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JOURNAL OF SOMALI STUDIES

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VOLUME 5, (NUMBERS 1 & 2), JUNE / DECEMBER 2018



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DHEELMATO: THE NIGHTLY VISITOR (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

ADEN HASSAN

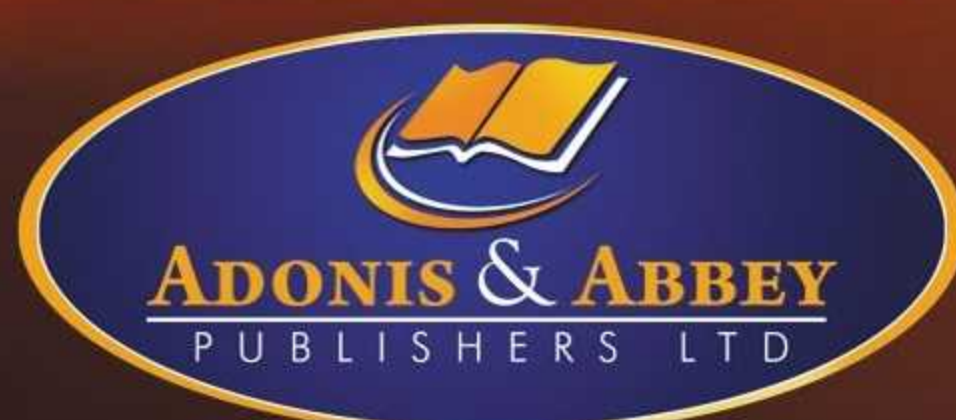
**THE ULTIMATE DOUBLE-BLUFF: AN ANALYSIS OF THE POEM
"DHEELMATO" BY ABDIRASHID OMAR AHMED (INA
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Published by:
Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd
St James House, 13 Kensington Square
London, W8 5HD

Tel: 0845 873 0262

Email: editor@adonis-abbey.com
Website: www.adonis-abbey.com



JOURNAL OF SOMALI STUDIES
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JOURNAL OF SOMALI STUDIES

ISSN 2056-5682 (Online) ISSN 2056-5674 (Print)

- Indexed at: EBSCO, ProQuest, J-Gate and Sabinet
- Accredited by IBSS

Volume 5, Numbers 1 & 2, 2018

Pp 61-90

The Challenges of ESL/EFL Education: An Examination of Teachers' Perceptions

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Abstract

The global shift towards the realization of effective communication in English and the need to empower prospective participants of the opportunities in the world marketplace and in the academic arena make knowledge of English a prerequisite tool. To satisfy the increasing demand, qualified personnel in ESL/EFL pedagogy becomes essential in helping aspirant learners achieve their goal—linguistic competency and proficiency for better learning and professionalism across the world. This study presents the perception of forty male and female teachers selected from personnel engaged in teaching English language in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. Despite the harsh bite of a protracted civil war, an ensuing civil anarchy, and other economic and social hardships prevailing in the country, the findings suggest a dire consequence for Somali education if the situation of ESL/EFL teaching and learning does not receive immediate attention. The national education authority and other stakeholders in the education sector need to accord the English medium a critical consideration if the national aim is to adopt it as the medium of instruction in academia—be it in all levels of learning or specifically at tertiary education—for the advancement of capable human capital at world class level.

Keywords: *English language, ESL, EFL, Somali education, teacher education, SLA*

Introduction

[...] no university can be a first class institution of higher learning if the secondary schools which feed into it are all mediocre. In order to fully develop a university, society also has to develop the educational ladder as a whole. Quality of education at the primary and secondary levels needs to be sustained if the final candidates for possible admission to the universities are to be of high standard. The capacity to be curious and fascinated by ideas has to start early in the educational process. The spirit of intellectualism has to be nourished from primary school onwards, but it can die at the university level if mediocrity prevails. –Ali A. Mazrui (2003:140)

Preparing competent teachers equipped with relevant subject knowledge and pedagogical skills to perform efficiently in the classrooms and lecture halls requires the development of suitable curricula to educate them for the profession. The training program for every category of trainee teachers—elementary, intermediate, secondary and post-secondary education—needs to consider a curriculum adopted from multiple disciplines but integrated into a wholesome unit of study developed for the specific objective of the professional category. The failure or even weakness of such an endeavor entails more catastrophic consequences to national education, the foundation that cements the multiple facets of social growth and success. To avail all learners a level playing ground, a common medium of instruction is a prerequisite that calls for a special attention, particularly in countries where competing indigenous languages pose the threat of cultural domination and subordination. For this and/or other pertinent reasons, many countries adopted a foreign language, with both its advantages and disadvantages, as a neutral factor and therefore the medium of the national bureaucracy including the school system. English is a prominent example of a foreign language whose use as a medium was characterized by an assortment of factors relevant to the policy of the nation concerned.

In the case of Somalia, the history of foreign languages as the media in secular education began during the colonial period when Britain established its colonial presence in the northern part of Somalia and Italy in the southern regions. Arabic was the language in which the Qur'anic exegesis and other religious studies were conducted in pre-colonial post-Islamization Somalia (Eno 2017; Eno et al. 2016; Eno et al. 2014; Laitin 1977; Hess 1966; Touval 1963). Upon WWII, when Italy lost the war, the

British imperial administration was extended into southern Somalia where students in Mogadishu started attending English medium schools (Omar 1992). The Italian colonial rule returned in 1950 for a negotiated period of ten years to train professionals and bureaucrats who would run the nation's administrative machinery upon independence in 1960. When the northern and southern regions formed the Republic of Somalia on 1st July 1960, medium had already been a looming problem—not only in the bureaucracy but also in the academe—as uncoordinated and unstreamlined curricula were mediated in Arabic, Italian, and English in the few institutions in the country (Eno et al. 2017; Laitin 1977).

However, a hint to the actual adoption of English as the sole medium appeared in the statement of then Education Minister Ali Garad Jama who, as cited in Laitin (1977:105-6), declared in November 1961:

After a careful study of the problems and the needs of the country, we propose that English should be gradually brought in as the common medium of instruction throughout the whole Republic...Beginning this year, however, Italian will not be taught in new third year elementary classes and English will be introduced instead...English will take over completely over a period of six to seven years.

Later in 1966, the civilian government suspended Italian and Arabic as school media although Arabic was retained to be taken only as a subject at every level of pre-tertiary studies. English was introduced as the only medium of instruction under a unified curriculum before Mohamed Siad Barre's military regime took over power on 21st October 1969. In October 1972, Barre's junta, the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC), solved decades-old language feud over the implementation of orthography among a cohort of clan-based systems of alphabets (Eno 2017; Eno et al. 2016; Eno et al. 2014; Laitin 1977). The military government announced the introduction of the Somali orthography in the Roman alphabet and the embracing of Somali as the national medium in all its bureaucratic functions, academia not being an exemption (Eno 2017).

After close to two decades of Somalization, a civil war engulfed the country and an ensuing civil anarchy and weak administrations reigned for a protracted period now close to three painful decades. During this era of chaos, amorphous systems of multi-curricular and multi-media education emerged—with English, Arabic, and Somali becoming the choices—a reminiscent of the conflicting curricula of the past. The

widening education gap was filled by private entrepreneurs including individuals, organizations, and well-wishers some of whom had received assistance from foreign donors (Eno 2017; Eno et al. 2014; Eno et al. 2015). In fact one could logically argue that the uncoordinated media and curricula were precipitated by the directionless nature of the country whose entire public service structure collapsed owing to the civil war. The problem was further aggravated by a series of ineffective leadership organs unable to steer the nation to the appropriate direction. It is from this difficult scenario that this study aims to contribute to the less studied area of education, particularly the much less investigated ESL/EFL education in the country, with a special focus on teachers' perceptions.

Literature Review

The Place of English as a Global Language

A factual substantiation or perhaps a definition of the word “own” or “ownership” and its ramifications—connotation, etc.—is in order here. Achebe says: he appropriates the English language to serve his purpose and carry the weight of his African experience. Bakhtin says something similar in *The Dialogic Imagination*. But, in another sense, you “own” it, in that, as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Frantz Fanon, among others, say: one adopts the worldview of the language one uses—or something to that effect. —Ali J. Ahmed (email correspondence, 26 June 2018).

Anne Johnson (2009) states that the internationalization of English needs to be examined from three broad dimensions: English as an apparatus for economic achievement, English as a device for communicating across diverse cultures, and English as a medium on transition towards being a *lingua franca* of the past as certain languages before it have done. Whichever the case, linguistic globalization does not occur without damaging effects to the local vernaculars and their sociolinguistic agents. Highlighting some of the repercussions, Steger (2003) tells us that linguistic globalization can be observed critically from two opposing processes. The first one “involves the spread of the languages used as international languages,” while the other process simultaneously contributes to “the disappearance of other languages,” (p. 82).

During this interaction, the frequency in the use of the local language drops and, in this case, to the detriment of the indigenous tongues that suffer as a result of the displacement. Here is where a critic of English dominance over other languages would lend credence to Phillipson's (2003) profound analysis of the language as having "a narcotic power." To extend his usually unequivocal diatribe, Phillipson alludes to this "addiction" as a phenomenon affecting "many parts of the world," which by extension "has long-term consequences that are far from clear" (p. 16). It is due to the astonishing ubiquity of the English language that David Crystal, as cited separately by Anita Johnson (2016) and Andrés Tapia (2010), posits, "There's never before been a language that's been spoken by more people as a second language than a first."

Crystal (2003:2) advances an arguably exaggerated—if not inaccurately misleading—statement that "nobody owns [the English language] anymore," and a somewhat too simplistic rhetoric that "anyone who speaks it owns it." However, turning the lens to a critical reading of scholars such as Phillipson (1992, 2003), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), Nayar (1994), Canagarajah (1999, 2005), Clark and Paran (2007) and Moussu and Llorca (2008), to name a few, reveals what may amount to pitfalls in Crystal's idealistic perception rather than a realistic interpretation of what the term 'ownership' alludes to (see Ali J. Ahmed's analysis in the above epigraph). But then, it is at this junction that one has to come to terms with an interpretation of the term 'own' or 'ownership' as it is fluid and can be interpreted from different scholarly viewpoints.

In one of our heated discussions, disagreements and debates over the subject in a professional development program in Dubai in August 2016, I borrowed the term "global apartheid" from Alamin Mazrui (2004) to deliver a view of English from the perspective of the fierce academic discrimination against non-native-speaker teachers to the benefit of the native-speaker teachers. Another participant added voice to mine, but with a plain verdict that displeased many proponents of the notion of 'ownership' of English by 'the speaker'. According to him, we, non-native-speaker teachers of English:

shouldn't be over-excited about our high credentials or experience and expertise etcetera, etcetera—as long as the conditions for recruitment include discriminatory terms such as 'preferably native speakers' or 'native speakers only' or 'non-native speakers need not apply'. According to these institutions and employers, honestly, the native

speaker is the owner of the language and not us, the non-native-speakers. They [institutions and employers] deny that many of us have similar or better academic background and more relevant experience than a large number of the native-speakers.”

While every scholar deserves a due respect for his/her viewpoint, the place of English language as a global medium attracts little dispute, considering its role as an international bridge for communication. The other equally important functions including its wide use as a medium in the academics as well as the economic advantages it offers to its speakers are evident from the growing demand of both learners and professionals specializing in English language teaching and related areas. The culture of English as a global language in which the non-native-speaker (NNS) teachers, despite the open discrimination against them in recruitment, are numerically growing in every corner of the world, to say the least, testifies to the indomitability of English as the leading commercial, political and academic medium of the world.

From the milieu of globality, Mazrui and Mazrui (1998:195) contemplate that English is ahead in “the linguistic balance sheet” of languages bearing the status of universal medium. At that level of function, the imperial language is positioned as the dominant medium of the global marketplace where forms of “horizontal interpenetration and vertical counter-penetration” determine the cultural essence of a harmonized world society (Ali Mazrui as cited in Mwesigire 2014). The logic in the mastery of this dialectical phenomenon and the will to participate effectively in the global issues makes the need for expert teachers an integral component at the core of ESL/EFL discourse.

Issues on Teacher Education

Pedagogically, the teacher is described as “someone who provides learners with opportunities for learning (and in the process learns themselves), [and] plans with ‘learning promotion potential’ in mind” (Malderez & Wedell 2007: xvi) while overcoming the challenges s/he encounters along the way (Tomlinson 1995). The multifarious composition of roles makes the learning promoter one with various responsibilities to diverse stakeholders—from the learner, institution, and parents to the wider society that depends on her/him for producing candidates capable of critical thinking and problem solving. Edwards and Mercer (1987:101) suggest that the success or failure in education lays “in

the discourse” negotiated between the educator and the learner. For discourse to bear a meaningful impact on the learner, as Elbaz (1983:11) indicates, “the phenomenon of teachers’ knowledge” should be where authorities focus attention on, considering that it holds “the greatest power to carry forward our understanding.” Teachers’ knowledge has taken center stage that Shulman (1987:8) elaborates the elements fundamental to teaching into separate independent components: “content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values.”

Benchmarking on high caliber educationists like Dewey (1904), Scheffler (1965), Smith (1980), and Schwab (1983), to name but some examples, Shulman’s (1987) work gained ample currency for its dissection of education from the perspective of “teacher-knowledge growth.” He delves into a theorization of teachers as learners by interrogating “those just learning to teach,” in other words, trainee teachers on their way to “becoming neophyte teachers” (p. 4). As a constant learner with a knowledge-base related to cognitive, behavioral, content, environmental, and cultural aspects, the teacher essentially assumes the role of not just a repository of an abundant body of subject knowledge but also that of one bestowed with competence to sift and employ that knowledge according to context and learner needs. The responsibility underlying successful teacher education is informed by the fact that, despite the clarity of instructional objectives/goals and importance of instructional philosophy, “In the long run, individual teachers are still the primary decision makers as to what happens on a daily basis in their classrooms,” (Goldman et al. 2003:213). According to this view, the imperative in the entire knowledge-seeking and knowledge-acquisition process, including the assessment of teacher education, school instruction, and related effectiveness of any pedagogy, is measured according to “how well the students learn,” TenBank (2003:345).

Indeed when all these theories and the necessity to make use of them are observed and exhausted, we need to consider each or any group of them within the relevant framework in the course of executing our professional duties as teachers. The focus should not be on the dichotomies arising from the gamut of theories as advanced by experts, but more importantly on the adoption of a reliable one or a combination

of any of them to assist us at any given time of encounter with our students. Harmonization of the divergent variables thus becomes the most appropriate method to select “the material needed to do the job,” (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:266)

In a later study, Shulman modified the earlier framework to “a new frame for conceptualizing teacher learning and development within communities and contexts,” (Shulman & Shulman 2004:257). This model was based on an “‘understanding’ ...of the elements that are now commonly found in standards for the knowledge base for teaching” that includes: “disciplinary/content/interdisciplinary knowledge; curriculum understanding; pedagogical content knowledge; classroom management and organization; classroom assessment; accomplishing community; [and] understanding learners intellectually, socially, culturally, and personally in a developmental perspective” (p. 262). Following the concept of Fostering a Community of Learners (FCL) program, which is vital for the development of effective education system, Shulman and Shulman (p. 262) propose the following FCL-compatible categories:

understanding the subject matter of the curriculum in a deep, flexible, and generative way; comprehending the pedagogical principles and being capable of designing and implementing instruction consistent with them; discerning useful instantiations of FCL-compatible teaching from incomplete applications, non-implementations, and lethal mutations, that is, knowing it when you see it; [and] assessing variations in student learning, interaction and development that result (or should result) from FCL teaching.

The Teacher as a Learner

Despite the later modification, Shulman’s (1987) work, referred to above, attracted commendation with scholars like Morton et al. (2006) and Darling-Hammond (2006) applauding it for highlighting notable aspects of teacher education, particularly the scope of teacher learning. Ong’ondo (2017:27) carried out a well-constructed review article on the trends of teacher education, particularly “the knowledge base for language teacher education.” With his solid contribution and critical analysis of the broad spectra of scholarly literature on teacher education, scholar Ong’ondo (p .36) reflectively highlights the indispensability of “link[ing] principles and procedures in teaching,”—in other words, the importance of meaningful *pedagogical reasoning* (K. Johnson 1999; Richards

1998) that empowers trainee teachers. On the other hand, the weight of teacher education remains little analyzed along with a contextualization of the core element of teacher learning. The interconnectedness is discussed by Kennedy (1991:1) as:

an unusual field for research because it is situated at the intersection of several fields of research and practice: research and theory on learning, on teaching practice, on the relationship between education and society, and on the nature of school subject matter.

Freeman (2001:608) observes the interplay between “teacher education” and “teacher learning” by emphasizing that how “*teacher learning* is organized and facilitated make a difference in terms of its durability and long term efficacy” [italics in original]. Efficacy, which is the desire of every teacher who lives the dream of the teaching profession, represents an accumulation of knowledge, traits, and expertise not merely embroidered in the educator’s portfolio but actually applied at every difficult encounter with students.

Problematizing Language Teacher Education

Undoubtedly, interest has increased over the past few years in the assessment of the quality of language education and its effectiveness. Although a section of scholars believe that due attention was given to shaping and raising the knowledge base of the teacher (Zeichner 1999), Ball (2000:242) underscore that more emphasis was put on “a persistent divide between subject matter and pedagogy,” which has constantly characterized teacher preparation and teacher education issues in the last century. Methods and materials developed for teacher education as well as the strategies utilized for their implementation, particularly language teacher education, appeared to have been treated as separate entities. Absent from such a (mis)conception was a flexible approach accommodative enough to bring all the variant factors involving language teacher education on board. The compartmentalization prompted Kumaravadivelu’s intervention with a new shift from method to a postmethod reality. Kumaravadivelu’s new concept seeks to decompartmentalize language teaching into an integrative system “that connects the various elements of learning, teaching, and teacher education” (2006: xiii). With this approach to language teaching and language teacher training, Kumaravadivelu enshrines the adoption and

application of “higher order tenets of language pedagogy” (p. xv) in motion with current trends in language teaching.

Unlike the previous methods, the postmethod approach, as Kumaravadivelu elucidates, tasks itself to the exploration of a broad based intellectual platform that “connects the higher order of philosophical, pedagogical, and ideological tenets and norms of language teaching enterprise” (p. 224). To justify his case from the perspective of the classroom environment, Kumaravadivelu invokes teachers’ conception “that no single theory of learning and no single method of teaching will help them confront the challenges” of the flexible, and sometimes unpredictable, situations they encounter in the classroom context (p. 166). Kumaravadivelu considers the fact that the classroom holds together humans as vibrant agents of change who hail from different social, cultural, ethnic, environmental and ideological backgrounds. These dynamics shape their views on issues and styles of learning which, in retrospect, do vary considerably. Moreover, it is through them that one can detect the “significant variance between what the theorists advocate and what teachers do” in a real life classroom situation (p. 166).

From his nuanced point of problematization, Kumaravadivelu advocates that the postmethod approach entails “concept-sensitive, location-specific pedagogy.” Its foundation, he argues, is laid on “a true understanding of local linguistic, socio-cultural, and political particularities,” rather than theoretical assumptions which may function contrary to the actuality of a given classroom atmosphere (p. 224). Kumaravadivelu seems to be articulating the role of the teacher as a leader in the execution of his/her duty. At this juncture, the prioritization of teacher education illuminates the leadership role attached to the teaching profession and the teacher as a leader by virtue of his/her responsibility. For instance, Goldman et al. (2003:213) refer to this role when they state, “individual teachers are still the primary decision makers as to what happens on a daily basis in their classrooms.”

By any dimension, singling out teacher education is not meant to underrate vital areas such as clarity of instructional objectives/goals, method of pedagogy, importance of instructional and institutional philosophy, social expectation, national policy, and other factors affecting knowledge advancement. The preceding factors notwithstanding, indoctrination of a policy that harnesses institution-wide instructional effectiveness, and its overall assessment, can neither be

achieved in the absence of effective teacher training nor can much be expected from a teacher who lacks self-efficacy in his/her professional approach. Personal self-confidence or self-belief is the propeller of the individual teacher's self-efficacy. That is why according to Bandura (1997:2), "Unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act. Efficacy belief, therefore, is a major basis of action [insofar as] people guide their lives by their beliefs of personal efficacy." In fact, it was with self-efficacy in mind that in 1972 the Somali government introduced the Somali orthography and Somalization of the national medium.

Somalization of the Medium of Instruction

When the military regime adopted Somali as the national language under the euphoria of dictator Mohamed Siad Barre's nationalist sentiments, the instructional medium was as a consequence adapted to Somali in all academic levels. In the course of very few years, a high rate of student enrollment was achieved under a new state policy of *waxbarashada qasabka* or 'compulsory education' for all school-age children and the youth. The program created a need for both school infrastructure and qualified manpower in the teaching profession.

An ambitious self-help scheme was initiated to construct more schools and intensive teacher-training programs were launched. Young boys and girls who graduated from intermediate school, the equivalent of primary eight, were given a robust twelve-months intensive training after which they were qualified as elementary (grades 1 – 4) school teachers. Secondary school leavers were trained at the prestigious College of Education, popularly known as Lafole, specifically for high school teaching. Here, every trainee would choose a field of concentration in a major and a minor subject, or a double-major, to qualify for teaching in secondary schools. A different kind of shorter syllabus was developed for secondary school leavers who were trained with specialization as intermediate school teachers—grade 5 to grade 8. These programs were very intensively conducted to fill in the human capital gap emergent in the teaching profession.

In the Somalized curriculum, English was taught as a subject only at secondary school (grade 9-12). The English language training of the novice teacher was the responsibility of the "College of Education which at the time had both the capacity and expertise for teacher education in

the arts and the sciences” (Ali O. Mohamed, discussion in Mombasa, Kenya, February 2017). A critical observer of the national education system at the time could claim that the government was committed to the realization of “a better output in the field of education” by academically empowering those “instrumental in the task” with the “right type of orientation,” to borrow from Anand and Padma (1998:37).

On the other hand, the English language program was fundamentally offering general English language. The teaching approach was based on a universal paradigm in which every trainee took certain required credits for the qualification. Indeed emphasis was also exerted on crucial areas including mastery of subject area and pedagogic knowledge (B.O. Smith 1969:122) aimed at uplifting teacher competency. Thus teacher education is regarded as core to preparing knowledgeable educators good at the disciplines and skills of teaching that can impact the cognitive being of the learners. The individual teacher’s art in combining and exploiting these resources takes us to the scholarly debate of whether the good teacher is born or made.

Is the Good Teacher Born or Made?

A considerable volume of scholarly research work has been undertaken that problematizes the nature of the “good teacher” and the appropriate corroboration of who would qualify to that category. The characterization is surfaced in the complex debate of whether teachers are born or made, considering how individuals from diverse disciplines and professional orientations would indulge in their own desired type of description and viewpoint as indicated in the works of White (1989), Good (1983), Caldwell (1985), Eble (1988), Ryans (1960), and Biddle & Ellena (1964), to select a few examples. Citing numerous authors, Brosh (1996:125) corroborates, “Yet there is no consensus model of the ideal teacher, nor is there an agreement as to his or her characteristics, desirable behavior, and qualifications.”

Notwithstanding the lack of consensus, that good quality teacher education improves learner performance has been reported, among other evidence, by McKinsey and Company (2007:16) quoting a Korean interviewee: “The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.” To that note, McKinsey and Company (ibid) aptly add that “[t]he quality of a school system rests on the quality of its teachers.” According to Dewey (1904/1964:162), a good educator has to

possess the knowledge and creativity to impart “genuine intellectual activity” to the learner, apparently placing more focus onto mastery of the disciplines or subject matter to the “psychical roots.” By Dewey’s school of thought, theory and practice in education cannot be treated as isolated from each other. Disconsenting with the separation between method and adequate acquisition of subject-matter, Dewey (p. 160) states:

Scholastic knowledge is sometimes regarded as if it were something quite irrelevant to method. When this attitude is even unconsciously assumed, method becomes an external attachment to knowledge of subject-matter. It has to be elaborated and acquired in relative independence from subject-matter.”

Method

The study used a mixed method of both qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches employing the questionnaire as a tool. It follows Lokesh Koul’s (2004:205) suggestion of supplementation of the quantitative analysis with the qualitative data which can strengthen the findings of a study. The objective, therefore, of considering the qualitative “interpretive” (Mackey & Gass 2016:3) approach is in agreement with Patton’s (1990:40) belief of qualitative data as containing “direct quotations capturing people’s personal perspectives and experiences,” intuitive personal information that structured, close-ended questions cannot provide. Best and Kahn (2004:186) inform us that in qualitative approach, “The richness of the data permits a fuller understanding of what is being studied,” rather than predetermined multiple choice responses that allow no self-expression for the respondent.

Comparatively, the advantage with quantitative data is laid in its display as “a numerical method of describing observations of materials or characteristics,” values intended to give significance by numeral quantification (Best & Khan, 208). Accordingly, a structured questionnaire was utilized because “it is easy to respond, takes little time to fill out, is relatively objective and is fairly easy to tabulate and analyze,” Koul (p. 147). Another concurrent postulate by Ngechu (2004:49) commends the method for its convenience in providing statistical numbers and as a method, “favored by academics” for its demonstration of “testable and empirical data.” However, the respondents were

provided with a space for self-expression at the end of each question to support views and choices taken in the close-ended questions, hence a qualitative mode to strengthen the quantitative data.

Employing the methods and tools expressed, this study seeks to investigate teachers' perceptions of teaching English as a second language or teaching English as a foreign language (TESL/TEFL). It gathers data from a sample of 40 teachers including 36 men and 4 women selected purposely as practicing ESL/EFL teachers. The respondents were asked 10 structured questions each with a selection of multiple choice answers—strengthened with an open space section for further individual comments, reflections and clarifications. The questionnaire sought responses to questions about qualification, level of classes taught, major area of training, years of teaching or experience, number of English related professional development (PD) programs attended, number of promotions awarded, choice of teaching as profession/career, satisfaction with teaching, satisfaction with current salary, and the prospect of an English-mediated Somali education.

Data was analyzed by means of frequency in the quantitative section. To that effect, 10 tables are used to display the results of the quantitative data. In addition, qualitative data from the comments section of each question was used according to key words or correlation of intended ideas as furnished in the respondents' comments. Furthermore, some of the opinions expressed in the qualitative sections are produced anonymously in direct quotations to further support the evidence of the findings. In the next section, the analysis of the data with simultaneous discussion of the findings is presented under each individual table.

Analysis and Discussion

A questionnaire containing 10 structured questions with a comment section for each individual question was administered to a purposely selected sample population comprising 36 male and 4 female teachers actively engaged in classroom teaching at the time of the survey. They responded and returned all the questionnaires. In the 10 tables below, each variable is presented with its scores in frequency, its correspondence in percentage and the cumulative percent followed by the analysis and discussion in one set.

Table 1: ESL/EFL Teachers' qualifications

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
High School Cert.	4	10	10
Bachelor's Degree	26	65	75
Master's Degree	8	20	95
PhD	2	05	100
Total	40	100	100

The demographics on qualification indicate that a large majority of 90% of the English teachers have a first degree and above i.e. 20% with Masters Degree and 65% with Bachelors qualification while 5% reported to have acquired a Doctoral Degree. This is an indication that response to the questionnaire was well understood by the respondents as data reveal that only 10% are engaged in teaching English with high school certificate.

Teaching is a very indispensable component of ESL and teacher education is crucial to its success. It reads that the quality of teaching and learning is affected by how well the educator was trained. Accordingly the data assures there is no scarcity of graduates although holders of first degree outnumber their counterparts with Master's and Doctoral degrees combined. The small number of teachers with Masters or Doctoral degrees might be a setback to the overall national philosophy when viewed from the perspective of training and preparing high caliber English language teachers of desirable attribute. The undermining of a wider specialization in this area at higher degree levels primordially leaves its negative impact in almost every area of the curriculum, from materials design/development, instruction and delivery to assessment and evaluation.

Table 2: Level of ESL/EFL classes taught

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
Elementary	4	10	10
Secondary	16	40	50
Tertiary	20	50	100
Total	40	100	100

The distribution of the results in Table 2 confirms the responses received in Table 1 regarding the teachers' qualifications. It presents an assumption that those with high school qualification teach in the elementary and secondary stages—going by the responses of level of classes taught. This is because 10% of the surveyed teachers teach in

elementary schools. The statistics support the probability that 40% out of the 65% BA holders (Table 1) are engaged in secondary school teaching. The tabular analysis demonstrates that those lecturing at the tertiary institutions stand at 50%, meaning certain holders of Bachelor's degree are active lecturers in higher learning institutions. The reason for this result is perhaps encouraged by the fact that holders of a high school certificate and a bachelor's degree are active in elementary and secondary schools, while presumably most of the teachers with tertiary qualification prefer teaching in a higher learning establishment. A reader familiar with the pre-civil-war Somali education system would surmise that currently graduate teachers are hired for secondary level teaching. Such approach is laudable, if the same trend is relatively considered to enhance performance in high school education, despite the absence of a regulating body that would assign only graduates from the College of Education or specifically trained candidates to teach in secondary schools.

Table 3: Major area of ESL/EFL teachers' training

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
Law	4	10	10
Public Admin.	4	10	20
Business Studies	8	20	40
Economics	6	15	55
Agriculture	4	10	65
Political Science	2	5	70
IT	4	10	80
Engineering	4	10	90
English Language	4	10	100
Total	40	100	100

Reading the data in Table 3 causes a lot of astonishment, if not despair, in what can be characterized as the tragedy of unregulated education system in the Somali academic sector, particularly English language studies. With majors in various disciplines unrelated to English specialization, 90% of the teachers or lecturers coach without the prerequisite English language qualification. In their institutions, it seems, the only required 'qualification' is whether one has some knowledge of the language and can therefore teach others, regardless of one's unrelated major to English—and in this case ESL/EFL as a specialized field of applied language science.

According to the results, none of the teachers, except a meager 10% whose claim would need further corroboration, have been trained with a major in English. Furthermore, there is an assumption that the 10% high school graduates identified in Table 1 above could be the same group claiming the specialization in English language. Whether they have sought advanced learning in post-secondary English language studies remains a matter unconfirmed in the comment space provided for such clarification. Examined from another angle, whether the presumed 10% English majors have had training based on teaching English as a second or foreign language (TESL/TEFL) is also a question open for discussion and further scrutiny. What makes the nature of any current English language program debatable could be linked to the fact that, among others:

1. Most of the currently existing English programs in the higher learning institutions draw from the pre-civil war curricula of the College of Education Lafole and/or the English Department of the Faculty of Languages without much reform to match the dynamics evolving in current trends in education, particularly English language studies and more specifically ESL/EFL education;
2. The English programs of the above mentioned bodies were based on General English Studies rather than containing a specialized concentration with a specific focus on ESL/EFL training.
3. Although the English curricula of the afore-mentioned pre-civil-war institutions were meeting their objectives due to their rigor, coordination in quality assurance, qualified subject instructors and higher competency level of the students enrolled, the current institutions lack most (if not all) of those essential standards.

The findings indicate how Somali education authorities are not considering the possible predicament of such (mis)practices to national education in general and to ESL/EFL and higher education in particular. Under the lack of trained professional language teachers, learners have to struggle through years of higher learning where massive linguistic doubts and masses of uncorroborated structures, codifications and corpus remain obstacles. The stakeholders, particularly the learning institutions

employing these teachers as well as the authorities overlooking the dire consequences of the problem, are committing very costly mistakes that will incur the learners and, by extension the entire nation, hard-to-repair (if not irreparable) academic setback. Avoidance of the importance of English as the academic medium, and the underpinning contribution its mastery would render towards learners' performance enhancement in their professional disciplines, leaves a lot to be admired in the current context. Yet, who should hold who accountable for the tragedy remains a matter not seriously discussed in the national and international education forums on Somalia.

As a consequence of the obvious discrepancies in ESL/EFL teacher training, English teachers without specialization in the field, and hiring institutions with no concern for either professionalism or quality matters, pose a major threat to Somali academics in its entirety. For, deficient in the knowledge and performance of these educators is the theoretical and practical approaches to teaching ESL/EFL, essential elements of the second language acquisition (SLA) process. Without the relevant foundational knowledge, treating emerging ESL acquisition difficulties of the learners, which only the trained can detect and thereafter seek mechanism for remediation, delivery may obviously be constrained. Consequently, students trained with evident fractures in the medium cannot be expected to overcome the demanding linguistic challenges and aptitude required in their discipline of study in higher education or even in the lower academic levels. The impact creates a perpetuated instability that will keep jolting the knowledge base of the future Somali professionals.

Table 4: Experience in teaching

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
1 – 5 years	8	20	20
6- 10 years	10	25	45
11-15 years	22	55	100
Over 15 years	0	0	100
Total	40	100	100

Surveyed teachers' experiences varied from 1 to 5 years for 20 % and 6-10 years for 25% while 55% claimed to have garnered classroom experience of more than 10 years. The data explicitly reveals teachers' experiences not only varied but indeed they spent quite a while in the profession. One reason could be due to the purposive nature of the

survey which targeted only English teachers, particularly those active in the classroom at the time of the survey rather than either retirees or others who might have left teaching for other jobs. Thus the result has not provided teachers with experience over 10 years who might have taught in the categorical option of 11 years and above.

The possibility for missing such categories lies, among other factors, in three reasons: the first one could be due to the ‘brain drain’ and death and displacement during the civil war that affected most professionals including teachers. Second, the survey sampling was purposively selective in targeting English teachers as a professional category rather than approaching teachers of any subject who functioned in the industry. A third factor could be attributed to the pathetic remuneration package that made teaching unreliable as a sustainable source of income. As a result, many teachers keep looking for a better employment while exploiting teaching merely as a bridge to the next better job (see Tables 6 & 9 below). As Munyui (2012) reports, high school graduates have no interest in undergoing training as teachers due to the “low salaries in the teaching profession.” Munyui further confirms that, according to the president of one of the universities in the country, even “most education graduates seek employment in other sectors rather than teaching.”

Table 5: Frequency of PD programs attended

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
0 – 5 Programs	6	15	15
5- 10 Programs	0	50	15
Over 10 Programs	0	20	15
None	34	85	100
Total	40	100	100

Eight-five percent of the teachers have never had an opportunity to benefit from professional development (PD) programs of any kind, locally or overseas, whereas only a minority of 15% attended local workshops not more than three programs in total. In this context, the English language teacher in Somalia has somehow been (and is yet) experiencing the burden of professional isolation leading to inaccessibility of the innovations in his/her field of professional career. Professional development programs, an incredibly vital strategy to condition teachers and provide them with exposure to the new trends in theoretical, methodological as well as technological advancement in the teaching profession, are missing in the Somali ESL teachers’ portfolio. In

addition to other predicaments surrounding professionalism in the field, the results indicate majority of teachers’ lack of access to the new developments emerging in this dynamic profession.

Table 6: Number of promotions

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
1– 3 times	2	5	5
4- 6 times	0	0	5
7- 10 times	0	0	5
No promotion at all	38	95	100
Total	40	100	100

Only two respondents, representing 5% and equivalent to two teachers of the category sample, have ever had a promotion within the frequency of 1-3 times. The remaining 95% have never been promoted even once. Promotion is a good variable for motivation if appropriately awarded within the premise of meritocracy. Disappointingly, this study displays that in the area of promotion, and upward professional mobility, very little has been done to appreciate teachers’ performance and consequently boost their morale. The results disclose the ineffectiveness of the stakeholders in implementing a proper and systematic promotional strategy for teachers.

Table 7: Choice of ESL/EFL teaching as a profession/career

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
Yes	4	10	10
No	36	90	100
Total	40	100	100

Table 7 confirms that a majority of the English language teachers “have not chosen” the job out of their own predilection or intrinsic personal love, but due to unavoidable circumstances related to the “general lack of employment” prevailing in the country close to three decades. The situation adds to the costly harm such a blunder can exacerbate—the major one being lack of intuitive professional motivation. It explains teachers’ frequent flight from the academic arena for other jobs of interest. Joining the teaching profession by way of circumstantial choice brought about by extrinsic motivation to make a living rather than for the love of it, contributes another heavy blow to the acquisition of ESL and to education in general. Choosing teaching fortuitously, or joining it

incidentally, along with lack of meritocratic motivational mechanisms that boost teacher morale, seems to make the prospect of ESL in Somalia an objectionable profession a few would appreciate joining. More detrimentally, English being the most preferable medium to a majority of the Somali society, its lack of mastery will remain a persistent handicap in the academics for quite a durable period of time.

Table 8: Satisfaction with the teaching job

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
Very Satisfied	0	0	0
Satisfied	4	10	10
Dissatisfied	18	45	55
Very dissatisfied	18	45	100
Total	40	100	100

The surveyees provided their opinion concerning the level of their satisfaction with the teaching job in the four categories of ‘very satisfied’, ‘satisfied’, ‘dissatisfied’ and ‘very dissatisfied’. The results reveal zero in the high satisfaction category of ‘very satisfied’ while only 10% express satisfaction. The two scales of dissatisfaction split the outcome into two equal parts of 45% each. The deep angst of the results does not confine the predicament only within the premise of the ESL/EFL or English education. The epidemic certainly engulfs the wider horizons of Somali education, a signal of a looming gloom surrounding knowledge creation in the country (see discussion under Table 4).

For the Somali authority, the private owners of educational institutions and the society as a composite, to obliviously watch the situation without immediate action, reveals irresponsibility towards academics and betrayal of the young learners striving for knowledge acquisition from an educator dissatisfied with his job. The consequence of lack of enthusiasm for one’s engagement in an activity needs no further corroboration. However, what makes the situation more disastrous relates to the fact that the concern here is about education, the path to every nation’s growth.

Table 9: Satisfaction with current salary

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
Very satisfied	0	0	0
Satisfied	0	0	0
Dissatisfied	12	30	30
Very dissatisfied	28	70	100
Total	40	100	100

A section of the teachers, in fact more than half, confided their primary aim of joining the teaching profession as a “part time” activity, noting that “teaching alone cannot help” them sustain their families. They intimate how the Somali society including “the authorities”, “owners of private schools” and “owners of private universities” that are thriving in the country and even “the international agencies” involved in Somali education, underrate the teaching profession. These stakeholders are accused of making teaching among “the lowest” paid job categories in the country. The teachers emphasize on how educational entrepreneurs and state education authorities “do not respect at all the teachers” and how the teaching field ceased to be “the honored career it used to be in the 1960s and 70s or even the 1980s,” when the teacher’s place was that of the elite.

Almost all of the literature on Somali education shies away from mentioning the exact amount of salary the teacher bags home. For example the Puntland State of Somalia Education Statistics Yearbook 2013/2014 and Education Statistics Yearbook 2015/2016, the UNICEF Somalia Education Cluster 2017, and the breakaway Republic of Somaliland Ministry of Education & Higher Education’s Education Statistics Yearbook 2013/2014 mention numerous institutions as payers of teachers’ salaries without daring to mention either the annual budget each spends in this regard or the amount of salary they pay to the individual teacher. To say the least, transparency seems to be a very scarce commodity among these organizations, in the sense that a revelation of the details may lay open the prevalence of “corruption” in which “personnel in [certain] positions” could be extremely benefiting from the financial resources aimed to compensate the educators “for the hard duty [they] painstakingly execute,” comments a participant.

David Evans, co-author of the World Bank’s *World Development Report 2018*, explains how teachers’ remuneration surfaces at the top of every country’s list and how the teachers he discussed with across the globe raised the issue of insufficient salary as an enigma in urgent need of

redress. Reporting teachers’ perspective, Evans (2018) postulates: “Teachers argue that they need higher salaries so as not to need to spend their time racing around to side jobs in order to be able to support their families.” The notion obtains a vast support from numerous international bodies like UNESCO (2014:254) that pathetic remuneration has the potential “to damage morale,” tempting the educators “to switch to other careers.” That good teacher remuneration, performance and satisfaction positively impact learner performance outcome has been confirmed by Glewwe et al. (2011) analyzing published estimates of the two decades between 1990 and 2010. Elsewhere Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez (2011) report a study during the decade of 1995-2005 that found improvement of student performance between 6% and 8% after teachers garnered a 15% salary increase.

Table 10: Prospect of English as medium of Somali education

Details	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative %
Very Bright	4	10%	10%
Bright	4	10%	20%
Dark	16	40%	60%
Very Dark	16	40%	100%
Total	40	100	100

Using four categories of choices with ‘very bright’ as the top category and ‘very dark’ as the lowest, Table 10 assesses the future of Somali education with English as the core academic medium. While the two best categories of ‘very bright’ and ‘bright’ draw at 10% score each, the lower, undesirable choices of ‘very dark’ and ‘dark’ dominate the values, garnering a remarkable tally of 40% each.

By explication, the predicaments demonstrated in the dissatisfaction with remuneration in Table 9, dissatisfaction with teaching as career in Table 8, and the *accidental* stunt of teaching as a profession in Table 7, inform the outcome of the results exhibited in table 10. Eighty percent of the interviewees do not foresee a bright future for Somali education under English language medium at the current trend. The frequently expressed reasons relate to “no good education for teachers” or because of “poor English education” in preparing teachers. As the respondents suggest, “poor pay” or “bad salary” or “low salary” will “not attract qualified and trained English teachers” into the classroom, since the job is not considered as reliable source of income to sustain a family. They express no uncertainty of losing even the best trained teachers to “more

paying jobs” in the government departments or more preferably in the private sector.

A general level of “incompetency in English” across all stages of academic learning is cited as a major concern which, if the authorities do not address it seriously, “will kill education in our country.” Resources such as libraries and relevant subject materials necessary in learning were mentioned as contributing sources to the inefficacy in the national education system. In one of the comments, a respondent queries how a country’s education can advance under a constant drift by teachers from the classroom. “Most teachers are part time teachers,” writes one of the respondents, ridiculing:

Maybe students and educational institutions and even the Ministry of Education & Higher Education will soon be part time. Education, good education does not matter to the Somali government. It is nothing for the owners of schools and universities. Even the UN guys who say they are caring about education of the Somali people they don’t care about the teachers.

Conclusion

Appropriate training of ESL/EFL teachers becomes an essential issue in meeting the global demand, and a priority for academic advancement for those pursuing their studies in English medium institutions. It is pursuant to the significance of ESL/EFL that the current study seeks to address a gap in the approach to English education in Somalia; hence investigating the perception of professional teachers regarding factors relevant to some understanding of the nature of ESL/EFL in the Somali context, particularly in Mogadishu, the capital city of the country.

The study reveals that the current trend is not all that promising for English language studies, especially considering the qualifications, expertise as well as perception of the teachers engaged in teaching the subject. The analysis indicates that the problem is more serious than the eye can catch at a mere glance of the monumentalized numbers of institutions in operation, the colorful reports of international organizations, and the statistical data of annual achievements registered in both enrolment and end-year student assessments. The curse of low pay, lack of specialized training, inconsideration for professional development programs, in return, lead to the diminishing of the worth of teaching, consequently affecting the quality of students produced in such

a dismal process. The situation reminds us of the Somali adage that one cannot reap better quality crops than what one had sown in the first place.

A change of vision and serious determination are needed to embark on a new shift to revamp the ESL/EFL education, starting with the appointment of high caliber education professionals to lead the new course. It is incumbent on the Somali authorities and society in general to shun the currently standardized allocation of ministerial and other key professional posts on the basis of clanocracy and the complete disregard for meritocracy. Specifically in the area of education, appropriate policies, principles and visionary guidelines need to be considered beyond clan competition for supremacy, individual prestige, or allocation of key posts for mere appeasement. A new focus on the prioritization of the quality of education for tomorrow's leaders must be put at the centre stage of national human capital development; and that needs to be addressed sooner than later by starting with a new strategic approach to ameliorate the academic medium.

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