

MANAGING THE QUALITY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS: TEACHER DEVELOPMENT, RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Miragzamova Oysha

the 4th year student at 2nd English faculty at

Uzbekistan State World Languages University

oishamiragzamova@gmail.com

Abstract

English has become an important part of school education in Uzbekistan because of the country's growing international cooperation, higher education opportunities, and demand for English-speaking specialists. During the last several years, the government has introduced a number of reforms to improve foreign language education, including changes in the school curriculum, teacher certification, professional development, and the involvement of foreign specialists. However, improving English education is not only a question of what happens inside the classroom. It also depends on how schools manage teachers, resources, professional development, assessment, and support for students.

This study examines the management of English language education in public schools in Uzbekistan. The research uses a qualitative document-analysis approach based on official government statistics, policy documents, reports, and recent studies on English language teaching in Uzbekistan. The findings show that the country has made progress in expanding the teaching of foreign languages and increasing the number of qualified teachers. At the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year, Uzbekistan had approximately 564,900 teaching staff members in general secondary schools, 43.4% more than in 2015/2016. Government data also show positive results from the involvement of foreign language specialists: in 500 schools, students' foreign language proficiency increased from an average of 5% to 15% by the end of the 2023/2024 academic year. At the same time,

problems remain in the areas of regional inequality, continuous teacher development, monitoring of learning outcomes, and the management of teacher certification and financial incentives.

The study argues that future reforms should move from simply increasing resources toward a stronger school-level management system based on measurable learning outcomes, continuous professional development, mentoring, digital monitoring, and targeted support for rural schools.

Keywords: English language education; education management; Uzbekistan; public schools; teacher development; professional development; foreign language education; educational reform

1. Introduction

English is becoming increasingly important in Uzbekistan. It is used in higher education, international business, tourism, information technology, diplomacy, and academic research. As a result, English is no longer viewed only as a school subject. For many students, it is connected with future education and employment opportunities.

The Uzbek government has therefore introduced several reforms aimed at improving foreign language education. Recent reforms have focused on increasing the intensity of foreign language instruction, improving students' speaking and writing skills, introducing second foreign languages, and attracting qualified specialists.

One important reform was introduced for the 2024–2025 academic year. According to the Ministry of Preschool and School Education, foreign language education in grades 5–9 should focus on developing basic knowledge and communication skills, while grades 10–11 should give greater attention to academic writing and speaking. The reform also provides opportunities for some students to study a second foreign language. [1]

However, policy reform alone does not guarantee better learning outcomes. Schools need effective management systems to implement these policies. School leaders have to decide how teachers are supported, how professional development is organized, how students' progress is measured, and how limited resources are distributed.

This issue is particularly important because Uzbekistan has a very large school system. According to the National Statistics Committee, the number of students in general education institutions reached approximately 6.8 million in 2024 and 6.9 million in 2025. The number of teachers also continues to grow. [2]

Research problem

Although Uzbekistan has invested significant effort in foreign language education, there is still a gap between national policy and the conditions in individual schools. Some schools have access to qualified teachers, international specialists, technology, and additional learning opportunities, while others, particularly in rural areas, may have fewer resources.

Therefore, the main problem of this study is: How can English language education in Uzbek public schools be managed more effectively to achieve more equal and measurable learning outcomes?

Research questions

1. What major management reforms have been introduced in English language education in Uzbekistan?
2. What progress and management problems can be identified from recent statistics and reports?
3. What school-level management strategies could improve the quality and equality of English education?

Research objective

The main objective is to analyze the current management of English language education in Uzbekistan and identify practical ways to improve teacher development, resource allocation, monitoring, and learning outcomes.

2. Literature Review

English education in Uzbekistan has been influenced by both national reforms and international approaches to language teaching.

A major issue discussed in the literature is continuous professional development (CPD). The British Council has worked with Uzbekistan's Ministry of Preschool and School Education on developing a more systematic approach to CPD for English teachers. The aim is to move beyond one-time training courses and create a continuous professional learning process. [3]

Research on English teachers in Uzbekistan also points to differences between urban and rural schools. Rural teachers may face problems such as limited access to modern teaching materials, weaker technological infrastructure, fewer opportunities for professional development, and professional isolation. [4]

Another important issue is the relationship between global standards and local conditions. Uzbekistan has adopted international approaches such as CEFR-related language standards. However, international standards cannot be implemented effectively without considering class size, teacher workload, available resources, students' backgrounds, and local school conditions. [5]

Recent research also emphasizes the importance of contextualized professional development for new English teachers. Novice teachers may need mentoring, induction programs, and practical support rather than only theoretical training. [6]

Therefore, the literature suggests that English education management should be understood as a system with several connected parts: teacher quality □ professional development □ school management □ classroom practice □ assessment □ student outcomes.

3. Methodology

This study used a qualitative document-analysis method.

Instead of collecting original questionnaires from teachers and students, the research analyzed existing information from:

- the Ministry of Preschool and School Education of Uzbekistan;
- the National Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan;

- the Chamber of Accounts of Uzbekistan;
- British Council reports and programs;
- recent academic studies on English language teaching in Uzbekistan;
- international English proficiency data.

The analysis focused on five management areas:

1. teacher availability and qualifications;
2. professional development;
3. foreign language policy and curriculum;
4. resource allocation and foreign specialists;
5. monitoring and evaluation.

The use of official statistics is important because it provides a broader national picture. However, this study also has a limitation: national statistics cannot fully explain what happens inside individual classrooms. Therefore, the findings should be understood as a national-level management analysis rather than a direct measurement of classroom quality.

4. Results

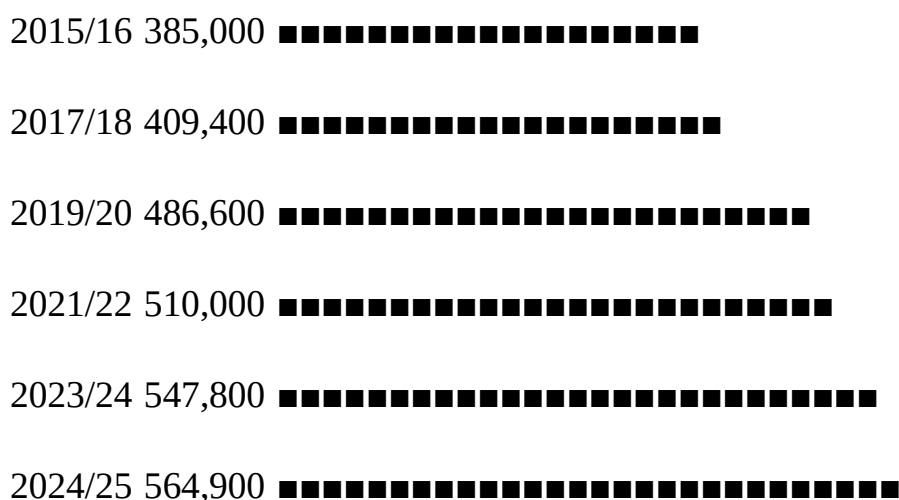
4.1. Expansion of the school education system

The scale of Uzbekistan's school system makes education management a major challenge.

The number of students in general education institutions increased from approximately 6.17 million in 2019/2020 to

6.65 million in 2023/2024. More recent National Statistics Committee data show approximately 6.78 million students in 2024 and 6.87 million in 2025.

At the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year, Uzbekistan had approximately 564,900 teachers in general secondary education institutions, excluding part-time workers. This was an increase of 170,900 teachers, or 43.4%, compared with 2015/2016. [7]



Source: National Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan.

4.2. Foreign language reform in schools

The government has increasingly moved toward a more structured approach to foreign language education.

Under the 2024 reform, grades 5–9 are expected to develop basic foreign language knowledge and communication skills, while grades 10–11 focus more strongly on academic writing and speaking. Students in certain tracks can also study a second foreign language. [1]

This represents a shift from simply teaching English as a subject toward developing language skills that students can use in academic and professional contexts.

Figure 2. New focus of foreign language education

Grades 5–9 □ Basic knowledge + Speaking and communication □ Grades 10–11 □ Academic writing + Speaking skills □ Higher education / employment

4.3. Foreign specialists can improve outcomes, but results are not equal

One of the most interesting findings comes from the 2026 audit by the Chamber of Accounts.

By the end of the 2023/2024 academic year, foreign specialists had been involved in 500 schools. According to the report, students' foreign language proficiency in these

schools increased on average from 5% to 15%.

The same report states that 8,951 students obtained international language certificates, compared with 5,296 in 2023. This represents an increase of approximately 69%. [8]

Figure 3. International language certificates

2023 5,296 students



2023/24 8,951 students



However, the report also identified weaknesses. In the 2024/2025 academic year, there were 33 schools where students taught by foreign specialists had no foreign language certificates or only one student had a certificate. This shows that employing foreign specialists does not automatically guarantee strong results. [8]

4.4. Teacher certification and financial management

Teacher certification has become an important part of the education management system because certificates can affect professional status and additional payments.

However, the 2026 audit found problems in the management of certificates. The ERP.maktab.uz system did not automatically verify the validity and expiration dates of some international certificates. This created opportunities for human error in calculating additional payments.

The audit identified 3.8 billion soums in suspicious or potentially incorrect payments connected with bonuses for certificates that had expired. [8]

This finding shows that education management is also a data-management problem.

A school system may have good teachers and good policies, but if its information systems cannot accurately track certificates, professional qualifications, and payments, resources may not be used efficiently.

4.5. Regional differences

English proficiency is not distributed equally across Uzbekistan.

The 2025 EF English Proficiency Index reported a national score of 429 for Uzbekistan. The score was below the global average of 488. However, there were significant differences between regions. [9]

Selected scores:

Fergana 470

Andijan 453

Tashkent Region 447

Bukhara 436

Surxondaryo 431

Samarkand 419

Qashqadaryo 412

Sirdaryo 409

Jizzakh 395

The same source reported a score of 469 for Tashkent city, compared with 392 for Jizzakh city. [9]

These results should be interpreted carefully because EF EPI is based on adults who took EF's online test and is not a direct test of school students. Nevertheless, the regional variation provides useful evidence that

English-learning opportunities and outcomes are not uniform across the country.

5. Discussion

The results show that Uzbekistan has made considerable progress in building the foundations for stronger English education. The number of teachers has grown, foreign language education has received greater policy attention, and foreign specialists have been introduced in some schools.

However, the main management challenge is now changing.

Previously, the key question was: “How can Uzbekistan expand English education?”

The next question should be: “How can Uzbekistan make the quality of English education more consistent across schools?”

5.1. From inputs to outcomes

A traditional education management model focuses heavily on inputs:

Teachers + Textbooks + Technology + Foreign specialists □ Education A stronger model should focus on outcomes:

INPUTS	MANAGEMENT	CLASSROOM	PRACTICE	ASSESSMENT
OUTCOMES				

Teachers/materials/technology	Planning/mentoring/monitoring
Speaking/listening/reading/writing	Regular evidence of progress
English proficiency	Improved student

The Chamber of Accounts’ findings support this approach. It found that some schools with foreign specialists did not produce strong certificate outcomes. Therefore, simply allocating resources is not enough; managers must monitor whether those resources produce results.

5.2. Continuous professional development should become a school-management responsibility

Professional development is often treated as something teachers do individually. A stronger system would make it part of school management.

For example, each school could create an annual English teacher development plan containing:

- individual teacher goals;
- peer observation;

- monthly teacher learning meetings;
- mentoring for new teachers;
- classroom-based research;
- digital teaching skills;
- speaking and pronunciation development;
- assessment literacy.

The British Council's work with Uzbekistan on CPD already points toward a more continuous model rather than isolated training events. [3]

5.3. Rural schools need targeted support

The regional differences identified in the literature and English proficiency data suggest that equal funding does not necessarily produce equal opportunities.

A rural school may need more support because it may have fewer experienced English teachers, weaker internet access, fewer extracurricular English activities, fewer opportunities to meet international teachers, limited access to professional development, and fewer private language centers nearby.

Therefore, management should follow the principle: "Equal opportunity does not always mean equal resources."

Schools with greater needs may require additional teachers, digital resources, teacher mentoring, and professional development.

5.4. Digital monitoring can improve management

Another important area is education data.

The 2026 audit identified weaknesses in certificate verification in ERP.maktab.uz. A stronger digital management system could connect information about:

Teacher Qualification Certificate Expiration date Training Classroom performance Student results This would allow school and regional managers to see where additional support is needed.

Figure 4. Evidence-based management cycle

Teacher certificate

Professional development

Classroom observation

Student assessment

Data dashboard

Management decision

6. Recommended Management Model

Based on the findings, this study proposes a Five-Part English Education Management Model for Uzbekistan. Figure 5. Proposed management model

1. QUALIFIED TEACHERS
2. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
3. SCHOOL-LEVEL MANAGEMENT
4. DATA-BASED MONITORING
5. STUDENT OUTCOMES

The model is based on the idea that improvements in English education require all five components to work together.

7. Practical Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Introduce school-level English performance plans

Every public school could develop an annual English education plan containing measurable targets, such as percentage of students reaching target CEFR levels, number of students participating in English clubs, teacher professional-development hours, speaking and writing assessment results, and number of students obtaining recognized certificates.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen mentoring for new teachers

Experienced English teachers could mentor new teachers for their first one or two years. The mentor could support lesson planning, classroom management, assessment, speaking activities, digital tools, and communication with parents.

Recommendation 3: Give additional support to rural schools

The system could identify schools with greater needs and provide additional teacher training, internet and digital resources, English-language materials, visiting specialists, online speaking programs, and mentoring opportunities.

Recommendation 4: Create measurable KPIs for foreign specialists

Foreign specialists should have clear goals connected to student outcomes. For example: foreign specialist

teacher mentoring + student speaking clubs + teacher workshops + measurable student progress. Recommendation 5: Improve digital certificate management

Teacher certificates should be recorded in a centralized electronic system that automatically shows certificate type, issuing organization, level, date of issue, expiration date, and verification status.

Recommendation 6: Measure speaking and listening, not only written knowledge

English proficiency should not be measured mainly through grammar and written tests. Schools should regularly assess listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

8. Conclusion

English language education in Uzbekistan has entered an important stage of development. The country has expanded its teaching workforce, introduced foreign language reforms, increased attention to teacher qualifications, and involved foreign specialists in some schools.

However, the evidence suggests that expansion alone is not enough.

The main challenge for the next stage of reform is quality management. Schools need systems that connect teacher development, resources, classroom practice, assessment, and student outcomes.

The findings also show that Uzbekistan should pay greater attention to regional inequality. Differences between regions indicate that a single national policy may not be sufficient for all schools. Rural and underserved schools may need additional resources and stronger professional support.

Most importantly, English education should become more evidence-based. Instead of asking only how many teachers have certificates or how many foreign specialists have been employed, education managers should ask whether students are actually improving.

A stronger management cycle can therefore be summarized as:

Plan □ Train □ Teach □ Measure □ Analyze □ Improve

If this cycle is implemented consistently at school and regional levels, Uzbekistan can move from expanding English education toward building a more equal and effective English education system.

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