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Perceptions of Academic Administrators and Policymakers on ESL/EFL Education

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Abstract

There is credible evidence in the literature on the prominence of English language as the most popular global medium. The manifold of roles it assumes in international trade, and its dominance in the global financial and business transactions, testify to the dominance of the British colonial legacy across the universe. Moreover, the enduring nature of the imperial culture, particularly its influence in the world academic arena, its ubiquity in the sphere of global cultural and commercial exchanges as well as in the advancement of science and

technology worldwide provides testimony to the potential of the sway which Britain's colonial expedition and exploitation has impacted on the entire world, directly and indirectly. To posit it more bluntly, the legacy of the cultural tension is nowhere more evident than in the newly independent nations which, after liberation and departure of colonial rule, could not pursue an indigenously-focused language policy and planning (LPP) strategy alternative to the colonial medium. That is why immediately after decolonization language policy and language planning (LPLP) became among the most debated postcolonial impasses in sub-Saharan Africa. With the exception of very few, most sub-Saharan countries are still staggering with the problem-maintaining the language of the former colonial ruler in the academia and national bureaucracy-with no unilateral solution to rid of it. In light of such reality, this study aims to augment the scant studies previously carried out on ESL/EFL and English language education in Somalia. It examines the perceptions of educational administrators and policymakers on matters related to language policy and education in the learning institutions. In specific terms, the current study enriches earlier studies on the perceptions of students on learning ESL/EFL (Eno 2017), ESL/EFL motivation (Eno et al. 2018) and a later essay on teachers' perceptions of the challenges of ESL/EFL education (Eno 2018).

Keywords: EFL, ESL, English Education, Language Planning, Language Policy, Somali Education

Introduction

Language Policy Problems in Somalia

In Somalia, matters related to language policy and planning are formally determined at the top echelons of state administration, which compels the critical linguist to observe the scenario from the perspective of the ethno-political dimensions overloaded with language issues. When during colonial period the idea of indigenization [Somalization] of the national medium was raised to replace the foreign media of English, Arabic, and Italian, contention rose over the selection of an appropriate orthography among scripts created/proposed by a cohort of competing authors. Critical scholars attribute the stalemate to a plethora of conflicting ethno-political agendas (Eno et al. 2016; Laitin 1977). According to them, the adoption of a script was interpreted as the elevation of the cultural status of a clan against the subordination of others not represented in the ethnic culture or group of the author proposing the system of alphabet to be selected. The disputation was so deep and divisively ensconced that

even the administrations of the country's nine years of post-independence civilian rule had been rendered incapable of crafting a solution to the script problem that would see the adoption of Somali as the official medium of the country. The squabble and impasse continued until Siad Barre toppled the civilian regime in a bloodless coup d'état on 21st October 1969.

Barre used two things to implement his language agenda, viz., a nationalist ideology bolstered and propagated by the Waberi national troupe and also the vast network of his national security apparatus to break the decades-old deadlock over the selection of a script and the ensuing adoption of Somali as the official medium. In October 1972, he announced the adoption of the Latin script and Somali as the national and official language of the country. There was no dispute whatsoever—neither on the adoption of Somali nor on the selection of the Latin alphabet system as the official orthography, thus endorsing the recommendations of a language commission he had appointed (Eno et al. 2016; Laitin 1977). Interplay among revolutionary ideology, nationalist rhetoric, and military dictatorship bolstered the engineering, adoption and implementation of the language policy the military junta projected to fulfill the “statutory, working, and symbolic” (Cooper 1989:100; cited in Ouedraogo 2000:27) functions of the country. Not surprisingly, criticism of Barre's language policy regarding the use of his ethnic-political leverage and creation of cultural imbalance among the different groups (not to mention academic imbalance) would emerge only after his ouster from power.

Hudson (1978: 12) postulates that nothing lies at the heart of politics more than “keeping a stronger group in power or...embarrassing or defeating ones' opponents.” Hudson's statement exemplifies the maneuvering Siad Barre made in October 1972 to declare the orthography of the Somali Maxaa as the national medium at the expense of other languages and cultures (Eno et al. 2016). But after almost two decades of Somalization, armed militia toppled Siad Barre's by now waning dictatorial rule. This development initiated a new chapter in Somali sociopolitical life (Ahmed 1995, 1996)—following a civil war that turned into another form of dictatorship driven by clan-empowered militias and their warlords. Immeasurable damage and setback in all sectors of development ensued—without sparing academia—that none can provide the exact number of human lives lost, amount of moral being compromised and volume of material properties wasted.

Return of Foreign Languages as Media of Instruction

It was during this period of protracted war and lack of legitimate authority to coordinate public institutions that caused the displacement of Somali as the only academic medium. The privately-owned learning institutions that emerged to fill the education gap re-introduced foreign language mediated curricula in English and Arabic in the absence of government-managed educational institutions. The owners of these institutions and the clan-based administrations that controlled the various regions did not have a proper educational agenda to follow or a blueprint for language policy and planning. Instead, they “opted” for what Ahmed (1994:14) termed elsewhere “the easy way out” of a critical situation, that is, adopting the language of the supporting agencies, or adapting to the request of the labor market in a situation where the only employers were the international organizations operating in Somalia at that time. By reversing the school media to foreign languages, the officials of the private institutions ignored the early criticism against the “imperial” or “colonial” languages, resurfacing the language problem of pre-Barre period, hence renewing the language debate.

Although the language policy debate can invariably be discussed in the context of colonial or dominant local language, this essay concerns itself only with English language. One reason is; the revival of English in post-civil-war Somali education depicts the necessity for the youth to master the medium as a tool for participation in the multiple advantages it offers to the speaker. However, the advantages and ideological contentions behind the uncoordinated adoption/revival leaves us query about the plight of the nationalist sentiment behind the homogeneity rhetoric, particularly the Somalization project, which already excluded the rich vocabulary from other internal languages and dialects other than the north-central one. As commonly believed, English contributes to social disparity in decolonized nations by creating insiders and outsiders among whom the elite who speak it are favored for the occupation of top national leadership responsibilities. From another view, it is condemned for its high positioning in contrast with indigenous vernaculars treated as less prestigious media. The disparity is what Alidou (2004:199) alludes to “a policy of indirect rule” by the colonial power concerned, regardless of its physical absence.

Literature Review

Policy of Foreign Language as a Medium

The policy behind the adoption of a language as an instructional or national medium, whether indigenous or inherited from a colonial power, entails a network of convoluted perceptions, debates, different viewpoints, resources, and the power and authority to plan and implement it. Experts including Fairclough (2001), Pennycook (2001), Cummins (2000), Ouane and Glanz (2010), and Eastman (1983) highlight that policymaking is examined through different ideological settings and perspectives. One of the perspectives is critical language theory (CLT) which unravels the “political intent” of language policy (Holt & Margonis 1992:5). This view, which undoubtedly borrowed a leaf from critical theory, problematizes “motives of domination and hegemony” (Ouane and Glanz, p. 5) by targeting the inherent “systems of exploitation, particularly those hidden by ideology, and ways to overcome that exploitation” (Tollefson 2006:44). Consequently, language policy keeps being relentlessly targeted by academic criticism while African governments remain caught up in the crossfire in a state of helplessness and indetermination.

For the adjudication of their language policy, governments formulate superficial processes for adoption, either by way of parliamentary legislation, approval by the cabinet, or by ad hoc commissions appointed by the state. The aim of a language policy is to determine the type of language or languages to be used for official government business, its development as a national language and/or to function as the academic medium of the nation as promulgated by the authority. By virtue of its importance, a national language policy sets the linguistic course or medium of official and national communication framework of a country. Corson (1990:141) substantiates that language policy is the institution that:

... identifies the nation’s language needs across the range of communities and cultural groups that it contains; it surveys and examines the resources available; it identifies the role of language in general and individual languages in particular in the life of the nation; it establishes strategies for managing and developing language resources as it relates all of these to the best interests of the nation through the operation of some suitable planning agency.

In a situation where social, communal and cultural diversity prevail, a nation's language policy is required to consider the best interest of all the different groups in a country and to contain "a set of nationally agreed principles which enables decision makers to make choices about language issues in a rational, comprehensive and balanced way" (Corson, p. 151). Because language policy as well as related planning are determined at state level, the implementation process involves strategically developed tasks that prioritize the organization and development of "the language resources of the community in an ordered schedule of time" (Das Gupta 1973:157), although more often than not the focus is laid only upon "preferred terminal goals." These goals, designed by the dominant group or elite in power, generally tend to leave the right and desire of the sections of the society at the periphery, reinforcing the extent on which the insider versus outsider rivalry, or a system of oppression, is effectuated.

Problems of Language Policy in African Countries

Grappling with language policy and choice of medium as the national, official language and academic medium of instruction has not been the exception to Somalia alone. It was indeed one of the most intransigent dilemmas hampering the aspirations of almost all newly independent countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The roots of the gridlock surrounding the language policies, according to scholars, could be traced to political, pedagogical, historical, economic, and socio-cultural matters (Ouedraogo 2000; Bamgbose 1991). Bamgbose (1991:69) introduces what he calls the "inheritance situation" to characterize the problem as a colonial legacy which to date "continues to shape and define post-colonial problems and practices," related to language policy in many parts of Africa (p. 70). Furthermore, he elaborates, "Nowhere is this more in evidence than in the very languages selected, the roles assigned to them, the level at which languages are introduced and the difficulty of changing any of these" (p. 70). Notwithstanding over five decades of self-rule and replacements of government administrations in the continent, "the difficulty of breaking away from the established historical patterns indicates the persistence of the inheritance situation," justifies Bamgbose (p. 70).

From a historico-political perspective, Ouedraogo analyzes patterns of language shift and status "from Greek to Latin when the Romans ruled over western and Mediterranean Europe, and later on, the shift from Latin to modern European languages for administrative and

educational purposes” (p. 27). However, explaining the issue comparatively to the infirmity and vulnerability of Africa’s political stability, Ouedraogo comments that “dealing with education and language policies” in Africa is a matter as delicate as “walking on eggs” (p. 36). But to implement language policy, particularly in the academics, requires a colossal amount of funds for the many stages of the project and for a long period of time. Materialization of the project poses a heavy economic burden to governments as it involves massive amounts of finances that many of them would not consider investing in a local language (Ouedraogo 2000).

However, scholars argue that the pedagogic obstacles and constraints facing projects and programs for the development of native languages essentially derive from the multilingual context of African society and the inheritance of colonial languages. Available literature on the subject such as provided by Fay Chung (1996), Bamgbose (1991, 1994), Obanya (1999), seems rather categorical on the continuation of colonial destabilization of the local languages. The inherited medium is blamed for causing the disability of the local dialects to assume the role of colonial medium for the various national development infrastructures. Although Thompson (1969: 361) quoted in Kedrebeogo (1997) denies European language in education can promote national integration and instead believes it to be a very misleading notion, many scholars postulate otherwise.

The counter-argument to Thompson’s via Kedrebeogo or those who postulate otherwise suggests that the destabilization process can, among others, be attributed to the multiple dialects in use among African ethnic communities, the advancement of science and technology in foreign languages, and the processes of globalization which make the local languages “counterproductive to use them in education” (Ouedraogo, p. 48). To overcome the chain of burden, experts recommend early acquisition and mastery of the colonial language/s in order for the African children to “acquire them better and faster,” without wasting much time in the due course (Ouedraogo, p. 48). This rather submissive tutelage, we believe, is also elucidated in Williams’ dismissive notion that “to get ahead,” Africa should “get an English head” (Williams, 1986: 514, cited in Bamgbose, 1991:3-20).

Bamgbose (1991), a strong advocate for the use of local dialects, reiterates formulation of language policies that consider inclusion of African languages in formal education. Yet, he rationalizes the plausibility of foreign language domination in Africa’s learning institutions:

A modern state requires for its proper functioning high-level manpower, technology and contacts with the outside world. The complexities of these demands impose a constraint on the language policies of African nations. Whatever they do with their indigenous languages, they will need a major world language for access to higher education, science and technology; and this same language will serve as their window on the outside world (p. 5).

Bamgbose's statement, worrisome as it might sound on one side of the coin, divulges the criticality of the scenario Africa is facing. On the other side, it cautions against "stagnation and isolation" of the African child facing fast paced scientific and technological advancements in an age of globalization (Ouedraogo, p. 48). Yet, the call for linguistic unity to uphold the indigenous language remains vibrant (Ruhumbika 1992) in spite of the lack of consensus in Tanzania (Brock-Utne 2002; Mohamed 2005; Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir 2005) and the emergent conundrum in Somalia not simply over language of instruction (LOI) but language debate in general (Eno et al. 2014; Eno et al. 2015; Eno et al. 2016; Eno 2017).

Contextualizing Language Planning

It was towards the end of the 1950s that American linguist Einar Haugen created the phrase "language planning" (LP) as a subject that covers "all conscious efforts that aim at changing the linguistic behavior of a speech community" (Deumert 2005:384). According to Haugen (1987:627), LP involves various tasks and processes "from proposing a new word to a new language." It is sometimes used interchangeably with 'language policy' (LP) although in practical terms, "language policy refers to the more general linguistic, political and social goals underlying the actual language planning process" (Deumert, 384). Language planning was committed to critical consideration in the 1960s after many African and Asian colonies attained independence.

As an academic area of study, language policy and planning (LPP) came at the forefront of linguistics, occupying its space as a sub-field of sociolinguistics, thereby extending the scope of language education into the realm of critical enquiry (Deumert, 384). Jernudd and Rubin (1971: xvi) explain that unlike language policy, language planning focuses on "the formulation and evaluation of alternatives for solving language problems to find the best (or optimal, most efficient) decision." Furthermore, the important position it fills makes LP to be observed

according to the functions it does, as we explain in the next few paragraphs.

Language planning as a purely linguistic activity

Language planning can cover three functions: corpus planning or the linguistic function of language; status planning which is related to the political and administrative role of language; or both of the two combined. Language experts contributed several definitions pertinent to these functional areas. From a linguistic point of view, Gorman (1973:73) states that language planning can be defined as the “measures taken to select, codify and, in some cases, to elaborate orthographic, grammatical, lexical, or semantic features of a language and to disseminate the corpus agreed upon.” In a similar voice, Haugen (1969:701) had observed the role of language planning as any activity that “includes the normative work of language academies and committees, all forms of what is commonly known as language cultivation, and all proposals for language reform or standardization.”

Language planning as a political or administrative activity

Jernudd and Gupta (1971:211) illustrate that language planning may be defined as a “political and administrative activity for solving language problems in society.” In a similar paradigm of thought, Fishman (1974:79) describes it as an “organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level.” Evaluating it from a dual (political & linguistic) functionality perspective, Karam (1974:105) delineates language planning as “an activity which attempts to solve a language problem usually on a national scale, and which focuses on either language form or language use or both.” Weinstein (1980:55) illustrates language planning as “a government authorized long term sustained and conscious effort to alter a language itself or to change a language’s functions in a society for the purpose of solving communication problems.” However, Tauli (1974: 561) suggests that it is “the methodical activity of regulating and improving existing languages or creating new common regional, national or international languages.” These different functions of language policy and language planning (LPLP) are at the heart of the debate that characterized the disagreement among the African elites on whether to continue using the inherited colonial language or adopt a local language.

In an attempt to bridge the gap between the alien and the indigenous media, Ouedraogo (p. 48) aptly justifies, “conceding that languages of wider communication like English and French are necessary does not necessarily mean that Africans should continue developing destructive negative self-attitude and image.” Instead, Ouedraogo proposes the development of “a creative destruction-constructive attitude towards African languages”—an attitude in which culture is retained while modern knowledge of science and technology is accessed in the global medium. Ouedraogo argues that with a policy of bilingualism or multilingualism Africa can overcome “the false dilemma” of either “kill[ing] the language” or “kill[ing] the child” (p. 48).

Nationalist, indigenist euphoria notwithstanding, central to the perplexity is African countries’ reluctance to fund the entirety of what entails an indigenization project. Are the leaders willing to allocate the colossal funding for investment in training translators, teacher trainers, curriculum designers, teachers, and designers/developers of instruction materials for all grades in the vernacular language/s? Can they set aside adequate budget for the translation and preparation of sufficient supplementary materials for all subjects and levels, among others? The matter is exacerbated by the fact that even the proponents of the indigenization project do not agree on the age or academic level at which a child is best exposed to the foreign medium—be it as a subject or as the mainstream medium of the rest of the child’s academic life.

The consideration of the alien medium at any level seems to reinvent the rationale of the advocates of foreign language as medium of instruction: isn’t early mastery better than a few years’ exposure at tertiary or secondary level? Thus, a pursuit to a successful path seems to be less convincing as sub-Saharan countries like Tanzania and Somalia which adopted the vernacularization track fell short of accomplishing it all the way through higher education studies. The persistent confusion has prompted Fay Chung’s (1996) criticism that whereas African nations have failed to disengage from over-dependence on foreign media, the South-East Asian countries have comparatively succeeded to overcome the dilemma. As Chung articulates, the Asian countries adopted policy strategies that benefited from Western pedagogical advantages in technology, mathematics and science while correspondingly retaining the knowledge base of the indigenous cultures (pp. 241-244).

Method of Study

Aim & Scope

The aim of this study is to survey the opinion or perceptions of educational administrators and policymakers about a few selected issues related to English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) in Somalia. Due to constraints such as inadequate resources and logistical problems, the study had to limit its scope to only Mogadishu, the capital city, and its environs. Security became another issue after officials in some of the regional educational administrations in the country, which could be potential candidates for the study, declined access into their areas.

Sample Group

The sample of the study is purposive in that it selected a particular group of 20 respondents consisting of administrators and policymakers of educational institutions. They include former and current officials of the Somali Ministry of Education, owners and officials of the private primary and secondary schools as well as officials from several higher education institutions. These individuals were selected because: 1. They are professionals with many years of expertise as functionaries in administration and policymaking positions; 2. They accepted the invitation to participate in the survey and share their opinions; 3. They could spare time for a one-day brainstorming session to discuss the importance of the study to the national education system.

Data Collection

The study used what is variously referred to as mixed methods (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003), multi-methods (Brannen, 1992), multi-strategy (Bryman, 2004), which integrate either the methods or tools of data collection and analysis. Accordingly, a mixed method of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools and analysis techniques was utilized for data enrichment. Qualitative data, with “open-ended approach to the research process,” as Bryman (2006:111) states, lead to “new insights” which, according to Patton (1982:22) “provide depth and detail,” or as Best and Kahn (2004) postulate, a broader grasp of the subject under investigation.

On the use of the quantitative approach, Bryman (p.111) highlights that its “techniques can result in new understandings” about a phenomenon. However, Bryman commends the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data because, in a mixed-mode strategy, “the qualitative evidence helps to explain some of the relationships uncovered through an analysis of survey data” (pp. 110-111). Therefore, by using the questionnaire as a data collection tool, the study endeavored to survey the perceptions of the selected respondents anonymously. The questionnaire was designed in English with 12 easily accessible questions. Although a Somali version was prepared to avoid any possible invalidity from language “barrier” (Word 1977; Henley 1979), its distribution was not necessary as the participants confirmed preference to use the English design. The questionnaire consisted of a mixture of closed-ended questions with a focus on quantifiable variables, open-ended questions to gather participants’ personal experiences/feelings in their own words, and closed-ended questions with optional space for free self-expression and provision of further detail.

Data Analysis

The study employed simple statistical analysis approach that measured frequencies of responses to determine their numerical rate of return so as to compare and contrast the agreement and/or disagreement of perceptions. To facilitate their accessibility, the numerical responses and findings were itemized according to their specific queries and then tabulated in their sequential order. For the qualitative section, including the elaborations made in the self-expression parts of some of the closed-ended questions and the open-ended questions, a simple coding system was used that identified “specific words or ideas [which kept] coming up” (O’Connor & Gibson 2003:68) and were listed and arranged into categories. The isolation or identification of words was important to our analysis because such expressions help researchers gain knowledge of “a person’s perceptions, attitudes, and feelings about something simply by noticing the words they use to express themselves” (P. 69).

Deductive qualitative data analysis approach (Nigatu 2009, p. 25) was employed to arrange the words and expressions on the basis of their similarities and differences and agreements and disagreements of perceptions. In some cases, these were arranged and enumerated according to not necessarily their recurrence and agreement or disagreement but mainly the inherent inferences made (Chi 1997) that

could support the perceptions held. After the initial task of analysis was completed, the assistance of an independent expert was sought for review and cross-examination after which his suggestions and recommendations were considered, although they were minor and utterly avoidable.

Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and discussion of the findings of a survey questionnaire seeking the opinion of a group of selected officials who have either worked or are currently working at their capacity as either administrators and/or policy-makers in the education sector of an academic institution, be it in public or private sector. The questionnaire contained 12 questions and was administered to 20 participants. All the respondents completed the questions and the questionnaires returned in their entirety. The results are tabulated or narratively described individually and discussed concurrently as demonstrated below.

Q 1. Years of experience:

Table 1: Respondents' years of experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
1-5 years	4	20	20
6-10 years	10	50	70
Over 10 years	6	30	100
Total	20	100	100

The distribution of the respondents in regard to their years of experience shows that 80% of them had over ten years of professional practice in the field of education, distributed as 50% within the range of six to ten years while 30% have over ten years experience. This is an indication that the respondents were experienced enough in the field and therefore in a position to provide information relevant to the study. The balance, 20% had less than six years experience. The respondents show they have considerable number of years to know and follow policy-related matters in their institutions. The information they have provided can therefore be treated as relevantly valid according to their experience.

Q 2. Most recent designation

Table 2: Designation/positions held

Designation/ position held	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Head of curriculum	1	5	5
Principal	1	5	10
Coordinator	6	30	40
Inspector	4	20	60
Director	4	20	80
School owner	2	10	90
Planner	1	5	95
Deputy Dean	1	5	100
Total	20	100	100

The respondents equally represented the key stakeholders from the institutional owners to curriculum designers, implementers, and reviewers. The first category made up of head of curriculum, principal and coordinator constituted 40% of the respondents but in their own individual category make up to 5% each save for the coordinators that are the majority of this category at 30%, which is the highest even within the categories of the other respondents. The respondents within the second category made up of inspectors and directors constitute 40% of the respondents, each standing for 20% of the overall population. The other category, composed of the owners, represent 10% while the last two classified as planner and deputy dean constitute the last 10% of the respondents, each covering 5% of the overall population. The table reveals that the respondents have served at least in 8 different positions, which give us the inference that the information contained in their responses reflects different individual views related to the positions held and the experiences acquired. The variety of the responsibilities held enriches the quality of data they have provided as reliable.

Q 3. Curriculum developers' qualification & designers

Table 3: Qualification of curriculum developers

Qualifications of curriculum develop-rs	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Teachers College Diploma	2	10	10
Bachelors Degree	16	80	90
Masters Degree	2	10	100
Total	20	100	100

On the enquiry concerning the qualification of the curriculum experts, 80% of the respondents thought the designers/developers were graduates with a Bachelor's degree, and 10% each opined them as holders of Teacher's College Diploma or Masters Degree respectively. The suggestion from the data accordingly supports that most of the curriculum developers were holders of a first degree, which could be that the expertise, regarding higher degree and advanced knowledge, might have been inadequate. From another perspective, one may perceive that the distribution of the respondents in terms of qualifications indicates that the developers were in a position to professionally execute the task of curriculum development based on their literacy levels. The higher number of BA holders functioning in this capacity is similar to an earlier study (Eno 2018:75) that rated BA holders (65%) as the majority of ESL/EFL teachers in Somalia, while 20% had MA. However, whereas Eno's (2018) previous study mentioned 5% PhD holders in the teaching profession, none exists in the curriculum development and design section, which creates a concern as well as a host of questions on performance and evaluation of the curriculum.

Q 4. Frequency of curriculum review

Table 4: Frequency of curriculum review

Frequency of English Curriculum Review	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
1-5 years	2	10	10
6-10 years	2	10	20
11-15 years	8	40	60
16-20 years	8	40	100
Total	20	100	100

The frequency of English language curriculum review is inconsistent among the respondents with an indication that it is generally low as majority at 80% responds a review is best carried out after eleven years. They tie at 40% for those who believe it should be carried out between eleven and fifteen years and others suggesting it to be done after the lapse of at least sixteen years. According to them, this gives sufficient time to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum before a review process is conducted. The other time periods of between one and ten years make up 20%, at 10% for between one and five years and six and ten years respectively.

The results suggest insufficient curriculum review process as 80% majority of respondents replied it best to occur at least at the lapse of 10 or 16 years. This situation gives us the speculation that a habitualized kind of recycling of the same material takes place over a decade—which may cause academic/curricular stagnation for a considerable period of time. In other words, lack of curriculum review or assessment for such a long period means that: feedback is either not sought or is unavailable; current trends are not followed; or, among other factors, studies are not carried out that probe into the relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum across the levels of learners. As Yitzhaki and Plessis (2015:180) argue, designing and/or conducting policy guideline alone “does not necessarily constitute successful language planning,” with the underpinning suggestion that “...there is more to measuring successful language planning than what is outwardly obscured.” Without evaluation, review, modification and redevelopment of a curriculum within a reasonable timeframe, its function, effectiveness, and even relevance to current trends cannot be qualified. Therefore, compared to planning or development, curriculum review or “renewal” as Clark (1987: xii) would put it, consists of continuing processes of individual components interlinked to the wider objectives of the curriculum but which function as a wholesome unit (Clark, xii-xiii). An enormous task needs to be done here particularly when learners have expressed dissatisfaction with both method and materials (Eno 2017:185, 186).

Q 5. Assessment of ESL learners’ achievement

Table 5: Assessment of ESL learners’ achievement

Measurement of ESL Learners’ Achievement	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Scheduled exams by teachers	18	90	90
Scheduled exams by the Institution, Ministry of Education, or an Independent Body	2	10	100
Total	20	100	100

On learners’ achievement, an almost unanimous number of 90% revealed that the teacher on schedule carries out assessment. Only 2 respondents, representing 10%, differed, indicating the Ministry of Education through scheduled exams undertakes measurement of learners’ achievement. Although the majority reckons the teacher as conducting scheduled assessment, the minority figure might have probably considered the

leaving exams centrally conducted all over the country by the Office of Examinations in the Ministry of Education, or exams that may be administered randomly but also rarely by a learning institution. However, the inclination here makes one believe that the teacher independently evaluates his students according to his terms, determining both his method of teaching and mode of evaluation. The fact that only one respondent mentioned in the comment space provided under the question about the possibility of other teachers commenting on a test before its administration to the students sounds quite worrisome.

Although the notion of teacher independence in learner assessment and testing is supported by many experts, oversight of his/her test design is necessary in order to validate the relevance of the assessment to the level, the syllabus and the general objective of the curriculum so as to emphasize accountability on any discrepancies. With teachers' design and conduct of the tests at will, a question arises on whether the tests can be reliable against the background of complaints about insufficient teacher training, particularly in the ESL/EFL specialization area (Eno 2017, 2018). Our argument need not be misconstrued to undermine the knowledge and effort of teachers, but rather must be seen to highlight the importance of teacher knowledge of the various types and tools of assessment which, "when designed and used appropriately, can provide valid and realizable measures of progress in English language arts and content area subjects" (Valdez-Pierce 2003:37). Stiggins (2002) maintains that effective classroom assessments have successful developmental role for learners when appropriate assessment measures are used in the classroom. However, whether the self-developed teachers' tests mentioned here are in compliance with or respond to the aims and objectives of the curriculum remains an open matter for further investigation.

Tests are constructed and administered by the teacher, adherent to the principles of teacher autonomy in testing, as advocated by Little (1995), Benson (2000, 2001), but without supervision of institutional guidance or approval of the test by a colleague or an area expert senior staff. So, the institutionally unsupervised or lack of independent avenue for testing leaves the learners' destiny in the hands of an untrained ESL/EFL teacher (Eno 2018) whose knowledge of the subject area, methodology and approach are unobserved and for that matter at large in the classroom. Such practice brings into question merely not the validity and reliability of the measurement and its instruments but actually even the quality of knowledge acquired and its correspondence and

comparability with that which is conventionally achieved by learners of the same level elsewhere in the universe.

How effective are these assessments and their tools? How can anyone validate the outcome of a unilaterally designed, developed and implemented evaluation process that might have ignored not just conventional procedures but more so the aims and objectives of the curriculum? On the other hand, the lack of overview flares up to foreground the importance of authenticity. Indeed, the question of authenticity does not seem to be in discussion here whereby consideration is deemed to the appropriateness of the target use and situation. In fact, matters related to direct-testing for proficiency are reported absent and standardized assessment systems to determine proficiency levels of students remain undiscussed. The impact of the test or measurement of any knowledge acquired remains a vague promise in which the student is not tested by a reliable independent body, whether internal or external. Lack of supervision can cause significant impediment to the learning and assessment process especially when there is no supervised means of measurement and/or follow-up for accountability. It can also undermine the identification of a learner's specific area of weakness and possible provision for remedy and create doubt over the compliance with the item response theory (IRT) that helps to determine the relationship between test items and candidate ability. The unavailability of data to support learner's area of weakness in particular contributes to the broader problem of ESL/EFL teaching and learning in Somalia.

Q 6. Class size

Table 6: Class size

ESL class sizes	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
21-40	14	70	70
41-60	6	30	100
Total	20	100	100

The policy-makers were asked to provide their view on the question related to the capacity of the English language classroom, to which a majority 70% replied as between 21-40 students; 30% opted for the higher capacity of 41 to 60 learners as containing the English class. The capacity of the ESL class in Somalia is large. Despite the average which is often estimated at 30 learners per class, it is not very surprising for the English language class to contain over 40 students, as stated by the

policy-makers. A class of that capacity may not receive equal attention from the teacher, and assuming that the ESL period is short and insufficient, there is much less time for appropriate interaction. Class size in Somali education is among the most incongruous factors as institutional reports present vagarious teacher-pupils ratios or pupils-teacher ratios (TPR/PTR). For instance, Eno et al (2014:22, 23) cite reports that provide the ratio as follows: 1:32; 22:1; 31:1. Eno and colleagues (2014) compare these institutional figures to an independent analyst's report that raises the bar to 1:64.

Q 7. Motivation for teachers

Table 7: Motivational schemes for teachers

Motivational Schemes for Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Seminars	2	10	10
All the cases	18	90	100
Total	20	100	100

When enquired about motivational schemes for the teachers, an overwhelming majority of 90% respondents noted these schemes consisted of a variety of methods including seminars/workshops within the country and overseas, scholarships, and promotion to a higher post as deputy-headmaster, headmaster or another top position within the institution. A 10% minority thought seminars as the only measure of motivation they use. The motivational schemes set for the teachers look fine, especially when they are related to promotion or exposure in the participation of workshops, seminars and/or further training locally or overseas.

Q 8. Teacher promotion

Table 8: Criteria for teacher promotion

Criteria	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Qualification	2	10	10
Experience	2	10	20
Performance	2	10	30
Other	14	70	100
Total	20	100	100

The educational policy-makers were asked for an elaboration pertaining to the criteria that their institutions use for promoting the teachers, with

four options to select from. Only one in each of the categories of “qualification”, “experience” and “performance” representing 10% respectively and 30% in their totality, replied against 70% who revealed their view in the open category of “other”. The latter respondents elaborated that the motivational and promotional criteria were mainly based on one’s ethnic affiliation rather than meritocracy. Despite the ideal in the promotional/motivational schemes as mentioned in the items in Table 7, a majority of the policy-makers admit that the criteria for providing these opportunities were influenced by ethnic kinship as compared to any other criterion. Ethnocracy, therefore, was the prevalent criterion rather than meritocracy and as such a root cause of dissatisfaction and consequent impairment of acquisition. The results displayed here support Eno’s (2018:80) study which found 90 of his respondent teachers never promoted throughout the span of their teaching career. The data provides further reflection of why majority of practicing teachers have neither chosen teaching as a career nor feel satisfied doing the job, nor are motivated by the stipend they receive for a living (Eno 2018).

Q 9. ESL teacher education

Table 9: ESL teacher education

ESL Education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
General English Teacher	20	100	100
Total	20	100	100

On the question of the teachers’ qualification, all the administrators and policy-makers unanimously agreed to 100% that English language teachers’ training courses were based on the production of general English language teachers rather than ESL teachers. The provision of the English language teacher training though might be satisfactory to the aims and objectives laid down in the institutional policy toward English language teaching and learning, it reflects inappropriateness to the specific area of ESL teaching since the teacher training curriculum does not contain the necessary theoretical as well as practical knowledge required to equip and sharpen the ESL professional teacher. In addition to lack of ESL/EFL focused training, most teachers teaching English language are not even qualified in the broader English language studies area (see Eno 2018:76). As (Oluoch 2006:87) observes, “Educational development projects can hardly succeed if teachers are not equipped to implement them.”

Q 10. Awareness of ESL/EFL research

Table 10: Awareness of ESL/EFL studies

Awareness of TESOL/ESL	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
None	20	100	100
Total	20	100	100

In replying to the enquiry about whether they were aware or knowledgeable of any TESOL/ESL-related studies or surveys conducted in the country, a 100% of the policy-makers admitted their unawareness of any such studies. A serious matter surrounds the ESL situation in Somalia, considering the fact that policy-makers admit unawareness of any study or survey conducted to investigate issues related to TESOL/ESL acquisition. The lack of an initiative to examine the performance of the methodology, input and output of the curriculum disregards the general principles of effective L2 learning, particularly ESL in our context.

11. Reasons for not adopting a single medium or language of instruction (LOI) in the country

On answering to the question regarding lack of coherence on a single medium of instruction, the respondents gave different reasons which the following were the main responses: a. no effective authority to streamline the country’s education system; b. because parents “prefer”, “like” English more than any other language of instruction because it “gives opportunities” for academic “study” and “professional” advancement in “in the future”; c. because parents “prefer”, “like” Arabic medium for the purpose of “religion” so they “want” the children to go to “Arabic curriculum” schools; d. Somali is “the national language” and fulfills the “education-for-all policy”, but “only government schools use it” as medium; e. “private schools” which filled the education gap “during the civil war” adopted foreign media (Arabic and English) as a way of “modern[izing] the country’s “education system”; f. “foreign languages” play “a role” as strategy of marketing “to attract” people to the private schools; g. Somali diaspora who send “money from outside the country” encourage their “relatives to study English.”

12. Measures considered to choose the language of instruction (LOI)

In relation to the LPP measures considered to select (LOI), respondents came up with diverse answers: a. owners of institutions selected the medium of their choice; b. selection of medium is based on availability of materials (books in Arabic were either received as part of charity from Arab organizations or from Arab countries and duplicated; c. English books were available in neighboring countries like Kenya and easily duplicated or copied; d. UN agencies like UNESCO and UNICEF and their associate international NGOs invested in the production of books in Somali for public schools (for the poor unable to pay fees for private schools).

Conclusion

This study investigated the perceptions of a group of professional educational administrators and policymakers regarding ESL/EFL education and the selection of English language as an educational medium. In particular, it sought opinions related to the ESL/EFL curriculum and knowledge base of curriculum experts, teacher training and welfare, assessment, and adoption of medium of instruction (MOI), among others. While commendable the initiatives taken to revive the education system in the country as well as the use of English for its popularity as a global medium, discrepancies exist in many of the areas investigated; hence a room for improvement in teacher training, curriculum development and design, and teacher motivation and welfare. The fact that most stakeholders prefer English to be the medium of instruction makes it necessary for the educational policymakers, whether in public or private institution, to consider the amelioration of English education on all levels--from teacher training, curriculum development, instruction design to student learning, among other areas. This does not mean abandonment of studying other languages, which can be done as subjects only, but to strengthen the medium that serves as the central tool of communication in the classroom and in the entire academic process. However, there is need to be conscious of both the advantages and disadvantages entangled with the adoption of any foreign language as the academic medium and, in this case, the English language.

As the most used, most influential global medium, English language has been committed to varying degrees of critical observations. The

proponents of English as national, official and/or academic medium, particularly in African academic arena, present their case based on uniformity of the medium as a feasible strategy of solving Africa's ethnic-based multilingual problems. It is to mediate the various multiethnic communities embracing each its individual indigenous or ethnic language. In this view, the implementation of a single national or academic medium not only precipitates the threat of ethnic competition but advances elements of exclusion and degradation of minority groups' identity and culture, paving the way for national disunity.

From the other end of the spectrum, opponents of foreign language or English as a medium expose the huge price tag attached to the language—not only including the economic and social disparity it creates among the speakers and non-speakers within society, but indeed the cultural and ideological propositions (or dispositions if you may like) it carries and superior/inferior spaces and social landscapes it creates to disadvantage the wealth of indigenous cultures and knowledge. In most cases, therefore, language policy plays a “hegemonic” role in multiple ways and at multiple levels in society (Ricento 2006:21).

From that point of view, national policymakers should consider the espousal of a relevant and more competitive modern education system in a global language rather than an isolated indigenous dialect. In other words, if the African society aspires for its children to survive in today's fast-paced world of science and technology and compete with their counterparts, it is imperative that children get access to knowledge of science and technology in a global medium. Moreover, such knowledge need not only embrace the set global standards but has to be accessed in the global medium in which it is presented.

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