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English Language Teaching (ELT) in the South Asia

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ABSTRACT

The prime objective of this study is to see whether the curricula of ELT programmes used by South Asian universities (SAUs) are at par with the curricula of the UK-based Russel Group universities (RAUs) or not. As for the methodology, this study has used mixed research design under which online-document-analysis was used as a primary data gathering tool and descriptive statistics coupled with analytic induction was used to analyze the collected data based on the study parameters. Using purposive sampling technique, a sample of 25 South Asian and 15 Russel Group universities specialized in ELT education was selected. As for findings, 15 major findings were reported with an emphasis on the fact that ELT curricula of South Asian countries comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are not at par with the ELT curricula of Russel Group universities. The study also reveals that a vast majority of ELT practitioners in South Asia remain deprived of entering ELT profession for lack of ideal ELT qualifications and training. From remedial perspectives, the study forwards 12 corrective measures to standardize South Asian ELT curricula so that ELT programmes and ELT practitioners of South Asia could also set their feet with due recognition in the ELT profession globally.

Keywords: Curricular Gap, Ideal Curricular components

1. INTRODUCTION

Given this growing importance of English, Russell Group universities are making best use of English having made a huge social, economic, and cultural impact locally, across the UK and around the globe. In doing so, the RGUs have maintained the very best research, to create an outstanding teaching and learning experience and produce ELT practitioners who stay competitive in the global profession of ELT.

Unprecedentedly, the ELT world is getting 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 Ph.D level. 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 (Jha, 2015). 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 unexpected conundrums in the ELT world (Jha, 2014).

1.2 Background of the Study

As English set its feet firmly in the Indian subcontinent in the early 19th century, several universities were established on the model of University of London in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras using English as the medium of instruction. Although it is fairly homogeneous across the subcontinent, sharing “linguistic features and tendencies at virtually all linguistic levels”, there are some differences based on various regional factors. South Asian English is sometimes just called "Indian English", as [British India](#) included most of modern-day [South Asia](#) except [Afghanistan](#). It is no wonder that today almost every nuance of human life is undergoing the process of globalization be it industrial, economic, social, cultural, linguistic or whatsoever, And, English, being the sole world lingua franca, has proved to be the best linguistic means of globalization. With growing importance of English, the face of English also started changing (see figure-1).

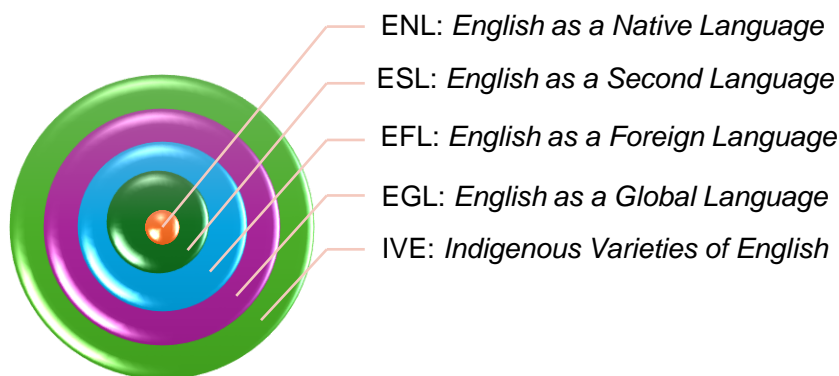


Figure-1: The Changing Face of English

In the centre is ENL that stands for English as a native language whose geographical location is mainly confined to Britain and surrounding areas. As for dark green circle, it shows that English started to be treated as a Second Language during 18th and 19th centuries due to British colonialism in countries like India, Singapore, etc; whereas blue circle shows the usage of English as a foreign language especially in countries that became part of industrial revolution worldwide. As for pink circle, it displays English coming into existence as a global language in 20th century due to American domination in technology, economy, and political leadership; whereas, the green circle has been termed as IVE standing for indigenous varieties of English which has been elaborated further in table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Major Varieties and Variants of English

British	BBC English Welsh English	Ulster English Scottish English	Cockney English Irish English
American	CNN English, Northern/Southern English	Black English Gullah English	Midland English Appalachian English

Caribbean	Jamaican English Guyanese English	Nicaraguan English Barbadian English	Trinidadian English Bahamian English
African	South African English Ghanaian English	Kenyan English Cameroon English	Nigerian English Zimbabwean English
South Asian	Indian/Pakistani English Burmese English	Bangladeshi English Nepalese English	Sri Lankan English Bhutanese English
East Asian	Hong Kong English Singapore English	Malaysian English Philippines English	Japanese English Chinese English, etc.
Australian/New Zealander	Aboriginal English Antipodean English	Tak Plain English Beach la Mar English	Maori English Northland English
Canadian	Quebec English, Franglish	Newfoundland English Athabaskan English	Inuit English Ukrainian English

The table above classifies English into two broad categories namely major varieties in the left column and major variants in the right column. There are eight major varieties of English namely British, American, Caribbean, African, South Asian, East Asian, Australian and New Zealander, and Canadian. As for major varieties, they bear continental identity; whereas, the major variants bear nation-based identity. The nation-based English can be further subclassified into region-based English. For instance, Indian English can be further subclassified into Kashmiri English, Punjabi English, Bihari English, South Indian English, North-Eastern English, and so on which are laced with the speakers' mother tongue accents. Reflecting upon the aforementioned eight types of English and their sub-types, the statement of problem is students of non-native countries despite having good proficiency of English remain deprived of getting admissions not only in ELT programmes but also in other tertiary programmes of RGUs. The RGUs clearly mandate in their specifications that those who have either completed an academic qualification equivalent to a UK degree or hail from any of the following countries are exempted from English proficiency tests like IELTS, TOEFL, etc.

Table-2: Countries exempted from IELTS and TOEFL

1. Anguilla	17. Fiji	33. Singapore
2. Antigua and Barbuda	18. Gambia	34. South Africa
3. Australia	19. Gibraltar	35. St Kitts and Nevis
4. Bahamas	20. Grenada	36. St Lucia
5. Barbados	21. Guyana	37. St Vincent and the Grenadines
6. Belize	22. Ireland	38. Swaziland
7. Bermuda	23. Jamaica	39. Tanzania
8. Botswana	24. Kenya	40. Tonga
9. British Virgin Islands	25. Lesotho	41. Trinidad and Tobago
10. Canada	26. Malawi	42. Turks and Caicos Islands
11. Cayman Islands	27. Malta	43. Uganda
12. Christmas Islands	28. New Zealand	44. UK
13. Cocos Islands	29. Niue	45. USA
14. Cook Islands	30. Norfolk Island	46. Zambia
15. Dominica	31. Papua New Guinea	47. Zimbabwe
16. Falkland Islands	32. Sierra Leone	

Contemplating on the data as cited from the website of University of Leicester, validating a particular type of English to be considered as standard English or making its users eligible is debatable which I shall deliberate under the last section of this chapter *Challenges Surrounding ELT Practitioners*. Parenthetically, with the increasing varieties of English, many scholars like Crystal, Chen, and many others have confirmed in their studies that today the number of non-native speakers of English is more than the number of native speakers of

English. Not only that, one recent finding by (Braine, 2010) shows that currently 80% of English teachers worldwide are non-native speakers of the language. However, the demand of ELT practitioners in non-native countries is very high but the supply is very low. To meet the growing demands of ELT practitioners worldwide, most of the top universities, especially in the UK have come up with a range of ELT programs a glimpse of which can be had below in terms of their cursory and pedagogical implications (Jha, 2015).

Table-3: ELT Programmes Offered by RGUs and their Cursory and Pedagogical Implications

SN	MA/MSc in	Cursory Implication	Pedagogical Implication
1.	ELT (English Language Teaching)	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, and ELT management and publishing.
2.	TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)	TEFL is a term used for teachers' training in EFL. The primary purpose of this 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.
3.	TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)	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.
4.	ALTESOL (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)	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.
5.	ELTESOL (Educational Linguistics and TESOL)	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.
6.	TEAL (Teaching English as	Since English can be the first, second, or third language for a learner, TEAL considers English	The core components of this master programme are topics like practicalities of curriculum and material designs for

	an Additional Language)	as an 'additional language'. This programme prepares ELT practitioners to teach young learners in particular.	EAL children, language acquisition and learning theory, motivation, evaluation, sociocultural perspectives on education and identity, seminar, methods of research in EAL, and capstone project.
7.	ALLT (Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching)	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.
8.	ALSLA (Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition)	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.
9.	TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language)	TESL is used for teachers' training in ESL. The shift from TEFL to TESL is intended to orient learners to 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.

To see the aforementioned ELT programs offered by the RGUs, one may wonder as to how many of these ELT programs are being offered in the South Asian universities especially in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Secondly, the question arises as to whether the ELT practitioners of South Asia are able to compete or stay afloat in the competitive profession of the ELT globally. The answer is disappointingly 'NO' as revealed in the pilot study of this research. Though there are several factors accountable for South Asians' failure to compete in global ELT profession or global ELT industry, but this study makes its statements of the problem as follows:

1.3 Statements of the Problem:

The study problematizes two statements of the problem. First, South Asian ELT practitioners do not become eligible for ELT in global scenario because they are not products of the required ELT programmes. Second, South Asian ELT curricula are not aligned with the curricular modules of RGUs. These problem statements can be viewed as the point of departure for this study as the researcher opines that when South Asians can compete with the rest of the world in almost all sectors like science, technology, education, etc. then why can't they compete with other nationals in the profession of ELT too. The stated problems lead to set three objectives as follows:

1.4 Research Objectives:

- To explore the status-quo of ELT education in Russel Group Universities (RGU) and South Asian Universities (SAU) and highlight modular gaps between them.

- To identify employment opportunities for ELT practitioners in non-native countries.
- To explore and mitigate ELT related challenges.

1.5 Research Questions:

- What is the status-quo of ELT education in Russel Group Universities (RGU) and South Asian Universities (SAU) and highlight modular gaps between them.
- What are the employment opportunities for ELT practitioners in non-native countries.
- How to address and overcome ELT related challenges surrounding ELT and its practitioners.

1.6 Significance of the Study

As for the significance of this study, the paper has pioneered a new area of discussion by addressing the perceivable curricular gaps between RGUs and SGUs. Moreover, the study can be viewed as an eyeopener for educational policy makers to realize the importance of offering right ELT programs in SAUs so that their ELT practitioners could prepare themselves to enter the lucrative world of ELT industry. The study is also significant as it outlines major ELT programmes in terms of their cursory and pedagogical implications. The study also makes prospective ELT practitioners aware of choosing right ELT programmes for their careers. Another strength of this study is its recommendations against the stated challenges and issues. The outcomes of this study will also pave the path of designing an ideal ELT curriculum for the learners of different proficiency levels. Another significance of this study is its remedial approaches to address current challenges lying ahead of ELT practitioners of the South Asian countries.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study has used mixed research design as it deals with qualitative and quantitative data to address the aforementioned research questions. The subjects of the study were 25 Russel Group Universities (RGU) and 25 universities of *eight* South Asian countries namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The subjects of 25 RGU were selected using purposive sampling technique as they were considered to be specialized in tertiary level ELT education. As for the sampling of SGUs, 15 SAUs were selected using purposive sampling technique because they have specialized ELT programmes; whereas, 10 SGUs were selected using random sampling technique to explore the existence of ELT programs in normal universities of the selected eight countries. The study has used *document analysis* (in the form of online archival artifacts) as a prime data gathering tool to elicit the required data. The collected data were analysed using analytic induction and thematic analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In response to the first research question, the study surveyed the existence of popular ELT programmes in RGUs specialized in ELT education (see the 2nd Column in table-4). The data of 25 recruiters (see the 1st column in table-7) were analyzed to know what kind of qualifications do they expect as part of eligibility criteria for the prospective ELT practitioners or English language teachers at tertiary level. In doing so, the study had surfed job adverts of the past two years in the ELT job websites namely, www.tefl.net/esl-jobs/esl-jobs.pl, www.eslemployment.com, www.esljobfeed.com, www.tefljoboverseas.com, www.findworkabroad.com, www.jobs.ac.uk, www.esljobfind.com, and www.eslcafe.com.

Table-4: Popular ELT Programs in the Eyes of Recruiters and the RGUs

POPULAR ELT PROGRAMMES in the UK	
RGUs Specialized in ELT Education	Name of the ELT Programs
Durham University	MA (Applied Language Studies for TESOL)
Lancaster University	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
Newcastle University	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
Northumbria University	MA (Applied Linguistics for TESOL)
University of Bath	MA (TESOL) plus Delta
University of Brighton	MA (TESOL)
University of Edinburgh	MSc (TESOL)
University of Leicester	MA (Applied Linguistics and TESOL)
University of London	MA (TESOL)
University of Manchester	MA (Educational Technology and TESOL)
University of Oxford	MSc (Applied Linguistics and SLA)
University of Sheffield	MA (Applied Linguistics with TESOL)
University of Sussex	MA (English Language Teaching)
University of Ulster	MA (TESOL) with internship
University of Warwick	MA (English Language Teaching)

3.1 Status of ELT Programs Offered by SAUs

Assessing the status of ELT programs offered by SAUs, the study firstly made a pilot survey of the existence of tertiary-level ELT programs offered by SAUs. The result is astonishing as none of the South Asian countries offer ideal ELT program even up to 20% except Maldives. The reason of the highest degree (78%) of Maldives' higher educational institutions (HEIs) offering the ELT programs is that three out of five HEIs of Maldives offer the ideal ELT programs.

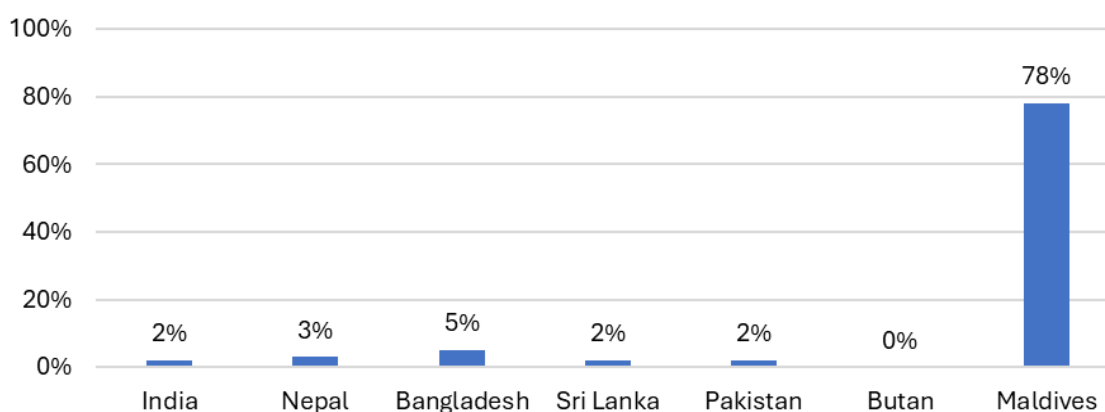


Figure 2: Percentile of ELT Programmes Offered in the South Asian Countries

At this point, it could be well argued that the worth of an academic program should not be judged by its name rather by its curricular contents. Hence, this study further delves into finding desirable components of internationally recognized ELT programs and finding their existence in the master-level ELT curricula of the eight SAUs (see table-5). It is important to note in table-5 that the binary features: '+' stands for 'existence' and '-' stands for 'non-existence' of any component.

Table 5: Curricular Components in ELT Programmes in South Asian Countries

S N	ELT Curricular Components Prescribed by RGUs	8 South Asian Countries							
		Ind	Pak	SL	Afg	Nep	Mal	Bhu	Ban
1.	Application of Linguistics to ELT	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2.	Classroom Management	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+
3.	Intercultural Communication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	Curriculum Development	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
5.	Delta Modules	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Designing Online Pedagogy	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+
7.	Discourse Analysis	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+
8.	English for Specific Purposes (ESP)	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	+
9.	English Phonetics and Phonology	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
10.	Bilingual Education	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-
11.	Individual Learner Differences	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Language Assessment and Testing	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+
13.	Methods of ELT	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-
14.	Field-based Master thesis	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Second Language Research Methodology	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+
16.	Theories of Second Language Acquisition	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
17.	Sociolinguistics of English as a Global Language	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-
18.	Teaching Practicum	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+
19.	Teaching and Learning in Diverse Classrooms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20.	Teaching Four Macro Skills Using Authentic Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21.	Educational Technology and ICT Literacy for Language Classroom	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+
22.	Workshop, Seminar, and Distinguished Lecture Series	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
23.	Language System: phonology, lexis, syntax, and pedagogic grammar	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+

Comparing the 25 desired curricular components in the ideal master-level ELT programs of RGUs with those of SGUs, it is evident that none of the ELT programs (offered by SGUs) prescribe all the vital curricular components. However, it is imperative to take stock of the status quo of ELT at university level in the selected eight countries of South Asia.

AFGHANISTAN

In the current scenario, a country like Afghanistan is facing substantial opposition over foreign language teaching in general and English language teaching in particular by the policy makers as girls are already forbidden from availing education in most part of Afghanistan. As a result of these restrictions, the ELT fraternity in Afghanistan are facing a lack of opportunities to teach in public-funded higher education institutes. However, the ELT environment in the country is still supported by private learning centers and online English language learning portals that help to overcome the barriers of physical presence in training centers or classrooms. Some examples of these are Victory Afghanistan and Afghan Opportunity Centers based in Kunar, Kandahar, Zabul, and Helmand, that provide modern education to underprivileged groups including English language teaching through WhatsApp and Hallo app. Global TESOL certification providers such as International TEFL Training Institute of New York are also important players in the field as they provide a 120-hour on-site TESOL training with the support of the international training and testing center of the Afghan National Association of Adult Education in Kabul.

Afghanistan Institute of Higher Education offers a Diploma in English Language that is based upon the TOEFL iBT Test comprising six semesters. On successful completion of their course, the students receive an English Accomplishment Diploma. The curriculum designed for this system includes six essential parts that include Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, Speaking, Writing, and listening. Another important centre for ELT teaching in Afghanistan is Kabul Education Society's Faculty of Language and Literature that offers a Masters' degree course in TESOL.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh has 53 public universities, 107 private universities, and 3 international universities in which nearly 1 million students are studying their undergraduate, graduate, and Ph. D courses. In this context, English language teaching in Bangladesh exhibits a vibrant status with several undergraduate and postgraduate programs being offered in TESOL, TEFL and ELT. Jahangirnagar University in Dhaka runs an MA in Applied Linguistics and ELT Programme that constitutes components like psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, approaches and methods in ELT, as well as a practicum component. Similarly, East West University, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology, and Chittagong Independent University offer an MA in ELT that includes several elective courses such as "Designing Language Course, Materials and Tests", "Literature in Language", "Issues in Communicative Language", "Psychology of language", "Management and Evaluation of Innovation", MA thesis, internship program and many more. Khulna University offers an M.A. in English language while BRAC University and Dhaka University (under the Institute of Modern Languages) provide Masters' degree course in TESOL. This is offered in a multiple entry and exit format providing the students to obtain a certificate, diploma, Masters' degree depending upon the number of years of study they have undertaken. It covers important curricular components such as Discourse Analysis, Statistics for EFL Researchers, as well as teaching practicum. Apart from these, Bangladesh University of Professionals has an M.A. in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (ELTAL) while Jagannath University offers an M.A. English (Applied Linguistics and ELT) that combines development of linguistic skills with language teaching abilities.

BHUTAN

Bhutan reports only two universities namely Royal University of Bhutan and Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan. None of these universities offer any ELT program at undergraduate or postgraduate level.

INDIA

As per the latest data, UGC lists 1200 Indian universities comprising 507 state universities, 174 deemed universities, 56 central universities, and 463 private universities. From India, only 23 universities were selected in which 12 universities were purposively selected due to their reputation in language education and 11 universities were randomly selected to see whether they offer any of the popular ELT programs offered by RGUs or not. This bar chart (Figure 3) highlights that that none of the Indian universities offer the ideal MA TESOL or MA ALTESOL. Only MA (ELT/TESL) which is closer to MA (TESOL and ALTESOL) was found to be offered by EFLU, Hyderabad. Few more universities that offer MA ELT are University of Kerala, Aligarh Muslim University, and Vanasthali Vidyapeeth and few others. What is normally offered in Indian universities is our traditionally designed MA (English) programme which is a blend of both English language and English literature. But here one can raise a question why the Indian MA (English) program is not at par with MA (TESOL) or MA (ALTESOL).

For instance, MA ELT programs offered by the selected Indian universities are more oriented towards English literature rather than English language. Next, it is remarkable that Indian MA (English) offers only one paper from ELT perspective (as shown in Table 6).

Table 6: ELT Curricular Components Prescribed by RGUs and Curricular Components of India's MA (English)

SN	ELT Curricular Components Prescribed by RGUs	Curricular Components of India's MA (English)
1.	Application of Linguistics to ELT	Anatomy of Literature
2.	Classroom Management	The History of English Literature and Language
3.	Intercultural Communication	Chaucer and the Elizabethan Age
4.	Curriculum Development	The Neo Classical Age (Theories)
5.	Delta Modules	British Literature from Chaucer to Augustan
6.	Designing Online Pedagogy	The Romantic and the Victorian Ages
7.	Discourse Analysis	Classical and Medieval European Literature
8.	English for Specific Purposes (ESP)	Twentieth Century Literature
9.	English Phonetics and Phonology	Comparative Literature
10.	Bilingual Education	Theory and practice of Translation
11.	Individual Learner Differences	Indian Literature in English
12.	Language Assessment and Testing	Postcolonial Literature
13.	Methods of ELT	Modern European Literature
14.	Field-based Master thesis	American Literature

15.	Second Language Research Methodology	Canadian Literature
16.	Theories of Second Language Acquisition	Modern Masterpieces of World Literature
17.	Sociolinguistics of English as a Global Language	Dalit Literature
18.	Teaching Practicum	Women's Writing in English
19.	Teaching and Learning in Diverse Classrooms	Commonwealth Literature
20.	Teaching Four Macro Skills Using Authentic Materials	Film Reviews and Presentation
21.	Educational Technology and ICT Literacy for Language Classroom	Analysis, Approaches and Applications
22.	Workshop, Seminar, and Distinguished Lecture Series	Literary Theory and Criticism
23.	Language System: phonology, lexis, syntax, and pedagogic grammar	Basics of Applied Linguistics, English Language Teaching, Grammar and Usage

Since 14 out of 1200 HEIs of India offer master programs in ELT, the researchers wanted to see the existence of desired ELT Curricular Components in India's popular MA (English) programme. It is noteworthy that only 4% curricular components of MA (English) program is relevant to the ideal ELT program.

MALDIVES

Under the National University Act, Maldives established its first University in 2011 as The Maldives National University. Since then, the University and Colleges in Maldives are on a developing path to offer various courses and programs to students. Following is a list of universities/colleges and Institutes of Higher Education in Maldives: Maldives reports five higher academic institutions namely The Maldives National University, Maldives Polytechnic, Mandhu College, Cyryx College, and Villa College. Out of these five institutions, only The Maldives National University and Villa College offer ELT programs like Master of Education (English Language Teaching), Advanced Diploma in English Language & Communication, and Advanced Diploma in TESOL at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Having examined their course structures (curricular modules), the modules that were emphasized to be taught included "Research Methods in Education", "Educational Sociology", "ICT Skills for Teaching and Learning", "School Experience", "Bilingual Learning" and "Teaching Reading and Writing to Language Learners". It is noteworthy in the figure-3 that Maldives stands tallest with 78% offering of ELT programs by its universities.

NEPAL

The first public university in Nepal, namely Tribhuvan University was established in 1959, which placed significant emphasis on the teaching of English language in the country. Prior to this, English language education was opened to the general public in 1951 by Tri-Chandra College that offered English courses under the aegis of Patana University, India. Presently, out of the 11 universities in Nepal, namely, Tribhuvan University (T.U.), Nepal Sanskrit University (NSU), Kathmandu University (K.U.), Pokhara University (Pok U), Purbanchal University (P.U.), Lumbini Bauddha University (LBU), Agriculture and Forestry University

(AFU), Mid-Western University (MWU), Far Western University (FWU), Nepal Open University (NOU) and Rajarshi Janak University (RJU), atleast three universities are actively engaged in offering courses in English education and English Language Teaching.

Tribhuvan University offers an M.Ed. degree in English Education that caters to a diverse range of curricular components such as applied linguistics, ELT, sociolinguistics, SLA, language testing, discourse analysis, teacher training, and syllabus design. Since its inception, TU has played an instrumental role in enriching the academic field of ELT and applied linguistics in Nepal. Furthermore, Kathmandu University (KU) offers a one-year program i.e. M.Ed. in ELT that emphasizes upon developing ELT skills in tandem with recent pedagogical trends and practices, development of ELT materials, and design of teacher training courses and activities for ELT practitioners. Apart from courses at the masters' level, M.Phil/ Ph.D. in TESOL and English is actively offered at Far-Western University. Their course titled "English Language Pedagogies and Practices" is an advanced course of English language methods and practices consisting of six units that cover various aspects of language teaching methods, curriculum design and testing practices, use of technology in English language teaching and research in language teaching.

PAKISTAN

It is found that Virtual University of Pakistan and Lahore Leads University offer MA in ELT with notable subjects like Bilingualism, World Englishes, Computer Assisted Language Teaching (CALT) amongst other components. National University of Modern Languages (NUML) in Islamabad provides an Advanced Diploma in English and ELT apart from Certificate courses in English language. Well established universities like the University of Karachi offer Applied Linguistics at M.Phil and Ph.D. levels. Air University in Pakistan offers four language based courses namely MS/M.Phil in Linguistics, MS/M.Phil in Linguistics and Literature, Ph.D. in Linguistics, and Ph.D. in Linguistics and Literature. In addition to these, it also provides a professional course namely English for Specific Purposes that focuses upon Communication Skills and English Comprehension and Composition. University of Peshawar (Department of English and Applied Linguistics) enlists MS and Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, while University of the Punjab offers a postgraduate diploma in ELT at masters level:

1. Comsats Institute of Information and Technology (CIIT): MS English (Linguistics)
2. Quaid-i-Azam University: MA English (Linguistics and Literature), MPhil in English (Linguistics)
3. National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST): MS in Applied Linguistics
4. International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI): MA TESOL, MPhil in Applied Linguistics
5. Aga Khan University: Postgraduate Diploma in Education (English Language Teaching)
6. Government College University, Faisalabad: MA in English Language Teaching (ELT), MPhil in Linguistics
7. Riphah International University: MS in Applied Linguistics
8. Hazara University: MA in Applied Linguistics, MPhil in English (Linguistics)
9. University of Sargodha: MA TESOL, MPhil in Applied Linguistics
10. University of Education, Lahore: MA in TESOL, MPhil in English (Linguistics)
11. Government College University (GCU), Lahore: MPhil in Applied Linguistics
12. University of Sindh: MA in English (Language and Literature)
13. University of Balochistan: MA in English Language Teaching (ELT)

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka, at present, has 18 public universities (called the state universities) in addition to 47 government approved universities and 27 private universities. The Faculty of Education, University of Colombo offers a one year Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Teaching English as a Second Language) that covers components such as Language Arts, Applied Linguistics, Educational Measurement and Assessment, amongst others. Similarly, The Open University of Sri Lanka runs a Department of English Language Teaching (DELTA) that offers one postgraduate program, i.e., Master of Arts in Teacher Education (MATE International) in addition to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as a support course for undergraduate students. The National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka, conducts Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language (Dip/TESL) for the professional development of English teachers. The Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University has a provision for Bachelor of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

3.2 Status of Employment in ELT Industry

In response to the second research question, the study made an assessment of eligibility criteria set by ELT job advertisements posted on the websites of www.tefl.net/esl-jobs/esl-jobs.pl, www.esemployment.com, www.esljobfeed.com, www.tefljobverseas.com, www.findworkabroad.com, www.jobs.ac.uk, www.esljobfind.com, and www.eslcafe.com.

Table-7: Eligibility Criteria Set for Tertiary Level ELT

Required Eligibilities Set for ELT Practitioners by the Employers/Hiring Agencies		
Recruiters	Position	Eligibility Criteria
Arlington, VA, Jeddah (KSA)	(EFL) Instructors	MA in TESOL and Native
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	(ESL Faculty Member)	MA TESOL, TEFL + 300 hours practicum
CELCA, Aston University	Teaching Associate	DELTA and MA in TESOL / Applied Linguistics
College of Lake County	Adjunct ESL Faculty	MA TESOL or TESOL specialized Linguistics
Community College of Philadelphia	ESL Faculty	MA/MSc. In TESOL or related field
Syracuse University, NY	Senior Lecturer-ESOL	Ph.D in TESOL or Applied Linguistics
Lingnan University, HK	Language Instructor	MA Applied Linguistics/related field
The British Council, Qatar	ELT Trainer	MA (TEFL/Applied Linguistics)
University of Tampa	Assistant Professor of English	Ph.D in English with TESOL experience
Oxford Brookes University	EAP Lecturer	TEFL Q status (DELTA or equivalent)

QA Business School London,	EFL Lecturer	MSc/ MA (TEFL/ TESOL) or DELTA
San José State University, California	Asst. Prof-TESOL	Ph.D (Applied Linguistics/ TESOL)
School of Education, Queens, NY	(Prof-TESOL)	Ph.D in TESOL plus record of TESOL research
SELS Language Center, Point Park University	ESL Instructor	MA (TESOL/ Applied Linguistics)
Quality Education Company, KSA	ESL Teacher	MA / Ph.D (TEFL/ TESOL) with CELTA

Assessing the current trend of eligibility criteria set by recruiters in the third column of table-7, the study reveals the graded preference of ELT programs among employers (see the bar chart in figure-3).

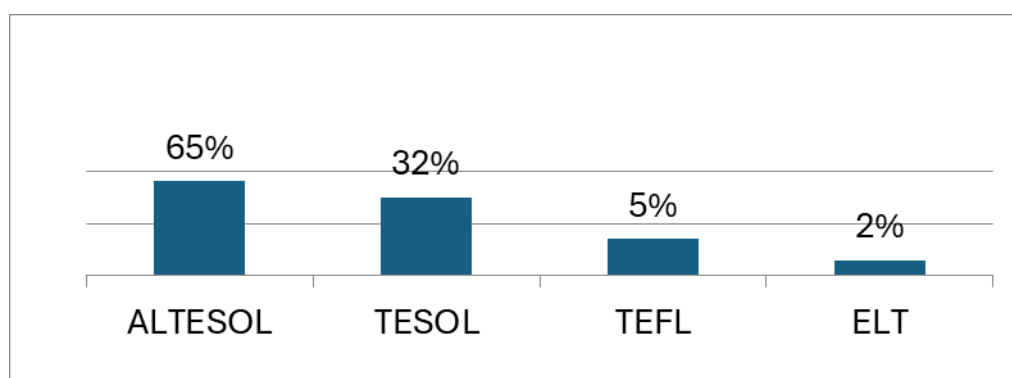


Figure-3: Graded preference of ELT Qualifications Set by Recruiters

It is evident that ALTESOL was found to be the most preferred ELT qualification as 65% recruiters have asked for Master or Doctoral level ELT degrees in Applied Linguistics and TESOL followed by 32% for TESOL, 5% for TEFL, and 2% for ELT. This finding takes us to answer our second research question whether there are sufficient employment opportunities for ELT practitioners in non-native countries or not. This question is further probed by assessing the data about various universities of South Asian countries as to whether they offer the desired master programs in ELT programs or not.

3.3 Vital Components of an Ideal ELT Program

Subsequent to assessing the status of ELT programs and their 23 curricular components as prescribed by SAUs in comparison with RGUs, the study here lays emphasis on the inclusion of nine vital components in an ideal ELT program because they are considered to be the backbone of an ideal ELT curriculum as they give theoretical and practical insights into second language learning and teaching. Here is a brief description of the nine vital components to be included in an ideal ELT curriculum.

- Principles of Second Language Acquisition***
 Understanding second language theories, principles, and hypothesis is the prerequisite to enter the field of language learning and teaching as it lets prospective language teachers know how a second language is learnt inductively and deductively. It lets

language teachers understand their learners better and create appropriate learning conditions for them by designing and delivering effective lesson plans and authentic course materials.

- ***Principles of Syllabus Design***

Including principles of syllabus design is essential for the effective lesson plans and effective use of authentic course materials to meet the needs of learners with different proficiency levels.

- ***Techniques of Evaluation***

Normally, any method of teaching does not hold any value if it is not followed by an evaluation. But in case of language learning techniques of evaluation should be used very sensibly because many a time it has been found that test, assessment, examination or evaluation proves an impediment or a bottleneck in learning a second language. Therefore many L2 learners develop a kind of testophobia. The term evaluation is associated with assessment and test but Evaluation is used in broader perspective subsuming both assessment and test, whereas assessment is being widely used in the field of ELT with two basic types: formative and summative. Critically speaking, the learners feel over-stressed due to formative assessment, whereas, summative assessment mounts up more pressure on the learners as it becomes vital for them to get through the test with good grades. And this is why, it has been argued that English should be taught not as a subject but more as a language (Jha, 2014). Even Stephen Krashen in his Affective Filter hypothesis says higher the anxiety lower the learning and lower the anxiety higher the learning. So, the purpose of evaluation should be to identify and rectify any learning deficiency rather than grading those deficiencies with scores and marks.

- ***Second Language Research Methodology***

All the ELT practitioners must find themselves in the role of researchers or more precisely action researchers as in action research we not only identify but also rectify various language issues.

- ***Practicum***

Teaching without practicum (a key component for an ELT curriculum) is like learning to drive without ever encountering traffic. Only 6% SAUs were found to have practicum in their ELT programmes. Practicum component is missing in the majority of ELT curricula of the ELT programs offered by SAUs. Not to say of SAUs, even most of the foreign universities, do not have practicum-based ELT programmes.

- ***Capstone Project***

The capstone project is a unique opportunity for ELT practitioners to do some action research at the end of the programme in order to resolve real-life problems faced by the learners of any second language.

- ***ELT Management and Publishing***

ELT management and publishing ensure standardized, high-quality resources that align with international language learning frameworks. They provide accessible, culturally relevant materials, enhancing both teaching and student engagement. By integrating technology and offering assessment tools, they promote innovative,

effective language learning methods. Publishing enhances professional development of teachers and ensures that curricula meet diverse learner needs. Overall, they play a vital role in delivering a consistent and efficient ELT curriculum.

- ***Blended Use of Technology.***
Components like ELT management, ELT publishing and blended use technology are the new additions to the current ELT curricula.
- ***CPD (Continuous Professional Development)***
CPD is primarily aimed at making ELT practitioners aware of new developments in the field of ELT and secondarily, it keeps them motivated professionally active and growing.

3.4 Vital Competencies for an ELT Practitioner

Along with nine vital components, the study also advocates six competencies to be acquired and imbibed to become an ideal ELT practitioner:

- **Systemic Competence:** Systemic competence is our knowledge about the language on the front of its phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
- **Communicative Competence:** As for Communicative Competence, it can be seen here as your proficiency of using the language appropriately with proper cohesion and coherence.
- **Sociolinguistic competence:** It is knowing the appropriate use of language in social contexts keeping in mind the participants' social status, sex, age, and other factors which influence styles and registers of speech. Since different situations call for different type of expressions as well as different beliefs, views, values, and attitudes, the understanding of sociolinguistic competence is very important for today's ELT practitioners.
- **Strategic competence:** It is one's ability to repair communication breakdowns while fumbling for grammatical knowledge and social communication norms. The breakdowns are normally repaired by using paraphrase, synonyms, gestures, context clues etc.
- **Inter-cultural Competence:** Intercultural competence is one's skills of getting along, working, and learning with people of diverse cultures as it helps learners view the world from others' perspectives and meet the desired behaviours of the learners from different ethnic groups in EFL classrooms.
- **Research Competence:** Research competence expects an ideal ELT practitioner to have an adequate amount of competence that could be used to understand the impediments in effective teaching and learning inside and outside an EFL or ESL classroom from both causal and remedial perspectives. So, research competence can be viewed as a procedural knowledge to introspect and retrospect over errors and right usage of the acquired knowledge.

3.5 Challenges and Issues Surrounding ELT Practitioners

The world of ELT is facing a plethora of challenges surrounding ELT practitioners and ELT materials. The following are some the challenges and issues surrounding ELT practitioners as revealed in the study of Jha (2015):

- **Lack of Globally Harmonized Syllabus:** There is a lack of unanimity among the employers in terms of endorsing an ideal ELT qualification. On the one hand, the aspiring ELT practitioners hesitate a lot prior to opting for an ELT course for fear of its appropriateness and validity in the ELT job market. On the other, in-service ELT practitioners too are apprehensive viewing the gap between their own qualifications and the ongoing changes in the desirable qualifications. What matters more is the right curricular components rather than the name or brand of an ELT programme. Currently, the world ELT fraternity lacks a harmonized curriculum or syllabus to be followed by the RGUs and SAUs equally so that the passing out ELT practitioners need not face any problem in terms of having ideal ELT qualifications. If commonality of curricular components can be established globally, the names, labels, or brands of ELT programmes will become immaterial.
- **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. The pertinent issue here is whether an accredited qualification is important or one's competence. 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 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). ELT fraternity of RGUs must set a benchmark or guidelines to accredit an ELT course and its products of SAUs to make native and non-native ELT practitioners equally eligible for the ELT jobs. This will also help non-native ELT practitioners to overcome time, space, and financial constraints as online ELT courses are not at par with those of offline courses.
- **Nativity amid Englishes:** English being a lingua franca is no more an asset of any particular speech community as it pertains or belongs to all. Nativity should not become a barrier in applying for 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. Many of the recruiters require ELT practitioners to be native especially from the UK, America, Canada, Australia, Ireland, South Africa, or New Zealand. 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. Proficiency is more important than nativity for tertiary level ELT.
- **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 a fancy for glossy ELT brands and getting educated by native ELT practitioners, the learners often express 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.

- **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. For instance, University of Bath 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).

CONCLUSION

To sum up, this exploratory study has tried to attain three prime objectives. Firstly, it explores the widely recognized ELT programmes and their pedagogical implications. Secondly, the study talks about job requirements for ELT practitioners in terms of their eligibilities. Thirdly, the study draws attention of the world ELT fraternity towards challenges and issues surrounding ELT and ELT practitioners. To summarize the results of this study, six important findings are apt to be reiterated here. Firstly, the study documents 15 RGUs that provide widely recognized ELT programmes as shown in table-4 above. Secondly, the study finds nine ELT programmes whose curricula are highly specialized in ELT as shown in table-3. Thirdly, MA ALTESOL was found to be the most preferred and widely recognized ELT programmes among RGUs and also among employers. However, a huge gap is found between the existing qualifications of the ELT practitioners of SAUs and the desirable qualifications set for them by the employers. There are two main reasons of this gap. First is lack of globally harmonized ELT curriculum and the second is lack of experiential knowledge. Fourthly, branding ELT programs by different acronyms nomenclatures is undesirable as their cursory and pedagogical values remain more or less the same as long as they have the same core components of curricula. Fifthly, practicum, an inevitable component of ELT curriculum, is offered minimally among RGUs and SAUs. Sixthly, the study articulates five major challenges surrounding ELT and ELT practitioners followed by 11 remedial measures to overcome them as follows:

- An immediate need assessment is required to identify much sought-after ELT programmes from vocational perspective and introduce them in SAUs so that the ELT practitioners could not only get global recognition but also enter global ELT industry with ease.
- A global ELT forum and regulatory cum monitoring body needs to be formed not only to update all the stakeholders of ongoing developments in ELT in terms of ongoing validity of globally offered ELT programmes.
- Given the void of teaching practicum, SAUs must provide at least 100+ hours teaching practicum in their concerned ELT related programs.

- As all the UK based ideal ELT programs are of one year, SAUs should also do the same by restructuring the master-level ELT programmes.
- As time, distance, and fees become hurdles in availing overseas ELT programs for the South Asians, SAUs need to launch them in collaboration with the RGUs.
- Design such an ELT programme that could orient the learners to be constructive social change agents with awareness of world issues and gear their communication skills to respond to the changes with analytical, complex, and critical thinking.
- Frequent branding of ELT should be stopped and unifying ELT modules should be maximized by having globally harmonized ELT curriculum with equal focus on theory and practicum.
- 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 due recognition by the employers.
- Viewing the growing varieties of world Englishes, employers should not make nativity a mandatory criterion in hiring process.
- Native ELT practitioners need to strike a balance by revering both source and target culture and language of the learners while designing ELT modules and lessons.
- 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.

Thus, there are several challenges ahead of us. Unlike yesteryears, today's ELT practitioners need to think out of the box. They need to teach beyond what they know, what they have, and what they believe. They need to develop additional expertise in behavioral psychology and intercultural nuances to acclimatize themselves to the overseas learners. An immediate challenge is to counteract academic imperialism of USA and UK in ELT education. But prior to that we have to be at par with countries like Thailand, China, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Middle East, and many African countries. They are doing marvelous jobs in the ELT profession and ELT research. Before we are surpassed by our counterparts in this lucrative and noble profession of ELT, this paper makes a wake-up call to draw the attention of all the stakeholders to set an ideal ELT environment in South Asian universities, and India in particular with globally harmonized curriculum so that the multi-faceted, culturally rich, innovative, workaholic, and ready-to-excel South Asian ELT practitioners could also become eligible to undertake the task of ELT and excel in global ELT industry.

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