UZBEKISTAN GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARDS TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract: In 1997-2013, large-scale works on drastically changing the state educational system, particularly rebuilding the higher educational system, creating new national model of preparing cadres, democratizing pedagogical process, its liberalization and modernization, and applying modern innovations and advanced pedagogical technologies in educational system are carried out in Uzbekistan. As separate trend of this activity, new modern system of teaching foreign languages, particularly English has been developed. Present article deals with analyzing works done in this area.

Keywords: reforms of education, teaching the foreign languages, English, government policy, innovations in education.

Introduction

Today, while implementing the third phase of National program of preparing cadres, all new specialists undergoing the higher educational system are required to know one or several foreign languages. In connection with this, huge tasks are set before teachers of English language; teachers became one of the main subjects of educational reforms. Therefore, if a teacher is open to welcome new pedagogical innovations, he can provide goal-oriented introduction of innovative ideas into educational process. Lately, range of significant official acts was issued on accelerating and developing the foreign languages teaching; per se they define the state policy towards teaching foreign languages.

The aim of this research

The aim of this research is to touch the ground of the government policy that includes modern requirements towards teaching foreign languages, particularly English.

The point of view

Analysis of the active system of organizing the foreign languages’ learning shows that today’s educational standards, programs and textbooks on foreign languages, particularly English do not quite meet the modern requirements, particularly use of advanced information and media-technologies. Education is still practiced on traditional ways. In all levels of educational system, organization of continuous learning of foreign languages, professional training of teachers and providing pedagogical process with modern educational-methodological materials are necessary.

Result and discussion

XXI century in Uzbekistan started as a century of culture, economy, scientific and technical innovations. Innovation factor is one of the peculiarities of modern educational system. Starting from the first years of independence, legal bases of preparing youth as harmonious persons were elaborated. Here, official acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan, decrees, enactments and social-political ideas of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, State Programs, decrees of Cabinet of Ministers, and other legislative and legal documents define the essence and significance of reforms in education.

During independence years, more than 200 laws, decrees, enactments and other legislative documents were issued on the protection of social, economic, legal, political, medical, spiritual and educational interests of the youth. For the purpose of further development of learning foreign languages, improving the level and quality of highly trained professional teachers for secondary schools, professional college and academic lyceums, and higher educational institutions, another new Decree the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan I. Karimov (PD – № 1971) on May 23, 2013 “On Measures to Improve the Activity of Uzbekistan State University of World Languages” (Uzbekiston Respublikasi qonun hujjatlari tuplami, 2013 y., 22-son, 279-modda). On May 8, 2013 Cabinet of Ministers issued Resolution “On approving state educational standard on

National program on training cadres that is considered as innovative approach was carried out in three phases during:

*Phase I* (1997-2001) was directed to creation of legal-normative, scientific-methodological, financial-material conditions that were necessary for implementing reforms. For this purpose, additional 65 billion Som was spent by government. This phase is called “era of establishing material-technical basis” of the program on training cadres.

*Phase II* (2001-2005) became a practical activity on building educational system, its essence and drastically changing of educational process; this phase reflected the interest of whole population in the country. This phases is called a *quality phase*.

*Phase III* has started in 2005 and still under implementation process. For the purpose of carrying out this phase’s tasks, the necessity of persistent and continuous activity was mentioned. In this phase, implementation of National program of training cadres ended. Achieved results during the application of drastic reforms in educational system, carried out changes, and gained experience during the implementation of the program were summarized. Today, the process of innovative improving of educational system activity continues; its modernization based on modern requirements as well. Therefore, this phase is called *modernization era* of educational system.

Our educational system was rebuilt during independence years. Its essence and significance form and methods were changed. “Development trends of higher educational system in our country during Independence years are following:

– In 1991-2010, the number of higher educational institutions and their branches has increased and in 2010 their number reached 79;
– In higher educational institutions, state educational standards on 150 schools of bachelorette and 650 MA courses were created (2011, p.108);
– The number of university entrants increased to 4.2 thousand from 1991 to 2010; university entrants increased to 17.7 thousand in 2010 compared to 2000, particularly 14.7 thousand in bachelor’s degree and 3 thousand in master’s;
– In 2010, the number of students in higher educational institutions has increased to 101.7 thousand comparing to the number of students in 2000, particularly 94 thousand in bachelor’s degree and 7.8 thousand in master’s;
– In 2010, the number of higher educational institutions’ graduating students increased to 21.6 thousand yearly comparing to 1991 and reached 74.9 thousand;
– In 1991, if the number of students was about 6489 in normal higher educational institution, then in 2010, their number decreased to 2061.6 and composed 4427.4 thousand students;
– In 1995, the number of students decreased to 96 people for every 10000 people in the country comparing to 1991; however, in 2010, students’ number has increased to 37 comparing to that of 1995;
– In higher educational institutions, average age of teaching staff has increased slightly and the number of teaching staff with academic degree has decreased; in 1995, teaching staff with academic degree composed 42.9% and this index has lowered to 39.7% in 2010;
– The number of international students in our higher educational institutions has decreased from 3771 in 1991 to 335 in 2010.

In independence years, 2189 people became DPhil and 11119 candidates of science. In this period, 5682 people became associate professors, 928 senior staff scientist and 1515 – professors (Zakhidova Sh. Sh., 2012, p. 15). While implementing the National program of training cadres in the country, more than 1500 new vocational colleges and academic lyceums were built. Modern school laboratories, computer and production tools and equipment in vocational colleges give the opportunity not only to get knowledge on subjects, but also help to learn modern techniques and technologies. It is known that more than 2 million 300 thousand students graduated vocational and academic lyceums. In 2012, more than 500 thousand students get their
certificate of degrees as specialists. Every year, more than 600 thousand graduates who are trained in totally new conditions start their working life.

Despite global financial-economic crisis throughout the world, Uzbekistan was able to keep the steady economic increase not less than 8.5 % for the last five years. Comparing to 2000, GDP has increased 2.1 times. More than 51.7 thousand teachers of foreign languages were prepared; multimedia textbooks in English, German and French languages for 5-9 year schoolchildren, electronic resources for the beginning classes in secondary schools were prepared and more than 5000 thousand language laboratories were equipped. There are 9779 secondary schools, 1399 vocational colleges and 141 academic lyceums in our country; also, there are 59 higher educational institutions, 11 branches of capital city higher educational institutions in other regions and 6 branches of foreign higher educational institutions in the country.

Uzbekistan economy grew more than 3.5 times for the past twenty years. The population increased proportionally to 9 million people and reached 30 million. Everyday approximately 2 million students attend to secondary special and academic lyceums, and higher educational institutions to study. During independence years, state educational classifier that includes mostly required 86 schools in higher educational institutions, 225 profession and 578 majors.

Drastic reforms in the Uzbekistan educational system were highly rated by world community. As stated in the report of the Uzbekistan Republic President, I.A. Karimov in the Cabinet of Ministry on “The results of social-economic development in the country in 2012 and the most significant priority guidelines for 2013” dated 18 January, 2013, “as we summarize works in the educational area, I think, it is relevant to state information given in the report “Global Innovation Index” in 2012 by one of the finest business schools of France, “Inssad” International Business school. The report was prepared in cooperation with World Intellectual Property Organization. In this report, innovative development in 141 countries of the world is analyzed. One of the integral parts of the analysis is about development of human capital, and our country is in 35-place in the world. On the development of educational system, Uzbekistan – pay close attention here- is in the second place in the world among 141 countries”. In fact, such statement is a huge success and award for the reforms in educational area under the leadership of President.

On 10 December, 2012, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan issued Decree “On further enhancement of measures on foreign language learning system” (Uzbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining “Chet tillarni urganch tizimini yanada takomillashtirish chora-tadbirlari tugrisida”gi Qarori, 11.12.2012, 240 (5660)-son). It is indicated in the Decree, that:

– “throughout the Republic, learning foreign languages, particularly English, shall be started as games and verbal communication in the first year classes of secondary schools, and step by step alphabet, reading and grammar from should be taught from second year;
– some special subjects, particularly technical and international specialties are taught in foreign languages in higher educational institutions;
– students and teachers of general secondary, secondary special, vocational education institutions shall be provided with textbooks and teaching materials in foreign languages; these materials shall be published according to determined periods and funded by Republic targeted book Fund under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan”.

Entrance quota to the Uzbekistan State University of World Languages in 2013/2014 for undergraduate studies was 1350 students; it includes 385 people on state scholarship and 131 – for master’s degree students (19 on state scholarship). These numbers are several times higher comparing to those of previous years.

According to state educational standards, for continuous education on foreign languages state educational standards define following: goals and tasks of the subject; essence of teaching and learning foreign languages; requirements to levels of graduates’ compulsory preparation in all levels of education.

B2 level on foreign language for teaching includes: linguistic competence; speaking competence; sociolinguistic competence; lexical competence; grammatical competence; pragmatic competence.

From the knowledge, experience and skills’ standpoint student’s listening, speaking, reading and writing comprehension levels are defined. Within the framework of education’s essence; topics on Internet and information technologies; social-cultural topics; comparison of Uzbekistan’s culture with countries the language of which are studied; topics related to specialty (history of specialty, related areas); social topics (social relationships with environment) are considered. Decree presents information about requirements related to comprehension in every language. For instance, speaking comprehension –dialogue and monologue.
are separated. Dialogue includes the ability of communicating on specific task or purpose, social communication or informal conversation, the ability of participating in formal or informal debates on student’s major, presiding at such debates and leading it, conducting interviews, negotiations, and phone conversations. Monologue includes the ability of preparing lectures.

Reading comprehension includes exchange of letters, information or electronic letters; also, it includes the ability to understand authentic texts related to one’s major, texts’ vocabulary and terminology: for example, extracts from texts, lectures, reports and textbooks, scientific and specialty literature (periodical, electronic literature). Additionally, reading comprehension implies the ability to be able to have developing skills: to understand general idea in foreign language, to get some information, to comprehend details and signs to identify direction (signs, indicators and others).

All requirements are elaborated wider and deeper for those whose specialty is foreign languages. For example, reading comprehension for them implies the ability of understanding social, specialty-related or other long, complex texts; belles-lettres and scientific-popular books, magazines, periodical materials, instructions, advertisement materials, various information sheets, documents, school record book, questionnaires, informal or electronic letters; memoranda, lectures, critical analyses, and working with working documentation. Therefore, university graduate is required to read and understand abovementioned type of materials and form his own ideas about them.

In compliance with the implementation of complex of activities on enhancement and development of higher educational institutions’ material-technical base, following are considered:
– Establishment of complex of laboratories among 15 higher educational institutions;
– Refreshment of 269 school laboratories;
– Establishment of Information-resource centers furnished with modern teaching and scientific literature;
– Application of computer technology in educational process;
– Establishment of single computer network among all higher educational institutions and providing its integration with international educational resource institutions;
– Application of distance learning;
– Providing 19 higher educational institution, listed within the addressed program, with modern computer technology, equipment and communication networks at a ratio of 15 computers to 100 students;
– Establishment of electronic libraries;
– Improvement of living and sport activity conditions for students and teachers in higher educational institutions.

As President of the Republic of Uzbekistan stated, “Today we will not stop satisfied with those significant works we achieved in such a short time on our way to goals. We need to learn to precisely foresee problems that will last for a long time” (Karimov I. A., 1997, p. 10).

Conclusions

Today, main tendency on computerizing education is developing pedagogical programs on English language subject. From this point of view, methodological preparation of English language teacher is especially important. Along with the knowledge on the subject, teacher who applies information technologies, widely used in education nowadays, in his activity can achieve significant results.

References


