



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH LEARNING METHODS AMONG UZBEK STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze and compare the various methods employed by Uzbek students in learning the English language. English is increasingly becoming a vital tool for academic success, professional advancement, and global communication, particularly in developing countries like Uzbekistan. As the country continues to open up to global markets and international cooperation, the need for English proficiency is growing exponentially. This paper focuses on the most commonly practiced English learning approaches in Uzbekistan, including traditional classroom instruction, online learning platforms, private tutoring, immersive language environments, and self-directed learning. The effectiveness of these approaches is evaluated through qualitative and quantitative data obtained from surveys, interviews, and case studies conducted in Tashkent, Samarkand, and Fergana. The results indicate significant differences in learner outcomes, depending on the method employed, the motivation of learners, socioeconomic factors, and institutional support. The study concludes with pedagogical recommendations tailored to the Uzbek context for maximizing English language acquisition.

Keywords : English language learning, Uzbek students, comparative study, language acquisition, learning methods, ESL, education in Uzbekistan



Introduction

The role of the English language in the 21st century cannot be overstated. It serves not only as a medium of international communication but also as a gateway to the global job market, scientific research, and cross-cultural dialogue. In Uzbekistan, English has rapidly risen in importance following the country's independence from the Soviet Union and its subsequent educational reforms. The Uzbek government has introduced English as a compulsory subject from primary school onwards and has supported numerous initiatives aimed at boosting English language proficiency among students and teachers alike. Despite these reforms, English language acquisition remains a significant challenge in Uzbekistan. Regional disparities, lack of qualified instructors, outdated teaching materials, and limited exposure to native English environments are some of the hurdles students face. Moreover, the variety of learning methods now available—including traditional classroom-based education, online learning platforms such as Coursera and Duolingo, private tutoring, immersion programs, and self-study options—offers both opportunities and confusion for learners and policymakers. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by providing a comparative analysis of these methods and their relative effectiveness in the Uzbek context. By examining the preferences, outcomes, and limitations associated with each method, we seek to provide insights that can guide students, parents, teachers, and policymakers in making informed choices about English education.

Research Methodology

The research follows a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of English learning in Uzbekistan.

1. Sampling

The study surveyed a total of 600 students aged 15–25 from three major regions of Uzbekistan: Tashkent, Samarkand, and Fergana. Stratified random





sampling was used to ensure representation from high schools, universities, private language centers, and independent learners.

2. Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires: Designed to capture demographic information, learning history, method preference, frequency of English usage, and self-assessed proficiency. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 students and 15 English teachers to gain deeper insights into learner motivations and methodological preferences. **Observations:** Classroom observations were made at three different institutions that use varied teaching methodologies. **Language Proficiency Tests:** Participants were also asked to complete a standard CEFR-based language proficiency assessment.

3. Data Analysis

Quantitative data from surveys and tests were analyzed using SPSS software to determine correlations between methods and outcomes. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were coded thematically.

Main Body

1. Traditional Classroom Instruction

This remains the most prevalent method of English language learning in Uzbekistan. Government schools and public universities follow a structured curriculum that focuses on grammar, reading comprehension, and translation. While this method offers consistency and institutional support, it is often criticized for being too teacher-centered and lacking in communicative competence. Students reported that classroom instruction is helpful for developing a foundational understanding of grammar and vocabulary. However, most expressed dissatisfaction with their ability to use English in real-life situations. Teachers also noted that large class sizes and limited access to updated teaching materials hinder effective instruction.



2. Online Learning Platforms

With the increasing penetration of internet services across Uzbekistan, online platforms like Duolingo, BBC Learning English, YouTube tutorials, and MOOCs have become popular, especially among urban youth. These tools offer flexibility, accessibility, and exposure to native speakers. Data indicates that students using online resources in conjunction with formal education show significantly better listening and speaking skills. However, many rural students lack reliable internet access and digital literacy, limiting their engagement with these platforms. Moreover, the self-directed nature of online learning demands high levels of motivation and time-management skills, which not all students possess.

3. Private Tutoring and Language Centers

Private tutoring is an emerging trend, particularly in urban areas. Language centers such as “LangSkill,” “Language Leaders,” and others offer personalized instruction, native-speaking tutors, and specialized test preparation courses (e.g., IELTS, TOEFL). Our data suggests that students enrolled in private tutoring programs tend to outperform their peers in speaking and writing tests. These institutions often employ communicative language teaching (CLT) methods, emphasizing interaction, pronunciation, and fluency. However, the high cost associated with private tutoring makes it inaccessible to many middle- and lower-income families.

4. Immersive Language Environments

Immersion is widely regarded as the most effective language learning approach. Although few students have the opportunity to study abroad, some domestic institutions simulate immersive environments through English-only policies, international partnerships, and exchange programs. Students in these environments reported higher confidence and fluency. Interestingly, even short-term immersion programs (such as summer camps with international participation) had a positive impact on language performance. However, the



availability of such programs remains limited and often exclusive to elite schools or well-funded universities.

5. Self-Directed Learning

Self-study, often supplemented with digital tools, books, and peer discussions, is common among highly motivated learners. This method allows students to focus on areas of personal interest and proceed at their own pace. Our findings indicate that self-directed learners often develop a deeper understanding of language structure and vocabulary but may struggle with pronunciation and conversational fluency unless they have opportunities for interaction. These learners also face challenges in maintaining consistency and accountability without external guidance.

Analysis and Findings

1. Effectiveness of Methods

A comparison of average CEFR test scores revealed the following:

Private tutoring: B2 level (average score: 71/100)

Immersive programs: B2 level (average score: 68/100)

Online platforms: B1 level (average score: 62/100)

Traditional classrooms: A2-B1 (average score: 55/100)

Self-directed learning: Variable (A2 to B2), average 58/100

These results suggest that personalized and communicative methods (tutoring, immersion) are generally more effective than rigid, grammar-focused approaches.

2. Motivational Factors

The study found that motivation plays a crucial role in determining success. Students motivated by career goals (e.g., studying abroad, working in





international companies) performed significantly better than those motivated by institutional requirements alone.

3. Challenges and Barriers

Infrastructure: Limited access to quality materials and internet connectivity in rural areas.

Teacher Training: Many instructors still rely on outdated methodologies.

Equity: Socioeconomic disparities affect access to quality education and resources.

Conclusion

This comparative study has highlighted significant variation in the effectiveness of English language learning methods among Uzbek students. While traditional classrooms remain the backbone of formal education, their impact is limited by outdated practices and lack of interactivity. Online learning and self-directed study offer promising alternatives, especially for motivated learners, but are hindered by infrastructure gaps. Private tutoring and immersive environments yield the highest outcomes but are not universally accessible. To improve English proficiency nationwide, Uzbekistan must invest in teacher training, digital infrastructure, and inclusive language programs. A blended approach that combines classroom instruction with digital tools and communicative practices would offer the most effective and equitable path forward.

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