



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS FOR UZBEK EFL TEACHERS IN USING AI TOOLS EFFECTIVELY

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19642588>

Abstract: This article analyzes the professional development needs of Uzbek English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in effectively using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The study examines the role of AI technologies in modern education, their potential to enhance teaching effectiveness, and teachers' knowledge and skills in utilizing these tools. It also explores teachers' attitudes toward AI, the challenges they face, and the level of methodological support currently available. Based on the findings, the study proposes recommendations for improving AI-related professional development programs for EFL teachers in Uzbekistan. The article contributes to the implementation of innovative approaches in education and the development of teachers' digital competencies.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), EFL teachers, professional development, digital competence, educational technology, Uzbekistan, English language teaching, pedagogical innovation, AI tools, teacher qualification*

Introduction: In recent years, the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly transformed various sectors, including education. AI-powered tools such as intelligent tutoring systems, automated feedback applications, and natural language processing platforms are increasingly being integrated into English language teaching (ELT) practices. These technologies offer new opportunities for enhancing teaching effectiveness, personalizing learning experiences, and improving student engagement. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), AI tools can support teachers in areas such as lesson planning, assessment, content generation, and language skill development.

Despite the growing availability of AI technologies, their effective integration into classroom practice largely depends on teachers' digital competence and pedagogical readiness. Research indicates that many teachers face challenges in adopting emerging technologies due to limited training, lack of institutional support, and insufficient understanding of how to align AI tools with





pedagogical goals. This issue is particularly relevant in developing educational contexts, where access to professional development opportunities and technological infrastructure may be uneven.

In Uzbekistan, ongoing educational reforms emphasize the modernization of teaching practices and the integration of digital technologies into the learning process. English language education has become a national priority, increasing the demand for innovative and effective teaching methods. However, there is still limited empirical research focusing on Uzbek EFL teachers' preparedness to use AI tools and their specific professional development needs in this area. Understanding these needs is essential for designing targeted training programs and ensuring the successful implementation of AI in language education.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the professional development needs of Uzbek EFL teachers in using AI tools effectively. It explores teachers' current level of AI literacy, their attitudes toward AI integration, the challenges they encounter, and the types of support they require. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies for teacher training and to promote the effective use of AI technologies in EFL classrooms.

Main Body: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into language education has been widely discussed in recent scholarly literature, particularly in relation to its potential to transform teaching practices and enhance learning outcomes. According to Michael Luckin, AI can play a crucial role in supporting personalized learning by adapting instructional content to individual students' needs, thereby increasing learning efficiency. Similarly, Rose Luckin emphasizes that AI technologies enable more data-driven decision-making in teaching, allowing educators to better monitor student progress and provide timely feedback.

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, AI tools such as automated writing evaluation systems, chatbots, and intelligent tutoring systems have demonstrated significant potential. Ken Beatty highlights that AI-based Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) systems can facilitate language acquisition by offering interactive and adaptive learning environments. These tools provide learners with immediate feedback, which is essential for improving language proficiency, especially in writing and speaking skills.

However, the effective use of AI in education largely depends on teachers' digital competence and pedagogical readiness. Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler, through the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)





framework, argue that successful technology integration requires a balanced understanding of content, pedagogy, and technology. In this context, EFL teachers must not only be familiar with AI tools but also understand how to integrate them meaningfully into their teaching practices.

Furthermore, Neil Selwyn points out that while AI offers numerous opportunities, it also raises critical challenges, including ethical concerns, data privacy issues, and the risk of over-reliance on technology. These challenges highlight the need for well-structured professional development programs that prepare teachers to use AI responsibly and effectively.

In the context of Uzbekistan, the need for such professional development is particularly significant. Although national education reforms emphasize digitalization and innovation, there is still a gap between policy and classroom practice. Many EFL teachers lack sufficient training and practical experience in using AI tools. Studies in similar contexts suggest that continuous professional development, institutional support, and access to technological resources are key factors in successful AI integration.

Therefore, it is essential to design targeted training programs that focus on developing teachers' AI literacy, pedagogical skills, and critical understanding of technology use. Such programs should include hands-on workshops, collaborative learning opportunities, and ongoing support mechanisms. By addressing these needs, the education system can better equip Uzbek EFL teachers to harness the full potential of AI tools and improve the quality of English language teaching.

In conclusion, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching presents both significant opportunities and notable challenges for educators in Uzbekistan. This study has shown that while AI tools have the potential to enhance teaching effectiveness, support personalized learning, and improve student outcomes, their successful implementation largely depends on teachers' professional readiness and digital competence.

The findings indicate that many Uzbek EFL teachers require targeted professional development to effectively incorporate AI into their pedagogical practices. Key needs include improving AI literacy, developing practical skills for classroom integration, and gaining a deeper understanding of the pedagogical value of AI tools. Additionally, challenges such as limited access to training, insufficient methodological support, and concerns about ethical and responsible use of AI remain critical issues.



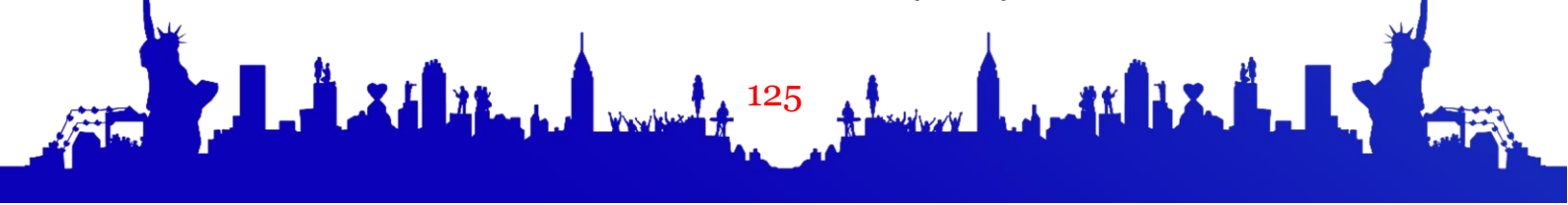


Therefore, it is essential to design and implement comprehensive professional development programs that are context-specific, practice-oriented, and sustainable. Such programs should combine theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience, encourage collaborative learning, and provide continuous institutional support. Furthermore, policymakers and educational institutions should work together to create an enabling environment that fosters innovation and supports teachers in adapting to technological advancements.

Overall, addressing the professional development needs of EFL teachers will play a crucial role in maximizing the benefits of AI in education and ensuring the effective modernization of English language teaching in Uzbekistan.

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