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ISSUES OF DEVELOPING METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION COUNTRIES

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Abstract

This article examines the key issues of developing foreign language teaching methodology in higher education institutions from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The study is based on statistical data from international organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, Eurostat, and EF EPI, which highlight global trends in foreign language competence. The findings indicate that the growth of academic mobility, massification of higher education, and the expansion of multilingual policies significantly increase the demand for effective foreign language teaching methodologies.

The results reveal that in developed countries, foreign language teaching is largely based on communicative and competence-based approaches, including the implementation of CEFR standards, CLIL and EMI models, as well as digital technologies and blended learning systems. The analysis of Uzbekistan's higher education system demonstrates a rapid increase in student enrollment alongside relatively low levels of language proficiency, emphasizing the need for methodological modernization.

The study proposes methodological recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of foreign language teaching, including strengthening competence-based approaches, implementing differentiated instruction, integrating language learning with professional disciplines, utilizing digital platforms, and improving assessment systems. The findings contribute to enhancing the quality of foreign language education and aligning it with international standards.



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Keywords: foreign language teaching methodology, higher education, communicative approach, competence-based approach, CEFR, CLIL, EMI

Introduction

In today's globalization environment, the international integration of higher education systems, the expansion of academic mobility, and the increasing demand for transnational competencies in the labor market have made the issue of effective foreign language teaching a strategic priority. According to UNESCO, by 2025, the number of students studying in higher education worldwide will reach 264 million, which is 25 million more than in 2020. At the same time, international academic mobility is also growing steadily, and the number of students studying abroad has reached 6.9 million. This figure represents an almost three-fold increase compared to 2000. This situation indicates that the formation of foreign language competence in higher education institutions is no longer an additional, but has become one of the main conditions for academic and professional success.

International experience shows that the effectiveness of foreign language teaching is primarily determined by educational policy, standardized assessment criteria and the level of implementation of the communicative approach in practice. For example, in the European higher and general education space, multilingualism policy has been consistently developed, and the CEFR system developed by the Council of Europe serves as a single criterion for teaching, learning and assessing foreign languages. This system, describing language competence at levels from A1 to C2, creates a methodological basis for developing curricula, creating textbooks, assessing learning outcomes and forming internationally recognized language competence. The practical significance of the CEFR is that it interprets a foreign language not as a set of



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grammatical knowledge, but as a means of real communication, academic activity and professional interaction.

The experience of the European Union countries shows that the formation of multilingualism from an early stage in the teaching of foreign languages also has a direct impact on the results in higher education. According to Eurostat, in 2023, 48.9% of students at the upper secondary level in the European Union studied two or more foreign languages. In the upper grades of general education, this figure was 60.0%. In some countries, the figures are even higher: in Romania, 98.0%, in Finland, 89.1%, in Luxembourg, 81.3% of students study two or more foreign languages. Such indicators will later expand the opportunities for the formation of a multilingual academic environment at the university level, involving students in exchange programs and mastering subjects in a foreign language [1-5].

The practical impact of foreign language teaching in higher education is also evident in academic mobility programs. According to the results of the Erasmus+ program in 2024, almost 1.5 million people participated in international mobility programs in one year. The Erasmus+ open statistical database for researchers provides comprehensive data on the mobility activities of students, professors and other participants in the period 2014–2024. These indicators indicate that the methodology of foreign language teaching in universities should not be limited to the classroom, but should become a comprehensive system that supports academic exchange, joint programs, modules taught in English, and international cooperation.

The experience of OECD countries also confirms the role of language competence in the context of the popularization of higher education and the knowledge economy. The OECD report for 2025 noted that the level of higher education among young people has reached a historical high, that is, 48% of



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young people in OECD countries are completing higher education. This requires a university graduate not only to have knowledge in a specialty, but also to have the skills to perceive and analyze information in a foreign language, to write academically, and to conduct international professional cooperation. Therefore, in developed countries, the methodology of teaching foreign languages is being improved based on modern models such as a competency-based approach, CLIL, task-based learning, blended learning, and digital language pedagogy.

These trends are also extremely relevant for the higher education system of Uzbekistan. According to Erasmus+ Uzbekistan, as of October 2024, the number of higher education institutions in the country was 212, and the total number of students was 1,553,552. In the context of such expansion, the issue of improving the quality and methodology of foreign language education becomes even more important. At the same time, according to the results of the EF English Proficiency Index 2025, Uzbekistan ranked 104th out of 123 countries, with a score of 429, below the global average. This indicator indicates the need to revise the methodology of foreign language teaching in the country, especially at the higher education stage, based on international standards and best practices.

From this perspective, the development of foreign language teaching methodologies in higher education institutions is not only a pedagogical problem, but also a complex scientific and practical problem directly related to improving the quality of education, ensuring competitiveness in international rankings, enhancing academic mobility, and strengthening the position of graduates in the global labor market. In-depth study of foreign experience, identification of effective methodological approaches based on statistical data, and their



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adaptation to the national higher education system determine the main relevance of this study.

Main part

Within the framework of this study, a comparative analysis of international, European and Uzbek statistical indicators was carried out to assess the need to develop the methodology of teaching foreign languages in the higher education system. The results of the analysis showed that the issue of teaching foreign languages has now gone beyond the level of a separate subject methodology and has become a systemic factor closely related to the international integration of higher education, academic mobility, adaptation to the labor market and the competitiveness of universities. According to UNESCO, the number of higher education students in the world has reached 264 million, and the number of students in international academic mobility is 6.9 million. The sharp increase in this indicator from 2 million in 2000 to today's level indicates that foreign language competence is the main infrastructural condition for global academic mobility.



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Table 1. Key statistical indicators that determine the need to develop foreign language teaching methodologies

Indicator	Value	Source and year	Methodological importance
Number of higher education students worldwide	264 million	UNESCO, 2025	A foreign language has become a basic competency in the context of the popularization of higher education.
Number of students on international mobility	6.9 million	UNESCO, 2025	Language preparation is a mandatory factor for academic mobility
Number of mobile students in 2000	2 million	UNESCO, 2025	Shows long-term growth in the need for language education
Erasmus+ mobility participants in 2024	about 1.5 million	Erasmus+, 2025 report	Communicative and practical language training is important for universities
Share of young people with higher education in OECD countries	48%	OECD, 2025	The quality of higher education requires the integration of language and professional competencies
Number of universities in Uzbekistan	212	Erasmus Uzbekistan, 2024	The system is expanding, and the quality of language teaching must also improve in parallel.
Number of higher education students in Uzbekistan	1 553 552	Erasmus Uzbekistan, 2024	A modern methodology is required that can reach a large audience
Number of international students in Uzbekistan	13,771	Erasmus Uzbekistan, 2024	A multilingual approach is essential for an international educational environment
Number of students in Uzbekistan (national statistics)	1,432.8 thousand	Stat.uz, 2024/2025	Rapid expansion of the system requires updating methodological resources
Acceptance rate in Uzbekistan	381.7 thousand	Stat.uz, 2024/2025	The gap between grades increases in first-year students
Number of professors and teachers in Uzbekistan	49.6 thousand	Stat.uz, 2024/2025	It is necessary to improve the methodological skills of teachers
EF EPI ranking in Uzbekistan	104th place, 429 points	EF EPI, 2025	It indicates a systemic problem in language learning outcomes.

**Sources: UNESCO, Erasmus+, OECD, Erasmus Uzbekistan, National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, compiled by the author based on EF EPI.*



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The data in Table 1 show that improving the methodology of teaching foreign languages is not just a matter of updating the content of the lesson. This is, first of all, a complex pedagogical task related to working with a large contingent in the conditions of massification of higher education, supporting international mobility, using academic resources in English, and increasing the competitiveness of students in the global labor market. In particular, the fact that the number of students in Uzbekistan increased by 2.5 times in 2020/2021–2024/2025 and enrollment reached 381.7 thousand requires a review of teaching methodologies, assessment approaches, group differentiation, and the use of digital tools.

The results show that the effectiveness of language education at the international level is closely related to the early development of multilingualism. European Union statistics show that in 2023, 60.0% of upper secondary students in general education had learned two or more foreign languages, while the figure was 34.8% in vocational education. Overall, 48.9% of upper secondary students in the European Union were learning at least two foreign languages. These figures mean that by the time they reach university, students will have functional knowledge of at least one foreign language and basic communicative knowledge of the other.



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Table 2. Some indicators of multilingualism in the European Education

Area

Indicator	Value	Analytical commentary
Share of learners of 2+ foreign languages in EU upper secondary education (total)	48.9%	Multilingualism is formed as a result of systematic education
2+ languages for general education students	60.0%	Strong language skills in academic areas
2+ languages for vocational students	34.8%	Language skills are also important in the professional sector.
Romania	98.0%	Multilingualism at its highest level
Finland	89.1%	High quality of education and effective language policy
Luxembourg	81.3%	A model of institutional multilingualism
Portugal	6.1%	There is a significant difference between countries
Spain	16.1%	Lower performance in learning two or more languages

**Source: Compiled by the author based on Eurostat, 2023 data.*

The differences in Table 2 provide an important methodological conclusion: the effectiveness of foreign language teaching depends not only on the number of teaching hours, but also on educational policies, standards, the creation of a language environment, teacher training and a competency-based assessment system. In countries such as Romania, Finland and Luxembourg, a high proportion of students learning 2 or more foreign languages leads to better language preparation of young people entering higher education. This makes it possible to relatively easily introduce foreign language teaching, CLIL, EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction), academic writing and international exchange programs in universities. Therefore, methodological reforms in higher



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education should be consistent with a continuous language policy starting from preschool.

The analysis shows that, despite the high numerical growth in the higher education system of Uzbekistan, the results of language competence are still not sufficient. According to national statistics, in the 2024/2025 academic year, the number of students in higher education institutions reached 1,432.8 thousand, and the number of professors and teachers reached 49.6 thousand. This means that there are approximately 28–29 students per teacher. In such conditions, the traditional principle of “one method - for all students” will not work; on the contrary, a differentiated approach by levels, modular teaching, blended learning, independent learning platforms and a system of formative assessment will be necessary.

Table 3. Some indicators of higher education and English language proficiency in Uzbekistan

Indicator	Value	Analytical conclusion
Number of students (2024/2025)	1,432.8 thousand	Massification of higher education has occurred
Student enrollment growth compared to 2020/2021	2.5 times	It is necessary to adapt the methodological system
Number of admissions	381.7 thousand	The language level differences are sharp in the first year
Number of professors	49.6 thousand	Continuous professional development of teachers is required
Percentage of female students	50.6%	Gender coverage has expanded
Number of Masters	39.8 thousand	The need for academic English and research writing is increasing
EF EPI Global Ranking	104th place	English language proficiency remains low
EF EPI score	429	Well below the global average
Global average EF EPI score	488	The 59-point difference indicates a systematic methodological gap
EF EPI “student” group	392	The student group is also performing poorly overall.
EF EPI “teacher” group	467	Teachers also have a score below the global average
Regional indicator: Fergana region	470	There are regional differences

**Sources: Compiled by the author based on Stat.uz, EF EPI 2025.*



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The results of Table 3 reveal the most important point of discussion. On the one hand, the higher education system in Uzbekistan is rapidly expanding; on the other hand, the indicators of English language proficiency are not increasing at a rate commensurate with this growth. According to the EF EPI, Uzbekistan is ranked 104th, with a score of 429, 59 points below the global average of 488. In addition, the fact that the “student” category scored 392 points and the “teacher” category scored 467 points indicates that the problem of language education exists not only at the student level, but also at the level of methodological leadership and pedagogical staff training. This shows that in teaching foreign languages, this situation is not limited to textbooks, programs and hours, but also relates to the teacher’s methodological repertoire, skills in creating real communicative situations, use of digital tools and assessment criteria.

According to the results of the discussion, the following methodological trends for higher education based on foreign experience can be considered relatively effective. First, the competency-based and communicative approach forms the language not as a set of theoretical knowledge, but as a tool for academic and professional activity. Second, differentiated teaching is more effective in large and diverse groups. Third, EMI/CLIL elements develop the language not as a separate subject, but as a skill integrated with the specialty. Fourth, digital platforms and blended learning reduce the classroom load in conditions of massification and create an individual learning trajectory. Fifth, formative assessment and diagnostics in accordance with the CEFR allow for a more accurate measurement of learning outcomes. These conclusions are indirectly confirmed by the European Model of Multilingualism and international academic mobility statistics [6-10].

Another important trend was also observed based on Erasmus+ statistics: as the volume of international mobility increases, the quality of language training



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required from universities also increases. The fact that almost 1.5 million people participated in Erasmus+ mobility in 2024 shows that universities that are successful in international cooperation see language teaching not as an auxiliary subject, but as a central component of their internationalization strategy. The fact that the number of Uzbek universities has reached 212 and the number of international students has reached 13,771 also reinforces the need to create a multilingual and multicultural environment in the national higher education space. Therefore, the development of foreign language teaching methodologies should be carried out in an integrated manner with the institutional international strategy [11-17].

Based on the results of the study, the general scientific conclusion is that the priority areas for developing foreign language teaching methodologies in higher education institutions are: group leveling based on initial diagnostics, setting learning outcomes in accordance with the CEFR, differentiating academic and professional English, improving the methodological skills of teachers, introducing a digital-resource teaching model, and integrating a foreign language with academic mobility and specialized subjects. Statistical analysis shows that these factors serve to reduce existing differences in language competence and bring the quality of higher education closer to international standards.



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Figure 1. Development model of foreign language teaching methodology in higher education based on international experience and statistical data. (*Source: Developed by the author based on UNESCO, OECD, Eurostat, EF EPI and national statistical data.)

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the development of foreign language teaching methodologies in higher education institutions is a complex pedagogical problem of strategic importance in today's globalization environment. Based on the analysis of international statistical data (UNESCO, OECD, Eurostat, EF EPI), it is determined that the massification of higher education, a sharp increase in academic mobility, and the expansion of multilingualism policies are determining foreign language competence as an integral part of modern specialist training.



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The analysis showed that the effectiveness of foreign language teaching in developed countries is ensured through the continuous education system, CEFR standards, communicative approach, CLIL/EMI models and the integration of digital technologies. In particular, the high percentage of students who master two or more foreign languages in European countries allows for more effective organization of language teaching at the higher education level.

Analysis of the higher education system in Uzbekistan has shown two trends: on the one hand, there is a sharp increase in the number of students and the expansion of the scope of higher education; on the other hand, the relatively low level of English language proficiency indicators (EF EPI) indicates the need to improve the methodological system. In particular, the fact that language proficiency at the level of students and teachers is below the global average confirms the inefficiency of existing methodological approaches.

Based on the results of the study, the following scientific conclusions were formulated:

- The development of foreign language teaching methodologies should be based on competency-based and communicative approaches;
- It is important to fully implement a grading and assessment system based on CEFR standards;
- In conditions of large contingents, differentiated and modular teaching methods should be used;
- integrating a foreign language with specialized subjects (CLIL, EMI) increases efficiency;
- digital platforms and the blended learning model are the most optimal solution in mass education;
- It is necessary to regularly improve the methodological and linguistic competence of teachers;



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- It is necessary to widely introduce formative and diagnostic approaches into the assessment system.

In general, improving the methodology of teaching foreign languages is an important factor in improving the quality of higher education, strengthening competitiveness in international rankings, expanding academic mobility, and ensuring the successful functioning of graduates in the global labor market. Methodological approaches developed on the basis of statistical analysis serve to bring the higher education system closer to international standards.

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