

IMPLEMENTING TEACHER-TRAINING COURSES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN TASHKENT, AKKURGAN

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ANNOTATION

Pursuing higher education plays a big role in many parts of the globe, therefore, enrollment for universities has become even more compatible compared to previous years among school leavers. Due to the recent changes in the governmental laws in terms of education, it has become more practical to gain the maximum score for entrance state examinations in some subjects, particularly in English. In spite of this, providing high-stake exam instructions especially in rural areas is a serious issue, for instance, at school number 8, in Tashkent province, Akkurgan district. Moreover, instructors' insufficient knowledge is another setback to prepare school-leavers to achieve CEFR B2. Our argument is that the above mentioned challenges could be best addressed by initiating effective teacher-training programs in line with preparing seniors to hold CEFR B2 in an attempt to increase the possibility of enrollment for higher education for candidates in far off destinations.

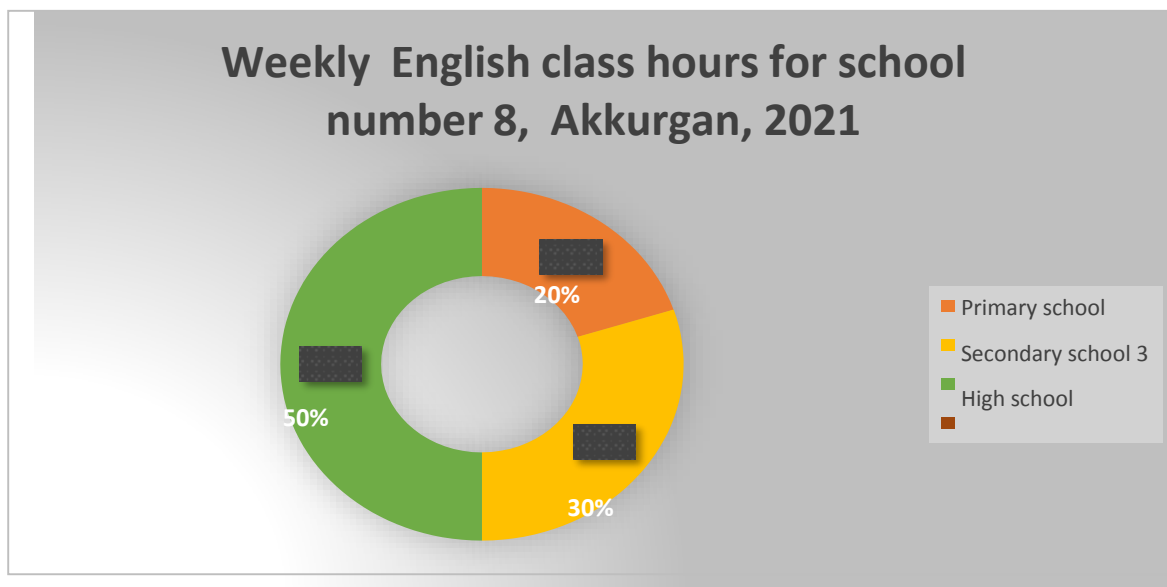
Over the past few decades Uzbekistan has witnessed numerous notable changes in many aspects of life such as educational, demographic, social-economic, spiritual shifts. Especially, on the one hand, education has experienced promising steps by improving the quality, increasing the number of candidates applying for higher education. On the other hand, Uzbekistan government has introduced a number of practical and well-decided strategic laws in an attempt to ensure productive and meaningful instruction in all spheres.

Uzbekistan, like many other countries around the world, has passed a law to recognize the verification of CEFR certificate. Like Canada, CEFR plays different roles in Uzbekistan. It, for example, gives the chance of providing maximum score for enrollment for national universities around Uzbekistan (CEFR B2 should be achieved), moreover, moving from one grade to another in English language, it is scaled according to the standards of CEFR. Other than that, it has an irreplaceable role, too. To put it simply, teachers with CEFR C1 are given up to 30% promotion bonus for their salary depending on the remoteness of the educational organization. The paper highlights the strategies towards the importance of teacher training in the increase of preparing seniors to obtain a place in higher institutions with the help of Common European Framework Reference.

CONTEXT

Tashkent province, Akkurgan district has approximately fifty public schools and among them school number 8 has grabbed my attention as I took a nine-year education at this school. Let us turn to the demographic data regarding this school. According to the statistics, there are roughly 650 schoolchildren at this educational setting, being one third of them males, while two thirds are females. If we look at the number of teachers, approximately 80 educators teach children different subjects. Turning to the weekly English classes, primary schoolchildren are

provided minimum 2 hours' instruction, while secondary schoolchildren receive twice as many classes as the primary school, whilst for high school learners 5 hours are allocated per week
Table 1



It should be mentioned that there are overall 4 English teachers three of whom are females and the other one is male. It is interesting to note that one of the English teacher's previous major

was psychology, and after taking a six-month training in English, she turned to teaching English as a foreign language. At the same time, the rest English instructors graduated from Uzbekistan State World Language university in the faculty of English philology.

English language is taught in a wide range of ways, for example, by task based instruction, inductive and deductive, grammar translation most of whom are quite traditional rather interactive and communicative. According to Rutherford (1987) in order to foster a second language differs significantly from grammar based instructions. Moreover, grammar for a language acquisition means a series of systems which should be integrated with other aspects of language. He further claims that grammar can be seen as a means of a second language development, not the final outcome. Furthermore, it is reported that grammar based instruction is mostly focuses on memorization of specific rules and articulations as well as teacher centered. Table 2 shows the overall survey results which was conducted on February 15, 2021. If we look at the bar graph, it demonstrates that from schoolchildren's point of view, English teachers need special professional improvement in their field. It is true that English teachers' need to meet students' needs and create his\her own language policy whether it is dedicated to one unit as a means of micro level or macro level. According to D. J. Kaiser (2019) English language teachers who teach as a second or foreign language to design their own language proposal and solve pressing problems. By the word "growing" your own "onion" the writer means the fact that every teacher knows her\his own classroom issues and he\she can play the role of agency and make meaningful improvements by being responsible for most of the "layers" of a language proposal.

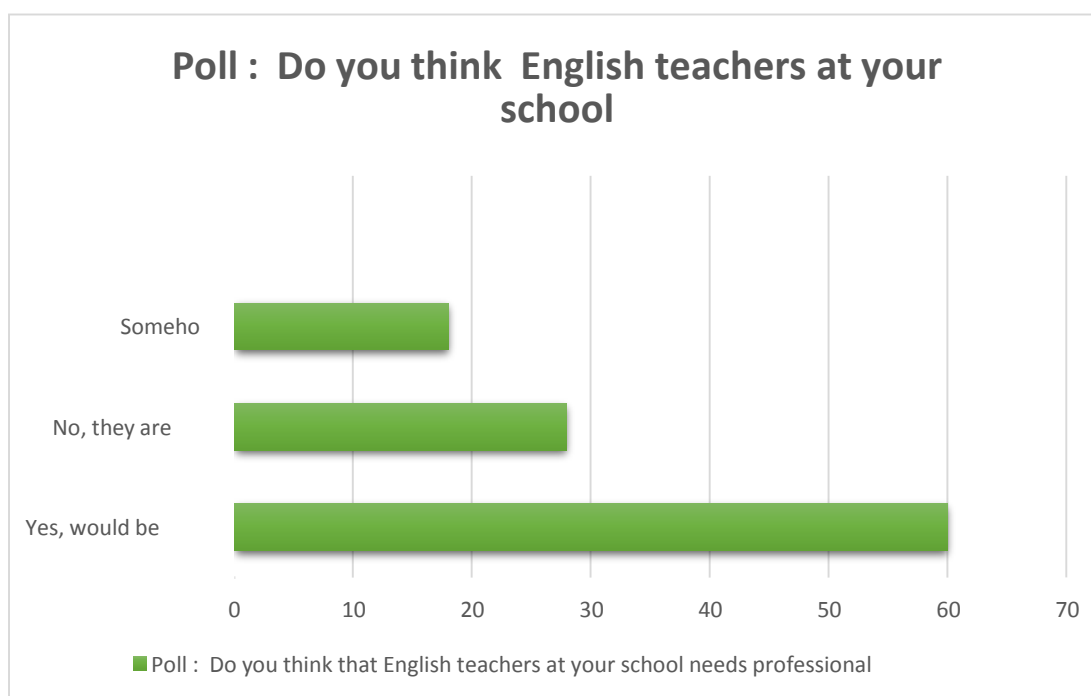


Table 2

While table 3 presents the overall picture of a real English classroom by aspects. This data has been anonymously collected from schoolchildren. Obviously, results reveal the fact that the majority focus is given grammar with 86 percent, while other receptive and productive skills are significantly the least favored having less than one out of every ten. Nonetheless, in order to meet students' down-to-earth needs to achieve CEFR B2, firstly, teachers themselves should look at it from another angle and implement up-to-date methods which can be both meaningful and engaging. It should be pointed out that, today's English classroom audience are in need of innovative ways of acquiring a foreign language, therefore, teachers are required to be aware of utilizing sophisticated technology. In other words, English teachers at my school should be trained to meet the needs of schoolchildren by preparing them to sit in the exam and achieve B2 CEFR certificate. In order to fulfill the expectations, teachers are required to be good at information and communication technologies so that they can have interactive and informative classes in online and offline mode by any chance.

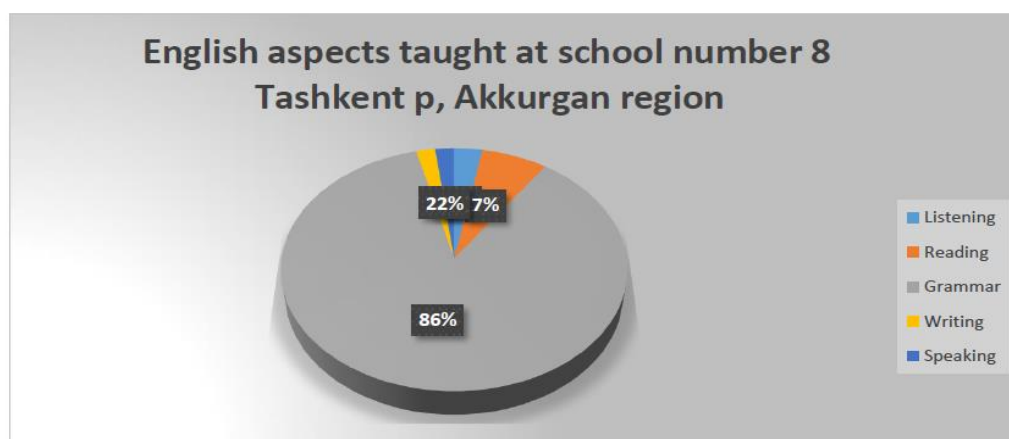


Table 3

Suburban high school in Tashkent province, Akkurgan district has set goals for their students to enroll for higher education. For students in order to gain full grade on English for entrance exam, minimum B2 CEFR National Testing Certificate is required. According to the decree adopted by the Ministry of Cabinet (2017, August 10, № 610) B2 or higher score holders including high school, vocational college and academic lyceum students are given the opportunity to have maximum score on English from 1st January, 2018. There is different English proficiency in this school according to their grade from elementary to pre-intermediate. On a weekly basis, 10th- 11th grade students have English courses 5 times for 45 minutes. In addition, most of them are native Uzbek speakers and talk in Uzbek, rarely in Russian, at home, whilst only 2 % are Russian and Tatar native-speakers.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Firstly, one of the primary goals of this language proposal is to train English language teachers to be able to prepare approximately 40 schoolchildren to get CEFR B2 on a yearly basis by the time they apply for national universities in Uzbekistan. It is also important to train teacher's digital literacy as Kristine (2020) argues that in order to conduct successful and meaningful online classes, teachers should be trained to master their e-competence.

Secondly, increase the number of school leavers to take a place at higher education.

This proposal highlights a number of objectives, too. On top of everything, in order to achieve the above-mentioned goals, the teachers need to be trained to fulfill the current expectations of students. Another element to consider is the idea that suggests longer ours of English classes. To be more precise, my plausible recommendation is to have 80 minutes lessons rather than 45 minutes. I truly believe that firstly, within this estimated amount of time both teachers and students have enough time to have a meaningful task-based, communicative, interactive lesson. I feel that more of than not in Uzbekistan lessons at school last 45 minutes. Naturally speaking, half of the time could be spent on checking homework and as a consequence it is impossible to have collaborative group work activities, get the students to do some solitary activities, not to mention assessment process. Both teachers and learners are part of learning management, ideally, we no larger perceive teachers as simply teachers, learners as simply learners (Allwright, 1984, p. 156). I am deeply convinced that one of the pivotal objectives of this proposal is to create meaningful and purposeful input which can lead students to achieve their aims. This could be done with the help of activities. It should be mentioned that to start with teachers need to create the atmosphere where students will be able to negotiate with one another until mutual understanding is reached (Pica, 1987, 1992; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987). In order to reach its intended objectivity, teachers are advised to pay a close attention to output (production) which is based on focus on form, the connection between form and meaning, and general picture of communication (Pica, Holliday, Lewis, & Morgenthaler, 1989; Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Swain, 1985). More importantly, even though some scholars (Krashen, 1985; Prabhu, 1987; Rutherford, 1987) argued that grammar construction should be aided, according to Chomskyan premise one cannot acquire grammar through explanation due to the fact that no one has adequate explicit knowledge to provide that instruction. Even though particular furniture and gadgets are needed in order to reach intended aims of this proposal, still there are a number of existing facilities are available:

- Classrooms
- Additional supplements such as posters, markers
- Technology (partially) : a TV & DVD set

In an attempt to bridge the gap purposeful and meaningful changes should be made. My argument is that, firstly, due to teachers' insufficient experience, a three-month training should be established. It should be pointed out that teachers should be provided intensive courses whose aims are to update teachers existing methodology as well as digital literacy. At the end of the short-term course, they are required to pass C1 level. Moreover, updating English materials instead of current course books. Having looked through 10th – 11th Pupil's book materials, it has been revealed that even if B1 and B2, it has been mentioned at the front of the course book, the content includes mismatched materials. Thirdly, in order to conduct meaningful and task-based instruction for students, special classroom facilities such as moving chairs, smartboard and extra 3 rooms will be needed with latest technology (PC for per student, headphones et.,) materials will neither be too effortless nor demanding, however, normally challenging (Brown,2004). It should be noted that an English PT plays a big role for most programs as it assists to direct students into their right proficiency level of English lest to allocate time to study higher or lower materials (Brown, 2004; Illionis, 2012). While designing placement tests, validity, practicality, reliability factors should be seriously included. Therefore, I recommend to create at least 4 different level students (if not 2-3) to achieve the goals and objectives by the end of the academic year.

Another recommendation would be using reliable sources and past exam papers to enhance students' knowledge. Another element to consider is the time. Is this project practical enough to bridge the gap? My argument is that with respect to teacher training course, the teachers could be invited for face-to-face evening courses or remotely via Zoom. After 3 months, teachers are to be certified to prepare 10th-11th grade students to prepare for CEFR, B2. At this point, having been placed into proper groups, students are to have 80 minutes' intensive training courses 5 times a week.

- How to use different modern methods to conduct meaningful classes
 - How to help learners with their weak points
 - How to teach students by recognizing cultural awareness and intercultural specifications
- Phase II

After a three-month training course, having had enough insights, now local teachers are ready to prepare 10th and 11th school leavers for CEFR. This requires at least 8-9 months to be fully implemented. Over the course of this period, learners undergo with a lot of task based and communicative language teaching process.

Target Language Features

One the one hand, for trainees, several language components should be enhanced such as listening, reading, speaking (monologue, dialogue, making summary looking at a given text), use of English, essay writing and formal letter. One the other hand, students will need to improve their core 4 skills along with use of English.

Assessment

Assessment plays a big role to identify students' strong and weak points, enable them to be placed in a certain course or even give a chance to be enrolled for a particular discipline (Brush, 1989) In order to check if my proposal effectively implemented both formative and summative assessment should be used. Brown (2010) claims that formative assessment helps learners to improve their performance throughout the course, while summative assessment helps learners to identify their current condition and move up for the next grade. In terms of formative assessment, each class learners will be given positive and valuable washback to level up their proficiency. When it comes to summative procedure, so as to assess teachers' performance, they are to undergo with Cambridge Assessment or CEFR held by National Testing Center. In terms of students, teachers firstly develop valid, authentic, practical and reliable tests after 8 months, students are required to take CEFR B2 level organized by National Testing Center in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Actors

Cooper (1989) argues that with respect to LPP, in order to initiate the program, "who" should be more taken into consideration among other eight components. Zhao & Baldauf (2008b) divide the actors into four categories with their performance (people with power, people with expertise, people with influence, people with interest). As Kaiser (2018) claims that there are a number of actors who will be sitting around the table in accordance with my LPP.

On top of everything, in order to align the language issue with political interest (Kaplan & Baldauf, (2007) people with power need to believe that the raised language setback is worthy to address. In other words, formal decisions need to be made by people with influence (Fishman, 1993). For these reasons, my LPP needs the cooperation of Cambridge Assessment Organization that can help with the number of qualified native instructors to train local teachers at school number 8. Secondly, according to Haugen's (1983) corpus planning, having organized initiation phase, now it is time for people with expertise to participate in teacher training program and provide full instruction that can enable teachers to prepare students for CEFR B2. As Haugen further adds, experienced people with linguistic knowledge play a big role in LPP due to the fact that they carry out the most important input. Thirdly, in terms of influence phase, Haarmaann (1990) argues that even though this phase has been underestimates comparing to other actors' roles, in fact with the help of this stage, local teachers and school leavers can be influenced by people with prestige from linguistic point of view. Haarmaann (1990) believes that prestige can have the ability to push targets in LPP. In my case, I am going to demonstrate President Shavkat Mirziyoyevich's daughter, Saida Mirziyoyeva (Political leader), to set an example.

SUMMARY

This proposal has been written for the purpose of offering purposeful strategies to bring the gap firstly by organizing teacher training program for CEFR B2 instruction as well as upgrading their ICT skills for less proficient local teachers, and secondly guaranteeing school leavers to hold CEFR B2 by the time they apply for universities. Teacher training program for improving the digital literacy and professional development for CEFR B2 is highly needed due to the fact

that Al-Fraihat et al., (2020, p. 67) argue that technology and education is believed to yield positive results to improve students' knowledge. While Akhtar (2006) believes that it is natural that degree holders tend to experience various setbacks over the course of their lives and only when teachers have broader vision, full capability and collaborative atmosphere, they can then shed light on shaping promising future generation.

By way of conclusion, I once again reaffirm that in order to improve the quality of teaching to meet the national and European standards, school leavers are strongly in need of CEFR B2 certificate to enroll for higher education and earn the maximal score on English. Not only CEFR B2 provides students with strong communicative and practical skills, but it is much better as a means of tool compared to solo grammar rules. So as to achieve this level, not only in the central parts of Uzbekistan, but also in most far off areas English language teachers should be provided special second language acquisition to prepare students to reach their academic goals. As Zao (2001) argues that in micro language planning active participants are teachers and learners, therefore much depends on them.

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