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Language Planning and Policy Proposal ESP Course for Fergana State University

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ANNOTATION

The article gives a complete overview of the language problem which faces one of the famous educational places in our country and proposes a solution which can be applied to solve the issue.

KEYWORDS: Language policy, lingua franca, globalization, ESP, language proficiency, assessment, qualification, teacher training, effectiveness, language instruction.

Introduction

Today, knowing as many foreign languages becomes not only a privilege but also one of the requirements of modern job vacancies. Especially, the acceptance of English as a lingua franca encourages people to speak in one international language almost in all spheres of our life. Consequently, the demand for teaching English is rising day by day. Most countries develop new language policies to improve foreign language teaching and learning.

After the collapse of the USSR, English has become the dominant foreign language which is taught in all education settings of former Soviet countries (Hasanova & Shadieva, 2007). As a country where the Russian language has been considered the most prestigious language for many years, Uzbekistan creates its own language policy after gaining independence. According to Hasanova (2007), people in Soviet Uzbekistan had to acquire Russian before learning any foreign languages because the Russian language was considered as the second language for Soviet countries. However, today the situation has totally been changed. Islam Karimov, the first president of Uzbekistan, legislated more than 200 decrees and documents related to education, particularly to the development of foreign languages (Azizova, 2014). These changes affect the quality of

foreign language education too. For example, the most noticeable shift was observed in the curriculum of the foreign language. The total hours of a foreign language were increased from 660 to 900 hours in secondary schools.

Despite such progress, new shortcomings continue to occur. Due to the massive implementation of new decrees and high demand for English, many foreign language education spheres need new plannings and policies. DJ Kaiser (2018) stated that the effectiveness of language instruction is highly influenced by external policies. Thus, it again proves the importance of language policies in the improvement of foreign language education.

Context

Globalization makes countries and people closer. Due to the cooperation and partnership, the economy of countries has been raised. In this process, language serves as a powerful tool which is known as a means of communication. Uzbekistan, as a fast-progressing country, also engages many foreign companies and investors. After the independence, lots of cooperative companies has been opened. As a result, the need for professionals with English competency has increased more than ever. In Universities, special foreign language faculties have been organized, and ESP teachers have been hired. Moreover, the quality of English teaching is also controlled more strictly.

However, in Fergana, one of the most industrialized regions of Uzbekistan, the scarcity of professional workers competent in technical English still exists. Thus, this issue badly affects the economy of not only the region but also the whole country. The root of the problem is the quality of the ESP teaching in education places. Fergana State University, the most prominent higher education institution, prepares professional workers and supplies the region with employees. Unfortunately, during the last ten years, University cannot cope with its alumni's preparation with sufficient English level. By the end of graduate, students of the non-linguistic faculties have to reach at least an Intermediate (B1) level in technical English. However, the graduates do not finish University with the relevant level.

To learn the situation better, I did a little survey in the FSU. According to the interview with students, it was revealed that the ESP classes are not conducted accordingly. Although the course has been taught for four years, students cannot get expected results because most ESP instructors still use the Grammar-translation method in teaching English. To change this situation, teachers need complete training. Although there are compulsory teacher-trainings, even in five years, they cannot re-qualify all candidates (Huttova & Silova, 2002).

Based on all these issues, I suggest organizing a four-month ESP teacher-training course for the FSU instructors. Through this course, we can both re-train our ESP instructors and master their teaching skills by introducing them to different teaching methods, techniques, and approaches. Moreover, the project's overall result can be beneficial not only to the Fergana State University but also to the region and even to the whole country.

Goals and objectives

In the implementation of any kind of project, clear goals and objects have to be set. Moreover, goals serve as a motivation that helps to drive the process better and faster. Our proposal also possesses several essential goals and objectives. The main aim of the project is to improve ESP instructors' qualifications and re-train them. By the end of the course, instructors will be able to:

- conduct ESP classes accordingly
- develop materials and curriculum correctly
- apply new methods and techniques of teaching the ESP course

As mentioned above, the central issue of the project is the qualification of the ESP instructors. That's why the primary goal was set according to the needs of the teachers. Currently, the most significant need is re-qualification. Thus, it serves as a destination that we intended to reach. In achieving our goal, objectives are considered as steps that we should take to reach the aim. During the course, teachers will be taught by professional trainers, so it is expected that the ESP instructors will meet the objectives of the course. To realize courses' all goals and objectives, several stages should be done:

- To invite professional ESP teachers and teacher-trainers from Universities and special Institutions
- To make a contract with trainers
- To organize their transportation, accommodation, and meals
- To prepare and supply inventories (classrooms, technologies, materials, etc.)
- To schedule all lessons, meetings, and practicum
- To prepare a syllabus for the training (teacher-trainers will do this)
- To set an assistant (coordinator) to accompany teacher-trainers and instructors
- To control the projects' realization

Recommendation

Despite the fact that the proposal will be implemented at a micro-level, its results will affect the macro level. Thus, both organization and implementation stages should be designed scrupulously. The primary purpose of creating such a course is the re-qualification of the FSU's ESP teachers. For this reason, the foremost task of the project is the invitation of special teacher-trainers and professional ESP teachers. Shirinova (2018) stated that UzSWLU and British Council ran a specific program dedicated to ESP teaching problems. During this project, issues related to teaching English for Specific Purposes in Uzbekistan were studied, and practical solutions were suggested to the issues. That's why the invitation of the leading ESP experts from these institutions is recommended. Moreover, to develop instructors' qualifications, trainers from teacher-training institutions should also be invited.

Additionally, to conduct the teacher training course in high quality, designers and professionals in the material and curriculum development from the Webster University in Tashkent should also be involved in the

project. Westminster University in Tashkent and American Embassy can be asked to supply the project with teaching materials.

In the organization of the course, the culture and language background of the target group (ESP teachers) should also be considered. Kaplan (2011) asserted that language planning would fail if the diversification of the place is not paid attention to. Based on this, the level, context, the dialect of the learners, course materials should be chosen. In the successful implementation of the project, overall, one teacher-trainer, two ESP experts, one specialist in curriculum designing, and one assistant is needed. Moreover, in the organizational part, some volunteers are also required.

Timeline

The implementation of the project will be carried out in two phases:

Phase I includes all organizational parts of the project: inviting and making contracts with teacher-trainers, preparing all existing and lacking inventories, providing trainers with accommodation, meals, and transportation, designing the course schedule, and other organizational moments.

Phase II is related to the actual application of the proposal. There are 35 ESP instructors at the Fergana State University. At the beginning of the course, teachers have to be divided into two groups:

Group A 17 teachers (Monday-Thursday)

Group B 18 teachers (Tuesday-Friday)

The course will be held two times a week and will continue for four months.

Target language features

As the central point of the project is the organization of the course, which is aimed at the re-qualification of the ESP teachers, language features that address the proposal mainly deal with the teaching content. Furthermore, the environment of the project totally consists of the ESP experts, teacher-trainers, and the ESP instructors of the FSU, which means the features of the target language are used to improve the professional area. According to the objectives of the course, trainees will be able to conduct ESP lessons correctly by using new methods and approaches. That's why during the course, trainees will mostly practice the ESP components. Moreover, all topics that they will be introduced during the course help trainees to perform better on assessments.

Assessment

Assessment is the most significant part of the project. Because it is directly related to the outcomes of the proposal thus, during the course, teachers will be assessed both formatively and summatively. As a formative assessment, teachers will conduct a needs analysis, and based on it; they will come up with a syllabus. According to Perez and Arce (2009), a needs analysis is especially important for conducting the ESP course because the ESP spectrum is huge, and the needs of the students according to their specialty will vary. That's why it is vital to write a needs analysis and, due to its results designing a correct syllabus. I have chosen this task as a formative assessment because, according to the attached syllabus, the ESP course's current syllabus is totally invalid. Moreover, instructors don't know the needs of their students and the actual goals of the course.

For the summative assessment, teachers will write a portfolio which includes several tasks. During the course, they have to collect a portfolio, and at the end of the course, they will submit it. The portfolio will comprise a unit which includes at least 3 lesson plans and, based on one of them, to conduct a demo lesson. Moreover, they have to design their own assessment tools and tests. Teachers also should include materials that they develop, adapt, adopt or find to use during the lesson. According to Birgin and Baki (2007), portfolio as a type of assessment is considered the most reliable and accurate because it enables examining learners' different skills simultaneously. Moreover, a portfolio is collected during some period, and it gives a chance to reflect on mistakes and weaknesses (Collins, 1992). Thus, I decided to use the portfolio collection as a summative assessment due to its multitasking functionality. Both assessments are vital in developing teachers' qualifications. From the formative assessment, they will learn to study students' needs and create a correct ESP syllabus, while from summative, they thoroughly review and recreate their ESP teaching.

The ESP teachers' culture totally differs from other types of English teachers' because they give not only general knowledge about the language but also teach English in the context of one specialty (Gonzalez, 1995). Hence, in the ESP, it is essential to improve students' overall language skills in their own fields. Consequently, it is double work for ESP teachers because they have to be aware of the content of the students' specialty, and they should be able to combine it with the General English features (listening, reading, speaking, writing, grammar and vocabulary). For these reasons in the course, we pay special attention to ESP teaching features along with the improvement of overall language teaching skills like methodology, teaching grammar, vocabulary, etc. The prove of this can be seen in the attached syllabus of the project.

Conclusion

Improving ESP teachers' qualifications has become an essential issue for the Fergana State University for the last four years. With the extension of faculties, the number of students has risen twice. Consequently, the demand for teachers, especially ESP teachers, is high than ever. However, the quality of lessons that they conduct cannot meet the standards. That's why organizing the ESP teacher-training course is a vital concern for the FSU.

In the proposal, all significant moments beginning from stationery to the schedule of teachers are paid attention. I firmly believe that if we implement this proposal accordingly, it will bring successful results.

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