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LANGUAGE PLANNING PROPOSAL

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ABSTRACT

This article indicates some issues in increasing students' ability to communicate effectively in English using the language specific to their professional fields by the time they graduate from university and reach B2. Also, the article demonstrates methods of the teachers as well as the aim of the curriculum. In addition, recommendations are provided in order to support students to achieve their goals.

KEYWORDS

Assessment system, teaching materials, methodology, problematic areas, higher education institutions, educational staff, language planning.

INTRODUCTION

The English language is considered to be one of the widely learned second languages and the official language in almost 67 countries. The influence and role of English nowadays are gaining higher speed in the world as well as in Uzbekistan. The main reason for this phenomenon is the expanding communication with the world after the independence and increasing speed of information exchange. In fact, since the declaration

of independence the importance of English has risen in every sphere of Uzbek people's life. Moreover, on December 10, 2012 a decree "On measures to further improve of foreign language learning system" was signed by the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov. It worth noting that, according to this decree, university modules especially in technical and international areas should be offered

in English and other foreign languages at higher education institutions. As a result of this decree most of the teachers received bonuses on top of their salaries if they have reached C1 level in CEFR and got certificates which are proved by National Testing Centre, which showed its positive impact on the quality of educational staff and became the main employment criteria in our country. Although English language planning in Uzbekistan has improved since the independence, the language policy is still one of the problematic areas in higher education. This is due to the fact that, implementation involves many things such as concrete steps, the allocation of financial resources, devising the time for schedules for completion, evaluation and so on. This proposal addresses the issues of the existing English language planning and implementation in National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek which includes some problematic areas in teaching materials, methodology, syllabus designing, assessment and suggests some ways for their development.

CONTEXT

Educational setting

While growing my own LPP proposal I have chosen National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek as an example. In fact, this university is located in Olmazor district, Tashkent which has about 306,100 inhabitants. In the area of this district there are approximately 37 secondary schools, 1 college, 1 lyceum and 3 universities. The university which I focus on was known as the First Central Asian State university and founded in 1918. This university offers various faculties specialized in different subjects such as Social sciences, Mathematics, Economics, Law, History, Physics, Foreign Philology, Chemistry, Biology, Geography and natural resources and others. According to the statistics, in 2018 the number of

bachelors in this university accounted for 9597, while the number of masters amounted to 806. The university is supporting fundamental researches according to international standards, building partnership with foreign prestigious educational centers and universities. For instance, in recent years educational partnership contracts were signed with the countries such as Austria, Japan, USA, Italy, Malaysia, Israel and so on. In terms of languages used and taught in this university, Uzbek and Russian are predominant, also foreign languages as English and German are offered to students by the end of the 3rd year. English language proficiency level of most students are A2 and B1. In fact, English classes are conducted twice a week and they last for 80 minutes. At English lessons the whole group is divided into 2 and each of them consists of 15 students. In this university 1180 professors and teachers are employed and 20 of them are English teachers.

Political or Administrative setting

In order to implement the LPP at National University some national and state policies should be considered. For instance, according to the National Standards of Uzbekistan (2013), students of higher education should reach B2 level by the end of the 4th year. This administrative decree about standards was based on Common European Framework Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). However, this level seems challenging to get for most of the students of National University and this is due to the fact that, they are not taught and assessed properly in order to reach this level. Moreover, today in the Republic of Uzbekistan great attention is given to the radical reorganization of the educational system that will give an opportunity to raise it to the level of modern standards. In order to achieve the aims and tasks put forward by the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" (1997) and

the “National Programme of Personnel Training” (1997) the complex system of reorganizing the structure and the content of personnel training, contemporary achievements of culture, technique and technology are being created in the country. However, there are still some problems regarding to these issues such as implementation of modern technology, using non-standardized techniques in teaching foreign languages in National University. According to the laws mentioned above modern multimedia technologies should be used in the process of teaching foreign languages and also the teaching materials should be renewed and made suitable for ESP courses. In addition, the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov highlighted the organization of a complex system of learning and teaching foreign languages in the country, focused on the upbringing of comprehensively developed, educated and intellectual young generation, who can meet the requirements of the modern time. After the Presidential Decree “On measures to further improve of foreign language learning system” (2012) a number of projects have been done as an implementation of this vital document. As was mentioned in this decree modern and new teaching techniques and methods should be utilized while teaching English in all educational settings. This might be because, new approaches in the system of education influences significantly on the learning and teaching of foreign languages, as language is the major factor of person’s development.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Target language features.

According to Azizova (2014), B2 level on foreign language for teaching includes: linguistic competence, speaking competence, sociolinguistic competence, lexical competence, grammatical competence and pragmatic competence. This proposal discusses the

goal of expanding students’ ability to communicate effectively in English using the language specific to their professional fields by the time they graduate from the university and reach B2 level. As nearly all the lessons are conducted in Grammar-Translation Method, the level of students’ oral proficiency is low. To help the target learners succeed in developing speaking skill the existing teaching method should be replaced by Communicative Language Teaching. Hasanova (2007) claims that utilizing CLT can help to make the classes more student-centered which are more effective than existing teacher-centered classes. The main reason for still existing teacher-centered classes is that, from cultural point of view often Uzbek students feel themselves shy and not comfortable in expressing their thoughts directly and freely to their teacher who is elder then them. In fact, this shows their respect. In fact, this is not the right way of teaching the foreign language, because this can affect students’ developing their oral skills and make them feel framed. If CLT method is used instead of Grammar-Translation method the students would be able to improve their speaking skill which is really vital for their future personal development. For instance, for the students majoring in law this skill is very important, as after graduating the university most of them plan to work in the field of international law that require having good oral proficiency in English. In this case this aspect will help them a lot.

Assessment

Bloxham and Boyd (2007) note that, “Assessment practice is judged primarily on whether it effectively measures the intended outcomes of a course of study in a valid, reliable and transparent way.” One of the problematic areas in assessing students of National University is that, it is not reliable and efficient. The result of my observation shows that, even though

students are needed to reach B2 level by the time of their graduation according to the curriculum, in summative assessment they are given standardized grammar and vocabulary tests. This decreases the efficiency of assessment and strongly affects students' performance. To tackle this problem, the assessment system should be changed into more sufficient. Bloxham and Boyd (2007) claim that "assessment tasks should be designed to encourage good quality, 'deep' approaches to learning in the students and they should serve as an effective tool for promoting teaching and learning process." First of all, the suitable teaching materials for ESP courses should be found and the existing curriculum should be changed according to the specialties of students, so that they would be able to use the English language in their future professions. Secondly, the part of objectives in the curriculum needs changing. Specifically, to the major goal of the course which discusses the language level of the students should be added some supportive objectives such as developing students' speaking, reading and writing skills. Moreover, the existing standardized grammar and vocabulary tests should be replaced by skill-based tests. This is due to the fact, having good knowledge in only grammar and vocabulary is not enough for students to reach B2 level. But additional skills such as speaking, reading, writing and listening should be taught properly and the tests should assess these skills in accordance with their specialties. Once new goals and objectives established, it is vital to align assessment tests with them. By doing this the validity of the assessment tests can be increased and it would make the teaching and learning process successful.

INVENTORY

According to the existing inventory, the most problematic areas in the teaching process are

instructors lack of professional knowledge, methodology, especially for specific purpose and

shortage of reliable teaching materials and IT tools. It worth noting that, mostly these factors serve as effective tools for successful teaching and learning a foreign language. In addition, the assessment system is ineffective and it does not measure what it should. Students are given still standardized tests for their summative assessment and in their formative assessment they are taught grammar topics and asked to do some grammar activities which make the learners lose their interest for the subject and cause demotivation. As a result students find expressing their opinions in English challenging and feel anxiety as they do not practice speaking at the lessons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Methods and Practices

First of all, it should be noted that the syllabus of this university which was adapted according to the curriculum given by the Ministry of higher education (macro level) does not include enough topics which are suitable for their specialties. Secondly, the teaching materials and textbooks are out of date and needs renewal. This also decreases the level of motivation of the students for learning the language. Moreover, the classrooms are not equipped with IT tools which plays a vital role in teaching a foreign language effectively. Also it worth mentioning that, most of the classes are conducted in Grammar-Translation method, but in the mid-term and final exams the students' general language skills are assessed. Finally, by the end of the fourth year students are expected to get B2 level even though they are taught only grammar and reading somehow.

In order to improve the current situation existing syllabus should be renewed and added more suitable contexts for the students' specialties. For instance, after graduating the faculty of law a student will need to use the English language in order to get a decent job as an international lawyer and play a significant role in the development of this sphere in our country.

The next objective is to renew all the textbooks according to the syllabus and equip the language rooms with up-to-date IT tools such as projectors, smart-boards, speakers and others which will make the process of teaching and learning more effective. In addition, changing the current GTM to CLT will help the learners to develop their communicative language skills.

This proposed policy will help the students of National University perform well in their summative and formative assessment tests. This is due to the fact that, after changing the curriculum and syllabus according to the students' specialties and changing the teaching method into CLT students will have an opportunity to improve their speaking skill for their needs. Moreover, the use of ICT tools and Internet resources in the English lessons allow teachers to more fully implement a whole range of methodological, pedagogical and psychological principles. In fact, the usage of computers in English classes increases the effectiveness of solving communicative problems and forms a stable motivation for students to learn foreign language activities in class. These factors effect not only their communicative skill but also other skills, because the textbooks also will be changed and all the skills will be connected.

It worth noting that addressing the needs of the all learners is essential for language policy proposal. As we know, in the last decades the emergence of

distance learning has posed a new difficulty for disabled students. In fact, online or distance learning is widely beneficial and can have a great impact if all services and accommodations are made for every disabled student. Taking into consideration the needs of disabled students I would suggest implementing distance and online learning courses so that they would also have an opportunity to complete bachelor degree knowing the English language well. It will be very beneficial for these type of students to learn the language without attending classes and watching the lessons and doing the tasks online.

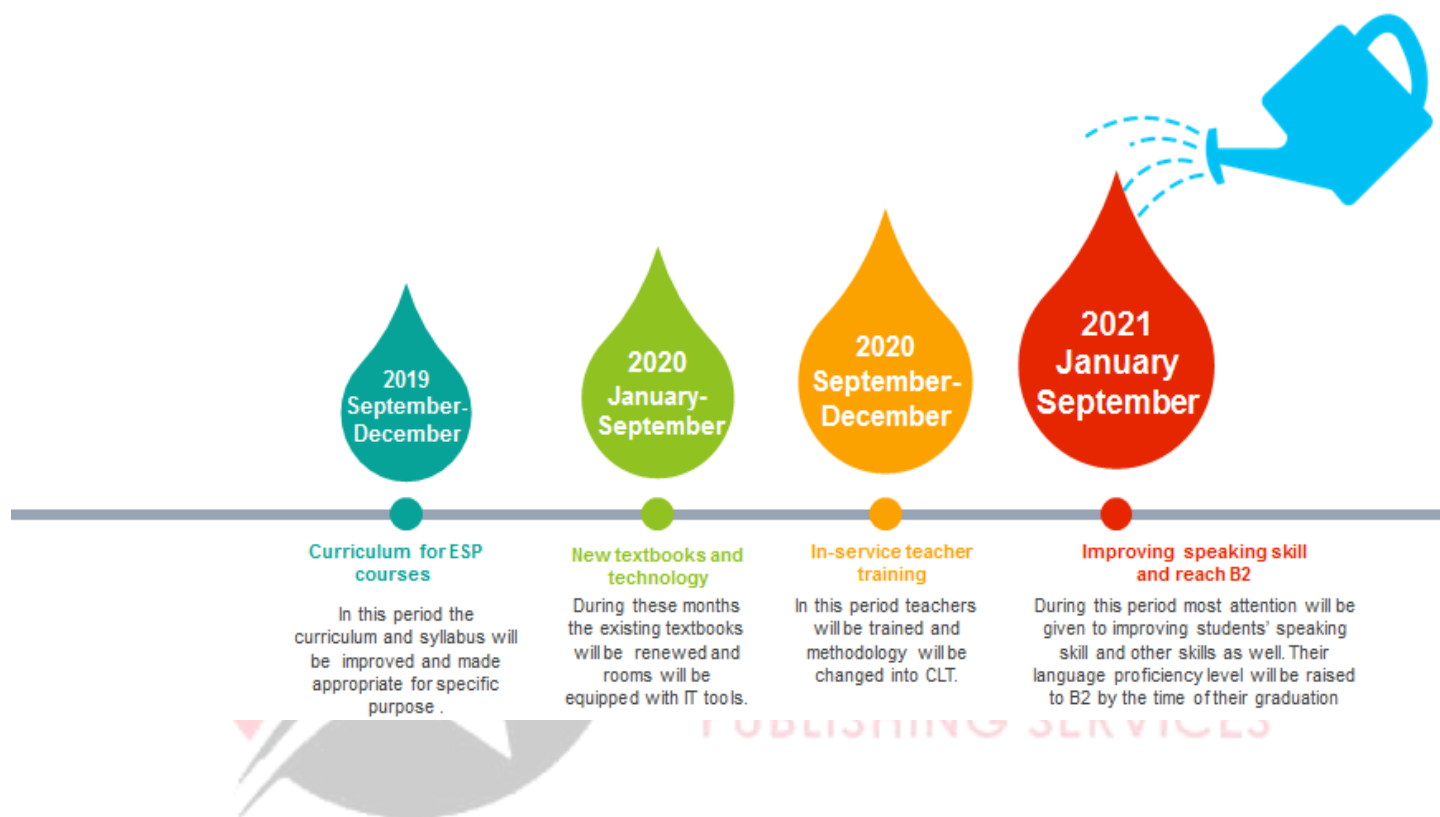
ACTORS

Zhao and Baldauf (2008) suggested categorizing actors into 4 groups: people with power, people with expertise, people with influence to people and people with interest. In this LPP first of all, people with power play important role. They are officials of the government and judicial system which are responsible for financial support which is needed for equipping the teaching rooms with modern technology such as projector, smart-board, speakers and moving desks; organizing in-service teacher training; and so on. Moreover, a person who knows the weaknesses of his university and can ask for some financial help with letter is the principal of the university. He also plays vital role in this planning. Next, micro level but very influential people are teachers. They are responsible for the main part which is giving good knowledge to their students using up-to date methods, approaches, techniques and help them improve their language skills. Last actors are people with high interest, specifically students. Before making some changes and proposing language planning, it is very essential to take into account the learners' needs, ideas and wishes. Because everything is being done for their prosperous future.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE AND FUNDING

Growing my own onion takes 2- year- period and during these years several steps should be taken into account.

Timeline graph below will help you for better understanding of this project. Timeline



For the implementation of this language policy proposal needed amount of money will be taken from the budget of the government and also from the fund of the university itself.

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