

FUTURE ENGLISH IN UZBEKISTAN

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Annotation: The article discusses Future English in Uzbekistan.

Key words: work, education, solution, teacher, classroom, effective, prospect, market.

On 15 August 2019 the British Council and the Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed a letter of agreement on running the Future English project in Uzbekistan. The overall aim of the programme is to address the reported and perceived problem of low level of English skills of school leavers who are entering work or tertiary education. The first year of the project was focused on conducting the research to generate reliable and valid data to identify and inform solutions.

There are two strands in the research: English Impact – aimed at building a multi-dimensional profile of English capability of school students that will help to diagnose the impact policy decisions can have on the development of learning systems: curriculum, delivery and assessment.

Teacher needs analysis research strand that help shape future policies aimed at improving and developing effective national CPD (continuous professional development) systems with the ultimate aim of improving teaching skills and practices in the classroom which will lead to improvement of learning outcomes and ensure that students are better equipped to advance in higher education, become internationally mobile and increase their employability prospects in the labour market. The first strand of the research due to pandemic caused by Covid-19 was postponed for the later time when the situation around Covid-19 in Uzbekistan

becomes more stable and the testing will be safely run in the sampled schools in Uzbekistan.

The second strand of the research was aimed to establish a better understanding of English language teaching across Uzbekistan and reasons for the reported low levels of English language skills of school leavers. Two phases can be identified in this strand of the research.

English language teaching in Uzbekistan

The research on English language teaching in Uzbekistan for the Future English project was run by the University of Leicester. Over a period of 3-4 months at the end of 2019 the University in partnership with the British Council and the Ministry of public education of the Republic of Uzbekistan collected a variety of data covering a range of topics including the motivation of students to learn English, their aspirations and learning preferences, as well as the classroom practices and perceptions of their English teachers. In the first instance, a large sample of Uzbek English teachers were asked to complete a detailed online survey.

This was followed by a 2-week research visit during which a range of activities were conducted, which included lesson observations, interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, and the collection of relevant documentation including lesson plans and curriculum descriptions. As the result of this two-stage research University of Leicester prepared a report that provides all details of the data gathered, the analysis and interpretation of that data, and subsequent recommendations. The report was shared with the Ministry of public education. The report can be found in the attachments

English language curriculum reform: Findings and Recommendations

Based on the findings and key recommendations of the report prepared by the University of Leicester and to support large scale reforms in public education sector in Uzbekistan the British Council initiated a short-term project aimed at supporting the English language curriculum development in public education.

Cambridge Partnership for Education (University of Cambridge) was successfully selected among other interested UK education institutions to provide best expertise

to: undertake an initial desk research report into curriculum reform work in the last 4 years, engage with key stakeholders and analyse baseline data develop a national English curriculum team that can drive changes in public education curriculum develop national English curriculum delivery strategy articulating key principles, processes and phases as well a draft structure of the new English language curriculum for public education.

On 28 April the results of the project were presented to the Ministry of public education and key recommendations discussed. The executive summary of the report with key recommendations can be found in the attachments.

Since Uzbekistan becomes more open, especially University students, are embracing the United States as well as the rest of the Western world. At many Universities across the capital, Tashkent, many Uzbek students are willing to learn English language. Studying English has tangible benefits, which Uzbeks are already using to make a profit. According to the Caspian Policy Center, tourism in Uzbekistan has "nearly increased five-fold over the last three years". Uzbek people with knowledge of the English language are able to create an advantage for themselves in the tourism industry, especially as tour guides and owners of tour companies.

As our president mentioned in his speech: "If someone wants to take master's degree, he should learn English".

Under the chairmanship of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, a video conference on measures to improve the system of teaching foreign languages was held on 6 May. Every year in our country, several areas of knowledge are determined, the development of which is given priority attention. This year physics and foreign languages have become such areas.

Today, teaching in foreign languages is conducted in 25 universities in our country. In 2016, there were only 7 such universities. Over the past 3 years, the number of applicants who have received an International language certificate has increased tenfold.

"The time has come to create in our country a new system of teaching foreign languages, which will become a solid foundation for the future. Since we set ourselves

the goal of building a competitive state, from now on, graduates of schools, lyceums, colleges and universities must be fluent in at least two foreign languages. This strict requirement should become the main criterion for the work of the head of each educational institution" -said Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev.

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