

WHAT DO UZBEKISTANI EFL TEACHERS KNOW AND BELIEVE ABOUT THE USEFULNESS OF THE CEFR?

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ABSTRACT

As the CEFR is the internationally recognized framework for learning, teaching and assessment, this framework became the requirement in teaching and learning languages in Uzbekistan context from 2013 that it has been implemented and introduced in education system. For this purpose, several reforms done for adopting domestic multistage of the CEFR in the country. According to this, state educational standards and requirements have been put for each level. This study aims to investigate whether Uzbekistani EFL teachers know about CEFR and its usefulness and impact in the country. An adapted multiple-choice questionnaire from Valax (2011) was administered to 250 EFL teachers, via Survey Monkey, an online survey program. Afterwards, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six of the survey participants. The data gathered from the survey were analysed quantitatively using the Survey Monkey features, which helped perform descriptive statistics. The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. The results showed significantly different ideas of EFL teachers about the usefulness of the CEFR. The findings of this study reveal that majority of EFL teachers are familiar about the CEFR through teacher training courses and seminars. Besides, a great deal of EFL teachers have read the document itself or related documents. The study's findings showed that majority of teachers have positive perceptions about the implementation of the CEFR in the country.

Keywords: CEFR, perceptions, State Educational Standards, requirements, European Language Portfolio.

INTRODUCTION

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) provides “a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). It is almost two decades now that it began to influence on language learning, teaching and assessment throughout the world. Its role in teaching and learning became vital in gaining language proficiency. Therefore, it is essential to know the contents of the CEFR and documents related to this Framework in order to become familiar and adapt its contents to practice. The reason of this is that “it provides the means for educational administrators, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, etc., to reflect on their current practice, with a view to situating and co-ordinating their efforts and to ensuring that they meet the real needs of the learners for whom they are responsible” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1).

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 CEFR

Since the official publication of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in 2001, there were ten years of work after the symposium in Rüschiikon, Switzerland in 1991, where the officials decided that there was a need of this document to promote learning, teaching and assessing language among educational settings in different countries of Europe (Trim, 2007). After consultation of the drafts of the concept two times, one in 1995 and one in 1997 (Trim, 2007) with professionals, it was published in 2001 to provide ‘a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe’ (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). Since then, the document has been translated into 40 languages and is known around the world. Its influence among those who create and develop curricula is indisputable (Byram & Parmenter, 2012). That ‘final’ version has now been complemented by a Companion Volume with New Descriptors published in September 2017, which is itself ‘provisional’ suggesting that the CEFR will continue to be updated and improved (Council of Europe, 2017 in Díez-Bedmar & Byram, 2019).

The CEFR document is consists of nine chapters and four appendices. It explains the overall objectives of the Framework, outlines action-oriented approach and defines competences as well as touches the topics of language learning, teaching and assessment. Besides, it describes the Common Reference Levels that are Breakthrough, Waystage, Threshold, Vantage, Effective Operational Proficiency and Mastery levels. Further, it divides it into three broad levels with letters, which is Basic User (A), Independent User (B) and Proficient User (C) and presents each levels with descriptors and definitions. The appendices concern developing proficiency descriptors and their formulation in which both positive and negative criteria of the assessment included as well as describe methodologies in scale development and present DIALANG scales and the development process of the “Can Do” statements formed in 1996 by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE).

There are some essential documents that related to the CEFR, such as User Guides and manuals, which includes CD-ROMs, videos and DVDs. Most importantly, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is included to the CEFR as a tool for self-assessment, which describes three components that are the Language Passport, the Language Biography and the Dossier.

1.2 The implementation of the CEFR on global scale

As the CEFR has been implemented and introduced in education system of many countries, its impact are now more or less noticeable in policy-making and the object of studies globally. Figueras (2012, p. 478) claims that “despite the discussions, debates, seminars, and congresses on the usefulness of the CEFR, it is still not possible to say that these language policies have been effectively transferred to classrooms or to teaching materials”. She also assumes that there are two factors of the success of the CEFR. The first one is to be both geopolitical and scientific, which means the necessity of making the language teaching more practical and creating the common terminology in teaching language. Whereas the second factor is “the positive wording of the level descriptors, and its non-compulsory nature with a structure open to multimodality and adaptations” (Figueras, 2012, p. 479). It means that the assessment of the CEFR is so clear that it can be adapted globally for different examinations, which is the main topic of investigations (e.g. Figueras, 2012; North et al, 2005; North, 2014).

When teachers’ views have been surveyed in different countries, they showed that their perceptions are diverse. North (2008, p. 56) argues that “Teachers’ view of the CEFR tends to

be oversimplified, confusing it with the European Language Portfolio and focusing on the six levels”. A recent study done with prospective EFL teachers in Turkey by Murat Hismanoglu reveals that from seventy-two of students who participated in the survey almost 82% knows the CEFR and 74% have sufficient knowledge about how to use the Framework in their teaching practices. In addition, majority of respondents agreed that the content of the CEFR should be taken into account in English language teacher education program. Therefore, he concludes that it is necessary to create an appropriate learning environment with different activities so that the students who are future teachers should have positive attitudes towards the CEFR and using this Framework in their teaching profession.

Another study in Malaysia, where the CEFR was officially introduced in 2013, suggests that from almost 60,000 English teachers, about 15,000 are not adequately equipped to teach the subject. (The Star, 2014 in Mohd & Nurul, 2017). This is because approximately two-thirds of English teachers in Malaysia failed to reach the minimal proficiency level in English, which is C1. The above study that surveyed about 331 secondary school teachers claims that FL teachers have very limited knowledge and awareness about CEFR, but generally optimistic and positive despite the obstacles. Therefore, they conclude that the implementation of the Framework is utmost important in raising the standard of English in the country via fully preparing and making the teachers familiar about CEFR before comprehensively implementing it in the country.

It should be noted that there are also other studies done in order to investigate the teachers’ views about the CEFR and its impact in educational settings in other countries, such as Japan, Vietnam, China and Thailand. One study in Japan by Nagai and O’Dwyer (2011) who examined the potential impact of the CEFR in Japan education showed that the influence is on the one hand positive, one the other hand there are some problems to tackle. In their study, they dealt with “Can Do” statements of the CEFR and the changes it brought in higher education in Japan, including several attempts to create Japanese proficiency standards for foreign languages. They conclude that, “the CEFR will implicitly and explicitly continue to influence language education in Japan. If the JF Standards and similar standards of foreign language proficiency are adopted and used on a wide scale, then the prospects will be positive” (p. 151). Another study in Vietnam by Xuan Minh Ngo (2017) examined the teachers’ perception about the CEFR with 44 FL teachers of universities with online questionnaire and five interviews. The study demonstrated that the most participants have positive attitudes towards the CEFR, mentioning its high impact in curriculum development especially in professional communication rather than pedagogical practice. The research reached the conclusion that “the CEFR led to positive changes in the research context, but action must be taken by all parties, including policymakers, framework developers and teachers to sustain and expand its favourable influence. Most importantly, resources should be dedicated to matching the institution’s assessment system to the CEFR and establishing a formal peer-support network to help teachers successfully integrate the framework into their daily practice” (p. 25). A similar study in Vietnam by Nguyen (2015) investigated the teachers’ perceptions about CEFR-V that belongs to Vietnamese context showed that the participants have positive views about the CEFR-V. The author concludes that the implementation of the CEFR-V in the country is utmost important as it was formulated based on the global Framework.

A doctoral research study by Valax (2011) examined the implementation of the CEFR with 164 teachers in several countries such as Australia, France, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the UK from which 96 % of the respondents were from tertiary education. The findings reveal that less than a third of the teachers had knowledge about the CEFR, but majority of

teachers did not read the Document itself. Although many teachers believe about the usefulness of the CEFR, they do not use it in their teaching practice. He concluded that, “what it suggests, however, is that the CEFR is likely to have less impact on language teaching and learning directly through the mediation of teachers than those who believe that teachers are generally knowledgeable about it and interested in it may think is likely to be the case” (p. 163). For that reason, he suggested that there is a real need to examine the curricula carefully that has the CEFR impact and claims that it should be mediated via curricula to teachers, and through teachers to learners in order to implement the Framework comprehensively into practice.

1.3 The implementation of the CEFR in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is one of the countries that implemented the CEFR into education system in recent years. It dates back to only 2012, when the Presidential Decree No. 1875 “The measures of strengthening the system of learning foreign languages” (2012) came into force and changed the situation in the country. Before this, however, there were several attempts in altering the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) dominating in the teaching of foreign languages throughout the country. Hasanova (2007) claims that even though the GTM shifted to Communicative Language Teaching in recent years, it is still the topic of discussion in seminars and workshops rather than practice in language classroom.

The aforementioned Presidential Decree (2012) led to the implementation of the CEFR in the country from 2013 onwards that resulted in the translation of the CEFR into the official language and adopting it in teaching, learning and assessing foreign languages in the country. This led to the introduction of State Educational Standards (2013) by the Cabinet of Ministers (CM) that recommended particular levels for learners at the end of each educational stages that based on domestic multistage of adopting the CEFR from A1 to C1. The reason behind this was claimed C1 to be the highest level of language proficiency by the CM (2013). The domestic multistage was not only adopted in FL learning but also in all subjects of educational settings (CM, 2013).

According to Yuldashev (2016, p. 9), “the same time new curricula on systematically teaching foreign languages starting from the first grade has approved. The requirements on defining the level of language learning competency of learners developed according to the measures of International Standards of “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages-Learning, Teaching and Assessment” (CEFR)”. As a result, from 2013 onwards, English began to be taught from 1st grades and the textbooks are being created according to the CEFR standards. Therefore, the Cabinet of Ministers’ Decree No. 124 (2013) put requirements for each level that graduates should achieve at the end of the key educational stage. Afterwards the Cabinet of Ministers (2017) made amendments in State Educational Standards in their Decree No. 187 and put particular requirements for level of learners on FL that mentioned in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Requirements for level of learners on foreign languages in the State Educational Standards of Continuous Education System (taken from Yuldashev, 2016)

Stage of Education	Requirements to Graduates	CEFR Levels	Name of the Level
General secondary Education	Primary class (4 th grade) graduates	A1	Basic user initial level
	Graduates of 9 th grade	A2	Basic user level
	Graduates of 9 th grades in specialized schools majoring in learning foreign languages	A2+	Basic user enhanced level
Secondary special, vocational education	Graduates of academic lyceums with non-language profile	B1	Independent user initial level
	Graduates of vocational colleges		
	Graduates of academic lyceums with language profile – second foreign language		
	Graduates of academic lyceums with language profile	B1+	Independent user enhanced level
Higher Education	Graduates of bachelor's degree courses in non-language departments of HEIs.	B2	Independent user level
	Graduates of bachelor's degree courses in language departments of HEIs - second foreign language		
	Graduates of master's degree courses in non-language departments of HEIs	B2+	Independent enhanced user level
	Graduates of bachelor's degree courses in language departments of HEIs	C1	Proficient initial user level
	Graduates of master's degree courses in language departments of HEIs		

It means one more time that the government's initiatives of promoting foreign language learning and teaching in the country is very high and it is resulting of the emergence of other Resolutions and opportunities for FL teachers and learners. The recent Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 395 "On measures in admission to higher education with national and international certification" (2019), for instance, would be the proof of aforementioned words. According to this Resolution, from the current educational year, the students of higher education can apply with national and international certificates without exam for foreign languages, for instance, from English language National certificate or IELTS (5.5), TOEFL (72), FCE; from Japan language JLPT; from German language DSD or DAF; from French language DELF or TCF with B2 or higher level. It claims that after the implementation of the CEFR in the country, there were different reforms in order to promote learning and teaching of foreign languages in the country and national certification that based on CEFR opened the way for applicants of universities as a proof of language proficiency for admission with B2 level. Admittedly, there were several investigations (e.g. Yuldashev, 2016; Madaminov & Ashurova, 2019) held in Uzbekistan so that to assess and research the Framework from different angles for about seven years. However, very few of them have focused EFL teachers' perceptions on CEFR. Finally, yet importantly, the research done by Madaminov and Ashurova (2019) on teachers' view about recent reforms claims that they are generally positive about the implementation of the CEFR in the country.

This study aims to address:

- What do Uzbekistani teachers know and believe about the CEFR?
- What is their perceptions about the usefulness and impact of the CEFR in the country?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of this study were 250 EFL teachers from primary, secondary, special secondary and higher education of Uzbekistan.

As Table 2 below reveals that from 250 respondents, almost 50% of them are aged between 30-39 years old, while over 36% are aged 20-29 years old. The other 40-49 and 50+ age respondents are 11.60% and 3.20% respectively. However, according to the table the gender distribution is not equal with almost 27% of male and more than 73% female EFL teachers.

The respondents' academic qualifications showed that almost more than half of the respondents have Bachelor degree, while less than half have Master degree and only minority of them have Doctorate degree. The year of experience of the respondents ranged from 1-10 to 11-20 years of teaching. More than half respondents work in Secondary education, which is followed by Higher education.

Table 2. Participants' descriptive statistics

		n	%
Gender	Male	67	26.80%
	Female	183	73.20%
Academic qualification	Bachelor degree	129	51.60%
	Master degree	108	43.20%
	Doctorate degree	9	3.60%
Years of teaching	1-10	148	59,20%
	11-20	81	32,40%
	21-30	18	7,20%
	31 and above	3	1,20%
Levels of teaching	Primary school	52	20,80%
	Secondary school	135	54,00%
	Higher education	98	39,20%
	Other (please specify)	15	6,00%
Employment status	Full-time teacher	208	83,20%
	Part-time teacher	42	16,80%
Level of language proficiency according to CEFR scale	B2	161	65.18%
	C1	71	28.74%

Data collection instruments

The instrument of this study is 25 Multiple Choice Questionnaire (three sections), which was adapted from Valax (2011). The survey was administered to EFL teachers in Uzbekistan using an online Survey Monkey software program.

The questionnaire is consists of three parts from which the first includes participants' demographic information, the second covers questions to evaluate their awareness about the CEFR and the third includes the respondents' perceptions about the usefulness and impact of the CEFR in the country and in their own teaching practices.

To evaluate the reasons behind their perceptions, six participants of the survey recruited for semi-structured interviews. The interview was conducted in English over a period of twenty to twenty five minutes via "WhatsApp". It was recorded by means of audio recording device that called "Wave Pad Editor".

Data collection procedure

After piloting the questionnaire with six Master course students at London Metropolitan University, the researcher examined the content of the survey with a professor for further amendments. Convenience and snowball samplings were used to collect the data, which involved sending the instrument to teachers who is available in Facebook, Messenger and other social sites and asked them to further send so that to get more participants.

Participants for semi-structured interviews were chosen from the contact details that they left at the end of the survey voluntarily.

RESULTS

Knowledge of the CEFR

The topic “Knowledge of the CEFR” is created in order to know the respondents’ awareness about the CEFR and the contexts that they were introduced about the document. The findings reveal that almost 55% of respondents are familiar about the CEFR and almost 40% of them know the main ideas about this Framework. Table 3 below indicates the number and percentage of respondents with their academic qualifications. It reveals that those who has Master degree are more familiar with the CEFR (52.89%) than who has Bachelor Degree (40.50%). From the total respondents 3.62% respondents have a vague idea and 3.17% just know the name.

Table 3. Respondents’ degree of familiarity with the CEFR with their academic qualifications

	Bachelor degree		Master degree		Doctorate degree		Total	
1. I am familiar or very familiar with it	40,50%	49	52,89%	64	4,96%	6	54,75%	121
2. I know the main ideas	53,57%	45	41,67%	35	2,38%	2	38,01%	84
3. I only have a vague idea	75,00%	6	25,00%	2	0,00%	0	3,62%	8
4. I just know the name, not the contents	71,43%	5	28,57%	2	0,00%	0	3,17%	7
5. I have never heard of it	100,00%	1	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,45%	1
Total	47,96%	106	46,61%	103	3,62%	8	100,00%	221

Correspondingly, in Table 4, when teachers’ degree of familiarity was compared with their level of teaching, it revealed that teachers from higher education (50%) and secondary school (48%) are more familiar with the CEFR. However, primary school teachers are less familiar with the CEFR (13%). Apart from that, the table reveals that more than 60% of secondary level teachers know the main ideas. Standard Deviation for the first item shows that (I am familiar with the CEFR) it is equal to 0.73 with the mean score of 2.39.

Table 4. Respondents' degree of familiarity with the CEFR with their level of teaching

	Primary school	Secondary school	Higher education	Total	Mean	SD
I am familiar or very familiar with it	13,22%	48,76%	50,41%	54,75%	2.39	0.73
	16	59	61	121		
I know the main ideas	23,81%	60,71%	29,76%	38,01%	2.18	0.82
	20	51	25	84		
I only have a vague idea	12,50%	62,50%	37,50%	3,62%	2.22	0.63
	1	5	3	8		
I just know the name, not the contents	42,86%	57,14%	42,86%	3,17%	2.18	0.94
	3	4	3	7		
I have never heard of it	0,00%	100,00%	0,00%	0,45%	200	0.00
	0	1	0	1		
Total	18,10%	54,30%	41,63%	100,00%		
	40	120	92	221		

Table 5 shows what kind of documents participants read about the CEFR or the Framework itself. The findings reveal that most of the participants (47%) had read the Document itself, while 37% participants had read documents related to the CEFR. From a total number of respondents only eight of them did not read anything about the CEFR.

Table 5. Documents respondents read about the CEFR

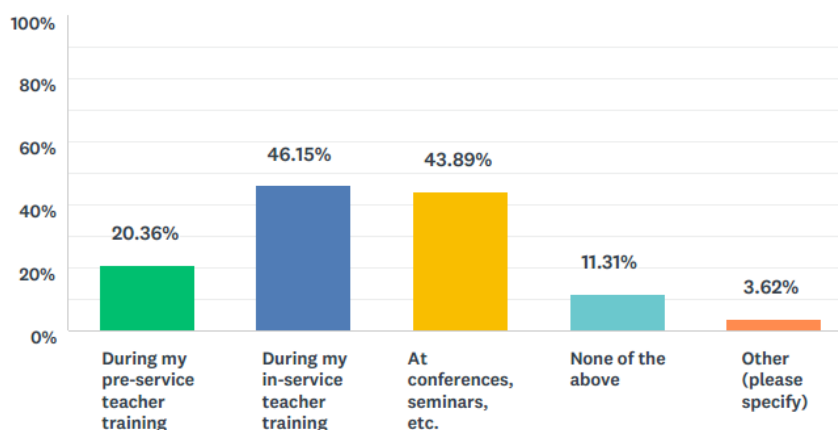
Have you read the CEFR or documents about the CEFR?	%	Number
I have read the CEFR	47,96%	106
I have read documents related to the CEFR (e.g. European Language Portfolio (ELP), user guides...)	37,56%	83
I have read documents presenting the CEFR in a summarized way	29,41%	65
I have read documents where the CEFR was mentioned but not really presented	12,22%	27
I have not read anything where the CEFR was mentioned	3,62%	8

When these results compared with the participants' degree of knowledge about the CEFR, it revealed that there is a direct correlation between documents read and their degree of knowledge, as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Respondents' degree of knowledge about the CEFR compared with their level of teaching

Documents read by participants related to the CEFR	Degree of knowledge of the CEFR					
	I am familiar or very familiar with it	I know the main ideas	I only have a vague idea	I just know the name, not the contents	I have never heard of it	Total
I have read the CEFR	71,70% 76	26,42% 28	0,94% 1	0,94% 1	0,00% 0	47,96% 106
I have read documents related to the CEFR (e.g. European Language Portfolio (ELP), user guides...)	62,65% 52	33,73% 28	2,41% 2	1,20% 1	0,00% 0	37,56% 83
I have read documents presenting the CEFR in a summarized way	49,23% 32	47,69% 31	3,08% 2	0,00% 0	0,00% 0	29,41% 65
I have read documents where the CEFR was mentioned but not really presented	37,04% 10	44,44% 12	14,81% 4	3,70% 1	0,00% 0	12,22% 27
I have not read anything where the CEFR was mentioned	0,00% 0	25,00% 2	12,50% 1	50,00% 4	12,50% 1	3,62% 8

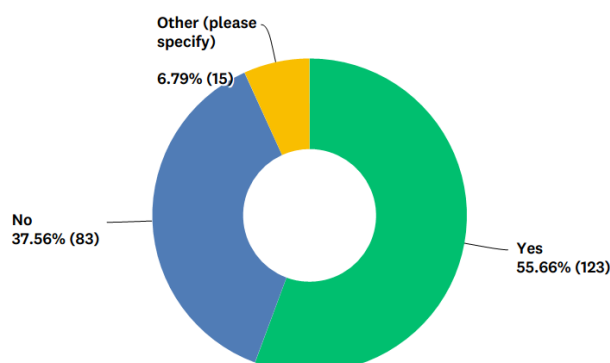
Figure 1 below shows the participants' context that they were introduced about this Framework. The findings reveal that 'during my in-service teacher-training' (46.15%) was the most common answer, which was followed by 'conferences, seminars, etc.' (43.89%). Those who answered 'other contexts' (8) indicate that they were introduced to the CEFR through job related, attending special training, working on the project and other situations.

Figure 1. Context in which respondents were introduced to the CEFR (221 respondents)

As Figure 2 below indicates, when respondents' view were asked whether domestic multistage of the CEFR (from A1 up to C1) adopted in Uzbekistan is realistic or not, it revealed that more than 55% of respondents think that it is realistic, however according to 37.56% of participants it is not realistic. Those who indicated 'other' (12) answered that it is difficult to answer (2

respondents), not so realistic (2 respondents), partially (2 respondents), I don't think that CEFR should be used as an assessment tool (1 respondent) and other answers.

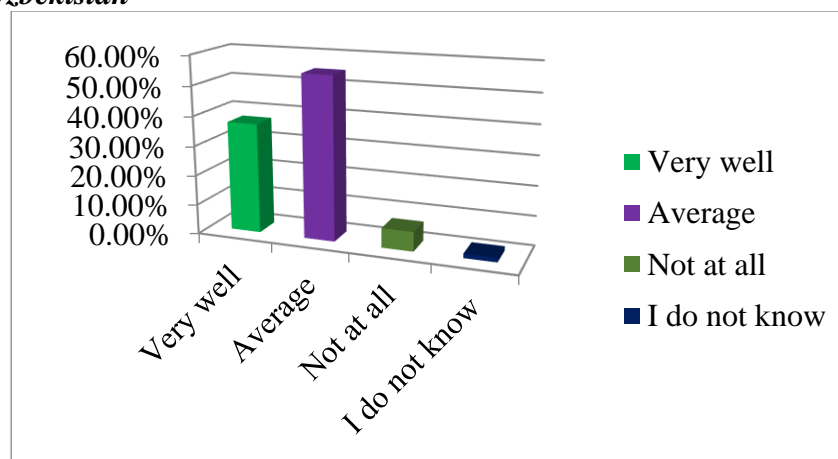
Figure 2. Respondents' degree of agreement about domestic multistage of the CEFR to be realistic or not



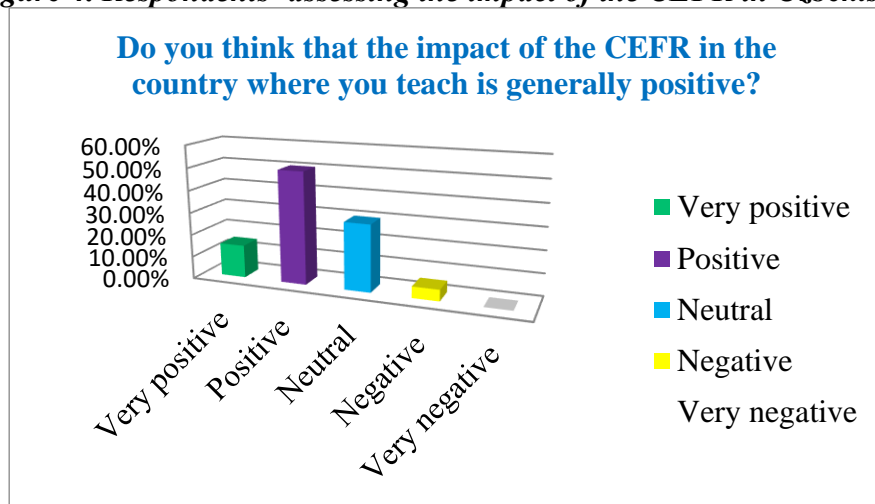
The usefulness and impact of the CEFR

The third part of the questionnaire deal with the usefulness and impact of the CEFR in Uzbekistan. For that reason, the respondents were asked to rate their opinion about the degree of knowledge of the CEFR among EFL teachers in Uzbekistan. As Figure 3 below shows that almost 55% of the respondents selected it to be 'Average', while 37% selected 'Very well'. However, still there are minority of respondents, who believe that the CEFR is not at all known or they do now know about it.

Figure 3. Respondents' perceptions about the degree of knowledge of the CEFR among EFL teachers in Uzbekistan



Apart from that, the respondents were asked to rate the impact of the CEFR in Uzbekistan that can be seen in Figure 4 below, which reveals that half of respondents assess it to be 'Positive', while only 5% of respondents perceive it as 'Negative'.

Figure 4. Respondents' assessing the impact of the CEFR in Uzbekistan

When the respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of the CEFR in four main domains, such as curriculum, assessment, teacher-training and textbooks, it revealed that, as Table 7 below shows, EFL teachers' opinions related to the CEFR in four main domains are generally useful, accentuating mostly the textbooks published in the country.

Table 7. EFL teachers' perceptions about general usefulness of the CEFR

	Curriculum	Assessment	Teacher-training	Textbooks
Extremely useful	15,23%	16,75%	22,84%	11,68%
Very useful	42,64%	40,10%	44,16%	34,01%
Somewhat useful	36,04%	32,49%	26,40%	36,04%
Not so useful	5,58%	9,14%	5,58%	14,72%
Not at all useful	0,51%	1,52%	1,02%	3,55%
Basic Statistics	Mean= 2.34 SD= 0.82	Mean= 2.39 SD= 0.92	Mean= 2.18 SD= 0.88	Mean= 2.64 SD=0.98

To be more specific, when the respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of the CEFR in four areas in their own teaching practice, it revealed that, as Table 8 below indicates, from a total number of respondents only few of them have not used the CEFR in these domains. It also revealed that most EFL teachers use the CEFR in 'Planning their courses and syllabuses (Mean score = 2.43), which is followed by 'Communication with students about teaching and learning as well as testing and assessment' (Mean score = 2.42).

Table 8. EFL teachers' perceptions about the usefulness of the CEFR in their own teaching practices

	Planning of courses	Teaching style and methods	Testing and assessment	Communication with students
Extremely useful	16,75%	18,27%	22,84%	15,23%
Very useful	41,12%	43,15%	41,12%	47,72%
Somewhat useful	31,98%	26,90%	26,40%	27,41%
Not so useful	5,58%	6,60%	4,06%	3,55%
Not at all useful	1,52%	1,52%	1,52%	2,03%
I have not used the CEFR in this area	3,05%	3,55%	4,06%	4,06%
Basic Statistics	Mean= 2.43 SD= 1.07	Mean= 2.41 SD= 1.12	Mean= 2.32 SD= 1.16	Mean= 2.42 SD=1.11

DISCUSSION

The aim of the first research question was to explore what Uzbekistani EFL teachers know and believe about the CEFR and therefore the focus of this discussion is to interpret the findings via comparing with previous studies. In order to make the data meaningful for the reader, the statistical figures from questionnaires' results and quotes from semi-structured interviews can be used.

Like other studies conducted with language teachers by a number of researchers such as Hismanoglu (2013), Faez et al. (2011), CoE (2005), Martyniuk & Noijons (2007), and Normand-Marconet and Lo Bianco (2013), the surveyed Uzbekistani EFL teachers' perceptions about the implementation of the CEFR is generally positive. A recent study done by Madaminov and Ashurova (2019) reveals teachers' attitudes toward reforms in English language education are positive in Uzbekistan. These findings can be reflected by semi-structured interviews that all the respondents feel positive about the changes that the CEFR brought in education system. Nevertheless, from total respondents of online survey, there are still a number of EFL teachers, who feel neutral and negative about the impact of the CEFR in the country. As Figueras (2012, p. 478) confirms that "a lot has changed, but there is still the feeling that there is still much to be done before it can be said that policy matches real life, if that is ever possible".

From a total number of 250 respondents, more than half of them are familiar with the CEFR and read the document itself or related documents about the CEFR. This can be mirrored in the interview participants' responses that out of six interviewees, two of them had read the Framework itself, while the rest three looked through and one read document related to the CEFR. Most EFL teachers have been introduced about the CEFR in teacher training in-service programs, as well as at conferences and seminars. Such instances were also described by *Molly* and *Georgia*, who confirmed the role of Friday in-service programs that initiated by government in five-year term to be effective introduction. The aforementioned study done by Madaminov and Ashurova (2019) reveals that EFL teachers view frequent in-service training as a key to the reforms and they believe it gradually affects the teaching methods.

In semi-structured interview, *Georgia* reported the CEFR to be a Framework not the test as most of the teachers interpreted it as a test according to her opinion. This can be reflected in

other interviewees' responses to link the CEFR with mostly as an assessment tool or test like IELTS or TOEFL. Most interviewees refer to the national exam or test based on CEFR as a "CEFR exam" or salary extension certificate to be a "CEFR certification" that reveals misperceptions about the CEFR among some EFL teachers in Uzbekistan. Therefore, it confirms North's (2008, p. 57) assumption that "the CEFR is not a method, and it is certainly not a panacea, but it is considerably more than just a set of six proficiency levels. It offers an opportunity to look at planning, teaching and assessment from different perspectives and see how they linkup".

Although a majority of respondents got education concerning the CEFR and they believe that the adaptation of the CEFR in domestic multistage to be realistic, still there are teachers who find it unrealistic. This can be reflected in the *Molly* and *Ilion* responses that even though there are State Standards for each level of education, the real level of learners do not match those Standards and most students still cannot reach the appropriate language proficiency at the stage that they are supposed to obtain. Therefore, perhaps majority of respondents believe that the CEFR is known among language teachers in Uzbekistan in average degree, which also mirrors in the interviewees' responses that their knowledge about the CEFR is average. It can be seen in open-ended responses of the survey that the CEFR is not fully understandable, or the reason lies in the point that it has been interpreted differently among teachers or not fully implemented in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study imply that the respondents have positive perceptions about the implementation of the CEFR in Uzbekistan. The questionnaire data demonstrates that majority of EFL teachers are familiar with the CEFR content, how to adapt to teaching and they have read the document itself or other documents related to the CEFR. The semi-structured interviews triangulates the findings and identifies that apart having positive perceptions, there are some misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the CEFR to be a test or exam. However, both quantitative and qualitative data confirm that the CEFR has a vital role in education system and teacher professional development. These perceptions appear to be influenced by many factors including, their teaching practices, academic qualifications, experiences, and the level of their learners, their current position and regular participation in teacher training courses.

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