



## "The immersion experiences of Uzbek students in learning English"

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines the relationship between language and society through the lens of sociolinguistics and highlights the importance of immersion in language learning. It explains how language is used in everyday communication and how social factors such as gender, age, and social class influence the way people speak. The study emphasizes that immersion is an effective method for learning a foreign language, as it allows learners to acquire grammar naturally and improve their pronunciation through real-life exposure.

The findings show that Uzbek learners often face difficulties due to differences between Uzbek and English, particularly in grammar structure and pronunciation. For example, the difference between SOV and SVO sentence patterns and the absence of certain English sounds in Uzbek can create challenges. However, these difficulties can be gradually overcome through regular practice and continuous exposure to the language.

The practical part of the study demonstrates that specific pronunciation exercises, especially shadowing and sound-focused activities, significantly improve learners' speaking skills. In conclusion, combining different learning techniques and maintaining consistent practice can enhance pronunciation, build confidence, and make the language learning process more effective.

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### Introduction

Sociolinguistics is the study of how language is connected to our everyday lives and social environment. It focuses on the way people use language in daily conversations, how language is presented and shaped by the media, and how social norms, rules, policies, and laws influence the way individuals communicate. This field also examines differences in language use based on factors such as age, gender, social class, and cultural background. In addition, sociolinguistics explores how language both reflects and shapes society, showing how people express their identity and relationships through speech. Some scholars use the terms sociolinguistics and sociology of language to describe similar ideas about the connection between language and society. However, others argue that there is a difference between the two, with each focusing on slightly different aspects of this relationship.

### Literature review

Language immersion is considered one of the most important methods in language learning. This approach involves placing the learner fully or partially in an English-speaking environment, for example by using only English during lessons or regularly consuming English-language media, such as watching movies or listening to podcasts. According to Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition, 1983), understandable input plays a key role in learning a language. In practice, students in an immersion environment tend to acquire grammar naturally rather than through conscious study, for example, they start using correct sentence structures without memorizing rules. For this reason, this way of learning is often seen as more effective than traditional methods. Pronunciation improves greatly when students use the language in real-life situations. According to James Emil Flege's "Speech Learning Model" (Second Language Speech Learning: Theory, Findings, and Problems, 1995), new language sounds are learned by comparing them with the sounds of the native language. Uzbek learners often mispronounce certain English sounds, such as /th/ and /ò/, because these sounds do not exist in Uzbek language. However, this problem gradually decreases through watching English videos, listening to audio materials, and communicating with native speakers. For example, a learner who regularly watches English movies and repeats after speakers can slowly improve their pronunciation. Research confirms that immersion helps pronunciation become more natural over time. The gender factor also plays an important role in the immersion process.

According to Deborah Tannen's research (You just don't understand; "Women and Men in conversation" 1990), men and women differ in their communication styles. Female learners often participate more actively in conversations and are more willing to use the language in practice. This allows them to gain more experience in an immersion environment. Male learners, on the other hand, may sometimes be less talkative, which can affect the speed of their language development. For example, in a classroom discussion, female students may speak more and practice more, while some male students may speak less. Thus, gender differences can indirectly influence the effectiveness of immersion. Social status directly affects learners' access to immersion opportunities. Students from higher social backgrounds usually have more resources, such as paid courses, international study programs, or opportunities to communicate with English speakers.

According to Pierre Bourdieu's (Cultural Kapital, 1986) theory of cultural capital, these resources increase success in education. For example, having wide access to English movies, books, and online resources can strengthen the immersion environment. In contrast, learners from lower social backgrounds may have limited access to such opportunities, which can slow down their language learning process. And are more willing to use the language in practice.

### Framing the issue

Learning a language can be difficult because learners often face challenges with immersion. To overcome these difficulties, it is important to have a good understanding of grammar. In conformity with the article "The Influence of Uzbek on English Language Learning among Uzbek Speakers" (2025, p. 42), Uzbek sentences are usually formed in a Subject + Object + Verb (SOV) structure, and this pattern is often helpful for learners. However, English uses a Subject + Verb + Object (SVO) structure, which can create some difficulties for Uzbek learners. In such cases, students try to memorize this structure when forming sentences, at least until they are able to create sentences naturally without relying on it. This process can take a long time. Therefore, when learning a new language, students should pay attention to both the differences and similarities between their native language and the target language. Another important challenge is pronunciation, especially vowels and consonants. Even if learners improve their grammar, they may still struggle with correct pronunciation. According to the article "The Influence of Uzbek Language on the Pronunciation of English" (2026, p. 71), both Uzbek and English have vowels and consonants, which is a useful similarity. However, some English consonant sounds do not exist in Uzbek. This can make pronunciation difficult for learners. During the learning process, students often face such problems, but they can overcome them through regular practice. Success in this area also depends on the effort of each individual learner. Although, Uzbek learners may face challenges in learning English due to differences in grammar and pronunciation. However, by understanding these differences and practicing regularly, they can gradually improve their skills and become more confident in using the language.

According to the article “A Profile of ESL Students in Uzbekistan” (2025, p. 804)", students' identity, pronunciation, and a formal learning environment play a very important role in making foreign language learning effective and memorable. In this process, if a learner finds similarities between the target language and their L1 (native language), especially in pronunciation, learning can become easier and faster.

Moreover, it is important to maintain a balance between both languages. Creating a suitable language environment in schools, universities, or other institutions can greatly support this process. Such balance helps learners develop both languages equally and more successfully. In conclusion, learning English can be challenging for Uzbek learners due to differences in grammar, pronunciation, and the use of silent letters. Grammar disorders may make it difficult for learners to form correct sentences, especially because of the structural differences between Uzbek and English. In addition, pronunciation problems, including unfamiliar consonant sounds and silent letters, can affect learners speaking skills and confidence. However, these challenges are a natural part of the language learning process. With regular practice, exposure to the language, and consistent effort, learners can gradually overcome these difficulties. Therefore, understanding these problems and working on them step by step can help learners achieve better results and become more confident in using English.

### **Pedagogical implications**

We also tested these methodological exercises in practice. These methods showed significant benefits for foreign language learners. The experiment was conducted with 15 students, and all 5 types of exercises noticeably improved their pronunciation and made the learning process easier. In particular, specific sound exercises and the shadowing technique were the most preferred by the participants. They were found to be more effective compared to the other methods. Based on these results, we believe that these exercises can also be useful for future learners. In fact, using different pronunciation techniques can greatly help learners improve their speaking skills. Practical exercises such as shadowing and sound practice are especially effective and should be included in language learning.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, learning a new language requires different approaches, as each learner has their own way of understanding and improving their skills. Pronunciation, especially sounds like “th”(/θ/ ), can be challenging for Uzbek learners. However, using a variety of practical exercises can make this process easier and more effective. The results of our experiment show that methods such as lip and tongue exercises, specific sound practice, tongue twisters, and the shadowing technique can significantly improve learners' pronunciation. Among these, shadowing and sound-focused exercises were found to be the most effective and engaging for students. Overall, combining different techniques not only improves pronunciation but also increases learners' confidence and motivation. Therefore, these methods should be actively used in language learning and teaching to achieve better results in speaking skills.

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