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## Myths and Realities of Tertiary ELT Programmes

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### Abstract

This study hypothesizes that branding ELT (English Language Teaching) by dozens of acronymous labels like ELT TESOL, ESOL, TESL, TEFL, TEAL, DELTA, CELTA, CELTYL, TENOR, ICELT, IDLTM, etc. have flummoxed both existing and aspiring ELT practitioners as well as ELT employers in terms of recognizing an ideal ELT programme. Owing to this fact, the paper, firstly, aims at discerning the face values (definitional implications) of major ELT programmes offered at tertiary level; secondly, it digs into their curricular components to know the justification of naming them by different brands; thirdly, it explores the negative impacts of frequent branding of ELT programmes on ELT practitioners. Using mixed research design, document analysis and unstructured interview were used as the prime data gathering tools; whereas, narrative analysis and analytic induction were used to analyse the data.

**Keyword:** ELT Programme

## 1. Introduction

In this age of informationalism - the term firstly coined by Castells (1996) referring to global capitalism – almost every nuance of human life is undergoing the process of globalization be it industrial, economic, social, cultural, or linguistic. And, English, being the sole world lingua franca, has undeniably and undoubtedly proved to be the best linguistic medium of globalization. Given the fast-paced changes caused by globalization, the ELT (English Language Teaching) world has brought a paradigm shift of producing more and more non-native speakers in general and ELT practitioners in particular to make them proficient in English for the exchange of any information for development. As a result, the number of non-native speakers of English has outnumbered the native speakers of the language (Chen, 2009). However the demand of ELT practitioners in non-native countries is very high but the supply is very low.

Unlike yesteryears, we are flooded today with a number of ELT brands (programmes) like TESOL, ESOL, TESL, TEFL, TEAL, DELTA, CELTA, and many others at certificate, diploma, master, and PhD level. But these outnumbering courses have not only flummoxed both ELT employers and employees in terms of recognizing an ideal ELT brand but also created a discriminatory gap between new and old ELT practitioners due to ongoing changes in the desirable qualification(s) criteria set by the recruiters. So the crux of this study is to highlight the repercussion of frequent branding of ELT programmes in terms of how it baffles

the employers to change their eligibility criteria periodically and ELT practitioners (current and aspiring) to opt for an ideal ELT course.

### **1.1 Justification for the study**

The shortage in the supply of ELT professionals has necessitated us to produce more and more ELT professionals and launch ideal ELT course(s). Thus, ELT has emerged as one of the most demanding SLTE programmes. 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, Singapore, etc.

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 (Jha, 2014). 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. Given the stated issues, this study sets two prime objectives: (i) understanding the cursory and pedagogical implications of widely recognized ELT brands and (ii) Assessing the adverse impacts of frequent branding of ELT on the stakeholders. To attain these objectives, the study has addressed two pertinent research questions.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What are the cursory and pedagogical implications of the widely recognized ELT brands?
2. What are the adverse impacts of frequent branding of ELT programmes on the stakeholders?

### **1.4. Significance of the study**

This study is significant for five main reasons. Firstly, it reveals the myths and realities of widely recognized ELT brands/programmes in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. Secondly, it makes yesteryears' ELT practitioners aware of the gap between their qualifications and the desirable qualifications set by the current employers. Thirdly, it gives a compact overview of the widely recognized ELT programmes in terms of cursory and pedagogical implications to see whether the prescribed curricula are indeed useful to meet the holistic learning needs of the learners or not. Fourthly, the study divulges the aftermath of frequent branding of ELT programmes. Finally, the study recommends six remedial measures to tackle the aftermath of branding ELT programmes frequently.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

Given the novelty of the research topic, it is imperative to mention that the field of ELT lacks adequate literature to be reviewed as very few researchers have shed light on the topic under discussion. However, this section inculcates a theoretical premise within which the aforementioned research questions could be addressed with appropriate rationales, hypotheses, and supportive ideas.

Some of the literature selected for the review in pertinence to the current study are "*Which ELT Qualification?*" an online English language blog posted by Tdol (2012), "*The*

*Changing Face of TESOL*” by Chen (2009), “*In Quest of an Ideal ELT Qualification*” by Jha (2014), “*Learning Outcomes and Experiences on a Masters ELT Programme*” by Taylorson (2012), “*Managing Change in English Language Teaching: Lessons from Experience*”, by British Council (2012), “*8 Major Trends in the Global ELT Field*” by Sun (2014), “*Insights towards Native and Non-native ELT Educators*” by Ulate (2011), two consecutive articles titling “*The Fraud of the Global English-Teaching Industry*” and “*The Illusion of Global English-Teaching Standards*” by Gethin (2002-A & B), and “*Understanding the International Standards for the TESOL Industry and Employment Pathways*” by Thorn (2011) to mention a few.

Of the aforementioned researchers, Tdol’ blog presents a survey report of 200 job adverts extracted from tefl.com to explore highly trusted ELT qualifications for lower level ELT jobs. According to the blog, 100% employers want CELTA brand; 89% employers prefer the brand Trinity Cert-TESOL too; 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 (Jha, 2014.C). Unlike Tdol, Jha (2014.C) conducted a study on exploring an ideal ELT qualification for higher (tertiary) level ELT by surveying 55 ELT job adverts in which PhD (Applied Linguistics), MA/MSc (TESOL), MA (Applied Linguistics), MA (TESOL and Applied Linguistics), MA (Linguistics / ELT / TEFL / TESL / English), BA (English / English Linguistics), B.Ed (English / Applied Linguistics / TEFL / TESOL, PG Diploma in EFL / ESL / TEFL / TESL), and Diploma (ELT / TESOL) were found as the preferred brands for tertiary level ELT. Of them *MA in TESOL in conjunction with Applied Linguistics* was found to be the most desirable ELT brand.

Sun (2014) discusses eight types of changes in the field of ELT under the purview of globalization, localization, and interdisciplinary collaboration. They are (i) changing perspectives on English teaching and learning, (ii) changes in goals of English teaching and learning, (iii) changes in approaches to teaching, (iv) changes in teaching content, curriculum design, and assessment, (v) expanding the dimension of communicative competence, (vi) changing views of an effective English educator, (vii) rapid development and integration of information technology in ELT, (viii) changing roles and increasing responsibilities of teachers. Of the eight changes, this study is more concerned with the first and the second changes as ELT fraternity is widening the horizon of English from EFL to ESL, from TEFL to TESL, from TESL to TESOL, from EAP to ESP, from ESP to EOP, from EIL or ELF to TENOR, from TENOR to World Englishes, from World Englishes to TESR. The notion of TESR (Teaching English for Social Responsibilities) is the current buzzword as the field of ELT is undergoing a paradigm shift from merely enhancing language proficiency to inculcating a sense of social responsibility in the learners. Today, ELT is more concerned with grooming a learner into critical thinkers and constructive social change agents (Crystal, 2004).

Like Sun, Richards (2009) also discusses several remarkable changes in the ELT field in his plenary address on *The Changing Faces of TESOL*. Two of his points that deserve mentioning here due to their pertinence to this study are *changes in the status of English* and *the demand of accountability*. As for the changes in the status of English, the ELT fraternity has witnessed an unprecedented change in the status of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to English as an International Language (EIL). English was regarded as the property of the English-speaking world, particularly Britain and the US and native-speakers of the language, particularly those with blond hair and blue eyes, had special insights and superior knowledge about teaching it (ibid). But the scenario has changed. English is no longer viewed as the property of the English-speaking world; rather it has become an international commodity.

However, Ulate (2011) gives a comprehensive commentary on growing disparity between native English speaking teachers (NEST) and non-native English speaking teachers

(NNEST) in the ELT profession. According to her, native and non-native speakers have certain characteristics that help them become a good language professional; as a result, a good language teacher is neither native nor non-native but one that is professionally and personally prepared to perform the demanding task of educating others. Similarly, Maum (2002) argues that differentiating among teachers based on their native and non-native status show the dominance of the native speaker, which contributes to discrimination in hiring practices.

As for the demand of accountability of an ELT programme, Richard (2009) raises an important question: “What constitutes a quality English language program in terms of its curriculum, the teaching methods that it gives rise to, and the kinds of teachers that the program depends upon?” In addition, there is an important dimension called accreditation used as a bar to measure quality of an ELT programme vis-à-vis qualification. There are few accreditation bodies for ELT courses such as Accreditation UK- British English Language Centre backed by British Council, NEAS in Australia, TESL Canada, and NZQA in New Zealand, etc. However, these bodies do not monitor the quality of tertiary level ELT programmes rather certificate to diploma level ELT courses such as CELTA, DELTA, Cert-TESOL, Dip-TESOL, and other courses in TEFL and TESL especially run by private English language industries. There is no international standardization body for the TESOL industry, but Accreditation UK dominates the international standards as a bar that qualifications are compared to (Thorn, 2011). Accreditation UK sets the following criteria for lower level ELT (visit the link <http://www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation>).

- be **externally validated** by a reputable examination body (usually a university or a recognised examinations board).
- contain **at least six hours supervised teaching practice** (i.e. practice where a qualified assessor observes the trainee teacher teaching real TEFL students and gives feedback to the trainee on his/her performance).
- Contain **at least 100 hours of TEFL input**.

Conforming to the above criteria, the need arises to have an international accreditation body to set similar criteria to measure the effectiveness of tertiary level ELT programmes. With regard to vested interests of the ELT industry, I would like to share Gethin’s remarks that *ELT industry is exploiting the aspiring ELT practitioners of rich and moderately rich background without delivering what they claim to deliver*. If the so called best or expensive ELT brand(s) do not help in ultimate attainment of learning, all the towering claims of quality training raze to the ground.

Since curriculum is the backbone of an ELT programme, this study, along with other issues, aims to assess the curricular efficacy of the widely recognized ELT brands. The curricular efficacy is intended to see whether the learners’ holistic learning needs in terms of their systemic, strategic, sociolinguistic, inter-cultural, communicative, analytical, and professional competencies are at least addressed by the prescribed curricula or not. For the ultimate attainment in a second language acquisition, an ideal ELT curriculum needs to inculcate these seven types of competencies as they are the mainstay of modern theory on second language acquisition according to current language researchers like Diaz-Rico & Weed (2006), Canale (1983), Johnson, (2008), etc.

### 3. Methodology

The methodological approach used for this study is purely exploratory in its nature as it is concerned with exploration of a problem from both causal and remedial perspectives. The following are the brief accounts of the *design, samples, and methods of data collection and analysis* used for this study.

### 3.1 Research design

The research design for this study is *mixed* (i.e. *quantitative and qualitative*) as the data collection and analysis were made both qualitatively and quantitatively. Moreover, it not only measures quantifiable data but also lays emphasis on interpretation for the qualitative data.

### 3.2 Samples and Sampling

In response to the first research question a representative sample of 30 leading universities specialized in ELT education (based on QS World University Rankings-2014) was purposively selected. As part of answering the second research question, a sample of 60 tertiary level ELT practitioners was selected from three non-native countries: Ethiopia, India, and Libya through convenience sampling.

### 3.3 Data Collection

This study used three data gathering instruments: *document analysis* in the form of online archival artefacts/documents, *questionnaire*, and *unstructured interview*. Document analysis was used to elicit online data of 30 leading universities specialized in ELT education based on QS World University Rankings-2014 and 19 ELT job adverts from six ELT based employment websites. A close-ended questionnaire was prepared for the participant ELT practitioners to know their brief academic profile; whereas, unstructured interviews were held with them to seek qualitative data in terms of their perceptions on the problem under discussion.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Since the collected data were both ordinal and nominal, they were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in terms of frequency and percentile; whereas, qualitative data were analyzed using narrative analysis.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

Responding to the first research question, the paper firstly presents *cursory and pedagogical implications of the widely-recognized ELT brands* as follows.

### 4.1 Cursory and pedagogical implications of the widely-recognized ELT brands

Prior to looking at cursory and pedagogical implications of the widely recognized ELT brands, it was imperative to explore the widely recognized ELT programmes. For this, the study browsed two online artifacts: Google search engine and QSWUR's top 150 universities under the subject domain of linguistics. The obtained results were further narrowed purposively to 30 (20%) universities as they were expected to be highly specialized in ELT (see table 1). It is imperative to add that table 1 contains five such universities that do not figure in QSWUR's top 150 universities, but they were selected due to their practicum based teaching, internship, and effective mode of online teaching for the aspiring ELT practitioners.

Table 1. Widely recognized ELT programmes as per QSWUR, 2014

	Highly Acclaimed Universities for ELT Courses	ELT Brands (Programmes)
1.	American University, USA	MA (TEFL)
2.	Anaheim Univeristy, USA	MA (TESOL)
3.	Columbia University, USA	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
4.	Durham University, UK	MA (Applied Language Studies for TESOL)

5.	Lancaster University, UK	MA (Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching)
6.	Macquarie University, Australia	MA (Applied Linguistics with specialization in TESOL)
7.	Michigan State University	MA (TESOL)
8.	Middlesex University, UK	MA (TESOL with Applied Linguistics)
9.	Newcastle University	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
10.	Northcentral University	MEd (ESL)
11.	Northumbria University, UK	MA (Applied Linguistics for TESOL)
12.	Penn State University (USA)	MA (TESL)
13.	Queen's University Belfast, UK	MSc (TESOL)
14.	University of Bath	MA (TESOL) plus Delta
15.	University of Brighton, UK	MA (TESOL)
16.	University of Edinburgh, UK	MSc (TESOL)
17.	University of Leeds, UK	MA (TESOL)
18.	University of Leicester, UK	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
19.	SIT, USA	MA (TESOL) <i>with internship</i>
20.	University of London, UK	MA (TESOL)
21.	University of Manchester, UK	MA (Educational Technology and TESOL)
22.	University of Nottingham, UK	PgDip (TESOL)
23.	University of Oxford, UK	MSc (Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition)
24.	University of Pennsylvania, USA	MA Educational Linguistics and TESOL
25.	University of Sheffield, UK	MA (Applied Linguistics with TESOL)
26.	University of South Wales, UK	MA (TEAL)
27.	University of Sussex, UK	MA (English Language Teaching)
28.	University of Ulster, UK	MA (TESOL) <i>with internship</i>
29.	University of Warwick	MA (English Language Teaching)
30.	University of York, UK	MA (TESOL)

To view the comparative prominence of the explored ELT brands in graded form, the study converts the frequency of their occurrence(s) into percentile (see figure-1)

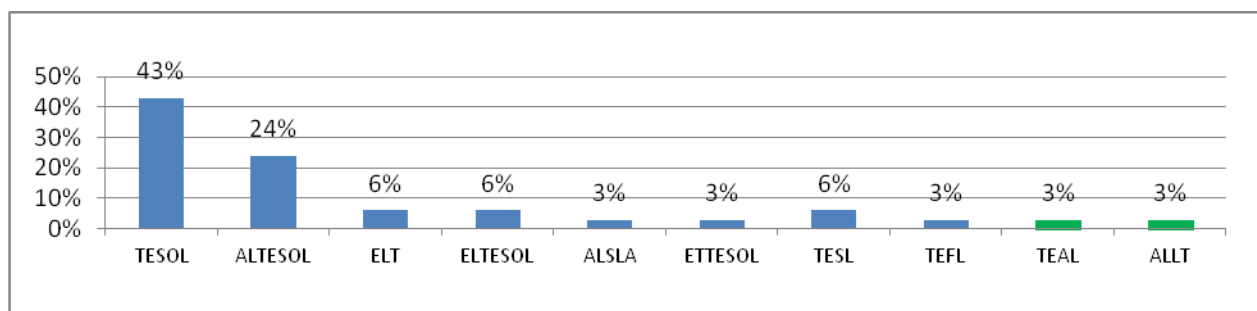


Figure 1: The Comparative Prominence of the ELT Brands at Master Level

Having seen the comparative prominence of ten widely recognized ELT brands in figure 1, it is easy to conclude that MA TESOL and MA ALTESOL are two most widely recognized ELT programmes. This finding reaffirms the researcher's early finding (Jha, 2014) on ideal ELT qualifications.

Reverting to the main concern of the first research question, the study now presents cursory (face value) and pedagogical (curricular) implications to know the rationale behind branding ELT programme with different acronyms nomenclatures. The pedagogical implications were elicited from the available online curricula (course structures) of the respective 30 ELT programmes. According to Carreiro (2010), Bagwell, (2012), Jha (2014), and, many others, the following ELT brands do not differ from one another remarkably. However, the study divulges the curricular components of ten seemingly different ELT

brands to show whether the taxonomy of using different nomenclatures for ELT brands are justified or not.

Table 2. Cursory and Pedagogical Implications of Widely Recognized ELT Brands

<b>ELT Brands</b>	<b>Cursory Implication</b>	<b>Pedagogical Implication</b>
<b>MA ELT</b> <i>English Language Teaching</i>	ELT is a generic term used for different brands of ELT. It is offered as a highly specialized master programme for the aspiring ELT practitioners to actuate ELT theories into practice.	ELT programme motivates students to design their lessons for actual classroom teaching by investigating issues in second language pedagogy, aspects of applied linguistics, second-language acquisition, varieties of English, testing, ELT management and publishing.
<b>MA TEFL</b> <i>Teaching English as a Foreign Language</i>	TEFL is a term used for teachers' training in EFL. programme is to give the aspiring ELT practitioners theoretical insights and extensive hands-on experience to meet the growing demand of high-quality EFL.	The major pedagogic concerns of this programme are principles of second language acquisition, principles of linguistics, curriculum and materials design, language assessment, technology for TEFL, culture in EFL classroom, academic writing, capstone project, and practicum.
<b>M(A/Ed) TESL</b> <i>Teaching English as a Second Language</i>	TESL is used for teachers' training in ESL. The shift from TEFL to TESL is intended to orient learners learn English for the sake of using English anywhere in the world.	Topics covered in this programme are functional grammar, language analysis, discourse analysis, second language acquisition, research methodology in second language research, teaching methodology, etc.
<b>M(A/Sc) TESOL</b> <i>Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages</i>	Many English learners are already trilingual or multilingual, so referring to English as a 'second language' seemed inapt. So, the term TESOL was coined which is professionally more focused on ELT than TEFL or TESL.	The core components of TESOL are principles of language learning and teaching, language analysis, sociolinguistics, second language acquisition, culture pedagogy, teaching practicum, testing and assessment, curriculum and course designs, and research methods.
<b>MA ALTESOL</b> <i>Applied Linguistics and TESOL</i>	Given the union of TESOL and applied linguistics, it is imperative to clear that TESOL focuses on pedagogy; whereas, applied linguistics focuses more on theory and language research.	The core components of ALTESOL are language analysis, survey of applied linguistics, principles of SLA, teachers' language, culture, testing, technology, world Englishes, practicum: the reflective practitioner, curriculum and course designs, and L2 research.
<b>MA ELTESOL</b> <i>Educational Linguistics and TESOL</i>	ELTESOL is a specialized course in language learning and teaching, educational policy and practice, and interdisciplinary theory and research in linguistics.	The main topics covered in ALSLA are educational linguistics, second language acquisition, language diversity and education, sociolinguistics in education, research methods, and principles of language learning and teaching.
<b>MSc ALSLA</b> <i>Applied Linguistics and SLA</i>	ALSLA is a unique programme offered by the University of Oxford to mediate between theories of second language and the practice of second language learning.	The main topics covered in ALSLA are advanced readings and current practices in applied linguistics, principles of second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, educational pedagogy, linguistics, and sociolinguistics, and a research dissertation.
<b>MA ETTESOL</b> <i>Educational Technology and TESOL</i>	ETTESOL is designed for experienced ELT practitioners to equip them with higher knowledge and understanding of TESOL using technology and act in advisory capacities for stakeholders.	The main topics covered in ETTESOL are language learning and technology, blended learning in digital age of multimedia, developing researcher competence, teaching and learning online, evaluation and design of courseware, and beyond approaches and techniques.
<b>MA TEAL</b> <i>Teaching English as an Additional Language</i>	Since English can be the first, second, or third language for a learner, TEAL considers English as an 'additional language.' This programme prepares ELT practitioners to teach young learners in particular.	The core components of this master programme are topics like practicalities of curriculum and material designs for EAL children, language acquisition and learning theory, motivation, evaluation, sociocultural perspectives on education and identity, seminar, methods of research in EAL, and capstone project.
<b>MA ALLT</b> <i>Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching</i>	This is the latest brand introduced by Lancaster University to accentuate the strength of TESOL and TEFL together for the ELT practitioners. It is relevant to ELT and teaching other languages.	The core components of ALLT are trends and issues in language teaching methodology, second language acquisition, language test construction and evaluation, research methods in linguistics and English language, test construction and evaluation, dissertation, etc.

Concerning the cursory and pedagogical implications (as mentioned in table 2), the study reveals seven key findings as follows.

1. Assessing the curricular components of ten widely recognized ELT programmes in terms of whether or not they impart holistic learning backed with seven competencies: systemic, strategic, sociolinguistic, inter-cultural, communicative, analytical, and professional, we find almost all the programmes focus on *systemic*, *sociolinguistic* and *communicative* competencies as part of their core components. The other competencies namely *cultural*, *strategic*, *analytical*, and *professional* have not been given due attention by most of the programmes in table 2.
2. The cursory implications of ten aforementioned ELT programmes are different to some extent in terms of their goals; but, the pedagogical implications considerably remain the same.
3. Taking a closer look at the pedagogical implications of almost all the programmes, five core components were found to be common. They are *second language acquisition*, *curriculum* and *course design*, *evaluation*, *second language research methodology*, and *a capstone project* followed by a dissertation. These components are the backbone of any ELT programme as they give deeper insights into the underlying principles of second language learning and teaching and ways of translating them into practice.
4. As for the pedagogical differences, they are not very significant because they are often covered as part of elective courses. For instance, technology, ELT management and publishing, culture pedagogy, educational linguistics, etc. are pertinent to the ELT programmes but of lesser importance in comparison with the core components. Hence, it sounds immaterial to brand ELT programmes by different acronymous nomenclatures.
5. One remarkable difference among these ELT programmes is *practicum* vs. *practicum less* ELT programme. Practicum (internship) here refers to practical teaching experience which is missing in most of the ELT programmes in tables 1 and 2.
6. It is noteworthy in table 1 that all the ELT programmes are based in native countries which directly or indirectly shows conventional academic imperialism of USA and UK in ELT education. For the ELT practitioners from non native countries especially from Asia and Africa, availing such programmes is simply a far-fetched idea due to time, space, and financial constraints. For millions of poor throughout the world it is quite out of the question (Gethin, 2002.B).
7. Since language learning is becoming more inclusive, the goal of ELT is no more producing only copycats of native speakers; rather new dimensions like inter-cultural communication, ELT management, blended use of technology, ELT publishing, educational linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, etc. are emerging components in the current ELT curricula.

Given the preference of ELT brands by 30 ELT course providers, the study further delved into exploring the preference of the employers too to ensure whether the preference of course providers and employers correlate with each other or not. In doing so, 19 tertiary level ELT job adverts (see table 3) were selected using random sampling from a list of 38 ELT job advertisements retrieved from six ELT employment websites: [www.tefljobsoverseas.com](http://www.tefljobsoverseas.com), [www.eslemployment.com](http://www.eslemployment.com), [www.esljobfeed.com](http://www.esljobfeed.com), [www.esljobfind.com](http://www.esljobfind.com), [www.eslcafe.com](http://www.eslcafe.com), and [www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk) advertised over the period of three years.

Assessing the employers' preference of ELT brands, the frequency of desirable qualifications was converted into percentile. The result showed that 49% employers have opted for MA in TESOL; whereas 26% employers have opted for MA TESOL and MA Applied Linguistics interchangeably. The popularity of MA TESOL and MA ALTESOL was



found to be 43% and 24% respectively among the course providers; whereas the same was found to be 49% and 26% among the employers. So we can say that there is a strong correlation between preferences of course providers and employers. 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).

## 4.2 The Aftermath of Frequent Branding of ELT Programmes

Responding to the second research question, the study examines the aftermath of frequent branding of ELT programme. In this direction, the study explored the gap in the participants' qualifications and the qualifications set by the current employers followed by five grave concerns expressed by the participants towards the perceived gap.

### 4.2.1 An Increasing Gap in Qualification(s)

To ascertain an increasing gap in qualifications, a comparative analysis was made to see the gap between qualifications of the sample participants (60 tertiary level ELT practitioners) and the desirable qualifications set by the employers as shown in the bar chart (figure 2).

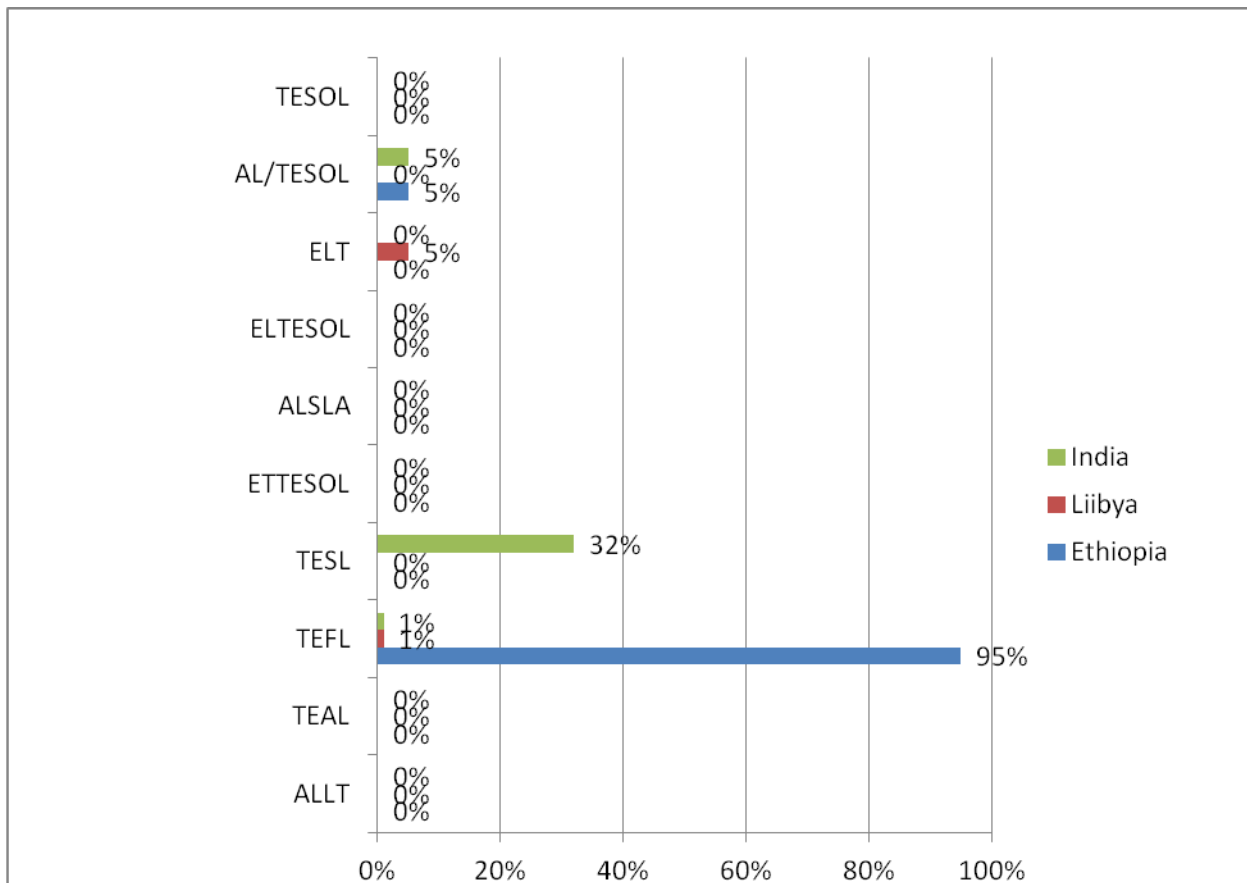


Figure 2: The Status of Gaps in Qualifications

The status of the gaps in qualifications (figure 2) shows that the Ethiopian, Indian, and Libyan ELT practitioners are way away from the expected widely recognized ELT qualification. As for the sample participants from India, none of them had the most preferred

qualification of MA (TESOL); whereas only 5% reported to have the second best ELT qualification of MA (Applied Linguistics). However, 32% participants reported to have their master background in TESL. The rest of the participants had MA English (Literature) background. As for the participants from Libya, none of them had the most preferred qualification of MA (TESOL); whereas 5% reported to have their master background in ELT and 1% was found to be from TEFL background. The rest of the participants had their master in English Language and Translation Studies. As for the participants from Ethiopia, none of them had the most preferred qualification of MA (TESOL); whereas 5% reported to have their master background in Applied Linguistics. Most strikingly, 95% Ethiopian ELT practitioners had their MA in TEFL background as TEFL programme is offered in almost all the Ethiopian universities. But the irony is average Ethiopian ELT practitioner is the product of indigenously developed weak TEFL programme which makes a vicious cycle or chain of unprofessional ELT practitioners in Ethiopia.

Having seen the perceived gap in qualifications in figure 2, all the sample participants were involved in unstructured reflective interview to seek their perceptions from causal and remedial perspectives about the perceived gaps in qualifications. The outcome of the interview revealed several points as to increasing gaps in qualifications but here only six major concerns are being discussed as they proved to be the common concerns of all the participants.

#### *4.2.2 Lack of Globally Harmonized Syllabus*

The first major concern expressed by the participants was *lack of globally harmonized ELT syllabus*. They envisaged having a common ELT brand vis-à-vis syllabus worldwide to avoid any disparity among the ELT practitioners in global arena. More specifically, they opined to have a common or globally harmonized syllabus for master level ELT education to bridge the gap of qualifications from one country to another. In this regard, British council and Trinity College London are offering globally harmonized programmes vis-à-vis syllabi for their lower-level ELT programmes like CELTA, DELTA, Trinity Dip-TESOL, etc. However, no leading institution has taken any initiative to offer master level ELT programmes by using globally harmonized syllabus. What matters more is the curricular components rather than the name of an ELT programme. If commonality of curricular components can be established globally, the names, labels, or brands of ELT programmes will become immaterial.

#### *4.2.3 Accreditation-Qualification-Competence*

Accreditation has become a paradoxical subject for ELT course providers, ELT practitioners, and ELT employers. In the field of ELT, accreditation is a benchmark to measure the quality of an ELT course in terms of its contents and delivery approved by the experts of the field or legal body of a country. The pertaining issue here is whether an accredited qualification or one's competence is important. Among those with the present orthodox qualifications there are of course many excellent teachers; and of course there are many 'unqualified' people teaching English who should not be doing so. But what makes good teachers good is not their qualifications; it is their conscientiousness. From that come all the other capacities needed for serving their students well (Gethin, 2002). Similarly, Jha (2014) opens a paradoxical debate among the ELT practitioners whether a piece of paper (transcript) qualifies one to be a good teacher or one's ELT competence comprising systemic, procedural, and experiential knowledge. Despite having over-inflated qualifications in ELT, there are many who are poor at ELT competence (ibid). The participants of this study though admitted that they lack ELT competence, they also questioned the benchmark of accrediting glossy brands of ELT in Europe and America. They sought for the concrete guidelines to accredit an ELT course and

its products so that they could try to implement the same formula in their indigenous ELT setup rather than becoming an entity of mockery in the eyes of global ELT fraternity. The participants also expressed their anguish over employers' negative attitude towards ELT qualifications offered through online mode. For instance, 10.5% employers in table 3 have clearly disproved online certification. To meet time, space, and financial constraints of ELT aspirants in Asian and African countries, online course is the only option to earn widely recognized qualification.

#### *4.2.4 Nativity amid Englishes*

"Whose nativity?" was an immediate question from one of the participants in response to nativity as a criterion specified in the adverts listed in table 3. They asserted that English is no more a property of any particular speech community rather it belongs to all. They also reiterated that nativity should not become a barrier in applying an ELT job or ELT courses it has proved to be a setback for many aspirants in ELT jobs and courses. Nativity is becoming a mandatory criterion as 18.1 % recruiters have exclusively specified it (Jha, 2014). With changes in the role of English language teaching and learning, many English educators realize that learners know more than two languages. English is not simply their second language anymore. 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. So, I feel proficiency is important rather than nativity for tertiary level ELT.

#### *4.2.5 Cultural Imposition*

Despite being an integral part of language learning, the conceptions of good teaching differ from culture to culture (Richards, 2009). Pertinently, Far, (2008) remarks that every culture has a particular way of teaching a language, e.g. one trained in India to 'reproduce' what is taught finds it difficult to understand and cope with the demand of 'production' of knowledge when studying in Europe. Despite having fancy for glossy ELT brands and getting educated by native ELT practitioners, the participants especially from Libya expressed their fear of acculturation. They believe that influx of native ELT practitioners and textbooks loaded with native culture pose a threat of affecting the indigenous thought process of the students and indirect cultural invasion which in turn may lead to indirect colonization of their country. My stance on the front of culture is to advise native ELT practitioners to strike a balance by revering both source and target culture and language of the learners.

#### *4.2.6 Lack of Experiential Knowledge*

"Learning to teach without classroom practice is like learning to drive without ever encountering traffic". Keeping this view in mind, experiential knowledge here refers to the knowledge gained from practicum (practical teaching) as well as from adequate and appropriate usage of English language. Not to say of non-native environment, even in native environment, the aspiring ELT practitioners are deprived of practicum based ELT programmes. If we look at table 1 we find only two (7%) universities (index 19 and 28) have internships. To compensate the absence of internship, some programmes have merged DELTA with their respective ELT programmes. For instance, University of Bath (see index 14, table 1) offers DELTA along with MA TESOL so that the aspiring ELT practitioners could be more oriented towards practicum. Given the importance of practicum, course makers have begun introducing an element of 100+ hours of teaching including 6 hours of observed teaching practice upon successful completion of the course (Jha, 2014).

## **5. Conclusion and Implications**

The paper, using exploratory approach, has tried to attain two prime objectives by exploring first the widely recognized ELT programmes and their cursory and pedagogical implications; second, adverse impacts of frequent branding of ELT programmes on the stakeholders. To summarize the results of this study, five important findings are apt to be reiterated here. Firstly, the study lists up 30 top universities that provide widely recognized ELT programmes as per QSWUR 2014 under the subject domain of linguistics. Secondly, the study finds ten ELT programmes whose curricula are highly specialized in ELT. They are MA./MSc./MED in TESOL / ALTESOL / ELT / ELTESOL / ALSLA / ETTESOL / TESL / TEFL / TEAL and ALLT. Thirdly, MA TESOL and MA ALTESOL were found to be the most preferred and widely recognized ELT programmes by the course providers as well as employers. Fourthly, it is undesirable to brand ELT by different acronyms nomenclatures as long as they have the same core components of curricula. Fifthly, practicum, an inevitable component of ELT curriculum, is offered by only 10% ELT programmes. Lastly, the study shows a huge gap between the qualifications of the participants and the desirable qualifications set by the employers. The participants hold mainly two factors responsible for the widening gap in their qualifications. They are lack of globally harmonized ELT curriculum and lack of experiential knowledge. Given the stated issues, the paper recommends six remedial measures as follows.

#### **Remedial Measures:**

1. Frequent branding of ELT should be minimized and unifying ELT lessons should be maximized by having globally harmonized ELT curriculum with equal focus on theory and practicum.
2. There is a need to make a liaison network among the stakeholders, i.e. ELT course providers, ELT practitioners, and ELT employers to ensure validity of globally offered ELT programmes and update one another on an ongoing basis.
3. Given the increasing number of fake ELT practitioners, employers should not hire one by the face value of one's qualification; rather candidates' systemic, procedural and experiential knowledge should be assessed by inviting them for a couple of practicum lectures in a real classroom.
4. Given the time, space, and financial constraints of ELT practitioners, the widely recognized ELT courses need to be launched in non-native countries and online ELT programmes should be given equal recognition by the employers.
5. Viewing the growing varieties of world Englishes, employers should not make nativity a mandatory criterion in hiring process.
6. With growing expectations from ELT practitioners for raising professional standards of the learners, today's ELT practitioners need to develop additional expertise in behavioral psychology, workplace English, persuasive English, intercultural nuances, and English for conflict resolution through prescribed curriculum.

Reflecting on the implications of the study, I would like to share the views of Brown (1994), Cates (1997), Crystal (2004) and Cook (2005) as my concluding remarks. If we retrospect into ELT studies, they speak volumes about the changing face of ELT in terms of pedagogical, attitudinal, and other traits. ELT practitioners of today are better prepared than ever before due to advancement in technology and innovations in teaching materials. Despite an array of second language learning theories, approaches, methods, software tools, and techniques in the form of different ELT programmes at certificate, diploma, and master levels, ELT world lacks an overarching ELT brand that may pave the way for holistic learning of different levels of learners in non-native countries. Though, TESOL or ALTESOL proved to be the most preferred brands in the eyes of the course providers and employers due

to their concentrated focus on theoretical and practical aspects of ELT, the need of the hour is not merely to develop language skills of the learners by asking them to mimic native English speakers; rather to instill a sense of social responsibility in them. Hence, the value of an ELT brand and its pedagogical worth should not only be judged in terms of producing native like proficient speakers but more importantly by assessing whether or not the course orients the learners to be constructive social change agents with awareness of world issues and gears their communication skills to respond to the changes with analytical, complex, and critical thinking. The paper finally appeals the ELT world to stop sprouting ELT brands and ELT jingoism; rather, endorse one ELT brand with globally harmonized curriculum to avoid any sort of discrimination in ELT jobs for the ELT practitioners.

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## Appendix

### Abbreviations and Acronyms

ELT:	Enhanced Language Training
TESOL:	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
ESOL:	English to Speakers of Other Languages
TESL:	Teaching English as a Second Language
TEFL:	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TEAL:	Teaching English as an Additional Language
DELTA:	Diploma in English Language Teaching for Adults
CELTA:	Certificate in English Language Teaching for Adults
CELTYL:	Certificate in English Language Teaching for Young Learners
TENOR:	Teaching English for No Obvious Reason
EST:	English for Science and Technology
ICELT:	In-Service Certificate in English Language Teaching
IDLTM:	International Diploma in Language Teaching Management
SLTE:	Second Language Teacher Education
Cert-TESOL:	Certificate in TESOL
Dip-TESOL:	Diploma in TESOL
EIL:	English as an International Language
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ESL:	English as a Second Language
NEST:	Native English Speaking Teachers
NNEST:	Non-native English Speaking Teachers
ALTESOL:	Applied Linguistics and TESOL
ELTESOL:	Educational Linguistics and TESOL
ALSLA:	Applied Linguistics and SLA
ETTESOL:	Educational Technology and TESOL
ALLT:	Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching
ELF:	English as a Lingua Franca
ILE:	International Language Education