

## **UZBEK LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN SOUTH KOREA– FOCUSING ON ‘STANDARD CURRICULUM FOR UZBEK LANGUAGE’**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study explores on the contents and results of the development of the ‘standard curriculum for Uzbek language’ supported by Korea's Critical Foreign Language Education Act (enacted since 2017). The ‘standard curriculum for the Uzbek language’ materializes the core competencies that learners need to achieve into ‘Uzbek language communication competency’, ‘self-management competency’, and ‘local cultural competency’. In Korea, this standard curriculum consists of a total of four levels, with A1 indicating the lowest level as an introduction to the Uzbek language and up to the B2 as the highest level. Based on the ‘standard curriculum for the Uzbek language’ in this way, the ‘Standard Uzbek A1, A2, B1, and B2’ textbook have all been developed and published.*

**Keywords:** *Act on the Promotion of Education of Critical Foreign Languages, Standard Uzbek, Standard Curriculum for Uzbek Language, Standard Uzbek A1, Korean learners for Uzbek Language*

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### **АННОТАЦИЯ**

*В этом исследовании исследуется содержание и результаты разработки «стандартной учебной программы по узбекскому языку», поддерживаемой Законом Кореи о критическом обучении иностранным языкам (вступил в силу с 2017 года). «Стандартная учебная программа по узбекскому языку» материализует основные компетенции, которые учащиеся должны освоить, в «коммуникативную компетенцию на узбекском языке», «компетенцию самоуправления» и «компетенцию местной культуры». В Корею эта стандартная учебная программа состоит в общей сложности из четырех уровней, от A1, обозначающего самый низкий уровень как введение в узбекский язык, и до B2 как самый высокий уровень. Таким образом, на основе «стандартной учебной программы по узбекскому языку» были разработаны и изданы «Стандартные учебники узбекского языка A1, A2, B1 и B2».*

*Ключевые слова: Закон о содействии обучению критическим иностранным языкам, стандартный узбекский язык, типовая учебная программа по узбекскому языку, стандартный узбекский язык А1, корейский язык для изучающих узбекский язык*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2017, the Korean Ministry of Education enacted the 'Promotion of Education of Critical Foreign Languages(hereafter, CFLE)' in the first phase (2017-2021) in 15 languages including Uzbek (Mongolian, Thai, Malaysian-Indonesian, Farsi, Indian, Turkish, Polish, Portuguese, Brazilian, Hungarian) as special languages. The CFLE project in 2022 is scheduled to enter the second phase (2022-2025). In the second stage, five languages (Kazakh, Lao, Khmer, Swedish, and Italian) are added, and a total of 20 critical languages will be supported by the government over the next four years to develop standard curriculum, standard textbooks, evaluation, and certification system, and target the general public's education of critical languages - free classes will be opened and an online video learning course will be developed as done already during the first phase.

The core purposes of this CFLE is how to professionally educate less known foreign languages and inform the general public about those languages. In Korea, critical foreign languages have less demand for learning than major languages such as English, Chinese, and Spanish. However, with the globalization of the world economy, the need to proficiently speak the language of a strategical country and area is increasing due to the expansion of Korean companies' entry into emerging market countries, the expansion of strategic resource diplomacy and the expansion of target countries for public diplomacy. Above all, in the era of the 4th industrial revolution, the ability to understand and express various foreign languages has become a must-have to represent the national interest in a more diversified overseas market and complex global environment.

This study will focus on the contents and results of the development of the standard curriculum for Uzbek language supported by Korea's CFLE project. Through this, we intend to provide information on what standard education system for Uzbek have been developed by especially focusing on 'standard curriculum development for Uzbek language'.

## **II. DEMAND FOR UZBEK AS A CRITICAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND ITS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

For the CFLE, the Ministry of Education and the National Institute for International Education (NIIED), in accordance with the 'Act on the Promotion of Critical Foreign Language Education' and the 'Enforcement Decree' of the same Act was released. In the global era, the 'Critical Foreign Language Education Act' reflects the new demand generated internally and externally, which is increasing due to the entry of domestic companies into emerging markets, diversification of national exchanges, and overseas employment and business start-ups. It was established with the purpose of designating 53 languages as critical foreign languages and nurturing experts who can speak the language proficiently. Ministry of Education of Korea allocates the budget for this project about 8 billion Korean won per year.

With the growth of Korean national power and changes in the internal environment, the recognition that critical language experts, including Uzbek, are essential in Korea, even with a small number of people, has gradually spread. In particular, the demand for Uzbek has increased significantly as the relationship between Korea and Uzbekistan is gradually getting closer and the number of Uzbeks in Korea has increased sharply as a result of signing 'Special Strategic Partnership' in 2019 between two states.

Today, as the number of Uzbek residents in Korea has increased to the 7th place (45,000 people legally) among the total number of foreigners, the demand for Uzbek speakers in various fields is also increasing. Private companies such as banks and trading companies, as well as public institutions such as the Korean National Police Agency, National Intelligence Service, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are steadily hiring Uzbek experts. In addition, as multicultural centers and local governments across the country promote exchanges with Uzbekistan at the private level, the demand for experts is also increasing every year.

Although Uzbek language education in Korea started after the establishment of the Department of Central Asian Studies at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (2004), there is still only one Hankuk University of Foreign Studies that specializes in Uzbek language education among higher education institutions (universities). Compared to popular foreign languages such as English, Chinese, and Japanese, opportunities to learn Uzbek in Korea are very limited. In order to spread Uzbek education in this situation, first of all, this CFLE began supporting the realization of Uzbek education at the university level and the Department of Central Asian Department of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, educating Uzbek as a partner to carry out this project. In the second stage of the Critical Foreign Language Education Promotion Project, Uzbek language is selected as a target language for

continuous support, training graduate-level professional manpower (scholarships provided), free online and offline Uzbek language education for the general public (short-term, mid-to-long term), and Uzbek language education for job-related workers (police, military, etc.) and overseas residents (resident in Uzbekistan) will continue as all those programs were conducted during the first phase.

### **III. STANDARD CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR UZBEK LANGUAGE: GOALS, CORE COMPETENCIES AND LEVELS**

The core goal of Uzbek language education in the CFLE is to cultivate people who have practical communication skills, so can communicate with Uzbeks, know their culture, and expand our cultural capacity to the world. For this purpose, it should be an education that leads learners to have interest in the Uzbek language and to continue self-motivated learning based on this. In addition, it is necessary to foster Uzbek experts who have extensive knowledge and understanding of Uzbek speaking regions.

However, foreign language education in Korea is focused on a few foreign languages, such as English, Chinese, and Japanese, and opportunities to experience Uzbek language are very limited. To supplement this limitation, Uzbek language education should be realized in specialized educational institutions that can sufficiently provide educational opportunities for Uzbek language. In addition, in Uzbek education, we plan and practice teaching and learning methods that provide sufficient opportunities for learners to experience the local language and local culture and utilize various multimedia materials and information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom. It is necessary to maximize the efficiency of learning by organically linking learning activities and evaluation. To this end, 'standard curriculum for the Uzbek language' was developed supported by the Act in the first stage.

The standard curriculum for the Uzbek language materializes the core competencies that learners need to achieve into 'Uzbek language communication competency', 'self-management competency', and 'local cultural competency'. First, 'communication competence in Uzbek' is the ability to communicate in Uzbek in everyday life and in various situations and includes ability to understand Uzbek and express ability in Uzbek. Second, 'self-management competency' is the ability for learners to continue learning Uzbek on their own initiative and including evaluation based on interests and interest in Uzbek. Third, 'local cultural competency' is a

competency with deep knowledge and understanding of the local culture and society of the Uzbek language spoken region.

The above is defined as the general characteristics and core competencies of the standard curriculum for the Uzbek language. In Korea, this standard curriculum consists of a total of four levels, with A1 indicating the lowest level as an introduction to the Uzbek language and up to the B2 as the highest level. The below study time (tab. 1) of each level was applied to the standards of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) announced by the European Parliament. In the case of Uzbek, it is linguistically close to Korean, and the number of times in each level is the accumulated.

[Tab 1.] Study time by languages (CEFR)

language level	linguistically far (hour)	linguistically close(hour)
A1	170	60
A2	260	120
B1	430	180
B2	600	280
C1	860	380
C2	-	780

In the ‘standard curriculum for the Uzbek language’, Uzbek language for the level A1 is the first level. This grade is commonly referred to as “introductory” and in fact it can include levels lower than A1. Students who are just starting to learn Uzbek, or those who have never learned Uzbek before, are at the pre-A1 level. The A1 level consists of 11 lessons in the ‘Standard Uzbek A1’ textbook, starting with learning the Uzbek alphabet, pronunciation rules, basic greetings and self-introduction expressions. The most basic Uzbek grammatical features are studied, and at the same time, simple Uzbek texts and Korean explanations including the cultural features of Uzbekistan and the relationship with the language are included.

The Uzbek level for A2 is the second level. In general, this level can be seen as referring to the “basic” level when you say “my Uzbek is at a basic level”. If you have faithfully studied the A1 standard curriculum, learning at the A2 level is possible. The official level name is “beginner”, and when you reach about half of all 11 lessons (from the ‘Standard Uzbek A2’ Textbook), you might name student’s level



as pre-intermediate. At this level, students have mastered the basics of Uzbek and are able to explain basic requirements or situations.

Uzbek level for B1 is the third level. Generally, this level is called “intermediate”, and students have surpassed the basics of Uzbek, and if they have studied the course faithfully, they will be able to continue daily conversations in Uzbek enough and have learned most of the grammar knowledge frequently used in Uzbek. However, there are still some difficulties in working or studying only in Uzbek.

Uzbek level B2 is the fourth level. In general, this rating can be seen as referring to the level of "confidence" when you say "I can speak Uzbek fluently". The official grade designation is "Upper-Intermediate", which is somewhat limited in nuance and accuracy, but can be independently approached using Uzbek in a variety of academic and professional settings.

The Uzbek level for C1, C2 development is currently reserved at this stage. It is judged that it is difficult to reach this level only in the domestic curriculum in Korea because those levels are close to the native speaker's proficiency at the graduate school.

Based on the ‘standard curriculum for the Uzbek language’ in this way, the ‘Standard Uzbek A1, A2, B1, and B2’ textbook have all been developed and published. In case of the B1 and B2 textbook, they are free to download as an e-book format. The figure below shows the table of contents and cover of the A1 developed based on the standard curriculum.



So'z boshi \_ 5  
머리말 \_ 7  
일러두기 \_ 9  
교재 구성표 \_ 12  
O'zbek tili haqida uzbekchegarae gwanhae \_ 18  
우즈베크어, 이것만 알자 \_ 23

1-DARS Salomlashuv va tanishuv 인사와 소개 \_ 37  
2-DARS Kasblar 직업 \_ 59  
3-DARS Oila 가족 \_ 77  
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5-DARS Bayram, Tug'ilgan kun, mengil, sangil \_ 119  
6-DARS Vaqt, Kundalik hayot, sagan, ilimsenghal \_ 145  
7-DARS Kecha nima qildingiz? danginon ege mudeil hennayo? \_ 177  
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## **CONCLUSIONS**

As studied above, education for a critical language such as Uzbek in Korea is just at the beginning stage. In the meantime, it can be said that teaching methods for major languages and development of learning materials have developed significantly in a short period of time. However, looking through a thorough logic of demand, critical languages such as Uzbek have limitations in that they do not have enough methods and materials to learn, no matter how much they want to learn them. Fortunately, with the support of Promotion of Education of Critical Foreign Languages enacted by the Korean Ministry of Education, Uzbek language education can be continued with more systematic and professionalism.

Today, the development of the ‘standard curriculum for the Uzbek Language’ has resulted in the development of ‘standard textbooks’ in four levels, and now it is challenging the new task of establishing evaluation certification system. This is because, as the number of learners gradually increases, the demand for a clear and credible evaluation system for learners’ Uzbek language level is also increasing. From 2020, the FLEX Uzbek language evaluation test conducted covering all levels from A1 to B2 has been conducted on a pilot basis, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> one is scheduled to be conducted in May, 2022. It is difficult to evaluate on this certification system now due to that the data are not enoughly accumulated, but at least for those who are in the process of finding a job related to Uzbek, it is very helpful getting a certificate officially issued by the specialized education institutes such as FLEX Center of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies.

It should be noted that all these fruits are the result of the ‘Promotion of Education of Critical Foreign Languages’. This law is a case in which the state provides professional, systematic, and long-term support for strategic languages for Korean government, so those language are recognized as necessary to foster experts in Korea due to political, economic, diplomatic, and academic needs. This case of Korea’s foreign language education act can be a good example for giving meaningful implication for foreign language education in other countries.

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