



GLOBAL ELT STANDARDS AND LOCAL CLASSROOM REALITIES IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: This article explores the intersection of global English Language Teaching (ELT) standards, particularly the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), with the practical realities of English instruction in Uzbekistan. While Uzbekistan has embraced CEFR-aligned reforms to enhance English proficiency, challenges persist in aligning these standards with local classroom contexts. The discussion highlights the efforts undertaken to reform curricula, implement continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers, and address disparities between urban and rural educational settings. The analysis draws upon recent initiatives and research to assess the effectiveness of these reforms and their implications for English language education in Uzbekistan.

Key words: English Language Teaching, CEFR, Uzbekistan, curriculum reform, teacher professional development, language proficiency, educational policy

Introduction

Over the past decade, Uzbekistan has undergone major educational reforms aimed at improving English language teaching (ELT). In line with its national development strategies and growing international engagement, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education has promoted the CEFR as the benchmark for language proficiency (Ministry of Public Education, 2020). This alignment seeks to produce graduates capable of functioning in multilingual, global contexts. However, the real-world integration of such frameworks into local classrooms reveals a complex set of challenges.

One of the primary obstacles is the inconsistency in teacher preparedness. While the CEFR encourages communicative competence and learner autonomy, many English teachers in Uzbekistan have been trained in traditional grammar-translation methods, and professional development programs are not always adequately aligned with CEFR principles (Umirzakova, 2024). A study by the British Council (2021) found that although awareness of CEFR is increasing among Uzbek teachers, a significant number still lack the practical knowledge to implement it effectively.

Assessment practices also present difficulties. National exams and university entrance assessments continue to prioritize grammar and vocabulary over communicative ability, leading teachers to “teach to the test” rather than foster holistic language skills (Nazirova et al., 2023). This mismatch between assessment and instruction creates confusion and diminishes motivation for adopting more interactive, student-centered teaching strategies.

Moreover, disparities in access to resources exacerbate the urban-rural divide. Urban schools are more likely to benefit from international partnerships and modern language labs, while rural schools often lack basic materials such as authentic listening recordings or internet access.

Consequently, despite centralized efforts to standardize instruction, implementation varies widely depending on local context and institutional capacity.

Sociocultural factors must also be considered. English is often perceived more as an academic requirement than as a tool for real-life communication, which affects both learner motivation and parental support (Saydibragimova, 2024). Without stronger cultural engagement and a clear understanding of the practical value of English, the uptake of CEFR-aligned strategies may remain superficial.

To bridge the gap between global standards and local realities, policymakers must prioritize contextualization. Training programs should incorporate practical applications of CEFR principles tailored to local needs, and assessment systems should be restructured to evaluate communicative competence. Furthermore, investment in infrastructure and community awareness is essential to ensure that reforms are inclusive and sustainable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while global ELT standards provide a valuable framework for language education reform, their success in Uzbekistan depends on their meaningful adaptation to local classroom conditions. A nuanced, context-sensitive approach is essential for these reforms to yield tangible improvements in English language learning outcomes.

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