



THE EVOLUTION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN (1917– 2020): HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY TRANSFORMATION

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Annotation

This article examines the historical evolution of the legal and regulatory framework governing foreign language education in Uzbekistan from the early Soviet period to the present. Based on archival documents, legislative acts, government resolutions, and scholarly literature, the study analyzes the main stages in the development of foreign language education policy, the institutional reforms implemented at different historical periods, and their impact on the training of qualified foreign language teachers. Particular attention is paid to the transformation of state policy after Uzbekistan's independence, including reforms aimed at improving foreign language teaching standards, modernizing educational programs, and integrating international educational practices into the national education system. The research employs historical, comparative, and systematic approaches to assess the continuity and changes in foreign language education policy. The findings demonstrate that the consistent improvement of the legal framework has played a decisive role in expanding foreign language education, strengthening institutional capacity, and enhancing the quality of teacher training. The study contributes to a better understanding of the historical foundations of contemporary foreign language education policy in Uzbekistan and provides a basis for further historical and educational research.

Keywords: Foreign language education, Uzbekistan, educational policy, legal framework, teacher training, archival sources, educational reforms, history of education

Introduction

The ability to communicate in foreign languages has become one of the essential requirements of the modern globalized world. As international political, economic, scientific, and cultural relations have expanded, foreign language education has acquired strategic importance in national education systems. In this context, the development of an effective legal and institutional framework for foreign language teaching has become a priority for many countries, including Uzbekistan. Historical experience demonstrates that sustainable educational reforms require not only methodological innovations but also comprehensive legislative support and consistent state policy.

The foundations of foreign language education in Uzbekistan were established during the Soviet period through a series of legislative acts, educational reforms, and institutional changes. Beginning with the early regulations on compulsory foreign language instruction and continuing through the establishment of specialized institutions for foreign language teacher training, the legal framework gradually evolved in response to changing political and educational priorities. Following Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, the government initiated a new stage of educational reforms aimed at modernizing foreign language teaching, aligning

national educational standards with international practices, and strengthening the preparation of highly qualified foreign language specialists.

Despite the growing number of studies devoted to foreign language education in Uzbekistan, previous research has mainly focused on language teaching methodology, pedagogical innovations, or contemporary educational reforms. Comparatively little attention has been paid to the historical evolution of the legal and regulatory framework governing foreign language education over a long chronological period. In particular, the relationship between state educational policy, legislative reforms, and the institutional development of foreign language teacher education has not been comprehensively examined from a historical perspective.

This study seeks to address this research gap by analyzing the evolution of legal and normative documents regulating foreign language education in Uzbekistan from the early Soviet period to the modern era. The research is based on archival materials, legislative documents, government resolutions, and relevant scholarly literature. Historical-comparative, systematic, and chronological methods are employed to examine the continuity and transformation of state policy in foreign language education.

The findings of this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the historical foundations of foreign language education policy in Uzbekistan. They also provide valuable evidence for evaluating the role of legal reforms in improving teacher training, expanding foreign language instruction, and shaping the country's contemporary educational system.

Method and Level of Study

The research was conducted based on the principles of historicism, objectivity, and a systematic approach. Historical-comparative, historical-chronological, and institutional methods were employed to analyze the evolution of the legal framework regulating foreign language education in Uzbekistan.

The history of foreign language education and teacher training in Uzbekistan has been partially examined by a number of scholars. In particular, R. Zaripova analyzed methodological aspects of foreign language teaching and teacher education in Uzbekistan [1]. The development of foreign language teaching methodology was also discussed by U. Hoshimov and I. Yoqubov [2]. Issues related to higher education reforms and foreign language teacher training have been reflected in the proceedings *Foreign Language Teaching: Today and Tomorrow* [3]. Studies devoted to educational reforms and the modernization of foreign language education are also presented in national scientific publications [4–5].

The legal basis of foreign language education has been regulated through a series of presidential decrees and resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers, particularly the reforms adopted in 2012–2015 [6–13].

The primary source base of this research consists of archival documents preserved in the National Archive of Uzbekistan, including Fund R-94, Inventory 5, File 5178; Fund R-94, Inventory 5, File 5090; and Fund R-2653, Inventory 1, File 2653 [16–18]. These archival materials are supplemented by legislative documents and official educational regulations adopted during different historical periods [19–20].

Although previous studies have investigated teaching methodology and educational reforms, the historical development of the legal and normative framework governing foreign

language education has not been comprehensively analyzed. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap through a historical analysis based on archival documents and official legal sources.

Research Results

The analysis of archival documents, legislative acts, and normative legal sources demonstrates that the development of foreign language education in Uzbekistan was not a spontaneous educational process but the result of consistent state policy implemented through several historical stages. [16–20]

The earliest stage of legal regulation dates back to the first decades of the twentieth century. The adoption of the Basic Principles of the Unified Labour School established foreign languages as compulsory subjects within the school curriculum. This document became the first official legal basis for introducing systematic foreign language instruction into the educational system [19].

The research further reveals that the shortage of qualified foreign language teachers became one of the most serious obstacles to implementing educational reforms. Archival documents show that in 1931 two-year foreign language courses were established in Tashkent; however, representatives of the indigenous population were not enrolled in these courses despite the growing demand for local specialists. The Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) adopted on 25 August 1932 introduced a new stage of reform by requiring every graduate of secondary schools to master at least one foreign language [19–20].

The findings also demonstrate that government policy gradually shifted from expanding school instruction toward establishing specialized higher educational institutions responsible for preparing professional foreign language teachers. A significant milestone was the Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the Uzbek SSR adopted in January 1941 [20].

The establishment of the Tashkent State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages represented one of the most important institutional responses to this challenge. According to archival materials, 105 of the 417 admitted students discontinued their studies during the first academic year [16].

Further analysis indicates that by 1959 foreign languages were taught in approximately 37 percent of schools throughout the republic. Additional reforms introduced two-group instruction for classes with more than twenty-five students, improving opportunities for developing communicative skills [17].

The research identifies another important stage beginning in the early 1970s, when higher education reforms became increasingly connected with foreign language teacher preparation [1–5].

A fundamental transformation occurred following Uzbekistan's independence in 1991. Presidential decrees and government resolutions introduced comprehensive reforms aimed at improving teacher training, educational standards, and institutional modernization [6–15].

The adoption of Presidential Decree PQ-1875 in 2012 represented a decisive turning point in the modernization of foreign language education. The reform introduced competency-based education, multimedia resources, and international educational standards [7–15].

Subsequent legislative acts further strengthened these reforms through the establishment of national educational standards, modernization of university curricula,

support for private language institutions, and continuous professional development of teachers [8–15].

Overall, the research demonstrates that the historical evolution of foreign language education in Uzbekistan has been characterized by a close relationship between legislative reforms and institutional development [1–20].

Table 1. Major Stages in the Development of the Legal Framework for Foreign Language Education in Uzbekistan

Period	Legal document	Main result
1918–1931	Basic Principles of the Unified Labour School	Foreign language introduced into school curriculum
1932	Resolution of VKP(b)	One foreign language became compulsory
1941	Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars	Expansion of foreign language teaching in schools
1991–1992	Independence reforms	New national foreign language policy
2012	Presidential Decree PQ-1875	Modernization of foreign language education
2013	PQ-1971 and Cabinet Resolution No.124	International standards introduced

Table 2. Student Retention at the Tashkent State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages

Indicator	Number
Students admitted	417
Students who left	105
Students continuing studies	312
Dropout rate	25.2%

Table 3. Expansion of Foreign Language Education

Indicator	Value
Schools teaching foreign languages (1959)	37%
Students per group (1961 reform)	25
Foreign language groups	Two-group instruction

Figure 1. Development of the Legal Framework (Timeline)

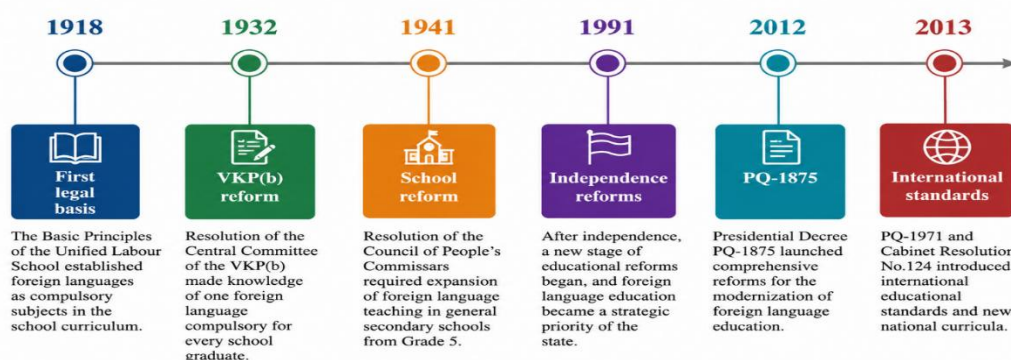


Figure 2. Student Retention

Bar chart

**Conclusion**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the development of foreign language education in Uzbekistan has been closely associated with the gradual evolution of the country's legal and institutional framework. Historical analysis confirms that the earliest regulatory measures introduced during the Soviet period established the legal foundations for foreign language instruction, while subsequent legislative reforms expanded both the scope of language education and the institutional system responsible for teacher training. Although these reforms contributed to the quantitative growth of foreign language education, archival evidence indicates that persistent shortages of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas, remained one of the principal challenges affecting the effectiveness of educational policy.

The study further reveals that the post-independence period marked a fundamental transformation in state policy toward foreign language education. Presidential decrees, government resolutions, and national educational standards introduced after 1991 shifted educational priorities from simple curriculum expansion to comprehensive modernization based on international standards, innovative teaching methodologies, and institutional reform. The establishment of specialized higher education institutions, the modernization of teacher training, and the introduction of competency-based educational standards significantly strengthened the national system of foreign language education.

This research also demonstrates that legal reforms have served not only as regulatory instruments but also as strategic mechanisms for improving educational quality and responding to changing social, political, and economic demands. The continuity of state support, reflected in successive legislative initiatives, has ensured the gradual development of foreign language education from a limited instructional activity into one of the strategic priorities of Uzbekistan's educational policy.

The historical evidence analyzed in this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the evolution of foreign language education in Uzbekistan and highlights the decisive role of legal regulation in shaping educational development. The findings may serve as a valuable source for future historical and educational research on language policy, teacher education, and the modernization of the national education system.

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