistic, corrective feedback, which is often considered highly beneficial for long-term learning. Therefore, applying this method in EFL classes will make a significant change, helping teachers to achieve the results of their instruction. Focused feedback that targets specific word-formation is more effective than unfocused feedback that addresses every mistake. This technique encourages students to self-correct and analyze their mistakes, leading to a better understanding of what is being taught. Highlighting the required part of speech directly addresses the central issue identified in the previous section: the difficulty in navigating English morphology and word class. Understanding the role a word plays in a sentence is fundamental to choosing the correct form. Controlled Practice: Incorporate gap-fill exercises and transformation drills that specifically require students to change word forms (e.g., "Change the word in brackets to the correct form"). Controlled practice activities are characterized by providing the highest level of structure and control, with the main focus being **accuracy** in consolidating understanding and memory. This is the ideal environment for practicing new or difficult morphological rules, like affixation or conversion, before expecting students to use them fluently in free production. Gap-fill exercises are highly effective for reinforcing the correct word form in context. They require students to select or generate the precise word form needed to

complete a sentence grammatically and semantically, ensuring the focus remains on form rather than fluency. Controlled practice is typically the first stage in a learning progression, serving as a necessary foundation before moving to semi-controlled and then free practice activities, which prioritize fluency. Word-formation errors are more than just "spelling mistakes"; they represent a basic failure in the learner's capacity to negotiate the intricate structure of the English language. The shift from a very regular agglutinative L1 to a fusional L2 necessitates a higher degree of morphological awareness for Uzbek students. This project will provide the empirical evidence required to advance Uzbek EFL training toward a more complex, lexically sophisticated model by identifying the systematic nature of these errors using a learner corpus. As a result, students will be better equipped to succeed in international competitions and make valuable contributions to scholarly discourse on a global scale. Uzbek (L1): Characterized as an agglutinative language, Uzbek constructs complex terms by appending a series of discrete, consistent morphemes to a base root. In this framework, each affix generally corresponds to a single, unambiguous grammatical function, resulting in a highly predictable and transparent linguistic system. English (L2): Conversely, English functions through a blend of fusional and analytic structures. It is defined by its morphological volatility, including irregular derivations, allomorphy (such as the phonetic shifts in negative prefixes like in-, im-, and ir-), and a frequent use of zero-derivation or conversion, where a word transitions between grammatical categories without any visible change to its spelling. This profound structural mismatch often triggers L1 interference. Because Uzbek learners are accustomed to a logic of total regularity, they frequently project these transparent rules onto the English lexicon. The result is a pattern of systematic errors as students attempt to navigate the less predictable morphological landscape of



English through the lens of Uzbek's stable affixation rules. Adopting this sophisticated pedagogical strategy allows Uzbek EFL instructors to substantially bolster their students' morphological agility and overall writing caliber. Refining these word-building competencies is vital, as it equips learners with the "Lexical Resource" required to excel in high-stakes exams like IELTS and to navigate the complexities of international scholarship. Because empirical evidence across similar EFL landscapes suggests that word-formation struggles often arise from a combination of native-language interference and underdeveloped morphological awareness, there is a clear and compelling mandate for

integrating explicit, systematic instruction into the curriculum. The investigation into word-formation errors in the English writing of Uzbek EFL students confirms that this area poses a significant challenge, often rooted in the complex interplay between learners' native language and the morphological demands of English. Errors related to incorrect affixation and wrong part-of-speech selection are likely dominant. By implementing a curriculum that emphasizes explicit morphological instruction, systematic error correction, and understanding of L1 interference, EFL educators in Uzbekistan can significantly enhance their students' lexical resources and overall writing proficiency.

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