
IN QUEST OF AN IDEAL ELT QUALIFICATION

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ABSTRACT: *Viewing the growing demands of ELT practitioners for high-level English language teaching (HELT) and low-level English language teaching (LELT) in native as well as non-native countries, the number of ELT courses is outnumbering day by day. Unlike yesteryears, we are privileged today with a number of ELT courses such as TESOL, ESOL, TESL, TEFL, TEAL, DELTA, CELTA, and many others at certificate, diploma, master, and PhD level. But these outnumbering courses (with somewhat varied curricula) have flummoxed both ELT employers and employees so much that a lack of unanimity has surfaced in terms of recognizing an ideal ELT qualification vis-à-vis an ELT course. Not only the current ELT practitioners are apprehensive viewing the gap between their own qualifications and the desirable qualifications set by the recruiters nowadays; but also aspiring ELT practitioners are confused in choosing an ideal ELT course which could meet the ongoing eligibility criteria for ELT. Hence, the paper limited its scope by setting three objectives: (i) exploring ideal qualifications for ELT practitioners (ii) exploring the availability of internationally recognized ELT courses in recognized universities, and (iii) exploring the challenges associated with ideal ELT qualifications. Document analysis was used as the sole data gathering instrument by eliciting required data from online and offline archival artifacts (documents). The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings of the study revealed 'MA/PhD in Applied Linguistics in conjunction with TESOL' as the most demanding qualification for HELT and 'Trinity Dip-TESOL or DELTA/CELTA' for LELT. Finally, the paper recommends apposite measures to counteract the challenges associated with ideal ELT qualifications.*

KEYWORDS: Ideal qualification, ELT practitioner, HELT, LELT, TESOL, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

The way oxygen is important to survive, so is English to survive in today's competitive world (Jha, 2014-i). With its growing importance under different labels and connotations like EFL, ESL, EGL (English as a Global Language), and presently ELF (English as a Lingua Franca), English should not be viewed merely as a language; rather as a tool of success and progress in every walk of life. No language, ancient or modern, can be compared with English in respect of its international status (Bhardwaj, 2012). Competence in English is essential not only for native speakers, but also for non-native speakers, who comprise the vast majority of professionals, but unfortunately they are in very short supply (Orr, 2010).

Given the importance of English, English Language Teaching (ELT) has emerged as one of the most lucrative professions. As a result, an unprecedented maddening rush of ELT practitioners can be seen today in ELT prone countries such as Korea, Japan, China, Thailand, Czech Republic, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Brazil, Thailand,

Chile, Ethiopia, India, etc. To meet the growing demands of ELT practitioners for HELT, a number of universities and private language schools have started offering ELT programmes at certificate, diploma, master, and PhD level. For instance, many European and American universities are offering courses like MA/MSc/Ed in ELT, TESOL, TESL, TEFL, ESOL, etc. for HELT. For LELT, courses like Trinity Cert-TESOL, Dip-TESOL, Cambridge CELTA, DELTA are quite popular in the ELT world. Amid these outnumbering ELT courses with slightly varied curricula, ELT world lacks a common consent on endorsing an ideal ELT qualification.

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it is a pioneering attempt to draw the attention of global ELT practitioners, ELT job employers, and EFL/ESL learners towards myths and realities of ELT qualification for HELT. The study intends to keep orthodox ELT practitioners abreast of the gap between their conventional qualifications and current desirable qualifications. In addition, the study presents a real database of qualification criteria for both HELT and LELT in native as well as non-native countries (see table-1) which can be of great use for the ELT practitioners to know and meet the worldwide requirements of ELT job employers. The study is also significant in that it divulges several unheeded issues associated with ELT qualifications (see section 4.3).

The Statement of the Problem

Apart from several linguistic and non-linguistic factors, this study hypothesizes that *qualification of an ELT practitioner* also attributes to the learners' high or low performance in learning or mastering English language. Since qualification is the first licence to undertake any teaching task, today's ELT world is in the doldrums as to *recognizing a valid ELT qualification globally*. Although the eligibility criteria differ from one country to another and sometimes within the same country among different employers, the outnumbering ELT courses have caused three intertwined conundrums in the ELT world. First, there is a lack of unanimity among the employers in terms of endorsing an ideal ELT qualification. Second, the in-service ELT practitioners are apprehensive viewing the gap between their own qualifications and the ongoing changes in the desirable qualifications. Third, the aspiring ELT practitioners hesitate a lot prior to opting for an ELT course for fear of its appropriateness and validity in ELT job market. In the light of the aforementioned facts, this study poses three pertinent research questions as follows.

Questions of the Study

1. Which ELT qualification(s) vis-à-vis course(s) is the most ideal?
2. Where are the internationally recognized ELT programmes available?
3. What are the major challenges involved in endorsing the ideal ELT qualifications?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of writing this paper cropped up when an English language blog titled *Which ELT Qualification?* posted by Tdol (2012) caught my attention. Based on the survey of 200 adverts extracted from tefl.com, the blog aims to explore highly trusted ELT qualifications for LELT jobs. Summarizing the findings of Tdol's blog, 100% employers want CELTA; 89% employers want Trinity Cert-TESOL; 78.5% employers want equivalent certificates with 100+ hours of classroom teaching; 37% employers want

other ELT qualifications; and 10 % employers do not require teaching qualification. Unlike Tdol's blog, this study takes a deeper insight into the issues of qualification for HELT by surveying 55 ELT job adverts.

Although, this study has been made from global perspective, three ELT prone countries namely Ethiopia, Libya, and India have been primary source of observation as they have been my ELT-workplace for about fifteen years. Hence, it is desirable to reflect first on the eligibility criteria for the ELT practitioners in these three countries. It is imperative to reveal that the majority of ELT practitioners in India, Libya, and Ethiopia do not hold any internationally recognized ELT qualifications simply because these countries do not have any ELT programme of international recognition. One of the chief causes of the dismal state of English education in these countries is the presence of English teachers from Indian sub-continent who lack both linguistic and pedagogic competence. In Indian context, students of BA and MA English literature are expected to become teachers of English language but they are deprived of a sound training in English Language Teaching (Dhanavel, 2009). In Ethiopian and Libyan contexts, most of the teachers are the products of weak MA (TEFL/English/English Literature) programme with poor proficiency in English. The practice of producing ESL instructors by the unskilled predecessors is forming a vicious cycle or chain of incompetent teachers in Ethiopia and Libya (Jha, 2014-ii). And, worse comes to the worst when ill-prepared Indian teachers are saddled there with ELT tasks. The average Indian teacher is not only the holder of irrelevant qualification or the product of the heyday of GTM method but also heavily coated with MTI (mother tongue influence). With regard to Ethiopian ELT practitioners, Mijena (2012) rightly observes that English language teachers teach what they know, what they have, what they think, and what they believe. They cannot give beyond what they have and what they know. It argues that the poor competence and proficiency in English language can be addressed by improving the quality of English language teachers.

As for Korea, it is somewhat organized as it has launched two programmes to recruit ELT practitioners. The first programme is known as TaLK (Teach and Learn in Korea) as a part of which native English speakers (from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom, or the United States) with at least two or more years of college education or Korean descendants with citizenships or legal residencies of one of the seven countries are eligible for LELT; on the other hand, the second programme known as EPIK (English Program in Korea) targets professional native teachers for HELT (Yook, 2010).

According to Kameda (2014), Japan is showing positive transformation in English education as a reform plan has been released by the education ministry in the last December to bolster English study from elementary to high school from the 2020 academic year in response to globalization. But, Japan being somewhat racist against non-Japanese teachers; and the Japanese teachers' lack of competency to make students English wise proficient, English language education may continue to remain in awful condition.

It is worth mentioning here that the ELT practitioners of almost all the South and Middle East non-native countries lack desirable proficiency in English more because of unavailability of adequate and appropriate training in ELT. Though the ELT training has been termed with different acronyms like TESOL, TEFL, TESL, ESOL, TEAL with a

little varied implication, their curricula do not differ much for HELT, but their curricula for HELT vary considerably.

METHODOLOGY

The study has used mixed research design (quantitative and qualitative) as it quantifies the data through measurements for the first and second research questions; whereas, the third research question has been dealt qualitatively as it lays emphasis on interpretation rather than measurement.

Subjects and Sampling of the Study

The subjects for this study were randomly selected *55 job adverts for HELT and LELT, 42 universities offering recognized ELT courses*, and purposively selected *12 online archives on the issues related to ELT qualifications* to suffice the needs of the first, second, and third research question respectively.

Data Collection

This study used only one data gathering instrument: *document analysis* in the form of *online archival artefacts/documents*. Firstly, the data of 55 job adverts for HELT and LELT were collected from eight official websites to know the most preferred eligibility criteria (academic and professional qualifications). In line with the preferred qualifications, the paper, secondly, made an extensive online search to explore reputed universities that offer the preferred ELT qualifications. Thus, 42 universities were found whose ELT courses are up to mark to meet the eligibility criteria of the employers. To collect data on the challenges associated with ideal ELT qualifications, 21 ELT news websites and blogs were scanned.

Data Analysis

Since the collected data were both ordinal and nominal, they were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The data collected for the first and second research questions were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and arithmetic mean to see the most demanding qualification and the institutions that offer the demanding qualification. The data collected for the third research questions were analyzed qualitatively using narrative analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In response to the first research question, the table-1 presents a database of 55 ELT job adverts which were retrieved from the eight legal employment websites: www.tefljobsoverseas.com, www.eslemployment.com, www.tefl.net/esl-jobs/esl-jobs.pl, www.findworkabroad.com, www.esljobfeed.com, www.jobs.ac.uk, www.esljobfind.com, and www.eslcafe.com. It is noteworthy that the following job adverts were advertised during the past 42 months for HELT and LELT in ELT-prone countries as well as native countries.

Table 1. HELT (H) and LETL (L) Job Adverts for ELT Practitioners

	Location	Post	Desirable Qualification
1 H	University of Raparin, Iraq	English Language Teacher	PhD/MA in TESOL, Linguistics, or TEFL
2 H	Nottingham University Ningbo campus, China	Senior Tutor in EAP	ESOL DELTA or MA in ELT/Applied Linguistics qualified (or equivalent)
3 H	Lingnan University, Hong Kong	Language Instructor	MA (Applied Linguistics/related discipline) or a diploma-level professional teaching qualification
4 H	Al-Maktoum Institute, Saudi Arabia	English Language Coordinator EAP	A recognised qualification in TESOL at diploma level or higher (e.g. DELTA)
5 H	Jubail University College, Saudi Arabia	English Language Instructors	BA/MA/PhD (English/Linguistics/TESOL) or English Lit. + CELTA/Trinity TESOL certificate
6 H	China, Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University	English Language Tutors (C)	MA (Applied Linguistics / TESOL) or a similar type of qualification
7 H	Sohar University, Oman	English Teachers	BA/MA (TESL/TEFL/TESOL/English/Education) + teaching certificates e.g. TEFL, TESOL, DELTA or CELTA. (<i>Online certificates are not acceptable</i>)
8 H	King Abdul Aziz University, Saudi Arab	English Language Teacher	BA/MA (Applied Linguistics/English) with TESL/TEFL Certification
9 H	Glyndwr University	Senior Lecturer in English Language	PhD in any area of Applied Linguistics
10 H	Kanda University of Intl. Studies, Japan	Teaching Position 'English language'	M.A. (TESL/TEFL) or some closely related field.
11 H	QA Business School London/Birmingham	EFL Lecturer	MSc/ MA (TEFL/ TESOL) or DELTA
12 H	The British Council Qatar	ELT Trainer	MA (TEFL/Applied Linguistics), Diploma in TEFL (UCLES DTEFLA / DELTA, Cambridge ESOL or Trinity Diploma in TESOL or equivalent
13 H	Northumbria University	Senior Lecturer in English/Lingui	PhD in English language and/or linguistics

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14 H	University of Liverpool	University Teacher	TESOL and Applied Linguistics
15 H	Soran University, Oman	English Language Teachers	An internationally recognised TESOL qualification and a minimum of two year's teaching experience. MA in TESOL is highly desirable.
16 H	Shanghai University, (SILC)	English Faculty	A recognized TESOL, linguistics or education qualification (e.g. CELTA, Dip Ed) + two years' teaching experience
17 H	Hong Kong Baptist University - Department of Education Studies	Associate Professor / Assistant Professor in English	PhD and native/near-native proficiency in English. Expertise in two or more of the following: <i>phonetics, phonology, lexis, morphology, semantics, pedagogic grammar, written and spoken discourse, literature, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics</i>
18 H	Oxford Brookes University	Associate Lecturer, EAP	A first degree, TEFL Q status (DELTA or equivalent)
19 H	HULT International Business School, London	EAP Tutor	A minimum of Master's level, preferably in the area of TESOL/Applied Linguistics
20 H	INTO, 438-490 Mile End, London, UK	Academic English Teacher	DELTA or MA in TESOL
21 H	Northumbria University	English Language Lecturer	RSA DELTA, MA in TESOL or an equivalent EFL teaching qualification, plus a first degree, together with substantial teaching experience in HE
22 H	Newcastle University, Place	General English Language / EAP Teachers	A relevant teaching qualification (CELTA or DELTA) and teaching experience in higher education or in private language schools
23 H	Technical And Administrative Training Institute (TATI), Oman	English Language Lecturers	MA/M.Ed (English / Applied Linguistics / TEFL / TESOL) or BA (English + Post Graduate Diploma in EFL/ESL) or B.Ed (4 years program in English/Applied Linguistics / TEFL / TESOL)
24 H	esemployment.com for Yanbu, Saudi Arabia	Native English teaching Lecturers	Master's Degree in TEFL/TESOL/ Applied Linguistics/ English.
25 H	Aston University, CELCA	Teaching Associate	A recognised teaching qualification such as RSA CELTA or DELTA and MA in TESOL, Applied Linguistics or other relevant area.
26 L	G Gheewala	General English Teacher	BA in English Linguistics + TEFL / TESOL /CELTA/DELTA or any equivalent certification

27 L	kindergarten to high school in Guangzhou city, China	English Teacher	Teaching experience - Degree in any field - British, American, Canadian, Australian or New Zealand Passport holders
28 L	kindergarten to primary school ages in Zengcheng, China	English Teacher	Teaching experience - Degree in any field - British, American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Irish or South African Passport holders
29 L	Teflnet ESL Jobs For Univesiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia	ESL Teacher	Native speaker of English, CELTA (Cambridge) or CertTESOL (Trinity College), or equivalent
30 L	Skyline Global Solutions, Saudi Arabia	ESL Instructors	Bachelors' Degree & TESL/TEFL/CELTA certificate, Native English speakers only
31 L	Coventry University London Campus	Pre-sessional English Tutor	Honours degree in an appropriate subject, as well as a professional qualification (CELTA or equivalent)
32 L	Different Cities In China (For Young Kids)	Native English Teachers	NO degree necessary
33 L	kindergarten-secondary school, Istanbul Turkey	ESL Teacher	A teaching qualification, such as TEFL/CELTA
34 L	Koya University, Kurdistan	English Teacher	BA+CELTA or equivalent with 5 years teaching exp. or DELTA+3 years (recent) teaching exp. or CELTA or equivalent with a degree in English Language and Literature/ TESOL / Linguistics / Education / Modern Languages with 3 years' teaching experience
35 L	The National Institute of Technology (NIT), Middle East	Male Instructors	a. MA TEFL/TESOL or Applied Linguistics or a one year, full-time postgraduate Diploma in TEFL/TESL. or b. A first degree with basic MA in TESOL (e.g. RSA/UCLES DELTA or Dip TEFLA). or c. BA+CELTA. Native Speaker+One year experience
36 L	K-12 School, Edirne, Turkey,	Certified ESL Teacher	Native speaker + TESOL-CELTA certification or B.Ed + 2 years experience.
37 L	Princes Nora Universitys Preparatory Year Program in Riyadh Saudi Arabia	Female Teachers	Native Speaker+BA/BS/MA/MS/Phd in English related field) or (A degree in Any Field Along with a CELTA/TEFL/TESOL of 120 hrs or more in person (no online certification) 2 years teaching experience
38 L	Chase Resourcing, Dublin and London	Skilled Instructors	Native/Near Native from UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia or South

	(For Middle East)		Africa + 120 hrs in-class TEFL/CELTA certificate+2 years ESL teaching experience + BA in Education/ESL/Linguistics <i>or</i> MA in any subjects are highly sought once certified in TEFL / CELTA. <i>PHD holders highly desired</i>
39 L	Female university in Riyadh , Saudi Arabia	ESL Teachers	Native speaker+BA+EFL qualification (e.g. CELTA) + a minimum of 2 years teaching experience
40 L	University of Sheffield Student Services Dept.	English Language Tutor	Diploma level ELT/TESOL qualification+experience of teaching English for Academic Purpose (EAP)
41 L	Fun Language Ratchaburi Ltd. Thailand	English Teachers	No teaching experience is required but TEFL/TESOL or other equivalent qualifications preferred.
42 L	Westgate Corporation (For Japanese Universities) www.esljobfeed.com	University Instructors	Native (USA, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland) + BA or higher degree + 500+ hrs of EFL/ESL classroom teaching experience with EFL/ESL teaching certificate) / (1000+ hrs of actual EFL/ESL classroom teaching experience in lieu of teaching certificate or credential/qualifications
43 L	HESS International Educational Organization, TAIWAN	ENGLISH TEACHERS	Native English speaker + Passport holder from USA, CAN, UK, IRE, SA, AUS or NZ + Bachelor's degree (any discipline) accompanied by a TEFL/TESOL certificate
44 L	DTLC, Haiphong, Vietnam	native ESL Teachers	Bachelor degree + TEFL or equivalent
45 L	Prime Teachers International, Tripoli, Libya	EFL TEACHER	Native/near native (IELTS 7)+BA from accredited university + CELTA or equivalent TEFL certificate of at least 120 hours (Not online) + teaching experience
46 L	Katowice English School, Poland	English Teacher	Native speaker (Born in English-speaking country) with CELTA. No experience is required – You will receive extensive support and input
47 L	TeachAway (for Public Schools in Brunei)	English Teacher	Commonwealth citizens with their schooling in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, or the UK+ Qualified teacher status/teacher accreditation (B.Ed, PGCE, DipT, etc.) EFL/ESL qualification preferable
48 L	Loughborough University	EAP Tutor	hold a CELTA (or equivalent), ideally hold a DELTA (or equivalent) and / or relevant MA/MSc,
49 L	ESL Jobs China	Disney English Foreign Trainer	Internationally recognized TEFL or TESOL certification
50	Universal English	English	A bachelor's degree; Minimum one year

L	Center , Vietnam	Teachers	teaching experience; CELTA or TEFL certificate
51 L	Wall Street English, Jakarta, Indonesia	ESL English Teachers	BA (English/Linguistics/Education) with an English-subject focus, Comparative Literature or MA TESOL * TEFL certified (CELTA/Trinity preferred)
52 L	esemployment.com for Dammam, Saudi Arabia	Native English Teachers	BA (TESL/TEFL) / MA (English, applied linguistics) for modern languages is preferred with a teaching certificate or diploma, such as: (CELTA/DELTA)
53 L	esemployment.com for Dammam, Saudi Arabia	Non-Native English Teachers	IELTS score of at least 7 or a TOEFL score of at least 100 on internet-based testing, 600 on paper-based or 250 on computer-based
54 L	International Academic Alliance, China	Academic English Program Teachers	BA in English or related subject but Master's, TOEFL/SAT prep, and/or TESOL experience <i>preferred</i>
55 L	Rebecca Tang, Beijing China	Native English speakers	Native English speakers who have some kids teaching experience, active and healthy.

Key Findings about Preferred Qualification:

1. The objective of creating table-1 was to see the desirable criteria primarily for HELT and secondarily for LELT, but it shows that recruiters are interested in academic and teaching qualifications equally.
2. The difference between academic and professional (teaching) qualification lies in that the former is more theory oriented; whereas the latter is more teaching or practicum oriented. Academic qualification is mostly preferred for HELT in college or university; whereas professional qualification is normally preferred for LELT in schools, private language schools, business firms, and so on.
3. It is noteworthy in table-1 that there are four kinds of eligibility criteria set by the recruiters. Firstly, there are ELT institutions which consider academic qualification as a prerequisite to teach. Secondly, there are ELT institutions which consider both academic and professional qualifications mandatory. Thirdly, there are some ELT institutions which require simply professional qualifications, especially for LELT. Fourthly, there are also some ELT institutions that require only natives. (See 42 and 43).
4. The preferred academic qualifications according to table 1 are PhD in Applied Linguistics, MA/MSc in TESOL, MA in Applied Linguistics, MA in TESOL and Applied Linguistics, MA in Linguistics / ELT / TEFL / TESL / English, BA in English /English Linguistics, B.Ed in English / Applied Linguistics / TEFL / TESOL, PG Diploma in EFL / ESL / TEFL / TESL, and Diploma in ELT / TESOL.
5. Of the aforementioned academic qualifications, *MA in TESOL in conjunction with Applied Linguistics* is viewed to be the most desirable qualification. Though the conjunction of TESOL and Applied Linguistics is undoubtedly important, it is imperative to decipher the distinction between TESOL and Applied Linguistics in short. TESOL, on the one hand, focuses on pedagogy; whereas, Applied Linguistics usually focuses more on theory and language research (Bagwell, 2012).

6. The following table 2 (an offshoot of table 1) presents hierarchical preference of five most demanding academic and professional qualifications based on their arithmetic mean values.

Table 2. Hierarchy of most desirable academic and professional qualifications

Academic ELT qualifications	Mean	Professional (Teaching/Practicum) ELT qualifications	Mean
PhD (TESOL/Applied Linguistics/ Linguistics / ELT / English Language)	20%	Trinity Diploma (TESOL) or Cambridge (DELTA)	46%
MA/MSc (TESOL or/and Applied Linguistics)	51%	Cambridge Diploma (TEFLA)	14%
MA/M.Ed (Linguistics / ELT / TEFL / TESL)	25%	Cambridge CELTA	35%
MA (English Language/Literature)	2%	UCLES/DETFLA/	3%
BA (English linguistics/English/Education)	2%	IELTS	2%

7. It is noteworthy in table 2 that *MA in TESOL and/or Applied Linguistics* has proved to be the most demanding academic qualification as it shows the highest mean score, i.e. (51%) followed by *Ph.D in TESOL or Applied Linguistics* with 20%. On the other hand, Cambridge DELTA or Trinity DipTESOL proved to be the most demanding professional qualification as it shows the highest mean score of 46%.
8. The major professional qualifications for ELT are Cambridge CELTA, Cambridge DELTA, Trinity Dip-TESOL, and Cambridge DETFLA, but CELTA and DELTA cherish the highest recognition. British Council (2012) declares CELTA 'the minimum ELT qualification' for all its ELT practitioners.
9. Cambridge DELTA or Trinity Dip-TESOL is viewed as a minimum qualification for HELT and an alternative to MA TESOL/Applied Linguistics. (See 11, 12, 20, 25, 26, and 52 in table 1).
10. TESOL has an edge over the other ELT programmes as it has both theoretical as well as practical orientation (practicum). For instance, Lancaster University website recommends MA (TEFL) for those who have less than 2 years' teaching experience and MA (TESOL) for those who have more than two years' ELT experience.
11. TESOL qualifications are basically conferred for three different levels of ELT. The first level TESOL is often termed as *Certificate in TESOL* which serves as an essential qualification to enter the ELT world. The second level TESOL is often termed as *Diploma in TESOL* or *Dip-TESOL* which serves as an essential qualification for HELT. The third level TESOL is *Master/PhD in TESOL* serving as an essential qualification for HELT with deeper insight into methodological issues of implementing different ELT approaches systematically.
12. Online certification is often scoffed by the recruiters. (See 7, 37, and 45 in table 1).
13. Nativity is becoming a mandatory criterion as 18.1 % recruiters have exclusively specified it.
14. It is good that IELTS and TOEFL performance are becoming part of eligibility criteria (see 45 and 54).

Internationally Recognized ELT Programmes:

In response to the second research question, table 3 lists 42 reputed universities where the most preferred qualification, i.e. *MA in TESOL and/or Applied Linguistics* and some closely related courses are available.

Table 3. The most demanding ELT courses available in reputed universities

	University	Study Programme
1.	Anglia Ruskin University	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
2.	APU, Los Angeles	MA (TESOL)
3.	Bath Spa University, UK	MA/MTeach (TESOL)
4.	Columbia University	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
5.	Durham University, UK	MA (Applied Language Studies for TESOL)
6.	Lancaster University	MA (TESOL)
7.	London Metropolitan University	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
8.	Macquarie University	MA (Applied Linguistics with specialization in TESOL)
9.	Michigan State University	MA (TESOL)
10.	Middlesex University, UK	MA (TESOL with Applied Linguistics)
11.	Newcastle University	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
12.	Northumbria University, UK	MA (Applied Linguistics for TESOL)
13.	Queen's University Belfast, UK	MSc (TESOL)
14.	Sheffield Hallam University, UK	MA (TESOL)
15.	University of Bath	MA (TESOL) plus Delta
16.	University of Brighton, UK	MA (TESOL)
17.	University of Cumbria, UK	MA (TESOL)
18.	University of East London	MA (TESOL)
19.	University of Edinburgh, UK	MSc (TESOL)
20.	University of Exeter, UK	PgDip (TESOL)
21.	University of Gloucestershire, UK	MA (TESOL)
22.	University of Hull, UK	MA (TESOL)
23.	University of Leeds, UK, (China)	MA (TESOL)
24.	University of Leicester, UK	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
25.	University of Liverpool, UK	MA (TESOL)
26.	University of London, UK	MA (TESOL)
27.	University of Manchester, UK	MA (Educational Technology and TESOL)

28.	University of Nottingham, UK	PgDip (TESOL)
29.	University of Oxford	MSc (Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition)
30.	University of Salford, UK	MA (TESOL and Applied Linguistics)
31.	University of Sheffield, UK	MA (Applied Linguistics with TESOL)
32.	University of Stirling, UK	MSc (TESOL)
33.	University of Sunderland, UK	MA (TESOL)
34.	University of Sussex, UK	MA (English Language Teaching)
35.	University of Ulster, UK	MA (TESOL) <i>with internship</i>
36.	University of Wales, UK	MA (TESOL)
37.	University of Warwick	MA (English Language Teaching)
38.	University of Westminster, UK	MA (TESOL)
39.	University of York, UK	MA (TESOL)
40.	Victoria University of Wellington	MA (TESOL)
41.	VIU	MA (TESOL)
42.	York St John University	MA (Applied Linguistics: TESOL)

It is noteworthy in table 3 that almost all the internationally recognized ELT courses are concentrated within the native countries. Viewing the growing demands of ELT practitioners in non-native countries, the aforementioned ELT courses need to be widely diffused in non-native countries as well. In doing so, either the concerned ELT departments of non-native countries need to run the aforementioned courses in collaboration with the respective foreign universities or foreign universities need to open sister branches of the respective ELT setups in the non-native countries. A significant breakthrough can be seen in this regard as universities like Lancaster, Leeds, and Nottingham have already started offering their ELT programmes in non-native countries like Malaysia, China, Japan, Hong Kong, and Qatar. Nevertheless, there lie several challenges in the pursuit of disseminating and endorsing ideal ELT qualifications ahead of ELT practitioners, ELT institutes, and ELT employers. The following are some of the major ones.

Major Challenges Associated with Ideal ELT Qualifications

Needless to say that ELT has been mushrooming as one of the most lucrative professions and non-native countries like Saudi Arabia, China, Chile, Czech Republic, Thailand, Korea, Japan, Libya, Malaysia, Ethiopia, Qatar, Brunei, Yemen, UAE, etc. have become the hottest ELT destinations. Although these ELT prone countries differ from one another in terms of setting their eligibility criteria, there is a common concern among them, that is, learners often fail to master English language to an optimum level. Moreover, viewing the growing demands of ELT practitioners for different purposes such as EAP, ESP, and EOP (English for Occupational Purpose), an ELT course is not able to meet divergent needs of the learners in a holistic manner. ESP concentrates more

on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures (Ahsan, 2009). EAP and EOP are viewed as the variants of ESP to lay more narrowed focus on grooming a learner to accomplish a particular academic and professional task. Almost all the ELT courses leak in terms of imbibing the holistic concern of ESP, EAP, and EOP. As a result, maximum ELT practitioners fumble while delivering ESP courses to advanced level learners. According to a Wikipedia report, “where there is a high demand for teachers and no statutory requirements, employers may accept otherwise unqualified candidates”. This fact can be seen in most of the African countries such as Libya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, etc. including India where there is almost no consideration of professional/teaching qualifications like CELTA, DELTA, and TESOL. This study explores seven major challenges associated with ideal ELT qualifications from global perspective. The following hard facts in the form of seven challenges have been deduced from 21 online archives of ELT News websites, podcast, blogs, and forums.

Theory vs. Practicum based TESOL

Someone rightly said "Learning to teach without classroom practice is like learning to drive without ever encountering traffic". *MA TESOLs* can be classified into two types: (i) Theory based and (ii) Theory plus practicum based. Having realized the importance of practicum, almost all the TESOL courses claim to have an element of practical teaching in their curricula. But the truth is far from reality. After assessing the curricula of different TESOL programmes, it was found that four major areas were found to be in focus.

- (i) *Theoretical Perspective*: Theoretical perspective deals with principles of Language Learning and Teaching, Language analysis of (English phonology, lexis, syntax, grammar, and discourse), Sociolinguistics, Second Language Acquisition, Language and Culture Pedagogy.
- (ii) *Teaching Perspective*: Teaching perspective deals with methods and materials, teaching practicum, learners' assessment, language testing.
- (iii) *Curriculum Perspective*: Curriculum perspective deals with curriculum development and course design, developing ESL materials, developing authentic materials for ESP, EAP, and EOP.
- (iv) *Research Perspective*: Research perspective deals with research methods, writing projects, and dissertations.

Of the aforementioned four perspectives, it is imperative to emphasize here that teaching perspective is comparatively given the least attention. Before being enrolled in a particular ELT programme, an aspiring ELT practitioner remains clueless as to pedagogical worth (practical orientation) of the programme. The absence of practicum causes dismay for the ELT practitioners when they are scoffed during job interview by the recruiters for their practicum-less degrees. Given this, some universities clearly specify whether the course contains practicum or not. For instance, University of Ulster (see index 35, table 3) was found to be the only university in UK that offers three months' teaching internship in Hungary. There are some universities which add DELTA along with MA (TESOL) so that the students could be more oriented towards practicum. University of Bath is one of them (see index 15, table 3). Given the importance of practicum for HELT and LEET, course makers have begun introducing combined TEFL courses which have an element of 100+ hours of teaching including 6 hours of observed teaching practice upon successful completion of the course.

Fake certificates/degrees

Due to boom in the lucrative profession of ELT, the demand of ELT practitioners far exceeds the production of ELT practitioners. As a result, most of the ELT institutions are often flooded with ELT practitioners with fake TESOL certificates. This fact can be verified from the following news retrieved from a post titled *Bad News for the ESL Industry* (eslincanada.com, 2013).

- *Percent of individuals using fake certificates to get overseas jobs is 60%.*
- *Best estimate for fake certificates sold in Asia to native English speakers to obtain jobs with fake credentials since 1980: 165,000.*
- *Number of Asian agents selling fake University certificates and degrees charged: 3.*
- *Cost of fake degree, TESL certificate, transcripts and special university hotline phone number to "verify fake degrees": \$600.*
- *Percent of worldwide ESL English language schools that are not properly registered, licensed or operating with illegal or unqualified teachers: 75%.*

In line with the aforementioned hard facts, I would like to present the excerpts of some shocking ELT news and blogs as follows.

A) English Teachers Arrested in Korea

As many as 150 English language teachers from Canada have been arrested in the last couple of weeks in South Korea following a crackdown by immigration officials, according to the Guardian's TEFL news section. There are about 7,800 teachers working legally, while the number working with fake degrees is around 20,000. *Full Story on* http://www.eltnews.com/news/archives/2005/10/english_teacher_1.html

B) Benefit of a Fake TESOL:

... A fake TESOL can be acquired through a fake diploma company and can be relatively cheap while still looking just like the one you would receive as if you actually took the test. The benefit of a fake TESOL is tremendous and many current students and student prospects for the tesol program, have considered getting a fake tesol instead of investing in an online tesol program. For more information, visit Diploma Company, the leader in fake tesol documents. *Full Story on* <http://diplomacompany.com/benefit-of-a-fake-tesol.html>

C) Is there no law to catch fake English instructors?

This year has also seen the discovery of English hagwon instructors who have faked their academic backgrounds. Educational companies have prepared countermeasures to deal with the endemic "fake instructor" problem but they point out that "It's difficult to do through our effort alone."

Full Story on <http://populargusts.blogspot.com/2011/04/is-there-no-law-to-catch-fake-english.html>

D) What? More Gyopi Gangbangers Teaching English?

So, Seoul's Finest have busted two Korean-Americans on charges of making and selling fake degrees, and seven other Korean-Americans for teaching English with fake degrees. The two "brokers" reportedly forged degrees from prestigious US universities for US\$100—200 a pop.

Full Story on <http://www.rjkoehler.com/2011/12/08/what-more-gyopi-gangbangers-teaching-english/>

E) Reports of Britons arrested in South Korean teaching crackdown

Three Britons are now believed to be among the latest group of English teachers arrested in South Korea as part of a crackdown on those flouting visa laws and using fraudulent qualifications to obtain jobs.

Full Story on <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/oct/26/northkorea.tefl>

F) I'm teaching with a fake degree for 5 year already

I would like to know if there's anyone else with this kind of thing going on? ... Two of my friends had used a different degree mill and were quickly deported. However I've stayed in Thailand for 2 years and almost 3 now in Taiwan. ... I'd say this fake degree was well worth it. But am I the only one to survive this long with a fake degree? Anyone else? *Full Story on* <http://www.onlinetefl.com/tefl-chalkboard/smoofaloof/posts/8923-i-m-teaching-with-a-fake-degree-for-5-year-already>

Irrelevant Qualification

There is a growing concern in many Middle East and African countries where non-native ELT practitioners with their stereotyped traditional academic qualifications such as MA in English/English Literature are often appointed for HELT and LELT. As a matter of fact, these courses are utterly devoid of essential theoretical insights, pedagogical awareness, and practicum of ELT. Without having any foundation in practical teaching experience, most of the Asian ELT practitioners make direct entry into the ELT world. As a result, the optimal growth of the ELT practitioners, the learners and entire ESL setup is adversely affected. A large majority of Asian ELT practitioners are not even aware of professional qualifications like CELTA, DELTA, TESOL and others.

Nativity vs. Non-nativity

Since the number of non-native speakers of English is outnumbering the native speakers of the language (Chen, 2009), the issue of nativity is becoming insignificant. But the world of ELT is still obsessed with the notion of nativity as 18.1 % job adverts in table 1 clearly specify nativity as an obligatory component for an ELT practitioner. It is ironical to mention that some recruiters simply want passport holder of Native country, white face, or Caucasian as part of eligibility especially for LELT. In the wake of growing cases of fake ELT practitioners from native countries, countries like China and Libya are no more amused with the notion of nativity because many young native teachers often lack methodical knack for LELT in general and HELT in particular. Seeing the dual treatment of recruiters about nativity, there is an outburst among non-native ELT practitioners whose applications are turned down despite meeting all the vital eligibility criteria except for the nativity. Though, some recruiters accept near-nativity, nativity often becomes a hurdle for the non-native teachers to teach even in non-native countries. It is also true that a number of non-native ELT practitioners especially from India make mockery of themselves with their MTI coated English. Such ELT practitioners are either sacked or kept as an object of amusement in an ELT setup. No matter an ELT practitioner is native or non-native, s/he has to have the adequacy of both linguistic competence and communicative performance.

Age and Gender Barriers

In most of the Middle East countries, gender plays a decisive and divisive role in the selection of ELT practitioners. More precisely, female students are supposed to be taught

by female teachers and male students are supposed to be taught by male teachers. Irrespective of cultural restrictions, such a bias makes us think whether competence of a teacher is more important or the preference of gender. Such an approach may mar the desirable progression of the learners. On the other hand, south Asian countries like China, Japan, Korea, Brazil and some South American non-native countries look for ELT practitioners in the age group of 25 to 35. In countries like China and Japan, if one is over 35, s/he is no longer welcome for LELT jobs because s/he is out of the spotlight in the eyes of students and parents.

Availability and Affordability of the Course

As almost all the internationally recognized TESOL programmes are normally imparted in native countries, it deprives aspiring non-native ELT practitioners of availing the right ELT course. The first hindrance is geographical distance and the second is course-fees. Normally, the aspiring ELT practitioners hail from non-native countries especially from Middle East countries, China, Japan, India, Korea, etc. and they find it hard to attend full time (regular mode) MA in TESOL programme whose duration ranges from one to two years. The second hindrance is affordability of the course fees which presently costs more than 25 thousand GB pounds in UK. The ones who are from poor financial background cannot afford to do an MA TESOL due to hefty tuition fees and other expenses. Their helplessness to avail this course does not mean they are less intelligent or less capable of becoming ELT practitioners. The bottom-line is that foreign universities should make the TESOL programmes affordable for developing and underdeveloped countries or launch them in non-native countries to facilitate quality English education.

Recognition of Online TESOL

To meet time, space, and financial constraints of ELT aspirants, online programmes in TESOL was promoted, but it is a sheer fact that online TESOL qualifications are often scoffed by the recruiters in ELT job market. Online course in TESOL doesn't hold any value for HELT as it lacks practicum or assessed teaching practice. In table 1, 5% recruiters have clearly discouraged online ELT certificates. So, a clear-cut justification should be made available not only to the aspiring ELT practitioners but also ELT employers as to the extent of online certificates' validity.

CONCLUSION

In its heuristic efforts, the paper has tried to attain three research objectives by exploring most ideal ELT qualification(s), the availability of the courses in reputed universities, and major challenges associated with ELT qualifications. Setting aside the aforementioned challenges, the core concern of ELT is to help learners learn and master English language instinctively and enjoyably. And, as long as an ELT practitioner succeeds in attaining this goal, s/he must be considered as an ideal ELT practitioner. However, the present concern of this study reveals *MA in TESOL or/with Applied Linguistics* as the most ideal and preferred ELT qualification. Someone with a master degree in TESOL is widely regarded by employers and peers as being well prepared: a properly trained professional in the field of ELT (Bagwell, 2012). As for the availability of internationally recognized *MA in TESOL or/with Applied Linguistics*, it is offered mostly in native countries especially England and USA. As for the major challenges associated with ELT qualifications, two issues call forth immediate counteraction. The first is to check the growth of fake ELT practitioners who enter the ELT world with fake

and irrelevant ELT certificates and work with impunity. The second is to promote practicum based ELT courses in native as well as non-native countries. Today, teaching a language is not merely a course of repeating words, phrases, or sentences; it has got a fully scientific and systematic approach like teaching any other science subjects. So it is always wise to get a TESOL which not only equips one with degree but more importantly with right teaching methodology.

There is a paradoxical debate among the ELT practitioners that a piece of paper (degree) does not mean one has a good grasp of English or one can teach English. Despite having over-inflated qualifications in ELT, there are plenty of people who are poor at spelling, grammar, and phonological aspects (stress and intonation) of the language. So, two groups of people in ESL world can be seen: (i) *one who works hard to gain a degree* and (ii) *one who works hard for the degree*. The first type of ELT practitioner has *methodical knowledge* followed by *degree*; whereas, the second type has *fake degree* followed by *shallow knowledge* in bits and pieces. Needless to say that the one who works hard to gain a degree after years of learning and teaching supersedes the one who works hard for the degree gained in a fraudulent manner. But the recruiters often fail to distinguish between these two types of ELT practitioners. Most of the certificates are accepted at face value and no background check is done in terms of genuineness of the certificates. Despite considerable variations in qualification criteria from one country to another and often from one ELT institute to another within the same country, the current trend is gaining a momentum of establishing uniformity and endorsing validity of ELT certifications globally. Despite flocking to Western countries to be educated by 'foreigners', several ELT prone countries such as China, Libya, India, etc. do not perceive native speakers (foreign teachers) as real educators. They keep foreign teachers at arm's length for various reasons like fear of colonization, acculturation, etc. To overcome the aforementioned seven challenges (from 4.3.1 to 4.3.7), the paper forwards ten apposite recommendations as follows.

Recommendations

- A. Since *MA in TESOL or/and Applied Linguistics* proved to be the most preferred ELT qualification, a globally harmonized syllabus should be designed and used by the native and non-native countries equally so that all the certificates could be treated equally by the recruiters.
- B. A balance needs to be struck between theoretical and practicum components of an ELT syllabus to meet the holistic needs of the teachers and learners from psycho-socio-linguistic perspectives.
- C. The syllabus should contain adequate and appropriate authentic ESP, EAP, and EOP segments to help learners meet real world task efficiently in English.
- D. More provisions should be made to facilitate Teaching Practicum during TESOL programme as well as Teaching Internship after the completion of TESOL programme.
- E. To weed out the fake TESOL certificate holders and providers, a cohesive policy involving three-layered investigative committee 'one at international level, one at country level and one at institute level' should be formed and enforced so that genuine ELT practitioners may not be lumped together with the fake ones.
- F. Given the Englishes encompassing all over the globe, the issue of nativity should be diminished to a marginal degree in the form of substituting it by an accent proficiency

test for all. As long as one uses neutral accent, nativity should not be a hurdle in one's selection for an ELT practitioner.

- G. On the part of recruiters, a sensible and concerted effort should be made to ensure whether an applicant is fit enough in terms of linguistic, communicative, and pedagogic competence rather than his/her geographical association and skin colour.
- H. Age barrier should not become a stringent criterion to be an ELT practitioner as we need sometimes experienced ELT practitioners who could think of innovation in ELT to upgrade the quality of ELT. So, age barrier should be either relaxed or waived. In a highly formal situation, the age range of (20-40) can be specified for LELT and (35-55) for HELT.
- I. The ELT fraternity should give a second thought while approving or disapproving an online ELT qualification. No matter one has got an ELT certificate through online, distance, part-time, or regular mode, s/he must undergo a stringent test to prove his/her worth for ELT. But accepting or rejecting someone at the face value of a certificate is highly undesirable.
- J. Amid varied ELT qualifications, the prospective ELT practitioners should not hesitate in applying for an ELT job simply because they do not have the exact qualification what the recruiters ask for. The recruiters should abstain from reaching any decision by the face value of one's certificate. They should examine candidates' potential of teaching by inviting them to deliver a couple of lectures on any complex aspects of English language and by assessing the publication record of the candidate on English education.

To sum up, there lie two immediate tasks ahead of us. The first task is to seek proper justification to the ongoing professional disgrace of ELT qualifications. For this, we need to look not only into the existing problems but more importantly to think of ways by which potential damage to the noble profession of ELT could be minimized timely. The second task is to envisage an ideal TESOL programme. Although the result of this study showed *MA in TESOL in conjunction with Applied Linguistics* as the most ideal ELT qualification due to its blending of theoretical and practical components, the need arises to design a curriculum somewhat similar to *principles-based approach* proposed by Mahboob & Tilakaratna (2012) or the SOKA University's *MA in International Language Education (ILE): TESOL* that aims at producing exceptional language educators by providing opportunities for students to develop a deeper understanding of language acquisition, language teaching, and intercultural communication to communicate effectively as global citizens.

Future Work

Since this study was a preliminary attempt to explore desirable qualifications for HELT, the paper further aims to make a comprehensive study of the vital components of TESOL for HELT and explore the ratio gap between ideal ELT qualification and the qualifications of ELT practitioners in non-native countries.

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