



## Exploring Ideal Curricular Components for Master Programs in ELT

**Dr. Sanjay Kumar Jha**

Professor of Linguistics, Amity School of Liberal Arts, Amity University, Gurgaon.

**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this descriptive survey was to explore ideal curricular components for master programs in ELT. The study used document analysis as key data gathering tool; whereas, data were analysed using descriptive statistics and analytic induction. The findings revealed 20 distinctive curricular components (modules) that an MA ELT program needs to have obligatorily.

**KEYWORDS**

**Introduction**

No language, ancient or modern, can be compared with English in respect of its international status (Bhardwaj, 2012). Today, the number of non-native speakers of English is more than the native speakers of the language (Chen, 2009). In line with the growing importance of English, mastering English language has become imperative for all the non-native speakers across the globe (Jha, 2014). Given the fact that pedagogic adequacy of an ELT program considerably accounts for the low or high performance of ELT practitioners and EFL/ESL learners, today's ELT programs especially in non-native countries have been found to be ineffective. Therefore, the study poses the following statement of the problem.

**Statement of the Problem**

Most of the ELT programs fall flat due to their linguistic and pedagogic inadequacies which in turn impoverish making ideal ELT practitioners as well as ELT curricula.

**Research Objective and Question**

What are the ideal pedagogic components for an ELT program?

**1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for the reason that it may serve as a guiding tool for the ELT curriculum designers for tertiary level ELT programs especially designed for non-native countries.

**1.4 Methodology**

Using mixed research approach (quantitative and qualitative), this study has used case study survey design.. The subjects for this study were ELT curricula of purposively selected 20 most sought after ELT courses in UK and USA. As for data gathering tool, only one data gathering instrument: document analysis in the form of (online archival artifacts) was used. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and analytic induction.

**2. Results and Discussion**

In response to the research question posed above, the study firstly surveyed the most sought after ELT courses available in UK and USA. As part of findings, it was found that UK and USA offer ELT education at tertiary level using different nomenclatures. The following table shows five most popular ELT programs available mostly in UK and USA.

| UK and US Universities Offering ELT programs |   |
|--|---|
| MA (TESOL)                                   | University of Edinburgh, UK<br>Anaheim University, USA<br>Michigan State University, USA<br>University of Brighton, UK<br>Queen's University Belfast, UK<br>University of Bath, UK<br>University of Leeds, UK<br>University of London, UK<br>University of York, UK |
| MA (Applied Linguistics & TESOL)             | Columbia University, USA<br>Lancaster University, UK<br>Newcastle University, UK<br>Northumbria University, UK<br>Durham University, UK<br>University of Leicester, UK<br>University of Sheffield, UK   |
| MA (English Language Teaching)               | University of Warwick, UK<br>University of Sussex, UK   |
| MSc (Applied Linguistics and SLA)            | University of Oxford, UK  |
| MA (Educational Linguistics and TESOL)       | University of Pennsylvania, USA   |

Since, it often becomes a vexing task to judge the pedagogic worth of an ELT course, this study has assessed the ELT curricula of 20 universities from UK and USA (see table 1). Having assessed 20 stated curricula of ELT courses, the study found the following components that an ELT program needs to have obligatorily for the holistic teaching and learning of English as a foreign or second language in non-native environment.

**1. Introduction to Linguistics and Applied Linguistics**

The primary aim of this module is to familiarize students with basic concepts of Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, and Second Language Acquisition. Precisely speaking, this module is supposed to foster a thorough understanding of the following components.

|                                    |                            |                             |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Phonetics vs. Phonology            | English Morphology         | English Syntax              |
| Basics of Semantics and Pragmatics | Basics of Sociolinguistics | Intercultural Communication |

|                                    |                             |                |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| World Englishes and Pronunciations | Basics of Psycholinguistics | Methods of ELT |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|

**2. Trends and Issues in Language Teaching Methodology**

The aim of this module is to keep students abreast of ongoing developments in Applied Linguistics in terms of using different ELT methodologies for ELT. The module also aims to discuss procedures by which underlying concepts are translated into practice.

|                       |                              |                             |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ELT Methodology       | Five Vital Competencies      | Classroom Practices         |
| Classroom Environment | Coping with large class size | Innovation in Methodologies |

**3. Phonetics and English Phonology**

The aim of this module is to improve awareness of how the English sound system works and to make students familiar with key concepts, terminology, and approaches in phonology and pronunciation teaching. This module also assesses learner's pronunciation difficulties and needs.

|                              |                                 |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Air Stream Mechanism         | English Phonemes and Allophones | Key Concepts of Phonology |
| Syllable and Syllabification | Word stress                     | Intonation                |

**4. Theories of Second Language Acquisition**

The aim of this module is to introduce contemporary theory, methodology, and empirical research in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) with reference to English language education.

|                              |                               |                                    |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Stages of SLA                | Key Concepts of SLA           | Cognition Oriented Theories of SLA |
| Applied SLA theories for ELT | Internal and external factors | Context Oriented Theories of SLA   |

**5. Designing Curriculum, Material, and Test**

The aim of the module is to discuss the ways in which tests are constructed and validated. The course also enables students to discuss current issues in material development and design learning and teaching tasks appropriate to particular groups of language learners.

|                               |                      |                                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Types of Curriculum           | Efficacy of Syllabus | Principles of Curriculum Development |
| Types of Classroom Assessment | Test design process  | Developing Authentic Materials       |

**6. Research Methods in Linguistics and English Language**

The aim of this module is to discuss theoretical, ethical and methodological issues that are central to research on language and language teaching, and to help students undertake research related tasks in the final phase of the ELT program.

|                              |                              |                                 |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| What is Research in SLA?     | Research Design Hypothesis   | Research Objective and Question |
| Research Gap, and Limitation | Data Collection and Analysis | Research Formatting             |

**7. Discourse Analysis**

The aim of this module is to familiarize students with the range of theories in Discourse Studies. It also aims to investigate the ways in which words, phrases and sentences hang together and make sense in contexts of use and provide practical analytical skills for analyzing spoken, written and visual texts of different genres. The course will encourage students to think about different types of data in relation to contemporary social and political problems and consider the most suitable 'tools' for a critical linguistic analysis.

|                   |                      |                             |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Discourse Studies | Pragmatics           | Speech Act Theories         |
| Textuality        | Discourse Structures | Critical Discourse Analysis |

**8. Sociolinguistics**

The aim of this module is to familiarize students with fundamental concepts and approaches involved in the study of the links between language and society.

|                                   |                           |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Basics of Sociolinguistics        | Bilingualism              | Language contact, policy, and shift |
| Language Death and Revitalisation | Code switching vs. Mixing | Globalisation and Localisation      |

**9. Media Technology for ELT**

The aim of this module is to provide grounding in ELT methodology driven by media technology in the form of computer assisted language learning, audio-video in ELT, media centre management, and using other instructional and educational technology. Additionally, this module aims to familiarize students with the current trends in the internet technology for English language teaching and learning. The course also examines contemporary language use online by looking at what people do online, what activities they engage in and what these mean to them. The module also explores a range of platforms such as Wikipedia, Flickr, Blogs, Twitter, Youtube and Facebook.

|                                     |                       |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| A Survey on Conventional Media      | Multimodality         | Online Communication Tools    |
| Computer based Learning and Testing | Digital Communication | Online communication Analysis |

**10. Descriptive and Prescriptive Grammar**

The aim of this module is to give a solid foundation in the description and analysis of the grammar of English; make students understand grammar concepts and terminology; predict and understand students' grammar problems; explain grammar when/if it is needed; answer students' questions, and evaluate the linguistic challenges presented by texts and tasks they use in their own classroom.

|                            |                                 |                    |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Types of Grammar           | Traditional vs. TG Grammar      | Functional Grammar |
| Lexical Functional Grammar | Syntactic and Semantic Analysis | Lexical Analysis   |

**11. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

The aim of this module is to make the existing and prospective ELT practitioners realize the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for them in the course of their professional lives. This also discusses how teachers change during their careers and consider various ways that have been devised to help teachers to learn, to remain motivated and to avoid burn-out, and to continue to inspire their learners. The module also discusses specific strategies and activities that they can use to keep themselves professionally alive and growing.

|  |                      |                                  |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Models of Teacher Development          | Reflective practice  | Peer Observation and Mentoring   |
| Lesson study and practitioner research | Exploratory Practice | Teacher's decision and expertise |

**12. Teaching Practicum**

Teaching Practicum is recognized as one of the most important aspects of ELT education. This module expects prospective ELT practitioners to undergo 50 hours of teaching observed by the mentor faculty within the institution and 50 hours of field teaching in any EFL/ESL setup outside the institution. This module is an opportunity of translating acquired theoretical competence of ELT into practice for the prospective ELT practitioners.

### 13. Dissertation

The aim of the dissertation is to provide an opportunity to further students' intellectual and personal development in their chosen field by undertaking a significant practical unit of activity, having an educational value at a level commensurate with the award of their degree. The dissertation can be defined as a scholarly inquiry into a problem or issues, involving a systematic approach to gathering and analysis of information / data, leading to production of a structured report. The module expects prospective ELT practitioners to work on three pertinent aspects as follows.

### Conferences

As part of this module, prospective ELT practitioners are expected to present their research findings on ELT in at least one pertinent national/international conference.

### Progress Report/Seminar

As part of this module, prospective ELT practitioners are expected to submit and present two progress reports followed by one hour seminar presentation.

### Research Paper

As part of this module, prospective ELT practitioners are expected to get their research findings published in at least one reputed peer review journal.

## 2. Conclusion

In response to the sole research question posed above, the paper has tried to attain the set objective by exploring five most popular ELT programs namely MA/Msc. in (TESOL / Applied Linguistics and TESOL / English Language Teaching / Applied Linguistics and SLA / Educational Linguistics and TESOL) offered by 20 universities of UK and USA. Despite the fact that these five ELT courses bear great resemblance at face value, the researcher went deep down into exploring the pedagogic components by assessing 20 ELT curricula used by 20 ELT programs of 20 different universities. The result revealed 13 core modules along with 110 sub-components that an ELT program is supposed to have. The study is going to be continued in three ethnographic phases so that the findings could be more comprehensive and valid.

## References

1. Bhardwaj, N. (2012). Teaching English As Second Language in India: Problems and Remedies. Education /Languages Retrieved November 16th, 2012 from <http://goarticles.com/article/Teaching-English-As-Second-Language-in-India-Problems-and-Remedies/6205777/>
2. Chen, M. C. (2009). The Changing Face of English Teaching: Some Views on TESOL. PPT Presentation, National Chengchi University, Department of English
3. Durham University. Retrieved on 25th March, 2016 from <https://www.dur.ac.uk/englishlanguage.centre/postgraduate/maappliedlanguagestudies/>
4. Jha, S. K. (2014: March) In Quest of an Ideal ELT Qualification. International Journal of English Language Teaching. Vol. 2, No. 1, 2014, pp. 1-20.
5. Lancaster university. Retrieved on 12th December, 2015 from <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/postgraduate-courses/applied-linguistics-and-tesol-ma/>
6. University of Edinburgh. Retrieved on 2nd February, 2016 from <http://www.ed.ac.uk/education/graduate-school/taught-degrees/tesol/structure>
7. University of Sheffield. Retrieved in 1st February, 2016 from <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/courses/arts/english/applied-linguistics-tesol>
8. Newcastle University. Retrieved on 3rd January, 2016 from <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/degrees/applied-linguistics-tesol-ma/#modules>
9. University of Bath. Retrieved on 5th March, 2016 from <http://www.bath.ac.uk/study/pg/programmes/ma-in-teac-engl-to-spea-of-othe-lang-ma-in-teso/>
10. University of Leeds. Retrieved on 23rd March, 2016 from <http://www.education.leeds.ac.uk/postgraduates/taught-postgraduates/ma-tesol>
11. University of York. Retrieved on 21st April, 2016 from <https://www.york.ac.uk/education/postgraduate/taught-masters/tesol/#tab-2>
12. University of London. Retrieved on 7th April, 2016 from [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2016/postgraduate/programmes/TMATESOL\\_C/](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2016/postgraduate/programmes/TMATESOL_C/)