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The Role of The Credit-Module System in Higher Education System in Uzbekistan

Shakhnoza Tadjimova

Nukus, Uzbekistan

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*Correspondence: Shakhnoza Tadjimova
Email: sh.tadjimova@mail.ru

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Abstract: This article explores the implementation and impact of the credit-modular system (ECTS) in the higher education sector of Uzbekistan. The study is motivated by recent reforms aimed at improving educational quality, student autonomy, and alignment with international standards. Based on document analysis, academic literature, and empirical data gathered through interviews and surveys at a technical university, the article assesses how the CMS influences teaching and learning processes. The research reveals that ECTS encourages a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning, promoting independence, critical thinking, and time management. A comparative table outlines the fundamental differences between the traditional and modular systems in terms of flexibility, curriculum design, and assessment. Survey data from students and teachers confirm both the benefits and initial challenges of transitioning to the CMS.

Keywords: Credit-Modular System, ECTS, Higher Education, Uzbekistan, Independent Learning, Interactive Methods

Introduction

Improving the quality of higher education is one of the significant problems of the 21st century, especially in context of globalization and rapid technological advancement. In Uzbekistan, substantial reforms have been launched to address the shortcomings of the national education system, including the lack of student autonomy, limited critical thinking skills, and inadequate foreign language proficiency among both students and educators. Recognizing the crucial role of higher education in preparing globally competent professionals, the President of Uzbekistan signed a decree in 2019 approving the "Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System until 2030". The decree emphasizes a number of shortcomings currently existing in the higher education system: the current education is aimed at forming graduates' theoretical knowledge, and students' critical and independent thinking and information retrieval skills are not sufficiently developed. In addition, such problems as the lack of knowledge of foreign languages and information and communication technologies among university teachers makes them lag behind the requirements of the modern world, as well as the fact that educational programs and the system for assessing students' knowledge are not adapted to international standards are

indicated. To correct the above-mentioned problems, the concept clearly sets the tasks: introduction of digital technologies and modern educational approaches into the educational process, increasing the share of practical classes in the specialty in the curriculum aimed at forming practical skills, involving student youth in scientific activities, and introducing the ECTS credit-modular education system. The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of the credit-modular system (CMS) in Uzbekistan's higher education institutions and evaluate its impact on educational processes, particularly in foreign language instruction.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, based on a synthesis of official policy documents, recent academic literature, and analytical reports concerning the implementation of the credit-modular system in Uzbekistan. Additionally, examples were drawn from applied practices in higher education institutions, particularly in technical universities where the demand for communicative competence in English is high.

The credit-module system (CMS) is a form of organizing the educational process that allows students to set their learning trajectories within certain limits, aimed at stimulating independent and creative acquisition of knowledge, the assessment of acquired knowledge is measured in tests (Usmonov & Xabibullaeva, 2020). Also, in the works of M. Akhmedova (2022) and S.R. Kamalova (2021), the following formulation is given: The credit system of education is a system aimed at education based on the tendency of transparency, as well as the selection and translation of test units oriented towards the student. The credit-modular system (Ulkanov, 2022) is a learning organization process that represents an assessment model based on a set of modular technologies for the educational process and credit measurement. It is oriented towards independent learning, aimed at organizing the educational process in a strictly defined manner and in accordance with the requirements of the labor market.

The credit-modular system is based on the principles of transparency, student-oriented learning, flexibility of education, improvement of independent work skills, contributes to the objective planning and execution of various tasks with a creative approach, and assessment is measured using credit units.

Within the ECTS credit-module system, credit is a unit of measurement for the learning load necessary for mastering the educational program. The amount of credits per year in the ECTS system is 60. If we take into account that there are two semesters in a year, then in each semester the student must accumulate 30 credits. Bachelor's degree studies typically last 4 years and a student must accumulate 240 credits to achieve this degree, while completing a master's program accordingly requires accumulating 120 credits.

Credits are not ordinary numbers. Each credit means a certain learning load that the student must complete and that the student, as a result of this load, achieves certain educational results. In ECTS, 1 credit averages 25-30 academic hours. The student must complete a certain academic load to obtain a corresponding credit. This means that the 25-30 hours of study load set for 1 credit is a set of learning efforts that a student must spend

on studying the discipline they are focusing on. Here, not only the time spent in classes but also the time spent in the library, exams, and at home mastering a particular subject is taken into account.

Modules are defined as complete units of study with specified learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The CMS tasks include dividing curricula into modules, using credits for assessment, applying rating systems, enabling student-directed study plans, promoting autonomy, increasing curriculum flexibility, and encouraging healthy competition (Urinov, 2020; Shakadirova, 2020; Raupova & Elov, 2020).

The essence of modular learning is that to achieve the set goals, the learner independently works with the given curriculum, which includes an action plan, a complete block of information, and a methodological guide. This means that upon reaching the module, students develop certain skills, knowledge, and competencies. For this reason, modular learning technology, in our opinion, is considered an effective basis for self-education.

Thus, the set of credits as a way to assess educational achievements and modules as a means of dividing the studied material allows us to speak of the credit-modular system as the basis of education in higher education. Its main tasks are:

- dividing the educational program into modules;
- using credits to assess knowledge;
- use of a point-rating assessment system;
- student's participation in the formation of an individual curriculum;
- stimulating students' independent learning in the educational process;
- increasing the flexibility of curricula;
- introduction of healthy competition in the learning process (Shmatko,2011).

To demonstrate how CMS contributes to learning process, we analyzed different scientific works, conducted interviews and surveys at Nukus State Technical University. A recent case study by Bennett, Borasheva, and Ruzmatova (2020) demonstrated the successful implementation of the flipped classroom (FC) model in tertiary institutions in Uzbekistan, specifically at the Uzbekistan State World Languages University (UzSWLU) in Tashkent and Nukus State Pedagogical Institute (NSPI) in Karakalpakstan. The FC approach involved delivering lectures outside of class via platforms like Google Classroom and Telegram, allowing in-class time to be dedicated to collaborative activities such as discussions and projects. This structure fostered active learning, increased willingness to communicate (WTC), and enhanced English proficiency among students.

Understanding the perceptions of students regarding communication apprehension and willingness to communicate can also inform instructional strategies, enabling educators to tailor their approaches to meet diverse student needs. (Nuratdinova, 2024).

Given the limited internet accessibility in some regions, Telegram emerged as a practical solution, supported by local telecom incentives. The innovative use of this platform made educational content more accessible and contributed to students' autonomy and motivation. According to post-course surveys, 87% of students reported improvement in their English, and 100% expressed interest in continuing with FC learning. This model aligns

well with the broader goals of Uzbekistan's higher education reforms, especially within the credit-module system, where independent learning and learner-centered pedagogy are increasingly emphasized (Bennett, Borasheva & Ruzmatova, 2020).

Inspired by such findings, we conducted our own study to explore how the principles of the credit-module system are understood and experienced in local educational settings. The interview was attended by 8 English teachers of the Department of "Languages and Humanities" and 52 students. This experiment was conducted to determine how well teachers and students know about the credit-module system and its impact on foreign language learning.

Result and Discussion

Table 1. A comparative analysis shows clear contrasts between traditional and credit-modular systems

Criteria	Traditional System	Credit-Modular System
Student role	Passive recipient of instruction	Central actor; teacher as advisor
Curriculum scope	Students take all plan subjects, limiting focus	Students choose modules based on professional relevance
Learning mode	Primarily classroom-based	Significant emphasis on self-study
Curriculum flexibility	Rigid, predetermined by the university	Flexible, individualized by student
Teaching methods	Traditional	Interactive methods
Educational focus	Knowledge acquisition	Independent learning, critical thinking, creative activity

From the table above, it can be seen that CMS has a number of features: during the training process, the student already finds themselves at the center and is given more autonomy, shifting the emphasis from classroom to independent work (Shmatko,2021), attention is paid to student motivation using interactive methods, as well as shifting the emphasis from knowledge-oriented to competency-oriented in personnel training (Tureniyazova, 2023). But this does not mean that the education system is completely abandoning the traditional one. On the contrary, the old system had a stable structure, which was well-developed. The process proceeded without any violations, the system was understandable and predictable. However, the modern world already needs a competent, independent-thinking, and responsible specialist, and it is the introduction of SCS into the higher education system of Uzbekistan that will be an important step forward in modernizing the country's academic profile.

The survey results showed that a noticeable feature of KMS is the increase in the share of independent learning. In the curriculum developed in 2024 for 1st-year specialties in the Foreign Language subject (FRL1114 subject code), the number of classroom hours is 48, and the number of independent study hours is 72 hours per semester. In other words, it corresponds to 1:1.5. That is, for each 1 hour of class, the student is allocated 1.5 hours for

extracurricular independent work. This proves the importance of independent learning for future specialists.

Despite benefits, the survey revealed both instructors and students face challenges: at the beginning of the academic year 25% of teachers have difficulty in motivating students to learn independently, and 50 % of students initially find it difficult to work independently and manage self-study time, expecting traditional in-class instruction. To mitigate these issues, educators apply interactive strategies—role-plays, projects, presentations—and tools like Duolingo, Wordwall, and Quizlet to foster student engagement, which contributes to a significant increase in students' interest in learning a foreign language independently.

Conclusion

Thus, the credit-modular system implemented in Uzbekistan's higher education institutions represents a powerful tool for developing foreign language communicative competence in students of technical universities. The peculiarity of this system lies in the significant role of independent learning, which allows students to flexibly approach foreign language learning and develop skills necessary for their future profession. However, the success of this system largely depends on the motivation of students, their ability to self-organize, and the readiness of teachers to support the process of independent learning. At the same time, the introduction of new educational technologies and methods creates additional opportunities for students to improve their foreign language communication skills and apply them effectively in their professional activities.

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