

Towards A Holistic Model Of Language Teacher Education: Integrative Strategies For Uzbekistan's Higher Education Establishments

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Abstract: *This study examines integrative approaches used in the Republic of Uzbekistan's higher education system, focusing on the formation of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among future teachers of English. This research contributes to the existing literature on teacher education by building on international pedagogical theories and combining cross-disciplinary research methods. Based on qualitative case studies, document analysis, and expert interviews, it presents a context-sensitive, holistic model that integrates linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions. While practical implementation includes experiential learning and reflective teaching.*

Keywords— integrative approach; language teacher education; intercultural communicative competence; reflective teaching; higher education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The growing complexity of global communication and intercultural contact imposes new requirements on language learning and teaching in general and in linguistically and culturally diverse countries like Uzbekistan, in particular. Teacher training universities have an important responsibility to train the future teachers generally recognized as needing competence both in language and in pedagogy. As Uzbekistan is undergoing major changes in its education system in accordance with national development priorities and global integration, there is an urgent need for integrated models of language teacher education [5].

The subject matter of this study is English language teacher training system in Uzbekistan language/ pedagogical universities, particularly, the integration of intercultural and methodological competences into a unified professional training structure.

The object of the study is the methodology and intercultural competence formation of future English teachers-information in the language/pedagogical faculties of Uzbekistan.

The research intends to produce a locally sensitive rationalised model for the education of English language teachers that will be compatible with the global notions of a quality education as well as the sociocultural context of Uzbekistan.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Academics in international education with a broader global comparative perspective, (e.g., Byram (1997), Kramsch (1993); Deardorff (2006) have emphasized the importance of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as one of the key dimensions of language education. These frameworks

underline the importance of the development of teachers who can manage cultural diversity appropriately both in and out of the classroom. More recent inquiries from Snow (2015) and Johnson & Golombek (2016) call for experiential and reflective dimensions of learning to join teacher education to marry theoretical verities with so-called classroom truth.

While there is ample international documentation for promoting the integrated educational models [19], little evidence demonstrates how these models are implemented in the Uzbek higher education landscape. Local research falls into the traditional knowledge gaps of focusing research exclusively on either a language level or on methodological training which do not account for their unification on linguistic, cultural and methodological levels on the intersection of unified educational process [17; 7]. Furthermore, while Uzbekistani educators (e.g., Mahkamova, Hasanov, Usmanova, & Kilicheva) have designed integrative pedagogical methods that have strong implications for the core values that professionals must know and be able to manifest, they do not target in a specific manner the requirements for enacting effective teacher training strategies or to the demands faced by language/pedagogical universities. For example, Mahkamova (2019) proposes the individualized learning in preschool, and calls for strategies, which consider children's special cognitive, emotional or physical conditions in accordance with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and the national preschool education documents. Hasanov (2021)'s novel pedagogical integration utilizes Montessori-like approaches and digital resources to document Uzbek traditions and to develop creativity, especially at preschool and early elementary levels consistent with the state curricular update. Usmanova also described the primary school model of integrated lessons, where topics like Science/History/Art which has led to holistic comprehension and critical thinking as seen in most of the primary school children learning through integrated lessons. Furthermore,

Kilicheva et al. (2024) discuss these vertically integrated pedagogies that tie together primary, secondary and tertiary education to national economic goals in industry-embedded curriculum and applied skills training; echoing for Uzbekistan the “Strategy of Action” towards sustainable development. Although these contributions are the advance integrative pedagogy in the context of Uzbekistan school education, we actually observe the explicit absence of resources for developing and implementing integrative approaches in language teacher preparation programs in universities. The present article aims to fill this gap by ex-pan-ding, and adavenous peer recognition, integrative models currently acknowledged world-over [8] to the confines of the sociocultural and institutional peculiarities of the language/pedagogical Uzbekistan’s universities. This study, drawing on a qualitative case study approach, documented through document review and expert interviews, offers practicable suggestions for preparing future-ready English language educators whose footprints can be mindful of the global rack and the local shoe.

2.1 Problem Statement

Although progressive national reforms are underway, the preparation of teachers of English at pedagogical universities of Uzbekistan is fraught with main structural and methodological issues. As scholars and teachers of English, we note the enduring tension in (20th- and) 21st-century educational policy and practice that creates challenges for teacher training if not practice itself. Core state documents such as: Presidential Decree No. RP–2909 (2017), Uzbekistan National development strategy for 2022–2026, Decree RP-4910 (2020), and Resolution RP-1875[1;2;3;4;5] highlight the necessity to modernize higher education, to enhance language learning and to integrate international standards.

But there are loose ends:

Fragmented curriculums: Linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical knowledges pass from an incomplete integration and lack a holistic focusing in training programs.

Ignoring ICC: Intercultural communicative competence fails to be systematically integrated into teacher preparation [7; 17].

Weak digital infusion: ICT applications are poorly used, and pedagogies and methodologies are still traditional [19].

Poor emphasis on ICC Development: The current curricula have a likelihood of neglecting the systematic development of intercultural communicative competence, which is a key component in the preparedness of language teachers for the multicultural classroom [7; 17].

Unstructured school-based practicum: the length of school-based practicum has been extended; however, it is characterised by predominantly passive observation of students by student-teachers. [17].

Limited collaboration between the university and the school: in Uzbekistan, there is no strong collaboration between teacher training institutions and PPP-project schools, and it

obstructs effective application of theoretical knowledge into the classroom situation.

In response to these concerns, we suggest a re-contextualized teacher education model that emphasizes:

integrate these with each other, and across the disciplines, and learning from experience and reflection, ICT-enhanced instruction and stepwise progress of ICC. Based on national reform and exit standards, this model is intended to produce teachers who are ready to teach in modern, diverse classrooms.

3. METHODS

Methodological framework of the study is based on the qualitative case study approach which was selected to be able to analyze complex educational issues in authentic institutional situations (cf. This framework makes it possible to examine the LTE systems within Uzbek language/pedagogical universities, through document analysis, expert interview and conceptual modeling based on the overall pedagogical materials theory [8]. The aim is to develop a context-sensitive, comprehensive model of teacher education implementing national reforms and international standards in intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

3.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Purpose and Significance of the Study Specifically, the objective of this study is to propose a contextually-tailored, integrated model for English language teacher education that corresponds to international educational benchmarks and local sociocultural requirements of tertiary level education in Uzbekistan. The study aims to contribute through the answers it offers to the following questions: a) what approaches and models would be more effective to prepare future English teachers in Uzbekistan to teach effectively towards the concrete sociocultural and educational context and societal needs; b) how can integrative approaches be gradually integrated into the course design of English teacher preparation programs; and c) why is it necessary to urgently update English language teacher education to foster intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and pedagogical adaptability.

These are the question, the research attempts to crystallize the essential problem addressed earlier: the need for an integrated, comprehensive approach to language teacher education that fosters global competencies and preserves national identity.

In light of such a problematic context, the value of this research is in the enactment of a timely redress to an educationally significant gap in and of itself: despite a variety of systemic changes in post-Soviet Uzbekistan’s higher education system, there has yet to pervade a cohesive and rigorous approach in the preparation of future English teachers, in terms of intercultural competence, critical thinking, and contextual agility. Such research was selected over other topics, as it is concerned with what Baxter and Qian (2015) refer to as a “bedrock dimension” of quality education

– that is, that teaching professionals are professionally ready in the important task of preparing young people to engage with the world.

Further, the study outcomes and data collected could be used to develop actionable plans by curriculum developers, administrators, and policymakers. They can assist in the design and implementation of more coherent, forward-looking training programs that will better prepare English language instructors to face local and global contexts. This research, finally, seeks to serve the national goals of modernizing the education system, of preparing educators for the country's internationalization, of providing the country with interculturally competent teachers in Uzbekistan.

3.2 Research Population and Sample

The researchers intended to develop empirically the model's structure and implementation for the context of language teacher education in Uzbekistan; therefore, the study was aimed at a particular and representative sample. The study population was composed of the teachers who were teaching English in the Language Departments and teacher-trainees of English Language Teaching (ELT) from the pedagogical universities in three major urban centers of Uzbekistan; Tashkent, Chirchik, and Jizzakh.

The sample for the study was selected on a purposive sampling technique. A purposive sampling was considered adequate because it was important to involve individuals at the forefront of curricular changes or experiences in the teacher education. There were two categories in the sample:

Faculty Experts: 12 teacher trainers (from Tashkent State Pedagogical University, Chirchik State Pedagogical Institute and Jizzakh State Pedagogical Institute) took part in focal expert interviews. These were chosen because they have long experience in teacher training, curriculum development, and direct influence on the process of training English language teachers.

There were 120 undergraduate students registered in ELT courses at the previous three faculties who took part in the empirical stages of the study. Participation was restricted to students who had completed at least one year of their academic studies, thus demonstrating an adequate level of both knowledge of the English language (CEFR B2–C1 levels) and pedagogical training theory.

Several considerations guided the sample size calculation:

- A purposive sample of 12 experts was chosen to obtain depth and saturation of qualitative data with which triangulation could be made to document analysis.
- A size of 120 was considered statistically feasible to observe interesting patterns in the pilot implementation of the holistic model in the student sample, and logistically feasible regarding intervention efforts and data collection.

- By having this twofold sample structure — experts (qualitative validation) and students (pilot study) — we were able to leverage both: practitioner views on systemic flaws, and evidence on the learners-based effectiveness of the model. To sum up, the purposive sampling technique allowed to have a representation of participants as well as a strategic fit to our aim.

3.3 Research Method

Table 1. Research Methods

Method	Description	Purpose	Rationale for Method Selection	Participants
Case Study Approach	A qualitative, context-bound investigation conducted in selected language/pedagogical universities in Uzbekistan. The method allowed for an in-depth understanding of institutional practices and their alignment with national educational reforms.	To contextualize the study and understand language teacher preparation within the real institutional, cultural, and educational landscape of Uzbekistan.	Well-suited for exploring complex educational reforms in real-life contexts and for building grounded understanding based on rich data.	Faculty administrators, curriculum coordinators, and institutional profiles from selected language/pedagogical universities
Document Analysis	Examination of policy documents, national strategies, university curricula, and international research to trace the evolution of language teacher education practices and identify gaps.	To gather foundational insights and establish the formal and informal structures guiding teacher training curricula and policies.	Provides a macro-level lens to trace institutional changes and their theoretical underpinnings; supports triangulation of other data.	National policy documents, strategic plans, university syllabi, international literature

Expert Interviews	Semi-structured interviews conducted with language teacher educators, curriculum developers, and pre-service students (first and second years) to capture multiple perspectives on existing challenges and needed improvements.	To incorporate insider knowledge from diverse actors in the educational process and validate findings through stakeholder experiences.	Ensures representation of both implementers' and learners' voices, adding depth and credibility to the analysis.	Language teacher educators, curriculum designers, pre-service students (1st and 2nd years)	Integrative Conceptual Modeling	prior to model intervention.	1 skill enhancement.	innovations.	
						Development of a research-based synthesizing experiential learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and reflective pedagogy suited for Uzbekistan's language teacher education system.	To construct an actionable, locally adapted, and globally informed model for language teacher training.	Enables synthesis of theoretical and empirical findings into a single model tailored to the Uzbek higher education context.	Synthesis drawn from all previous participants and cross-validated with international best practices
Thematic Content Analysis	Analytical coding and interpretation of qualitative data collected from interviews and document reviews, aiming to uncover recurring themes, contradictions, and patterns relevant to ICC integration.	To systematize qualitative findings, ensuring data is meaningfully interpreted and used to inform the development of the proposed model.	A proven method in qualitative research for converting textual data into analyzable evidence; strengthens the validity of interpretations.	Same participants as interviews and document reviews; coded and analyzed data sources	Comparative Analysis	Comparative synthesis of local teacher education policy and curriculum with international ICC models to highlight innovation points and ensure both relevance and feasibility in proposed reforms.	To measure convergence and divergence between Uzbekistan's educational practices and internationally recognized ICC frameworks.	Promotes benchmarking against global standards and highlights Uzbekistan's strengths and areas for strategic growth in teacher education.	Uzbek teacher education institutions vs. international ICC models and frameworks
Baseline Needs Analysis	Surveys and observational studies targeting pre-service students to evaluate their initial pedagogical knowledge, reflective practices, and intercultural competence	To assess current student needs, identify developmental gaps, and inform pedagogical scaffolding for reflective and intercultural	Captures the lived realities and developmental stage of students, which is crucial for proposing realistic instructional	First- and second-year students in teacher training programs at language/pedagogical universities					

4. FINDINGS

To ensure that the proposed comprehensive model of language teacher education in Uzbekistan's pedagogical universities is based on the empirical data and the best practices across the world, this section reports the findings of the study. It consists in a logic of consolidation of knowledge, cutting across expert interviews, document analysis as well as comparative analysis of integrative strategies. Results are presented in tables and figures, providing quantitative summaries as well as interpretive

perspectives. Wherever possible, comparisons are made with studies abroad to highlight the relevance of the model.

4.1 3.1. Document Analysis and Expert Interview Findings

A qualitative document analysis was conducted on standards for teacher education, strategic direction for educational reform, and university program syllabi in Uzbekistan. This was cross triangulated with in-depth interviews from 12 teacher trainers of pedagogical the universities in Tashkent, Chirchik and Jizak (see Table 2).

Table 2. Key Findings from Expert Interviews and Curriculum Document Analysis

Focus Area	Key Findings	Number of Sources/Experts Supporting
Integration of ICC in Curriculum	ICC is marginally referenced in syllabi; mostly in elective or theoretical units.	10 out of 12 experts
Reflective Teaching Strategies	Reflective methods are rarely implemented; lesson planning dominates training activities.	9 out of 12 experts
Use of Experiential Learning	Practicum remains observation-heavy; little structured experiential learning or simulation use.	8 out of 12 experts
Interdisciplinary Collaboration	Minimal interaction between departments (e.g., linguistics, psychology, pedagogy).	Document analysis across 3 universities
Technology Integration	Digital platforms are underused in teacher preparation, except for online assessments.	Verified across 3 universities

This radar graph shows the % of experts who reported core integrated elements in existing syllabi and praxis. As observed, the most integrated area is related to intercultural communicative competence and reflective teaching, whereas technology integration is the weakest.

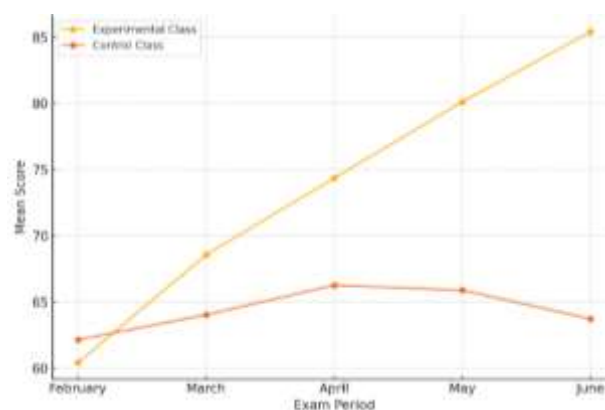


Figure 1. Interview and Syllabus Review Summary

4.2 Implementation of the Holistic Model in Pilot Setting

In a pilot study at Tashkent State Pedagogical University, a new module combining ICC, reflective practices and digital media tools was used by 1st and 2nd year students.

Table 3. Learner Gains in ICC and Pedagogical Competence (Pre/Post Comparison, n=62)



Competency Area	Pre-Test (Mean)	Post-Test (Mean)	Δ Mean	Significance (p)
Intercultural Awareness	2.8	4.2	+1.4	<0.01
Teaching Methodology Confidence	3.1	4.5	+1.4	<0.01
Reflective Practice Usage	2.5	4.3	+1.8	<0.01

Technology Use in Teaching	2.9	4.0	+1.1	<0.05
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5-point Likert scale: 1 (Very Low) – 5 (Very High)

Interpretation: These findings reflect significant change in all competencies measured, most notably in reflective practice and intercultural awareness, validating the model's promise.

Comparative Perspectives

Our results (see Table 4) are consistent with those of international studies. For instance, Wu (2025) showed similar enhancements to classroom engagement and academic achievement for students when the integrative ICT-supported teaching method was implemented at the Chinese universities.

Table 4. Comparative Progress of Experimental vs. Control

Exam Period	Experimental Class (Mean)	Control Class (Mean)
February	60.42	62.15
March	68.57	64.03
April	74.36	66.27
May	80.12	65.89
June	85.41	63.72

The progress of the experimental group exceeds that of the control group in all five dimensions from February to June, and it shows that the sustained execution of the integrative model can largely enhance students' communicative competence as a whole and their overall preparation for language teachers in general.

Comparison of gains of means of scores of exams taken by individuals between February and June in experimental and control groups. The findings address a clear and significant positive trend among students who involved in the integrative ICT-supported pedagogical model and that the control group presented a consistent or declined (compared with their previous average) level of it. The extending performance gap also indicates the efficiency of long-term integrated strategies in promoting students' academic success and communicative proficiency, consistent with Wu (2025).

Figure 2. Comparative Progress in Exam Score

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings from the pilot implementation of integrative pedagogical models validate the assumption that a holistic, context sensitive model has beneficial effects on the overall professional readiness of pre-service language teachers. Scores showed substantial progression over a 5-month period (February to June) The students taught with the integrative model had higher scores on all measures as compared to students in the control group. This development is consistent with earlier international research studies (Wu, 2025), spanning both in service (Byram, 1997) and preservice programs, indicating the value of the integration of digital

tools, intercultural competence training, and reflective methodologies in ITE.

We add the need to locate educational reforms in the socio-cultural peculiarities of Uzbekistan to Mahkamova (2022) and Rakhmatullaeva (2018). Although the CEFR and UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education program provide generic guiding principles, implementation is only successful in the ways they can be adapted to specific contexts. For example, the intelligent comparative approach between English and the L1 of the learners was found to be particularly effective to foster students' metalinguistic awareness and intercultural sensitivity.

The conversation also uncovered a number of persistent systemic features:

Fragmentation of ICC preparation: ICC is still a peripheral concept in most syllabuses, perceiving as a content to be included later, but not necessarily a key point in teacher training.

Poor Digital Pedagogies: Teachers in institutions are slow in embracing digital lectures modes and students' exposure to contemporary digitally enhanced pedagogical techniques remains inadequate.

Lack of Alignment with National Education Policies: Inconsistency is found between what institutions are doing and what the national strategy documents set as goals, for example in the Concept for the Development of Higher Education in Uzbekistan until 2030.

Regional Disparities: Discrepancies in outcomes between urban centers (e.g., Tashkent, Chirchik, and Jizzakh) illustrate infrastructural and administrative imbalances which need to be tackled for successful overall reform implementation in all institutions.

Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of a joint effort between linguists, methodologists, technologists, and intercultural communication (IC) researchers. This type of collaboration is essential in preparing teachers as not just language teachers, but also language and culture brokers that can promote inclusive and global competency classrooms. Drawing on the results and discussion above, the following recommendations are made in order to strengthen language teacher education in Uzbekistan (see Table 5):

Table 5. Summary of Recommendations for Holistic Language Teacher Education Reform in Uzbekistan.

No.	Recommendation	Description
1	Embed Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) at the Core of Curricula	Redesign teacher education curricula to systematically integrate ICC development across all coursework and practical experiences, rather than isolating it within elective modules.
2	Prioritize Digital Literacy and Technology-Enhanced Pedagogy	Incorporate training modules that familiarize future teachers with educational technologies, digital

		platforms, and online communication tools essential for modern classrooms.
3	Institutional Alignment with National Educational Strategies	Regularly review and update teacher education programs to align them with national documents, such as Uzbekistan's '2030 Higher Education Strategy,' ensuring responsiveness to state priorities and societal needs.
4	Develop Modular, Scalable Training Programs	Create flexible training modules that can be adapted to regional contexts while maintaining consistent educational standards, thus reducing disparities across institutions.
5	Implement Contrastive and Comparative Methods Broadly	Systematize the use of contrastive analysis (e.g., English-Uzbek, English-Russian comparisons) as a method for enhancing linguistic and intercultural competence among future teachers.
6	Foster Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Program Development	Encourage cooperation between departments of linguistics, education, digital technologies, and cultural studies to design comprehensive, integrative teacher preparation frameworks.
7	Strengthen Teacher Trainers' Professional Development	Invest in continuous professional development for teacher educators, particularly in areas of ICC, digital pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching practices.
8	Monitor and Evaluate Reform Implementation	Establish robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of implemented reforms, with feedback loops to ensure continuous improvement based on empirical data.

On the above recommendations, Uzbek language and pedagogical universities will be able to create a model of the system of education of teachers of English language that will be effective, innovative and competitive at international level.

The study put forward a context-based and a comprehensive model of ELTTE that addressed the specific needs of

Uzbekistani language and pedagogical universities. Combining the best of international practice, national needs, and Uzbekistan's socio-cultural context, the research demonstrates the time is ripe for pre-service language teacher education reform. The results of our study illustrate that exposure to theoretical instruction in isolation does little to help preservice teachers understand about how to teach in the intercultural, digitally mediated, pedagogically diverse classrooms in which they are likely to teach.

In this research, we highlight the importance of Infusing Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), Digital Literacy, and Reflective Pedagogy into teacher education. Comparative results show that these approaches will increase the professional world readiness and in-class participation as well as flexibility.

The findings indicate that there are significant lacunae, such as inadequate ICC proficiency level achievement, the minimal use of complementary analysis, and the disarticulated intervention programme. The model is consistent with national policy documents and international policy frames, such as UNESCO's Global Competence Framework and the CEFR Companion Volume.

The results support an interdisciplinary, culturally sensitive, and experiential model of language teacher preparation that fosters linguistic competence, intercultural fluency, and pedagogical versatility and offer implications for research, curriculum innovation, and policy development

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