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Professional Development of EFL Teachers in Tanzania: Ubinafsi or ujamaa?

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Abstract

This small descriptive study examined the professional-development activities of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers at a university in Tanzania, in particular their awareness of professional organizations such as IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) International. Basing her inquiry on English-language teaching as a "community of practice," the researcher used a questionnaire, interviews, and personal observations. University lecturers were asked about their personal professional-development practices, which represented the value of individualism, *ubinafsi* in Swahili, as well as their interest in becoming involved in professional organizations for EFL teachers, which illustrated *ujamaa*, or familyhood. Though they were extremely professional, knowledgeable, and dedicated, none of the lecturers was a member of any organization, nor did they attend international conferences. This was due not to any fault of their own, but to the political and economic reality of their circumstances and the lack of assistance and outreach by professional associations. (163 words)

Key words: *professional development, EFL teachers, ELT professional associations, language-teacher associations, East Africa, Tanzania, community of practice, IATEFL/TESOL International*

Professional Development of EFL Teachers in Tanzania: *Ubinafsi* or *Ujamaa?*

Umoja ni nguvu, utengano ni udhaifu. (Unity is strength; disunity is weakness.)

The field of teaching English as a second or foreign language is relatively new, with the two predominant professional organizations, IATEFL (the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language), based in Great Britain, and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), in the United States, both founded in the 1960s. Nonetheless, as a fairly young academic field, TEFL, Teaching English as a Foreign Language; TESL, Teaching English as a Second Language; or ELT, English-Language Teaching, has matured significantly in the past five decades. First associated with the field of applied linguistics, it has grown into a discipline of its own, with university credentials, research journals, and other publications now commonplace in the world of academia (Hinkel, 2005).

As a recognized field of study, TESOL/TEFL has produced an abundance of empirical evidence regarding the professional development of practitioners (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001; Brown, 2007; Crandall, 2001). Much of this research about teachers at the tertiary level deals with their reflecting on their own practice in addition to their asking others for feedback. Little research, however, has been conducted on the role of language-teacher associations as part of teachers' professional development, especially in Africa.

With regard to Tanzania, in East Africa, I served as a Fulbright scholar at a preeminent university there during the 2017-18 academic year. The previous year I had communicated with the chief coordinator of TELTA, the Tanzanian English Language Teachers' Association, who informed me that there were ten chapters of TELTA in the country, but none in the city where I would be working, the official capital. That sparked my interest in learning the reason behind

this lack of participation in professional language-teacher associations (LTAs) by my soon-to-be colleagues. The TELTA association appeared to be affiliated with both IATEFL and TESOL, as well as Africa TESOL.

The objective of this research project was to investigate professional development activities of English-language teachers at a preeminent university in Tanzania, particularly their membership in professional organizations. In addition, I intended to investigate the teachers' familiarity with organizations and their interest in becoming members.

Professional associations exemplify the social nature of a practice such as teaching, and they correspond to Wenger's (1998) theoretical framework of communities of practice (CoPs) in that they provide individuals a sense of belonging through a shared identity and a mutual professional practice. Communities of practice merge the dichotomy of individualism-collectivism, *ubinafsi-ujamaa* in Swahili, and by focusing on identity, this theory acknowledges the constructs of inclusion and exclusion of individuals as well as groups. Membership and participation in LTAs clearly reflect the three dimensions of CoPs: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998).

This paper begins with an examination of the literature on language-teacher associations, LTAs, and professional organizations in general. It then describes the methodologies of the research project and concludes with the study's findings and the implications thereof.

Literature Review

Some of the research on the professional development of second-language teachers has been of a fairly general nature (Brown, 2007; Crandall, 2001; Richards & Farrell, 2005). Other research by experts in the field has been done on what Lamb (2012) calls *internal* professional

development, that is, activities that language teachers undertake in order to improve their performance in the classroom, be that individually or cooperatively. Paramount to this is reflective practice, that is, teachers' critically reflecting on their classes and students. Reflective practice can include narrative inquiry (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001; Johnson & Golombek, 2011) or action research (Freeman, 1998; McKay, 2006).

With regard to the *external* dimension of professional development, Lamb (2012) defines this as the role of professionals as authorities in their fields who influence official policies and inform the public about their domains of expertise. Both the internal and external dimensions of professional development are provided by professional organizations such as language-teacher associations, but there has been a lack of empirical data about these associations and teachers' professional development (Aubrey & Coombe, 2010; Lamb, 2012; Paran, 2016). Aubrey and Coombe (2010) examined one English-language-teacher association (LTA) in the United Arab Emirates. In other studies, individual educators have chronicled their professional growth as a result of participation in IATEFL (Hainu, 2002) and JALT, the Japanese Association of Language Teachers (Nakamura & Nakamura, 2002). Paran (2016) reflected on his own experience as an EFL teacher and his membership in LTAs, while at the same time summarizing the articles in a special issue of *ELT Journal* devoted to language-teacher associations. Finally, Lamb (2012), a recognized expert on LTAs in Europe, turned to a more general topic, that of professional associations in other disciplines, e.g., law, nursing, and business, to find a definition that could be applied to language-teaching associations as well:

> The professional association exists to advance the standing of the members of the occupation or profession by setting educational and other standards governing the profession, advocating for favourable public and private policies, aiding members

in their professional development, and advancing professional practice through

research and information dissemination. (Kloss, 1999, p. 71)

This definition includes both of Lamb's (2012) internal and external dimensions of professional

development, and it could be employed in the future literature on LTAs.

One of the reasons for the lack of research on language-teacher associations may well be

the field's short history. IATEFL and TESOL were founded in 1967 and 1966, respectively,

while teachers of other European languages have a history that is about 30 years longer. The

Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes/International Federation of

Language Teacher Associations (FIPLV) has been in existence since 1934 (Freudenstein, 2009).

To put this in perspective, we can look to the more traditional disciplines of chemistry and

history. The American Chemical Society (ACS) was founded in 1876, and the American

Historical Association (AHA) in 1884, nearly a century before IATEFL and TESOL.

Despite the field's youth, there has been some recent interest in the topic of LTAs for

English-language/English-as-a-Foreign/Second-Language teachers. In 2015, Borg administered

a survey to EFL teachers in the Persian Gulf and wrote about the importance of attending ELT

conferences. In addition, in the special issue of the *ELT Journal,* Motteram (2016) wrote about

how membership in IATEFL contributes to teachers' sense of belonging, collegiality, and

professional identity. Similarly, in that same issue, Gnawali (2016) described a small study in

Nepal, noting the benefits of membership in NELTA, the Nepal English Language Teachers'

Association. The majority of the research on language-teacher associations, however, has been

carried out in developed countries.

There is a need to add to that body of literature and examine in more detail the benefits of

professional organizations for English-language teachers. Except for a recent chapter about

LTAs, language-teacher associations, in Africa (Elsheikh & Effiong, 2018) and an article about English-language teachers in Cameroon (Smith & Kuchah, 2016), there has been little research on the professional development of EFL teachers in Tanzania at the tertiary level. This study may serve as a small contribution to that body of knowledge and as encouragement for other TEFL practitioners in Africa to reach out to their peers to collaborate as professionals by forming their own chapters of LTAs.

Research Questions

1) What professional development activities are English-language teachers in Tanzania involved in?

2) Which professional organizations do they know about? Which are they members of?

3) Are they aware of IATEFL and TESOL, and if so, is there any interest in becoming members of either of those organizations? Why/why not?

Methodology

Inasmuch as this was a qualitative study, I followed the systematic procedures of educational research (Denzin, 1978; Dörnyei, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The instruments and methods used included a questionnaire, personal interviews, and personal observations. The questions about professional development are based on data from experts in the field of English as foreign/second language (Brown, 2007; Crandall, 2001; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Sampling and Procedures

The non-random technique of purposive sampling was used in order to gather the data that would answer the research questions. After receiving agreement from the dean of the college and submitting a research proposal for approval by the university, I emailed the ELT academic staff. Twenty-three teachers were contacted, ten replied to the email, and eight agreed to meet with me for an interview in their offices.

The Respondents

Of the eight respondents, three worked in the College of Education and five in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. All but one were male; most had been teaching for 6-10 years. Three had PhDs and had the title of Lecturer, while the remaining five had Master's degrees and had the title of Assistant Lecturer. Of those five, four were pursuing a PhD (Table 1). All of their degrees were granted from the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Dodoma in Tanzania.

Questionnaire

Each interviewee was asked to read and sign the consent form before receiving the questions. As for the development of the questionnaire (see Appendix), I attempted to follow the guidelines of standard academic protocol (Babbie, 1990; Dörnyei, 2010). The questions asked for basic demographic information, the teachers' titles, degrees held, the courses they regularly taught, class size, and the number of years teaching. In addition, the teachers were asked how they identified as professionals, how they tried to become better teachers/researchers, and how familiar they were with certain professional organizations: IATEFL, TELTA, TESOL International, and Africa TESOL. These questions were intended to establish the degree to

which the participants conformed to the three dimensions of the ELT community of practice: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998).

The questionnaire gave choices for how the respondents identified as professionals: *How do you identify as a professional? Number as many as you would like, starting with your primary identity as #1.*

_____ English-language teacher   _____ university teacher/professor

_____ teacher trainer/educator   _____ linguistics professor

_____ education professor   _____ researcher

_____ other: _____

One shortcoming in the research process was that I had created the form before arriving in Tanzania, and I was unaware of the academic culture at the university and what terminology was used there. For example, at my university in the U.S., the teachers are referred to as faculty, whereas the teachers at this university were called academic staff. The majority of the teachers were either lecturers or assistant lecturers, so when I would chat with students on campus, they would ask me, "Are you a lecturer here?" A pilot study in the country could have improved the clarity of the vocabulary used on the form.

As for professional development, choices were also given to the respondents, with the opportunity to provide other activities if the respondents so wished. The question was *How do you try to become a better teacher/researcher? (Check all that apply.)*

_____ keep a teaching journal and record your thoughts about your classes

_____ read professional journals, books, *et al.*

_____ ask peers to observe your classes

_____ meet with colleagues to discuss pedagogy

_____ ask students for informal feedback and/or for formal evaluations of your teaching

_____ conduct action research

_____ belong to professional organizations. (Name(s): _____

_____ attend professional conferences. Name(s): _____

_____ attend online conferences and/or webinars. Name(s): _____

_____ Other activities: _____

3. Which of the above do you think are most beneficial to you as an English-language teacher?

Why?

Interviews

I approached the interviews acknowledging my personal bias for professional organizations. After asking the teachers about their own classes and professional development, I tried to be as forthright as possible, telling each teacher how I have benefitted from my membership in TESOL. I explained how the organization had members from a wide spectrum of English-language teaching positions, from elementary-school teachers to researchers to teacher trainers. In addition, I informed them about the various interest sections, as well as the regional and local affiliates. I did not attempt to hide my enthusiasm for TESOL's annual conference. Rather, I wanted to share with them how much I had learned and grown as a professional by being a member of such an organization. I informed them that the reason I was asking them about their familiarity with professional ELT organizations was that the TESOL International website showed only a few African affiliates of the organization, which intrigued me.

Interview Questions. All of the respondents were asked the same questions (see Appendix) about their professional development as EFL teachers.

 I encouraged the lecturers to talk about any of the topics related to their professional identities and development. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. In order to be as accurate as possible, I followed Poland's (2003) recommendations, as well as his abbreviated system of transcribing. Also, personal notes were recorded during my time at this university. They included observations of the teachers and my interactions with them, particularly as they related to the topic of professional development. These notes were incorporated into the data analysis, with the content compared to that of the questionnaire and interviews.

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaires were analysed by using frequency counts, and the respondents' open-ended comments were recorded and compared. Concerning the semi-structured interviews, I followed a systematic transcription process (Silverman, 2000). After completing the transcriptions, writing analytic memos (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), and reflecting on the interviews, I did the initial coding according to themes I saw in the data, as well as in vivo quotes, that is, writing the words of the respondents themselves (Saldaña, 2009). In order to seek patterns in the respondents' comments, I created a matrix and entered their responses according to the research questions. I then used frequency counts to see numbers and the distributions among the participants.

Validity / Trustworthiness

Rather than the traditional quantitative-research terms of validity, reliability, objectivity, and generalization, it was more fitting for this qualitative study to use the term trustworthiness (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), which comprises credibility, dependability, confirmability, and

transfer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Possible threats to these constructs and how I tried to minimize them are explained below.

To ensure that the criteria of trustworthiness were met, I spent approximately seven months at the university, working with the lecturers there, attending meetings, and team-teaching with one, who was also an interviewee. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this as prolonged engagement in the field, one way to meet the credibility criterion. When in doubt, I asked my Tanzanian colleagues for confirmation of my interpretations. In addition, I compared my notes, in the form of a personal journal, with the data collected from the questionnaire and interviews.

As explained earlier, I was open about my data-collector bias, making it clear to the respondents that being involved in professional associations was an important part of my identity as a language teacher. Most likely I influenced the lecturers' responses to the question about their interest in joining an organization such as TELTA, IATEFL, or TESOL. As a Fulbright scholar at the university, I worked in the same department as two of the participants. This relationship may have affected their responses during the interview. Instrumentation threat (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009) was another possible weakness, as explained above.

Findings and Discussion

This section begins with the results of the questionnaire and relates the findings from the interviews and personal observations. It also provides possible explanations for those findings.

A shared identity

The first question on the form asked *How do you identify as a professional? Number as many as you would like, starting with your primary identity as #1.* The respondents were to number a list of possible identities. Ironically, only the assistant lecturers followed directions; the others

simply checked their answers without numbering them. Two of the choices included

"professor," which is a title associated with the highest rank at the university, so most of the

respondents did not choose that identity. Overall, "English-language teacher" received the

highest number of responses (7); only one respondent did not choose it. Second was

"researcher," with six (6) responses, and the choices that tied for the third highest ranking (5

responses each) were "teacher trainer/educator" and "university teacher/professor" (see Table 2).

One of the respondents, an assistant lecturer, identified as only English-language teacher, while

another identified as all six choices, his first as linguistics professor and his last as teacher

trainer/educator, which was a bit puzzling inasmuch as he works in the College of Education.

However, his master's degree is in linguistics, and he was pursuing a PhD in linguistics at the

time of the study, so he probably saw himself as an expert in that field. In contrast, two lecturers

with master's and PhDs in linguistics (who often taught psycholinguistics and English syntax

courses) did not identify as linguistics professors. One chose "English-language teacher" and

"researcher;" the other identified as "English-language teacher" and "university

teacher/professor." What stands out in these responses is that all but one of these teachers shared

the identity of English-language teachers who clearly belong to the CoP that ELT associations

represent.

The one respondent who did not choose "English-language teacher" on the questionnaire

was a colleague in the College of Education, who had impressed me as earnest and dedicated--

and in his interview, he expressed the most enthusiasm about LTAs. After indicating his primary

identity as teacher trainer/educator, and his subsequent identities as researcher, university

teacher/professor, and education professor, he added his own, i.e., "master trainer in language

education." He saw himself not just as a teacher trainer, but a *master* trainer, and some of his

students in the College of Education were going to be Swahili teachers, which may be why he expanded his role to language education, rather than limiting it to English.

That the respondents identified in multiple ways attests to the richness and complexity of identity as Wenger (1998) defines it in his communities of practice. In fact, the lecturers exemplified almost all of the characteristics of the CoP definition of identities: they are lived experiences; negotiated and social phenomena; and an ongoing learning process. The respondents' lived identities and professional practices were almost identical to those of my university colleagues in North America, yet as the data below reveal, the local/global interplay (Wenger, 1998) of LTAs was missing.

The second question was *How do you try to become a better teacher/researcher? (Check all that apply.)* One respondent chose two of the activities from the list, another chose seven; the mode was four. That is, four of the eight lecturers indicated they practised four of the professional-development activities on the list. As the reader can see from the responses in Table 3, the three practices that the nearly all, if not all the respondents indicated they engaged in were 1) asking students for informal feedback and/or for formal evaluations of their teaching (a requirement at the university); 2) read professional journals, books, *et al.*; and 3) meet with colleagues to discuss pedagogy. Not one belonged to a professional organization, and only two had attended a conference sponsored by a professional association. One respondent had attended a conference in South Africa, and the other had attended one in Tanzania. A third respondent told me during his interview that he had wanted to attend a conference while he was studying for his PhD, and he was willing to pay for the trip himself. However, he was told by the university that he had been given release time to work on his doctorate--not to attend conferences.

Given the heavy teaching load of these lecturers, it is remarkable that they found time to keep current in the profession by reading professional journals and books. The assistant lecturers taught two courses per term (one if they were on leave to pursue their PhD), and the lecturers were required to teach two-three courses. (See Table 5 for the typical number of students enrolled in their classes.) Nevertheless, the teachers in my college engaged in robust intellectual discussions throughout my time there, particularly during meetings for graduate students' dissertation proposals and defences. The majority of their professional-development activities could be classified as internal (Lamb, 2012), and they clearly reflect the ELT community of practice.

After identifying the professional-development activities they engaged in, the respondents were asked *Please indicate your familiarity with the following organizations by checking all the boxes that apply to you* (Table 4). As the reader can see from Figure 1, all of the respondents indicated they were aware of TESOL, with only two of the eight responding that they had heard of the British-based IATEFL. Five had heard of Africa TESOL, and two of TELTA, the Tanzanian association. None of the respondents was a member of any of the associations listed in the questionnaire.

During the interviews, the lecturers were very open about their unfamiliarity with the ELT associations. One lecturer kept repeating, 'It's a matter of awareness.' Another, pointing to TELTA, looked at me incredulously, saying, 'I have been astonished to see that, and I know nothing about it.' He has been teaching English in Tanzania for nearly 10 years and had served as department head at the university, yet he was unaware of this organization. This professional undoubtedly saw himself as someone who should at least know that these groups, these communities of practice with which he identified, existed.

In their written answers, the respondents did not express as much interest in becoming members of organizations as they did in the interviews after I explained how I had benefitted from membership in TESOL. When asked about whether they would like to know more about IATEFL, TESOL International, TELTA, and Africa TESOL, half of the respondents did not check any of the boxes, which could be an indication that the instructions were not completely understood. The other half of the respondents marked they were interested in knowing more about either IATEFL (one respondent); IATEFL, TESOL, and TELTA (one respondent); or all four of the associations (two respondents). Nevertheless, when I interviewed them, all eight of the lecturers said that they would be interested in learning about these organizations. For instance, one assistant lecturer told me, 'Myself, I am interested to join even all of them if it is possible.' He was not the only one to express such enthusiasm. Two others also expressed an interest, not just for themselves, but for their colleagues, both saying that it was a matter of awareness. The first said, 'So to me, I find it very useful for our staff, but what was lacking was just an opportunity.' The second echoed these sentiments: 'Yes, of course I think so. I'm most interested. Maybe the only problem that we face is that we don't have such kind of opportunities. People are interested to join those organizations, too.' In other words, the academic staff were not aware of these CoPs. As the previous respondent stated, they felt that it was a professional *opportunity* to belong to TELTA, Africa TESOL, TESOL International, and IATEFL, but unfortunately, it was an opportunity that they were denied.

Marginality and postcoloniality

According to the communities-of-practice framework, non-participation in a CoP can become marginality (Wenger, 1998), which appears to be the case with the study participants in Tanzania. Indeed, my African colleagues, even though they identified as English-language

teachers, felt marginalized from full participation in the LTAs that were presumably founded to serve them. TESOL International's Strategic Plan, which was executed in 2019, highlights "global presence and connectivity" as their primary outcome, yet just one year earlier, not one of the English-language teachers at a top-ranked university in Tanzania was a member of that LTA or any of its affiliates on the continent, nor did any of them belong to IATEFL.

There seems to be a huge difference between the assistance that professional organizations provide to their TEFL colleagues from developing countries such as Tanzania. Teachers from these countries are almost completely ignored by their professional organizations. TESOL has one award for international presenters, but the amount does not come near to what an awardee in sub-Saharan Africa would have to spend to travel to North America for TESOL's annual conference. It appears that ACTFL and FIPLV, two other professional organizations for foreign-language teachers, provide no financial assistance for members who might like to attend or present at their conferences. IATEFL, in contrast, has reached out to support *all* English-language teachers, not just those from a privileged socioeconomic status, in their policies regarding membership as well as the annual conference. In short, some language-teacher associations marginalize, if not completely dismiss, teachers from disadvantaged economic and geographical backgrounds.

The lack of awareness of the respondents regarding LTAs could also be attributed to what Elsheikh and Effiong (2018) refer to as the "fragile contexts" of teachers in sub-Saharan Africa, or the reality of postcoloniality (Loomba, 2015). Their marginality prevents them from the form of belonging that Wenger (1998) calls alignment, which requires time, energy, and financial resources. In order to fully align themselves with an LTA such as TELTA or IATEFL, these teachers might have the energy to do so, but they have little time and few financial resources. In

addition, the university administration does not value their involvement in professional organizations. Thus, outside forces have prevented them from even knowing about these communities of practice that so closely correspond with the concept of *ujamaa* in the culture of Tanzania.

Heavy teaching loads

The number of academic staff at the university was sorely inadequate to teach an overwhelming number of students, especially those enrolled in classes required for first- and second-year students. For example, students across campus were required to take Communication Skills, a course that five of the eight respondents regularly teach (see Table 5). One of them told me he 'shared' a class of 2,000 students with nine other lecturers: 'Like I have two topics to teach.' Another reported that 2,500 were enrolled in his Communication Skills class: 'Yeah, . . . so we need to be more than nine instructors to handle such a class because we chop the class into so many teacher positions.' A third lecturer chuckled (and groaned) that there were approximately 2,600 students in his class: 'But I do not teach alone. We are so many; we are about seven. So teaching's not that much because we divide the class into three sessions. So it's almost five hundred or four hundred plus, each class.' It appeared from the other interviewees that the norm was a ratio of about 200 students per instructor. In contrast, the average teacher-student ratio in European Union countries is 16/1 (OECD, 2009).

As I understand it, 'sharing,' which one of the lecturers called 'topicalizing,' meant that the instructors divided the course content into a certain number of modules, and each instructor was assigned to teach a number of those modules. Consequently, s/he would teach the modules, for example, three weeks during the semester (many times each day), and then at the end of the

term, all of the instructors would share the burden of marking the final exams, all of which were essays. To my mind, this required an extraordinary amount of time.

Shillings, not dollars

In addition to a lack of time for professional involvement, these teachers did not have the financial resources to support involvement in an LTA. Although in Tanzania their positions as lecturers at the university were considered prestigious, most of them had a second source of income to be able to support their families. One of my colleagues, for example, raised poultry, a common practice among teachers of all levels, and another sold used cars imported from Japan. This economic reason was also given by many during their interviews for why their fellow English-language teachers might not be interested in joining an LTA in Tanzania. Not only did they not have the funds to pay for a membership, but they expected to be paid for attending a professional-development seminar or conference.

Finally, there was a lack of institutional support for professional organizations. The university administration rewarded the assistant lecturers and lecturers for conducting research and publishing (even if they had to pay a fee in order to get their papers published). Nothing in the university's Quality Assurance handbook (2014) refers to professional organizations or conferences.

Interview responses: *Ujamaa* or *ubinafsi?*

The interview responses appeared to fall into either the *ujamaa* or the *ubinafsi* duality proposed by Julius Nyerere (1971), Tanzania's first president. *Ujamaa*, meaning familyhood in Swahili, refers to his slogan about a form of socialism based on traditional African values. The most basic of these is equality; that is, everyone should be treated equally and with respect,

regardless of her/his abilities or social status. Nyerere (aka *Mwalimu,* or 'Teacher') wrote about three principles of equality, one of which was to share property with everyone in the social unit:

> Within the extended family, and even within the tribe, the economic level of one
>
> person could never get too far out of proportion to the economic level of
>
> others. . . . in time of need it was available to all . . . (pp. 107-108)

Ujamaa was practised by my colleagues in their everyday lives, not only in the personal but also the professional realms. Several of them told me that they were considered wealthy by their extended families because they were university lecturers. Relatives in other parts of Tanzania would ask them for financial help whenever there was an emergency, and they felt it their duty to respond. Professionally, the department also practised a version of familyhood in that the academic staff agreed to contribute to a general fund, which was overseen by one lecturer. Every year a certain amount of money was given to one person, on a rotating basis. In addition, if someone in the group had a personal emergency, the department would give that individual a certain sum to help deal with the problem. For example, during my time there, the father of one of my colleagues passed away, and he had to travel to another city in order to attend the funeral. I assume that the group helped him out financially with whatever they had in the fund. *Ujamaa* permeates the society.

Ubinafsi, in contrast, might be translated as individualism in English. It could also be translated as selfishness, but in my opinion, that word would be inaccurate, for I observed a remarkable amount of generosity in the country. By *ubinafsi,* I mean taking care of oneself first, in order to be in a position to take care of others. For example, one of the lecturers had arrived in Tanzania as a young refugee from a neighbouring country and slept on a straw mat throughout his childhood. 'I was the poorest pupil at school,' he recalled, and that motivated him to succeed

academically. If he worked hard, he thought he could improve his family's financial situation.

He explained it as such:

> If I would study and get employed, maybe I could reposition my family and
>
> change. So, from the point I entered, I joined secondary school, my feelings has
>
> [sic] been to look for, *How can I change my economic position of my family?*

Although it appears that he was thinking of only himself and his family, he was also concerned

about those relatives beyond his immediate family. Even now, with a PhD and a prestigious

university position, it is evident that whatever he takes on needs to benefit him financially

because so many others depend on him. He also sees himself as a role model:

> So, even to date, (chuckles), I'm trying to build something that would give me
>
> sense economically. Plus, those who are my dependents. We, in our culture,
>
> when you climb the social ladder, you have people who are hurting . . . and to
>
> be humane, you should look at them in a positive way, in a manner that supports
>
> them . . . to support these people, to show them the way.

These comments illustrate the values of a collectivist culture, yet they also reflect the dog-eat-

dog world of Tanzania's economic reality. Four of the respondents' comments were classified as

ujamaa, three as *ubinafsi,* and one of the comments did not fit into either category. The

comments of the *ubinafsi* respondents were about themselves and their own professional

interests. Two of them did not mention other teachers, their colleagues at the university, or

primary/secondary teachers of English in the country. One, for example, said that he attended

professional-development activities 'to enrich my career,' and another replied, 'For sure, I'm

interested,' when I asked about the possibility of ELT professional organizations in Tanzania.

Though they clearly identified as members of the ELT community of practice, neither of the lecturers expanded on their responses beyond themselves.

As for the more altruistic *ujamaa* responses, one of the interviewees reported that he and a colleague had attended a conference in South Africa, which inspired them to think of how they could organize a group in Tanzania whereby they could provide professional-development activities to English instructors there. At the time of the interview, he was involved with a project for developing language-supportive materials for secondary teachers. The group had travelled to three cities in Tanzania to share the materials at several schools. His eyes sparkled and his voice crescendoed as he recounted how the project supported subject-area teachers by giving them English vocabulary and grammar so that they would not have to resort to Kiswahili when teaching their subject, be it chemistry or biology. This lecturer was undoubtedly invested in his profession and exemplified the three modes of belonging in the CoP framework: engagement, imagination, and especially alignment, which involves "coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises" (Wenger, 1998, p. 174).

Another respondent who illustrated *ujamaa* was one of my colleagues in the College of Education. After hearing about my involvement with TESOL International and the existence of other organizations in Africa, he said that any professional practice required a 'forum for sharing' in order to improve in that practice:

> It's my hope that if we are, if English teachers are affiliated in organizations, they
> can have, they can be informed about a lot, uh, take an example of the paradigm
> shifts in the teaching, in the teaching, or in the teaching pedagogy . . . changes
> of the, of the ways of teaching. Normally we have got a very great problem in our

country whereby teachers get so alone to be acquainted with the new styles of

teaching, so the first challenge is . . . at the schools. So they have no avenue to

access, to get access to hear about what others are doing.

This individual recognized that teachers at the primary and secondary levels are often isolated

and that an organization such as TELTA would not only inform them of innovations in TEFL

pedagogy, but it would also put them in touch with their counterparts at other schools. His

expression of camaraderie attests to his imagination, a way of belonging in a community of

practice. This lecturer was not thinking just of himself and his counterparts at the university

level, but also of his former students, many of whom are now teachers in secondary schools. He

was able to imagine their situations as language teachers and their need to collaborate with their

peers.

Implications

The findings of this small study have implications for the university administration that

employs these teachers in Tanzania, the teachers themselves, and particularly for LTAs such as

TESOL International. The university needs to expand their view of what is valued in the

academic world. Publications are not the only venue for academics to disseminate their research

and learn about others'. Involvement in professional organizations and conferences should be

valued, too. The university also needs to consider either reducing class size, hiring more

teachers, and/or limiting enrollment. As for the teachers, now that they are aware of national and

international LTAs, they can practice the CoP mode of belonging known as alignment by

reaching out to TELTA and participating in that organization. In addition, they can apply for the

many scholarships that IATEFL offers for teachers in Africa. For its part, in 2015, IATEFL

recognized that it needed to support African LTAs (Bicknell & Lo, 2018). It is time that it act on that need. With regard to TESOL International, it claims that the organization 'values and seeks diverse and inclusive participation within the field of English language teaching' and that it 'promotes involvement and broad access to professional opportunities for all' (TESOL, 2019). Yet it appears it is practising *ubinafsi* in that its Awards program discriminates against my Tanzanian colleagues on the basis of their economic and geographic status. I encourage the leadership of all professional associations to promote *ujamaa* by examining their policies regarding membership and participation and by making the necessary changes to become truly accessible to *all* of the members of their professional communities of practice.

Conclusion

The qualitative and quantitative data show that the English-language teachers at this Tanzanian university share the same identity and repertoire of my North American, European, and Australasian colleagues in their ELT community of practice. They are professional, knowledgeable, and dedicated, yet none of them is a member of any organization nor do they attend international conferences. This is due not to any fault of their own, but to the political and economic reality of their circumstances and the lack of assistance and outreach by professional associations and government entities such as the British Council and the U.S. Embassy. Whether it is for personal development, *ubinafsi*, or to share with others, *ujamaa*, the teachers who participated in this research expressed a genuine desire to become involved in ELT associations. It is my hope that by becoming aware of IATEFL, TELTA, and TESOL, they can be empowered like the teachers in Cameroon (Smith & Kuchah, 2016) to align themselves with these communities of practice.

Professional Development of EFL Teachers in Tanzania

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Table 1. Respondents' academic backgrounds.

Demographic	Frequency ($n = 8$)
Degree	
Master's	5
PhD	3
Title	
Assistant lecturer	5
Lecturer	3
Teaching experience	
1-5 years	1
6-10 years	6
11-15 years	1

Table 2. Responses regarding lecturers' professional identity.

	Frequency
English-language teacher	7
Researcher	6
University teacher/professor	5
Teacher trainer/educator	5
Education professor	2
Linguistics professor	2
"Master trainer in language education"	1

Table 3. Lecturers' activities for improvement.

Activity	Frequency
Ask students for feedback of your teaching	8
Read professional journals, books, et al.	7
Meet with colleagues to discuss pedagogy	6
Conduct action research	4
Ask peers to observe your classes	3
Other activities (writing textbooks & doing research)	3
Attend professional conferences	2
Keep a teaching journal	1
Belong to professional organizations	0

Table 4. Frequency of responses about organizations.

Name of organization	I have not heard of it.	I have heard of it.	I would like to learn more about it.	I am a member.
IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language)	5	2	4	0
TELTA (Tanzanian English Language Teachers' Association)	6	2	3	0
TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)	0	8	3	0
Africa TESOL	3	5	2	0

Table 5. Course enrolments for respondents.

Respondent	Courses	Enrolment
A	English Syntax Communication Skills Translation and Interpretation Skills	> 2,000
B	English Syntax Rhetoric English Composition	> 200 35 56
C	English Structure English as a Second Language English Pragmatics English in East Africa Communication Skills	~ 300 ~ 300 ~ 200 ~ 300 2600
D	English Teaching Methods Communication Skills Language-Supportive Pedagogy	~ 250 2500 ~ 30
E	English Phonology English in East Africa Communication Skills	220 ~ 250 1400
F	English Morphology Modern Linguistic Theories	150-250 150-250
G	History and Dialects of English English Morphology	< 200 160-200
H	English Structure English in East Africa Psycholinguistics Rhetoric Communication Skills	~ 200 > 40 5 ~ 30 3500

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Demographic Information

Gender: ــــــ Female   ــــــ Male

Educational Institution: _____

Department: _____

Courses you regularly teach: _____
Number of years teaching (Circle one):   1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25   >25

Other information you would like to share: _____

_____

_____

_____

Professional Identity and Development

  1. How do you identify as a professional? Number as many as you would like, starting with your primary identity as #1.

        _____ English-language teacher   _____ university teacher/professor

        _____ teacher trainer/educator   _____ linguistics professor

        _____ education professor   _____ researcher

        _____ other: _____

                    _____

  2. How do you try to become a better teacher/researcher? (Check all that apply.)

        _____ keep a teaching journal and record your thoughts about your classes

        _____ read professional journals, books, et al.

        _____ ask peers to observe your classes

_____ meet with colleagues to discuss pedagogy

_____ ask students for informal feedback and/or for formal evaluations of your teaching

_____ conduct action research

_____ belong to professional organizations. (Name(s): _____

_____

_____

_____ attend professional conferences. Name(s):): _____

_____

_____

_____ attend online conferences and/or webinars. Name(s): _____

_____

_____

_____ Other activities: _____

_____

_____

3. Which of the above do you think are most beneficial to you as an English-language teacher? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Please indicate your familiarity with the following organizations:

Check all the boxes that apply to you.

Name of organization	I have not heard of it.	I have heard of it.	I would like to learn more about it.	I am a member.
IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language)				
TELTA (Tanzanian English Language Teachers' Association)				
TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)				
Africa TESOL				

Interview Questions

1. What courses do you teach?

2. What is your teaching load? Are you required to do research, service, administration, or work in any other areas?

3. Generally, how many students are in each of your classes?

4. Does your department, college, or university require that you do any kind of professional development?

5. In your responses, you said . . . Could you elaborate? OR What did you mean by . . . ? Do you think other teachers at UDOM would be interested in joining one of the professional organizations listed in the questionnaire? Why/Why not?