

The Position and Professional Status of the Tutor of English for Academic Purposes in Higher Education

Catrin (Kate) Jones

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School of Social Sciences

Cardiff University

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Abstract

Numbers of international students in UK universities have risen dramatically in the past decade and currently comprise a significant proportion of the student population. This has led to an increase in tutors of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to teach international students on pre university courses, and once they have enrolled onto subject-specific courses. Despite heightened interest in EAP tutors, they are still an under-researched group. In response, this exploratory study examines the position and professional status of EAP tutors in a number of universities in the UK.

The study employed a qualitative research strategy comprising semi-structured interviews with ten EAP tutors to explore their experiences and perspectives. A number of key themes emerged from the data regarding how EAP tutors view their role and their position in universities. The findings support the contested nature of the role described in the literature. This is evidenced in reservations regarding the designation EAP Tutor, variations in how tutors see their role, and in the responsibilities included. The participants are not linear careerists and did not plan to become EAP tutors. The data show that EAP occupies a position in the margins of academia, and tutors feel undervalued and in a lower status position compared to other groups. Although the majority of the sample consider the position of an EAP tutor to be a profession, with some reservations, the evidence indicates that it is an emerging profession, and that EAP has made significant progress towards professionalisation.

The research suggests that there are key issues still to be resolved but that EAP can strengthen its position within the university and as a profession. It is hoped that a greater understanding of the role will help improve the position and professional status of EAP tutors, and thus benefit the international students they teach.

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Part 1

Preface

Motivation for the study

Working in a UK university as a tutor of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), I came to realise that understanding the role and its position within the university are not straightforward matters. I was clear about the importance of the job I was doing as I could see the impact it was having on the lives of international students grappling with linguistic and study skills issues, and attempting to negotiate their way through university life. I felt, however, that as EAP tutors we don't quite fit into a neat box within the university structure. For example, we trained as teachers, not lecturers, and yet our job title is Tutor, which I felt carried a whole host of connotations I wasn't sure I could relate to; we are contracted to work regular office hours with limited flexibility to come and go in the way that academic staff do, and yet we do not feel like professional services staff; our busiest time is the summer when hundreds of fee-paying international students arrive for our summer pre-session courses and yet for most of the university the summer is 'down time', used for holidays, and building maintenance and improvements, making the booking of classrooms for example, an annual headache. Our relationship with the rest of the university feels very ad hoc: many people do not seem to know who we are and yet we have great working relationships with some academic departments. These successful links tend to be a result of finding a sympathetic individual within the department who 'gets it' in terms of what we do and is therefore happy to collaborate. As appreciated as this is, what is missing is wider recognition and a greater understanding of our role at an institutional level.

Linked to these feelings of dislocation is the sense that there is so much more that could be done to help international students maximise their time in UK universities, and that it is the students who are missing out because of the lack of awareness of our role as tutors.

Understanding how to improve the situation feels all the more important given the growing number of international students that we are seeing every year, particularly on pre-session summer courses.

After several years as an EAP tutor, I felt very much in an occupational rut. I looked around for progression through routes other than a management pathway and struggled to find opportunities aside from sideways moves to different universities. This impasse gave me the push to create my own growth through doing a master's in TESOL, going part-time in the University I was working in, making up part of my salary doing examining work, and then going on to study for a professional doctorate and starting some lecturing work.

Through the professional doctorate, I understand that what I'm feeling can be related to a wider perspective. I recognise that the "personal troubles" I was experiencing may well reflect "public issues" taking place in the field of EAP generally. My tutor, Professor Sally Power, discussed the idea of developing a professional imagination (2008) based on the ideas of C. Wright Mills' (2000) sociological imagination and connecting personal troubles and public issues. The importance of this resonates with me as a way of gaining perspective. I can see that understanding the role of the EAP tutor and communicating this to a wider audience is fundamental to improving the experience of international students.

This research then comes from my own need for personal growth; inspiration from the professional doctorate and my tutor; my desire to understand why EAP tutors don't quite fit into the university; and the recognition that an increased awareness of our role is needed in order to benefit the international students we teach.

Chapter 1 - Placing the thesis in context

1.1 The focus of the research

The number of international students studying in UK higher education institutions (HEIs) has continued to show a steady increase, reaching a total of 458,490 non-UK domiciled students in the academic year 2017-18, an increase of 22,970 since 2013-14 (HESA 2019a). This growth is one of the factors which has contributed to the increased diversity of the student body, and which has provided a range of linguistic and educational challenges for universities (Hyland 2006). One of the effects of these challenges is the increased importance of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), “the language and associated practices that people need in order to undertake study or work in English medium higher education” (Gillet 2019 para.1). In turn, this has meant growth in the need for EAP tutors in universities, the staff tasked with helping international students to become familiar with the linguistic, cultural and institutional conventions required to study effectively. Although interest in EAP tutors has increased, this group has been underinvestigated and there is a gap in terms of research into EAP practitioners and the issues which affect them. Similarly, further research is required into the professional status of this group. Although there have been moves towards professionalisation, different views on this have emerged (Ding and Bruce 2017; Sizer 2019). In light of these points, this research aims to explore the position and professional status of the tutor of English for Academic Purposes in higher education.

This chapter aims to prepare the reader for the rest of the thesis by providing the context and necessary background information required to understand the role of the EAP tutor in universities. It first considers the presence of international students in universities, and then goes on to provide a more detailed explanation of what is understood by EAP. The role of the EAP tutor is introduced, with reference to the location of EAP units within universities and the work conditions of EAP tutors. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis to orientate the reader.

1.2 International students in UK universities

As mentioned above, the increase in international students in UK universities has been significant. International students are particularly prominent on postgraduate courses, with almost half (43%) of all full-time postgraduate students coming from outside the UK or EU in 2017-18 (HESA 2019b). Definitions of what constitutes an international student can differ considerably. For the purposes of this research, international student is defined as a student from outside the UK or EU; students from these two areas are referred to as home students. Bolsmann and Miller (2008 p.76) state that this understanding of an international student places emphasis “on the financial and economic aspect of the recruitment of students” as EU students pay the same fees as UK students, and international students pay higher fees. This definition has been selected on the basis that this distinction is often made with regard to which students can access free English language provision as part of their university course. It would usually be available to international students because of the increased fees they pay.

The fee revenue that international students provide for universities is considerable. Bolsmann and Miller (2008 p.87) found that “the dominant rationale” for the recruitment of this group by university managers is their budget contribution. Hadley (2015 p.79) notes that in his study, the ‘cash cow’ metaphor appears frequently in relation to how his participants perceive the treatment of international students. In addition, the contributions of international students to the wider UK economy are also recognised. Universities UK (2019) refers to research by Oxford Economics which states that international students studying in the UK generated at least £25 billion in the academic year 2014-15. Unsurprisingly, it is a trend that the UK government is keen to see continuing. It has shown its commitment to increasing the number of international students studying in the UK to 600,000 per year by 2030 (GOV.UK 2019a). Recognising that it is a competitive market, with other English-speaking countries also popular with international students, it has also introduced a number of strategies to ensure this growth, including the introduction of the two-year post study work visa (GOV.UK 2019b). It should also be noted that “lucrative summer pre-session courses” (Hyland 2018 p.389) run by universities, which prepare international students to join mainstream courses also generate significant revenue for universities.

Despite the emphasis on the economic benefits of international students described above, the positive impact of this group in other areas is also recognised, such as the ethnic and cultural diversity they bring which can enrich university campuses. It is argued that the presence of international students plays a key part in providing “a genuinely internationalist education in British universities” (Tannock 2013 p.459) helping prepare home students for a global world. In practice, however, this may not be the case: informal personal observation has shown that hoped-for integration does not always happen, with groups of students from different nationalities failing to mix.

Integration of international students into HEIs is not without its problems. An example can be seen in the concerns about the English language levels of international students which are raised within universities and have also been discussed in the media (for example Parr 2015; Allison 2017). There are also questions about the position of international students in terms of equality and justice. In his insightful study drawing on attitudes towards international students in 22 universities and 7 higher education institutions, Tannock (2018) highlights a number of fundamental inequalities relating to international students such as the discrepancies between home and international students’ tuition fees, and the lack of a widening access agenda in terms of international students.

Amongst university staff, different attitudes to international students can be observed. Tannock (2018 p.161-2) describes “a hard nationalist stance” from staff who are not committed to the university’s internationalisation agenda and do not see why they should adapt to the needs of international students who have chosen to come here. He contrasts this with “a softer academic nationalism” in which staff recognise the need to help international students adapt to life in UK HEIs. This has resulted in more international curricula support for these students. Tannock (2018) comments that even with more inclusive curricula, international students are in a deficit position as they lack knowledge of the British education system and struggle to catch up, particularly on one-year master’s courses.

Providing international students with the support they need to cope with the linguistic demands of higher education can also be viewed as part of this deficit model. Some see EAP as simply fixing international students' faulty language (Hadley 2015), which is a view that will perhaps remain as long as it is believed that international students need to be socialised into the British system. Despite such criticisms, the increased demand for the teaching of English for Academic Purposes in universities, and thus, EAP tutors, remains. As Hyland (2018 p.388) points out, without the support of EAP tutors, students "would be vulnerable to the challenging contexts in which they find themselves": often academic subject lecturers do not teach the literacy conventions of their subject areas and EAP tutors are the only support available to international students.

1.3 Defining EAP

EAP has its roots in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), an umbrella term which covers many types of English Language Teaching (ELT), including English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where the language taught focuses on the needs of the learners in relation to a particular context. EAP comes under this heading as the particular context is academic study and the students in such classes tend to be working towards common academic goals. It is important to note that EAP and ESP were both "fledging fields" (Hyland and Hamp-Lyons 2002 p.3) in the early 1980's, and as such EAP is a relatively new area.

In addition to the brief definition of EAP given above (Gillet 2019), it is also recognised that the term is much more complex. For example, Hyland (2006 p.2) emphasises a further dimension of EAP, describing it as "specialised English-language teaching", particularly because of the now widely acknowledged need to focus on the varying discourse and linguistic conventions in academic disciplines. This specialisation can be seen in Hyland's (2006 p.4) more complex definition:

EAP attempts to offer systematic, locally managed, solution-oriented approaches that address the pervasive and endemic challenges posed by academic study to a diverse student body by focussing on student needs and discipline-specific communication skills.

It should be noted that no mention is made of international students or language learning in the second definition. The fact that EAP is an area which can equally assist native speakers of English with the demands of higher education should be recognised as contributing to its growing importance. This is particularly the case with reference to widening access strategies in HEIs and, thus, increases in numbers of home students who may also need language and study skills support. A further definition by Charles (2013 p.137) makes reference to the part research into the literacy conventions of different disciplines plays in EAP: “EAP is concerned with researching and teaching the English needed by those who use the language to perform academic tasks”. This emphasis on research ties into discussions regarding the knowledge base of EAP which are referred to in the following chapter.

Discipline-specific communication can be seen in the fact that EAP can be further divided into English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). The former focuses on generic language and skills for academic study, whereas the latter is more targeted, dealing with academic language and skills related to a particular academic discipline. In UK universities, typically both EGAP and ESAP would be taught to students at different stages of their academic journey, depending on which pathway into academic study they have taken. EGAP tends to be the focus of pre-university courses (for example summer pre-sessional courses) where students from different subject areas are grouped together in the same class. Other pre-university courses such as international foundation programmes may provide both general academic English classes and subject-specific tuition for students doing subjects such as medicine, law and engineering. A form of ESAP can also be seen in in-sessional provision which offers additional English language classes and one-to-one tutorials to international students while they are studying their main academic subject. In-sessional provision varies considerably from institution to institution, but classes typically focus in part on helping the students with the reading and assignments they are required to complete for their academic course. One-to-one language tutorials where the student brings a few pages of his/her assignment to a meeting with an EAP tutor are also often an integral part of an in-sessional tutor’s work. The aim of such tutorials is usually to increase learner independence: through highlighting the typical linguistic and stylistic errors that the student makes, it is hoped that the student will learn to spot similar errors in the remainder of the piece of work.

It should be noted that some EAP classes form part of accredited university courses but many others do not. For example, international foundation programmes are often accredited. Although in-session classes may sometimes be part of credit-bearing modules, they are usually provided as additional 'support' classes. The positioning of EAP as a support service has created much debate in the literature (for example Raimes 1991; Ding and Bruce 2017) and has many implications, including for the professional status of EAP tutors. This topic is discussed further in Chapter 2, the literature review.

1.4 Introducing the EAP tutor

It is clear from the above that teaching is fundamental to the role of an EAP tutor. EAP tutors may find themselves working on a range of courses at different times or simultaneously throughout their careers. For this reason, this research does not differentiate between teaching roles on different programmes but rather asks tutors about their EAP experience generally.

A range of other responsibilities can also be considered central, where they occur frequently as part of the tutor's role, such as course materials development, test design and assessment. However, there are differences of opinion about what should be considered core including working with academic staff; research; evaluation of courses and materials; and needs assessment (Ding and Bruce 2017 p.118). The extent to which these responsibilities are included in tutors' roles varies according to the context they are teaching in and the location of where they are working in the HEI. Further discussion of what is included in the role of the EAP tutor and the key significance of this are also continued in the next chapter.

1.5 The location of the EAP unit in universities

When considering EAP, it is important to be aware that the location of English language sections in HEIs in the UK varies considerably. In some cases, the English language section is a separate unit attached to an administrative or support section of a university, such as the International Office; in others, it is housed within an academic department. Another location, which is symptomatic of the establishment of market forces in universities in general, is the increasing trend for English language provision at HEIs to be managed by a

private company, referred to as “exogenous privatisation” (Ball 2008 p.50); growth in this area has been rapid.

Writing for the Times Higher Education in 2007, Newman noted the emergence of this trend and that six private companies would soon have deals with twenty-two UK universities. Three of these companies’ websites currently show the extent of the growth in the thirteen years since the article was written: Kaplan (2019) has links with fifteen UK universities, including Nottingham Trent University in the form of Nottingham Trent International College, and the International Foundation Programme at the University of Bristol. Study Group (2019) has agreements with sixteen UK universities, including the International Study Centre at Durham University and The University of Sheffield International College. INTO (2019) has partnerships with ten institutions, including the INTO Centre at the University of East Anglia and the INTO Centre at the University of Exeter. The most recent study providing figures of private providers in partnerships with UK universities overall was by Bell (2016) showing that there were sixty-one such alliances in January 2016. Despite this proliferation, he notes that the effects of this trend are under-researched in the literature.

The idea of contracting out English language provision has proved controversial, with the increase in private providers prompting discussion in the press and “causing concern among some academics” (Newman 2007 para.4). There have been fears that an increase in for-profit organisations will lead to a decrease in staff salaries, job security, and academic standards and an increase in false promises to students as has been seen along the lines of some of the problems seen in US institutions (Ryan, 2010). These concerns are echoed in Bell’s (2016) research. He refers to a number of significant criticisms, including the fact that the position and status of EAP have been weakened as the links with private providers place it further outside the structures of academia. Further criticisms cited (Bell 2016 p.91) include: lower levels of pay for EAP tutors; increased teaching hours; no allocated time for research or scholarly activity; and lower qualifications required for positions of employment. Bell’s (2016 p.91) position is that these partnerships seem to represent “a systematic downgrading and de-professionalisation” of the field.

Overall data on the numbers of EAP units in different locations date back to a study carried out by Fulcher (2009) in 2007 and did not provide a full picture even then. He identified 104 UK providers from HEIs' websites but only received a twenty percent response rate to questionnaires sent out requesting information about aspects such as location and structure of the unit. The majority of respondents were units attached to different parts of an HEI, and only three were departments in their own right. Fulcher (2009 p.133) notes that the "uncertainty institutions face about the place and role of TESOL/EAP" is reflected in the range of different structures reported, and in the fact that their "anomalous position" in the university was mentioned in a proportion of responses.

A range of locations of EAP units was also found in more recent informal research carried out by Furneaux (2017) for a plenary talk at the BALEAP (the professional organisation for EAP practitioners, formerly B.A.L.E.A.P., The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes - further information is given below) conference in 2017. BALEAP has over a hundred institutional members but again a low number, only sixteen, responded to a request for information. Out of these, seven respondents were part of academic departments, three were located in a student support service, two were run by private providers, one was an independent, free-standing unit within the university, and there was no information given for the other three. It is clear that there is still a need for more representative research to give a fuller picture of the current situation of EAP within HEIs.

The lower status of EAP is a theme which frequently appears in the literature and it is considered that the location of the EAP unit has implications for this. Bell (2016 p.93), for example, comments that even where EAP units are not run by a private provider there is the sense that EAP tutors "are not afforded the same kudos, professional respect and working conditions as academics in other disciplines". Ding and Bruce (2017 p.108) argue that EAP has become more marginalised in academia as a result of the trend of separating EAP units from academic departments, which moves EAP further away from scholarly activity and research.

The wider university setting is intricately linked to the provision of EAP within the HEI. The general trend for the neoliberalization of universities has involved the marketization of HE in

general and the view of students as consumers. This can be seen in attitudes to international as well as home students, particularly as a result of the higher fees paid by international students. Ding and Bruce (2017 p.40) describe “macro-influences” in the current university context that impact on EAP. They describe the need for EAP units to be financially self-sufficient and revenue-generating, and to function effectively as businesses. There is also the expectation that EAP will play its part in the marketized university system, with the increased competition for international students. These factors lead to pressures such as EAP staff teaching higher numbers of hours at the expense of scholarship activities, and the delivery of courses in short spaces of time using pre-packaged materials.

Location of the EAP unit within the HEI and the scope of role of the EAP tutor in each organisation also impacts on contracts, pay and work conditions for EAP tutors. A wide range of situations exists, including permanent, fixed term and zero-hour contracts; academic contracts, professional services contracts or a combination of the two; and teaching only or teaching and scholarship contracts, where research or scholarly activity makes up a proportion of contracted hours. This variation and lack of transparency is evident from informal discussions between EAP colleagues in different institutions and can be seen in the following examples. At Heriot-Watt University, for instance, staff are known as Assistant or Associate Professors (Grade 7 and 8 respectively), are on academic contracts and have a scholarship component included in their contracts. They are expected to carry out pedagogical research to inform their practice and to disseminate this at conferences. At the Arts University Bournemouth, staff are on academic contracts even though they are classed as a professional support service. These contracts are teaching only and research and scholarship, which are mentioned in their contracts, are seen as an optional extra.

In addition to a core of full-time staff on permanent contracts, hourly-paid staff, again with a range of titles (for example Associate Tutor or Lecturer) are often employed, also on a variety of contracts. This is particularly the case over the summer, when demand from international students for pre-sessional courses is highest. Universities are under pressure to recruit high numbers of temporary staff to cope with the large numbers of students and, as a result, competitively high salaries are common during this period of the year. By its very nature, teaching English as a foreign language (the background which most EAP tutors come

from) is flexible, and short-term contracts are typical; this is also proving to be true of EAP, with conditions in the industry varying greatly.

Given the extensive range of contexts, contracts and work conditions that exist for EAP tutors, it is difficult to generalise regarding matters of employment (Ding and Bruce 2017 p. 108). It is important to note, however, that the issue of conditions for EAP tutors on short term, low paid contracts is becoming an increasingly prominent theme in the field of EAP. Recent discussions on the BALEAP mailing list have shown concerns regarding precarity in EAP, including recognition of its psychological impact. An upcoming professional event is planned to discuss such issues in a format which ensures that a range of voices is heard, especially those who are in precarious positions of employment themselves. There is also a sense from the mailing list that tutors on temporary contracts have felt a sense of being the 'other' as opposed to being included in the 'we' of tutors in more stable positions of employment. Such events represent steps towards the coming together of the EAP community to deal with significant socio-economic issues facing tutors.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This introductory chapter has aimed to introduce the reader to the research by putting the field of EAP in context and acquainting them with the role of the EAP tutor. Part 1 of this thesis continues with the literature review: this builds on the introduction by considering the literature in relation to the role of the EAP tutor, its position within universities, and professionalisation. Chapter 3 explains the qualitative approach taken for the study and the methods used for data collection. Part 2 begins with an overview of the participants involved in the study. This is followed by Chapter 4, in which the data are divided into two parts: the EAP tutor and the EAP tutor within the university. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis by drawing together the findings in order to discuss them and the conclusions reached. The implications of the findings for EAP units are discussed.

Chapter 2 – Reviewing the literature

2.1 Chapter overview

In order to provide the theoretical background to this study, three bodies of literature will be drawn on. The first is the literature related to EAP and EAP practitioners. This is followed by research into the position of EAP in universities, and finally the literature on professionalisation and EAP is considered. It is the interconnectedness of these strands that leads to the research questions in the overall conclusion to this chapter, along with an explanation of how this study will contribute to filling the gap in the current literature.

2.2 EAP and EAP tutors

The first chapter described the “uncertainty” of universities regarding the location of EAP units and the role and status of EAP tutors; this has “practical implications for the role and identity of the practitioners themselves” (Ding and Bruce 2017 p.45). The effects of this insecurity are evident in the themes that are raised in the EAP literature and which are discussed in this chapter.

2.2.1 The contested nature of EAP

As previously noted, defining what is meant by EAP is complex and it can be seen as a contested area in its own right. Bruce (2019 para.1) comments that “reductive” definitions which give EAP “a narrow, technical focus” are common. He argues that the focus of EAP is two knowledge areas: academic discourse competence and academic processes and values (see Figure 1) and that problems are created when one of these areas is forgotten. Bruce (2019 para.5) sees language as central to EAP but the language “is used to achieve discursive academic purposes, which is what differentiates EAP from other types of general English language teaching”.

The types of knowledge underpinning EAP are key to arguments that EAP should be seen as an academic subject in its own right. It is recognised (Hyland 2018) that although EAP originally had a less complex practical focus, thanks to the new knowledge base that has developed we are more aware of its connections to other academic communities. Hyland

Figure 1 - Defining EAP (Bruce 2019)

Two types of knowledge	What is involved	How competence is achieved
1. Academic discourse competence (Central to EAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject epistemologies • Assignment genres • Processing & creating extended texts • Textual grammar (e.g.: coherence & cohesion) • Metadiscourse devices • Academic lexis 	Through genre-based pedagogy ie the implementation of an analytic syllabus with holistic objectives, based around genres or text types
2. Academic processes and values (Secondary)	Familiarity with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • university structure and hierarchies • means of communication • course documents • modes of course delivery • academic integrity • accessing & processing information • development of student autonomy 	Through exposure to lectures and tutorials; completion of larger assessed academic tasks that give practice of necessary skills such as accessing, reporting and synthesising knowledge, and expressing critical thinking.

(2018 p.389) argues that EAP now forms part of the knowledge base of applied linguistics, as well as having an interdisciplinary role at the crossroads of applied linguistics, education, sociology and science. He believes that it is now “a much more theoretically grounded and research-informed enterprise” thanks to features such as an increased research focus, subject-related journals, specialist expertise and conferences, all of which help to make it “a full-fledged educational practice”.

Similarly, Charles (2013 p.137-8) states that EAP research based on corpora, genre analysis, and investigation into its wider social context are coming together to contribute to “multifaceted” and “thicker” accounts of EAP, which are both extending and deepening our knowledge of the subject. According to Belcher (2013 p.546), ESP is in the process of “constructing a knowledge base facilitative of pedagogical praxis” which helps students

challenge assumptions and use the language and associated cultural practices for their own purposes rather than passively fitting in. This extensive knowledge base is reflected in the Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes (CFTEAP) developed by BALEAP (2008). The importance of this document is discussed in more detail later in this section.

2.2.2 EAP Practitioners – an under-researched and contested area

Although the field of EAP has a growing body of related academic literature (Ding and Bruce 2017 p.1), EAP tutors as a focus for enquiry remain largely under-researched despite the increased demand for their services. Belcher (2013 p.544) comments that the “community ESP professionals know least about is their own”. However, there is an increasing recognition of this lack of attention to EAP practitioners in the literature and of the importance of addressing this gap. As a result, the EAP tutor is becoming a more prominent figure. For example, at the BALEAP conference in Bristol in April 2017, a discussion of EAP tutor identity was a prominent theme in a number of presentations, such as the one by Ding (2017) ‘The EAP Practitioner: Examining an unexamined life’, in which he refers to this lack of knowledge as a “lacuna”.

One of the key questions within this lacuna is posed by Ding and Bruce (2017 p.3): “Is EAP a research-informed academic subject or a peripheral support service”? The answer is crucial in determining how EAP and the role of EAP tutors within universities are seen. Ding and Bruce (2017) discuss the effects of how EAP is considered and their views are summarised in Figure 2. Throughout their book “The English for Academic Purposes Practitioner: Operating on the Edge of Academia”, Ding and Bruce (2017) argue that EAP should be seen as an academic subject with the consequent effects for EAP practitioners; however, from the title of their book, it is clear how they feel EAP practitioners are positioned in reality. The fact that EAP tutors are on the edge of academia is ironic and represents a “core conundrum”: the irony is that the role of the EAP practitioner is to facilitate students’ entry into academic communities and yet their own position in academia is ambivalent (Ding and Bruce 2017 p.3).

Figure 2 - Conceptualisations of EAP (Ding and Bruce 2017 pp.7-11)

Area	Support service approach	Academic field of study
Overall goal of EAP	“Language acquisition for general proficiency development”.	“Developing discourse competence”. Cannot separate language from academic world it is situated in.
Aim of practitioners	Aim to develop linguistic knowledge and communicative skills. The backgrounds of most who come into EAP teaching reflects this.	Aim to help students to participate in discourse community they are studying in. Practitioners need to develop a complex base of knowledge to do this.
Role of practitioners	Teach language with materials which have an academic focus. Teach study skills including critical thinking. Lack of subject-specific context as belief is that these skills can be applied to different academic fields.	Students are seen as “discourse analysts”. Everything taught is much more contextualised and related to the students’ particular discipline.
Time allowed	EAP courses take place within “limited (and quite often unrealistic) time frames”.	Sees “the development of students’ discourse competence as a longer-term enterprise”.
Teaching resources	Sees EAP as a “commodified subject, teachable from finite commercial courses”.	Practitioner uses “a wide range of resources”. Commercially available materials are just part of this, along with practitioner’s developing knowledge.
Practitioner identity	Practitioner “assumes an identity reflected in the metaphor of the ‘butler stance’ proposed by Raimes (1991)”; EAP practitioners are “technical support” to academic staff. Practitioners do not need theory; professional development is focused on technical skills. Practitioners are “not required to engage intellectually within the larger, collective knowledge-building role of the university”.	Practitioners actively engage with theory and research and this shapes their identity. They need to understand disciplinary discourses and use what they discover in their own pedagogy.
Academics in other disciplines	Academics are able to analyse discourse of own subject area.	Academics are subject specialists not discourse analysts. This would require specialist theory/skills gained by experience or from applied linguistics.

Figure 2 shows that in terms of the ‘Overall goal of EAP’, and the ‘Aim of practitioners’ the ‘support service approach’ emphasises skills that are similar to those that a student would gain in a language school; the ‘academic field of study’ approach, however, represents the more extensive knowledge base of EAP illustrated in Figure 1. With regard to ‘Practitioner

identity', where EAP is seen as a support service, it becomes a lesser status activity. Raimes (1991 p.243) uses the metaphor of the 'butler's stance' to illustrate the fact that "ESL/EFL teachers value the subject matter of other disciplines at the expense of the content inherent in our field and at the expense of writer, reader and language form". She refers to the butler's motto of "uncomplaining, unobtrusive service" to emphasise the sense of subjugation. Hyland (2018 p.386) agrees that when EAP is in this position it "de-professionalises teachers and marginalises EAP units".

Another point under the heading 'Practitioner identity' is the difference in terms of the position of research: it is not required under the 'support service' heading but is key to the practitioner's identity in an 'academic field of study' position. In Fulcher's (2009 p.134) research, out of the approximately twenty EAP/ TESOL providers in universities that returned questionnaires, only two respondents located in academic departments stated that research was a high priority. The majority replied that there was no EAP research focus; this was even the case where there were postgraduate and research students.

This frequent lack of a research focus in EAP units has been seen, along with the position of EAP units on the outskirts of academia, and EAP tutors in the 'butler's stance' (Raimes 1991), as one of the contributing factors to EAP's lack of status in universities. Bell (2016 p.93) comments that in academia, status is usually the result of peer-reviewed research and that EAP practitioners' failure to carry out research means "they may well be sowing the seeds of their own demise". Bell (2016) also points out that the same problem is also experienced by academic staff on teaching only contracts. Ding (2014) highlights many of the issues associated with research and scholarly activity, including difficulties in reaching precise definitions of both terms. He notes that the act of making the end result public and open to discussion by peers is key, and that for EAP, debates around the idea of research include the following questions: should it be part of the role of the EAP tutor? how much time and resources should be allocated to it? are EAP tutors justified in complaining about their "marginal position" (Ding 2014 para.5) in universities if they are not research active? It is recognised in the literature (for example Bell 2016 p.322; Ding and Bruce 2017 p.163) that in journals such as the dedicated Journal of English for Academic Purposes (JEAP) an increased focus on practice is needed to narrow the gap that exists between theory and

practice. In his editorial to the July 2017 issue, however, Hyland (2017) comments on the focus of the research submitted for publication, noting that the journal has a high rejection rate of 80% as many submissions are not related to EAP and few have a practical focus on the classroom. Instead, there is a narrow focus on textual analysis, for example lexis and metadiscourse. The introduction of the 'Research into Practice' section in JEAP announced in Hyland's editorial (2017) aimed to help redress this imbalance.

As has been mentioned above, discussions regarding the status of EAP tutors are common throughout the literature. It has been argued, however, that EAP needs to accept responsibility for its own role in the existence of this inferior status and position in the 'butler's stance' (Raimes 1991). Hyland (2018 p.395), for example, argues that EAP has "failed to establish the value of our work and the status of our profession" through a ready acceptance of working for and not with academic departments, and accepting a support role instead of emphasising EAP's existence as an independent subject with its own knowledge base and skills. Hyland (2018) summarises further elements of the criticism EAP has seen over the years. For example, Hyland refers to Spack's (1988) argument that it is not the role of EAP tutors to teach the discourse and practices of different academic communities as they do not have the knowledge or expertise to do this.

The difficulties facing EAP tutors are also recognised. As noted in Chapter 1, in today's corporatized universities, there is an overemphasis on the profit-generating potential of EAP, with EAP courses providing a rich source of revenue for universities, particularly summer pre-session courses. As a result, a support service role is almost inevitable as tutors may be teaching for an increased number of hours with no time allocated to focus on the aspects of EAP which reflect an academic subject approach, such as research, disciplinary discourse analysis and bespoke materials development. In such contexts where EAP staff do conduct research it is in addition to contractual requirements. Ding and Bruce (2017) see research as crucial to EAP flourishing rather than just surviving in today's universities but they recognise that this can require a considerable investment of the tutor's own time and money, especially when the EAP unit is situated in a university that only sees its financial value. They present a rallying call to EAP tutors and managers to focus on research and share knowledge about the benefits of an 'academic subject' approach to EAP

in order to secure its place in academia (Ding and Bruce 2017 p.156). Harwood (2017 p.5) also advocates the importance of the EAP tutor in terms of conducting and disseminating research, but he too recognises that this may be unrealistic because of the limits the position of EAP in universities imposes: heavy workloads, financial limitations and the fact they are “struggling against being seen as low status ‘service providers’”.

2.2.3 Designation

The uncertainty regarding the role of EAP tutors can also be seen in the lack of consensus over designation. In job advertisements and professional discussions, job titles used include EAP Tutors, Teachers, Fellows, Instructors and Lecturers; examples of the range can be seen in the job advertisements on the BALEAP website (2020a). The designation ‘EAP Practitioner’ is common in the literature and Ding and Bruce (2017 p.122) choose to use it in their seminal text, explaining their choice as follows:

Practitioner and practice carry with them connotations and associations with established, expert, autonomous and powerful professions with significant cultural and social capital such as the legal and medical professions.

The authors believe that the term “is connotative with practice, applied knowledge and most importantly it signals professionalism and professional status” (Ding and Bruce 2017 p.122). Their choice indicates moves towards the professionalisation of EAP which is discussed in the final section of this chapter. Ding and Bruce (2017 p.121) have found, however, that “it is not uniformly or consistently used” and that often a range of terms is used interchangeably. They state that ‘practitioner’ is “self” or rather “community-designated”, and is not commonly used by institutions to refer to EAP staff. It is felt that the use of this term suggests that the role is wider than that of teacher alone. For the purposes of this research, the term EAP Tutor will be used as it is felt that this is the designation that is used most widely in practical terms outside the literature.

The importance of job titles has been shown to be far reaching, having an impact on areas such as the lived experiences of employees, the construction of work identities and anticipated output (Melling 2019). Grant et al. (2014 p.1202) highlight the importance of

titles inside and outside the workplace and emphasise the fact that some job titles do not always accurately convey the skills and roles of some employees. The authors refer to the self-expressive function of job titles and the effect they have on employees' feelings of being "understood and accepted" in work and outside.

Nomenclature of university staff roles has been investigated and is recognised as important in terms of identity. Although there are few studies focusing on job titles in HE in general, it is a topic which is increasingly investigated with regard to professional services staff (Melling 2019), which is the category that EAP staff are often positioned in in HEIs. Professional services comprises the administrative, clerical, technical and manual staff of a university, which provides support services to academic departments. The services under this umbrella can be divided up in a number of ways but typically include sections such as Human Resources, Information Services, Estates and an International Office. EAP units may find themselves as part of a range of these sections, including Library Services, an International Office, Recruitment and Admissions, or Student Services. The name 'professional services' replaces previous terms such as general staff, administrative staff and non-academic staff. Studies have shown (for example Sebalj et al. 2012 p.470) that the term "non-academic" is seen as devaluing, demeaning and unwanted", contributing to a divisive 'us and them' mentality. Kolsaker (2014 p.132) posits that the use of the term 'professional services' is part of a "deliberate strategy to professionalise university administration".

2.2.4 Routes into EAP

Taking one of a proliferation of basic short courses to train to become a teacher of English as a foreign language is often the first step into the field of English language teaching although many people teach on the strength of being a native speaker of English alone. The range and quality of these courses vary with some of the initial courses (for example the certificate courses run by Trinity College or Cambridge English) being valued more highly than others.

Routes into EAP are varied but for work in HEIs, a further qualification is often asked for. Which qualification is the most appropriate is a topic that has been discussed on EAP fora, such as the BALEAP mailing list, and is a discussion which divides the EAP community.

Campion (2015 para.2) notes that the debate essentially concerns “a basic dichotomy/distinction between skills and knowledge”. On the one hand, there is the Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults (DELTA), available from the same two providers mentioned above, for example Cambridge English (2019). This is a practical advanced teaching qualification focusing on classroom skills. On the other hand, there are arguments for master’s level qualifications in TESOL, applied linguistics or a related area, through which the bearer would gain a better understanding of academic literacies and the research process. A lack of consistency regarding what is required can be seen in job advertisements (BALEAP 2020a) reflecting the fact that the industry is still developing and that different views of EAP practitioners’ roles and identity exist. Campion (2015) rightly comments that these debates are fundamental to who tutors are and echo the uncertainty described above regarding the contested nature of EAP.

Harwood and Petri (2011 p.252) comment that “in some parts of the world, institutions ask ELT teachers to teach EAP without providing specialized training”. This is common in the UK, where the higher qualifications described above are not usually EAP focused and it is unusual for EAP tutors to be asked for specific qualifications in EAP teaching. The number and variety of courses leading to these specific EAP qualifications have increased significantly in recent years, however, and now includes short courses, master’s degrees, and courses focusing on different aspects of EAP, such as technology and writing (see BALEAP 2020b for examples). Such courses assist teachers with making the transition from general English language teaching to EAP and provide development for more experienced EAP tutors. A study by Campion (2012 p.2) suggests that general English teachers would welcome pre-service training focused on EAP as part of an “ongoing framework of EAP teacher development” but not as a pre-requisite for entering the profession. The proliferation of EAP courses is further evidence that the specialized nature of EAP teaching is being recognised and that it is considered an area worthy of focus. Currently, however, EAP tutors are subject to growing demands to be subject specialists but without the status that this confers. It is recognised in the literature that there will be further developments related to EAP tutor education in the future (for example Bell 2016 p.97) particularly in light of the growth of the profession.

2.2.5 The development of a professional organisation for EAP

Despite the uncertainty in the field of EAP described above, greater clarity has been achieved through the timely steps taken by BALEAP, “the global forum for EAP professionals”, which describes its primary role as being to support “the professional development of those involved in learning, teaching, scholarship and research in English for Academic Purposes” (BALEAP 2020c ‘About Us’). Membership of BALEAP is available for individuals and institutions on a voluntary basis and is not required to work as an EAP tutor or to function as an EAP unit. The current name BALEAP was adopted in 2010 from its previous title the British Association of Lecturers of English for Academic Purposes in 1989; this developed from SELMOUS (Special English Language Materials for Overseas University Students), which was founded in 1972. The change in name reflects the widening of interest from simply a focus on developing teaching materials to a much broader sphere. A fuller account of the birth of the organisation can be found in Bell’s (2016) research where he presents an interesting and thorough overview of the development of EAP.

BALEAP’s support for professional development comprises a number of strands, including a biennial conference and regular one-day professional interest meetings (PIMs), focusing on selected aspects of EAP teaching and research. To counteract the lack of a formal structure for entering and developing within the EAP field, in 2008, BALEAP (2008) created the ‘Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes’ (CFTEAP). It aimed to address “a gap which exists in EAP-specific teacher qualifications” by describing what is considered to be best practice in the field (BALEAP 2008 p.2). The eleven competencies relate to the following areas: Academic practice; EAP students; Curriculum development; and Programme implementation. The document states that the framework could be used for a number of purposes, including supporting EAP teachers’ professional development; teacher recruitment and to assist with “raising the profile of the profession within institutions and the further and higher education sector” (BALEAP 2008 p.2).

The CFTEAP forms the basis of the BALEAP accreditation scheme for institutions and individuals, which is described below, and is widely referred to within the EAP field in the UK. Despite recognizing the document’s value as it was produced by senior practitioners in the field and is therefore considered to be representative of professional opinion, it has

been criticised for a number of reasons. Firstly, Ding and Campion (2016 p.553) argue that it is “UK-centric – lacking contextual sensitivity and range”, making it unknown if the document reflects competencies appropriate for different settings. The lack of a global focus is also mentioned by practitioners in other countries, for example MacDonald (2016 p.108) in Canada. Ding and Campion (2016) also note that it is impossible to know whether the framework is even truly representative of UK settings: the methodology behind it is not specified and, as emphasized above and in the literature, there is a dearth of research focusing on EAP tutors’ professional lives, meaning it is difficult to know how appropriate the framework is. Thirdly, the authors point out that the framework aims to help practitioners become part of a community, and as such, involves “appropriating and reproducing this set of competencies” (Ding and Campion 2016 p.553). They lament the lack of criticality involved in such a process and the fact that there is a no emphasis on creation of new EAP praxis. The authors comment that the framework represents “an idealized holotype” (Ding and Campion 2016 p.553) of an EAP practitioner. Despite these valid comments, it is recognised that BALEAP has taken a significant step in helping to standardise and professionalise EAP in the UK. The fact that there was clearly a need to create this kind of document indicates the current situation the EAP profession finds itself in. However, as Ding and Campion (2016) point out, the CFTEAP needs to be updated to include ongoing developments within the EAP field or risk stagnation.

Another significant step taken by BALEAP was setting up its accreditation schemes for institutions and individuals. Institutions can choose to apply to go through the institutional accreditation process set up by BALEAP, the aim of which is to “establish and sustain the standard required of specialist English for Academic Purposes provision to enhance the student experience” (BALEAP 2020d ‘Institutions’). Individuals can become part of the TEAP (Teaching English for Academic Purposes) scheme, which “encourages and recognises the continuing professional development of individual BALEAP members” (BALEAP 2020e para.1). Through submission of an evidence-based portfolio, tutors can become Associate Fellows, Fellows or Senior Fellows.

Although Ding and Campion (2016) recognise the value and importance of the scheme in terms of development, they again raise certain doubts. First of all, they question the

premise of reflection as the basis of significant parts of the scheme, drawing on the literature to show evidence which undermines the “status, quality and purpose of reflective practices” (Ding and Campion 2016 p.554). A further criticism relates to the fact that new EAP practitioners are perceived as poorly prepared ‘novices’ and that expertise can only be gained through experience, revealing “a deficiency model” of early career EAP practitioners (Ding and Campion 2016 p.555). They argue that the descriptors and the scheme’s emphasis on the reproduction of existing practices could have a limiting effect on teachers, and this could stifle growth overall. They suggest that a revised view of EAP tutors is needed to recognise the contribution this group can make to the field instead of their being perceived “as a threat to good practice” (Ding and Campion 2016 p.555). The authors’ third concern about the scheme relates to the way it promotes the application of existing norms, placing the EAP practitioner in a “subservient position”, rather than being involved in “shaping the values, norms and conventions of education” (Ding and Campion 2016 p.555). Overall, the authors believe that EAP tutors should develop their own voice through questioning norms and values. As can be seen from the above discussion, the developments introduced by BALEAP are not seen as perfect, but they represent a significant step forward in terms of increased professionalism and standards in field of the EAP.

BALEAP has also played an important role in terms of contributing to the growing sense of EAP as a discourse community. In addition to giving tutors a platform on which to present and discuss their work, BALEAP events provide an opportunity for networking and sharing ideas with colleagues; the organisation’s electronic mailing list is also an invaluable source of discussion. Ding and Bruce (2017 p.110) point out that this “remote connection” is appropriate as tutors are located around the world and that engagement with the EAP literature is required for these activities. Other factors which have contributed to this sense of a discourse community include the creation of the dedicated journal for EAP, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, which was created in 2002. King (2012) comments that as a community, EAP has sought to differentiate its work from that of those teaching general English. She notes that this is ironic given the fact that so many summer pre-sessional teachers are temporarily recruited from that group.

2.2.6 Summary

This section has highlighted the uncertain nature of EAP through an examination of the literature related to its knowledge base, practitioners, routes into EAP and the development of a professional organisation. Implicit throughout the literature are concerns about the position of EAP within the university and professional status of EAP tutors, which are examined in the next two sections.

2.3 Position within the university

It is clear from the earlier discussions in this chapter and the previous one that the position of EAP in the university is problematic. King (2012 para.7) reminds us of the uncertainty surrounding EAP and by extension its practitioners: “EAP units have no logical home and can be anything from independent centres, to a part of an academic School or belonging to professional services, and [...] practitioners can be called lecturers, instructors, tutors or teaching assistants”. This section first discusses the lack of visibility of EAP in higher education literature; it then focuses on the concept of third space in universities and the implications of this for EAP; finally, opportunities for collaboration between EAP and other groups are considered.

2.3.1 The wider HE literature

In the past, literature surrounding occupational groups in universities appears to have largely focused on academic staff although recent years have seen an increasing interest in professional services staff. The new professional identities which have emerged as a result of changing university policies, such as staff dealing with widening participation agendas (Burke 2008), are starting to be recognised in the literature. Burke (2008 p.128) argues that research is needed in order to understand “this new professional workforce”. Despite this increased focus on other occupational groups, outside the specific EAP-related literature, a lack of reference to EAP tutors is evident. Even in Tannock’s (2018) insightful book on international students and inequality, which focuses on university contexts, there is only one mention in passing of EAP tutors.

There is a lack of clarity with regard to terminology in the literature. Ball (2008) uses the word ‘teacher’ to refer to ‘education professional’ and to cover everyone who teaches or

researches in schools, FE or HE. Other authors are less explicit, failing to explain who they include in terms such as ‘university teacher’ (for example Nixon 1997). As previously mentioned, EAP staff are often classified as ‘professional services staff’ in today’s universities; however, their invisibility in the wider literature leads to the sense that they have been overlooked although they can sometimes be recognised in descriptions. In his article ‘The Morphing of Academic Practice: Unbundling and the Rise of the Para-academic’, Macfarlane (2011) is critical of how para-academics, such as student advisers and learning technologists, are increasingly taking over parts of academics’ roles. While he sees this as upskilling for administrative staff, it is deskilling of academics and is seen as a threat to academics’ professional identity. No mention is made in the article of English language teaching staff.

Similarly, Locke (2014 p.12) also refers to ‘para-academics’ who perform what had been core academic tasks, such as student admissions and assessment, educational development and (online) learning support. He notes that ‘non-academic’ roles now comprise over fifty percent of full and part-time employees. In later research, Locke et al. (2016 p.9) refer to “learning enhancement” roles, where the term is used generically “to describe the roles of such individuals, who are likely to have academic qualifications”. They also note that as has been discovered in other studies (Bennett et al. 2015 in Locke et al. 2016 p.9) “the identities of learning enhancement staff, and the more practice-oriented research they undertake, are often not clearly defined or visible within an institution”.

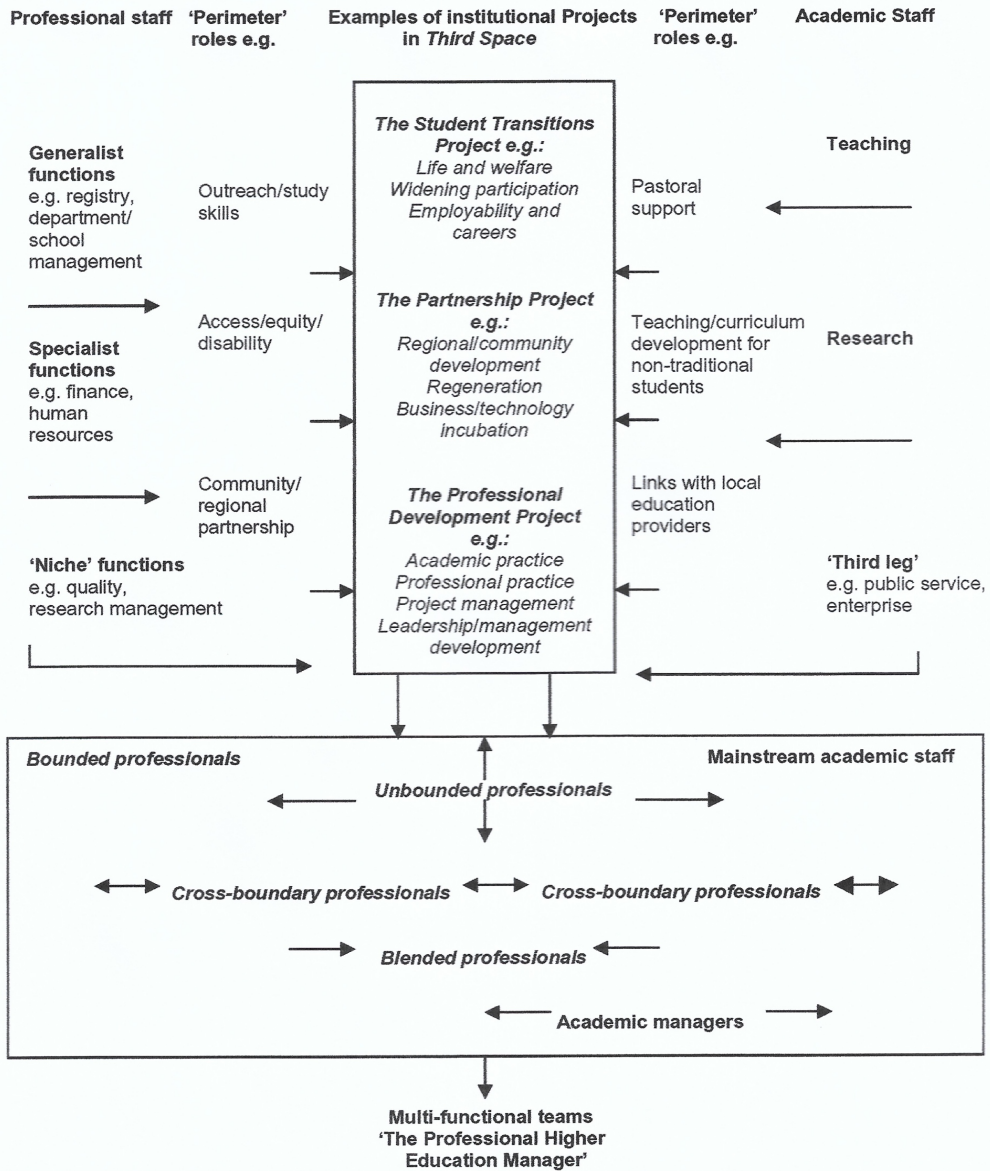
2.3.2 Third space

It is also evident from the HE literature that the roles of staff in universities can no longer be seen “in binary terms: of an academic domain, and an administrative or management domain that supports this” (Whitchurch 2008 p.378). Whitchurch’s (2008 p.385) research into the crossovers between these two areas shows that boundaries are increasingly blurred and there is now a *third space* (italics used by the author) which lies between academic and professional staff, in which the skills of a range of staff are needed. Here, the idea of “administrative service” (Whitchurch 2008 p.378) has been replaced by a focus on partnership with academic colleagues and other stakeholders (see Figure 3). Whitchurch (2008 p.380) describes those that work in this space as ‘Blended Professionals’: professional

staff with management roles but not an academic contract, including for example general academic managers and “specialist professionals with accredited qualifications such as those in finance and human resources offices”. This may not apply to EAP tutors who do not have management roles, but EAP managers may fit into the latter category of specialist professionals. For example, in Figure 3 (Whitchurch 2008 p.385), they may be part of ‘institutional projects’ such as a ‘Professional Development Project’ which involves sharing their knowledge of the problems international students face with subject lecturers. It seems that EAP tutors fit into the ‘perimeter’ roles on both sides of the diagram: on the professional staff side, ‘study skills’ is pertinent, along with ‘access’ as EAP tutors have a gatekeeping role in terms of language skills; and on the academic staff side, ‘teaching/curriculum development for non-traditional students’ is relevant. ‘Pastoral support’ can also be part of the EAP tutor’s role both formally or informally depending on the programme they are teaching on. As can be seen from the diagram, Whitchurch also includes a taxonomy of professional roles. This will be referred to in the final section of this chapter in relation to a discussion of professional status.

The idea of a third space is now familiar in the literature. In line with Whitchurch (2008), for Veles and Carter (2016 p.520) it is “a collegial space where university professional staff and academic staff work collaboratively on complex and multifaceted projects”. However, different conceptualisations of the idea exist and for some authors there is less emphasis on the collaborative nature of the space. For some writers the term is used to refer to a liminal space on the margins of academia, which in terms of Whitchurch’s (2008 p.385) conceptualisation would be a ‘perimeter’ role. Hadley (2015 p.8) for example comments on the trend of moving EAP units away from academic departments and research to “these organizational third spaces” where they can focus on teaching English language skills.

Figure 3 - A changing higher education workforce map: the emergence of *third space* between professional and academic domains (Whitchurch 2008 p. 385)



2.3.3 Third space Student Processing Units

The background of neoliberalism in universities has had a significant influence on the position of EAP units. Ding and Bruce (2017 p.108) note that removing EAP units from academic departments and positioning them as “a commodified, commercialised training activity” away from the research function of the university and has led to increased marginalisation of EAP. They also recognise (2017 p.105) that this position is very common in ‘inner circle’ countries: “EAP tends to be positioned as providing a support service on the periphery of universities, taking place in English-language centres”. In such places, EAP practitioners commonly have ‘teaching-only’ positions.

Taking a global perspective, Hadley (2015 p.3) emphasises the backdrop of the neoliberal university in order to understand the position of EAP units. He refers to momentous “climate change” within HE, which includes vocationalisation, globalisation, massification and Macdonaldisation, and the wide-reaching negative effects for EAP. The author has developed his own typology for different types of university, which he intends as a general guide only: Sausage Makers; Mass Providers; Dreamweavers; and Ivory Towers. The names reflect the different characters of the universities:

The lower a university is on the globally stratified class ladder, the more openly aggressive the marketing and promises of vocational success for graduates, the tighter the management of teaching staff, and the more concentrated the effort to produce educational content for mass ‘delivery’ (Hadley 2015 p.34)

The visibility of the effects of neoliberalism varies depending on where the university sits in the typology, with Hadley (2015) placing Sausage Makers at the bottom. These universities exist entirely for profit and market themselves at lower middle-class learners; any student who can pay is accepted and their EAP units are often run by private providers. Mass Providers, as their name suggests, accept high numbers of students; their EAP units are either run by private providers or are separate units within the university with administrative management. Dreamweavers have historic and social credentials which they use to brand themselves, and their EAP units may still be part of an academic department.

These universities often ask for higher language levels from the international students they accept and therefore there is a focus on helping students to enter the academic community. Ivory Towers are prestigious universities which uphold classic traditions and ideals. They sit at the top of the typology and attract fewer EAP students because of higher language requirements for entry. EAP tutors have the most autonomy here and EAP is often situated within academic departments, such as linguistics. Focus is on higher level skills for research and critical thinking to ensure students can play a full role in academia.

As can be seen, the typology is important because of the influence it has on EAP sections. Lower down the scale, Hadley (2015) sees the EAP sections as Student Processing Units (SPUs), where large numbers of international students are processed using pre-packaged teaching materials and academic integrity is sacrificed. He argues (2015 p.39) that “academic training, remedial learning and other educational experiences” are delivered at a minimal cost to the HEI and that teachers are no longer educators but rather technicians. SPUs exist in the Third Space (capitals used by the author), outside both academic and administrative departments, as mentioned above. Hadley (2015 p.39) states that this reflects the latest trend in emphasising EAP as a commercial provider and the redefinition of EAP tutors “as auxiliary educational service providers”.

2.3.4 Opportunities in the third space

Hadley (2015) builds on Whitchurch’s (2008) ideas of Blended Professionals and coins the term BLEAP, for a Blended EAP Professional, aware of the humorous connotations of the name. This group are TEAPs (Teachers of English for Academic Purposes) with an entrepreneurial outlook who recognise the opportunities for career development within the Third Space and who rise to a middle management position. Hadley (2015 p.22) focuses on BLEAPS in order to understand EAP in today’s universities; they are an interesting group as they are no longer teachers but are not quite administrators and are caught between the demands of their managers, international students, TEAPs, and academia. They develop different strategies to survive in this environment, which will see some sink and others thrive, but “professional disarticulation” (Hadley 2015 p.23) is common as a result of becoming disassociated from their original vocational identity. This is also a real possibility for TEAPs in the Third Space as they are expected to follow orders; complete administrative

tasks; use pre-packaged set materials and apply standardised procedures with the aim of processing high numbers of students at the lowest possible cost to the HEI. They become “the technical operators of Student Processing Units” (Hadley 2015 p.42), which can lead to decreased motivation and feelings of being marginalised.

In her research into the professional situation of post-secondary EAP teachers in Canada, MacDonald (2016 p.107) describes similar issues to those faced by EAP tutors in universities in the UK. She states that they very often “operate on the margins” and there are issues in terms of role and status: for example, “status differentials often persist between EAP programs and other programs at the institution”. MacDonald (2016 p.111) also positions EAP units in the third space but argues that EAP tutors should take advantage of the freedom that this brings as the work here is “less bound by definitions and categories that exist in the traditional academic or administrative domains”. EAP teaching fits into the definition of work carried out in the third space as the work tutors do is less bound as it is often not credit bearing. However, what is often missing or inadequate in an EAP teaching context is the opportunity for collaboration with other occupational groups in the third space. In Whitchurch’s (2008 p.378) definition, the third space is a place where collaboration takes place, and also according to her definition, opportunities would only potentially apply to managers in EAP units.

2.3.5 Relationship with other groups within HE

The relationship between EAP and other groups within higher education is a focus of discussion along with the idea that EAP needs to take the initiative to be recognized as equal. A plenary lecture at the BALEAP conference asked, ‘State of the Union: What Union?’ (Furieux 2017). The speaker stressed the importance of EAP “going mainstream” in HE institutions, by behaving in the same ways as other subject areas and forging connections using a range of means. Her suggestions included measures such as running study skills classes for home students; sharing our knowledge of teaching and language with subject specialists in other disciplines, and publishing to become known on a wider stage.

Smart (2017) also discusses the question of collaboration between EAP tutors and subject lecturers, referring to the previously mentioned ‘butler’s stance’ (Raines 1991). Smart

found that the idea of the 'butler's stance' was very much supported in the literature and that it was further confirmed by his own research into the views of EAP tutors of their own position. Other writers, for example Sharpling (2002) and Charles and Pecorari (2015 p.38) refer to the Cinderella nature of EAP. For the latter, EAP has a Cinderella status in the institutional context, as staff experience lower salaries and fewer benefits compared to academic staff. In order to manage feelings of inferiority that may result from this, the authors emphasise the need for EAP staff to understand the bigger picture and recognise that they have a different role and skills to those of academics; EAP tutors need to have confidence in these unique skills and their own identity in order to feel comfortable in universities.

Harwood and Petri (2011 p.245) cite whether and to what extent EAP teachers and subject teachers should collaborate as one of the "Current issues in EAP". An example given is information gathering, where the EAP tutor compiles details of materials such as student assignments and syllabi, which can help them tailor EAP classes to the specific needs of the students in that subject area. Another closer step in terms of working together would be for the EAP and subject teacher to team teach classes. The authors (2011 p.246) note that studies have shown that a number of factors can militate against that: "the institutional context, differences in teaching methodologies and philosophies, the low status of the EAP teacher in some contexts, and related issues of power".

Reference is made in the literature to the increase in the separation of research and teaching in academic staff contracts, and the increase in the number of academic staff on teaching only contracts. HESA data (2013-14 in Locke et al. 2016 p.5) show that in 2013-14, 27% of all academics and 36% of those who teach were on teaching-only contracts. Staff employed on teaching and research contracts decreased and, for the first time, now are a minority (48.6%) of the academic population. Even though EAP tutors teach, they would probably not have been considered in these statistics as in many universities EAP staff would not be on academic contracts.

2.3.6 Summary

Despite the lack of visibility of EAP, several key developments can be seen above: changing staff roles in universities in general; a third space where there are potential opportunities; increased research into the influence of the neoliberal environment of universities on EAP; an awareness within the EAP community itself of the need to play a fuller part in university life; and a greater focus on teaching through the increase in teaching only academic contracts. As a result of these, the literature indicates that the gap between EAP and other university staff may be narrowing, making this a time for EAP professionals to change how they see themselves and seize opportunities for collaboration. If EAP can capitalise on these developments, it will help EAP units “flourish rather than survive” (Ding and Bruce 2017 p.207).

2.4 Professionalisation

The question posed in the title of Johnston’s article (1997) ‘Do EFL Teachers Have Careers?’ was considered a necessary one at the time because of doubts about the answer. Whilst the clichéd image of a hippy EFL teacher with a guitar and only a vague notion of teaching methods may remain in some circles, there have been significant moves away from this in terms of modern day TESOL and EAP. In recent years, the growth of EAP has had a significant impact on the response to the question above, as moving into EAP teaching is often an avenue of professional development for EFL teachers. This section first attempts to select from the vast literature on professionalisation to define the term profession for the purposes of this research. It then describes different aspects of the professionalisation process and discusses whether EAP can consider itself to be a profession. Finally, opportunities for EAP in an area referred to as the ‘third space’ are suggested.

2.4.1 Difficulties defining the term ‘professional’

Defining what is meant by the term ‘professional’ has proved to be extremely problematic. In fact, Perkin (2003 para.1) goes so far as to comment that “the term professional is one of the most ambiguous in the English language”. This is reinforced by many writers, such as Power (2011 p.1) who refers to the definition as “complex and contested”, and also Freidson (1994 p.27), who believes that a “single definition which is hoped to win the day” cannot be achieved. Difficulties in reaching a definition are a result of the fact that what is

understood by the term varies according to historical perspective. Writers refer to the term's "historically bound character" (Freidson 1994 p.19) and the fact that history makes it "an artificial construct" (Crook 2001 p.23). A further difficulty relates to vested interests and the desire of different groups to include their own occupation when defining the term (Freidson 1994).

In the past, authors have focussed on the features and established criteria that are needed for an occupation to be considered a profession but have not always agreed on what those characteristics are (Middlehurst 1995 p.35; Middlehurst and Kennie 1997). The most comprehensive list was produced by Millerson (1964), who identified over twenty core tenets of what it means to be a profession. Narrowing down this list, Freidson (1994 p.154) argues that most authors are in agreement that the main requirements of a profession are "expertise, credentialism and autonomy", and he explains this as follows. Firstly, professionals are full-time specialists, as opposed to amateurs who 'dabble' in their field, and they do not drift in and out of jobs. Secondly, the work they do is skilled because it is learnt after a long period of training. Thirdly, professionals will have an appropriate qualification as testament to the formal training they have undergone. Finally, Freidson (1994) adds that only some professionals can be described as autonomous or self-governing.

Although in the past selecting tenets in this way has been considered to be effective in reaching a definition, more recently, Sizer (2019) agrees with Habenstein (1963 p.292) that selecting from a "constellation of characteristics" in this way is a flawed approach as your own position will determine which stars are "glowing brighter than others" in your own galaxy. However, for the purposes of this research, criteria were felt important to define what is meant by the term 'profession'. The criteria selected (see Figure 4) are amongst those put forward by Millerson (1964) and are frequently included in lists of features of a profession (Whitty 2006 p.2).

Figure 4 - Common features used to define professions (Millerson 1964; Whitty 2006 p.2)

The use of skills based on theoretical knowledge
Education and training in those skills certified by examination
A code of professional conduct oriented towards the 'public good'
A powerful professional organisation

2.4.2 Themes in the literature

A professional project or professionalisation describes the journey an aspiring occupation travels in its aim for full professional status. This is something that is still seen as desirable for an occupation to achieve, although Whitty (2006 p.3) reminds us of some of the criticisms levelled at the traditional professions, such as elitism and authoritarianism, and that some have questioned aspiring to such a model. Etzioni (1969 p.144) describes semi-professions where the profession finds itself in the middle of “the continuum of professionalism”, because it lacks some of the “professional qualities” required to be a profession. However, as mentioned above, writers may disagree on what these qualities are.

Hoyle (2001) highlights two aims of professionalisation, which he refers to as two strands: the improvement of status, and in the quality of service offered. These may both happen concurrently but that is not always the case. The literature described in the earlier parts of this chapter reveals that both of these features are to be hoped for in the case of EAP. An improvement of status is to be aspired for as a result of issues such as EAP’s marginal position in universities, and the overemphasis on its revenue-generating function as opposed to recognition of its and tutors’ academic credentials. It would also be welcome to militate against the effects of deprofessionalisation brought about by partnerships with private providers (Fulcher 2009) and EAP units that function as SPUs (Hadley 2015). In terms of the second strand, an improvement in the quality of service offered, greater professional freedom for tutors would provide a richer experience for international students and would be more beneficial in assisting them to play a full part in the academic community.

Deprofessionalisation has also been a theme in state school teaching. Hoyle (2001 p.15475) describes how it has moved from professionalisation to deprofessionalisation, and then to what he terms 'the new professionalism' ie "from a concern with status to a concern with the quality of service" but as the teacher sees it, not necessarily as management see it. The focus is no longer on achieving the status of a profession but rather on being 'professional'. Hoyle accepts that it is a difficult concept to pin down and that he provides a simplistic definition but it means "to have acquired a set of skills through competency-based training which enables one to deliver efficiently, according to contract, a consumer-led service in compliance with accountability procedures collaboratively implemented and managerially assured". When discussing how to deal with the challenges for EAP professionals of low status and operating in the margins, MacDonald (2016 p.110) suggests focusing on the occupational group's conduct, for example, instead of on the characteristics that must be present: "this is a shift from what a profession *is* to what a profession *does*".

2.4.3 Professionalisation of EAP

It is clear from the literature and points made earlier in this chapter that there have been important developments in terms of the professionalisation of EAP. These include the evolution of BALEAP and the introduction of measures such as the Competency Framework and the Accreditation Scheme for individuals and institutions; the arrival of a dedicated EAP journal, JEAP; and a greater sense of EAP as a discourse community. The question of whether EAP can consider itself a profession, however, remains.

For her own thorough analysis of the question "Is Teaching EAP a profession?", Sizer (2019 p.26) writes that "a profession can be identified based on its professionals, professional community and knowledge" as these are the characteristics most prevalent in the profession-based literature over time. Her breakdown can be seen in Figure 5. She argues convincingly (Sizer 2019 p.26) that EAP can be considered a profession as it:

has an objectively-recognised status as a profession with a well-established community of professionals...with shared professional values and knowledge informed by a broad and comprehensive academic and professional knowledge base.

Figure 5 – Criteria for defining professions (Sizer 2019)

Professionals

Profession defined by individual professionals' values

Professional Community

Profession identified by community of professionals

Community of professionals define own professional standards

Knowledge

Profession defined by profession's knowledge base: esoteric knowledge; academic knowledge (theoretical); professional knowledge (practical)

Ding and Bruce (2017 p.122) adopt a broader range of the features of a profession from the literature and hold EAP up against them, considering where EAP falls short. They argue that in the UK “the process of professionalisation is only beginning to partially emerge” for EAP. Firstly, they recognise that EAP practitioners do not have “*special powers and prestige*” (italics used in original), and that EAP’s position is not equal to that of other subjects: “EAP’s bid for status and prestige within academia has not been entirely successful”. Secondly, EAP is not protected from the business market but is part of it as it has been commodified for profit in today’s neo-liberal universities. Thirdly, they debate the social and ethical basis of EAP and find the answers ambiguous, particularly given the precarious employment conditions of some EAP practitioners. In terms of self-governance and associations, they recognise the importance of the steps BALEAP has taken to professionalise the field, for example its Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP 2008). However, they cite weaknesses of the organisation such as the fact that it is UK-centric, and it has no control over entry to the EAP profession or teaching. Finally, they mention “practitioner *socialisation* into the profession and their *cultural/symbolic capital* within academia” (Ding and Bruce 2017 p.127). These are both areas which tutors often lack, particularly upon entry to EAP.

2.4.4 Professionals in the third space

Findings from Whitchurch's (2008 p.384) research led her to redefine professional identities and group them into four categories: bounded professionals; cross-boundary professionals; unbounded professionals and blended professionals (see Figures 3 & 6).

Figure 6 – Categories of professional identity (Whitchurch 2008 p.384)

Categories	Characteristics
Bounded professionals	Work within clear structural boundaries (e.g. function, job description)
Cross-boundary professionals	Actively use boundaries for strategic advantage and institutional capacity building
Unbounded professionals	Disregard boundaries to focus on broadly-based projects and institutional development
Blended professionals	Dedicated appointments spanning professional and academic domains

It seems that something of the role of EAP tutors can be seen in the category of bounded professionals:

Individuals who located themselves within the boundaries of a function or organisational location that they had either constructed for themselves, or which had been imposed upon them. These people were characterised by [...] the performance of roles that were relatively prescribed.
(Whitchurch 2008 p.383)

However, as has been seen from the previous discussion of the EAP literature, although the role of EAP tutor may appear bounded, there is a considerable amount of variation and discussion over what should be included in the role. Uncertainty regarding job title is also illustrative of this. Additionally, as has been pointed out, EAP tutors are often positioned in 'perimeter' roles and the nature of their work there tends to be unbounded as it is often not defined by the university. There is more potential, therefore, for EAP tutors to cross boundaries although this may only happen to a limited extent in reality. As mentioned above, there is more scope for EAP managers, Hadley's (2015) BLEAPs, to do this as they

may sometimes participate in joint projects with professional or academic staff from other parts of the university.

MacDonald (2016 p.111), writing from a Canadian perspective, states that EAP teachers could be considered to be “third space professionals in terms of the literal and figurative spaces they occupy and the roles they carry out”. She suggests how EAP units can use the third space to their advantage, and although some of her propositions seem idealistic, they can apply to a UK setting. She notes that EAP tutors can create their own idea of professionalism in the third space through presenting at conferences and becoming involved in professional associations. She does not mention the specific details such as whether this would be in the staff’s own time or whether scholarship time would be given for this. MacDonald (2016) sees the third space in a positive light as a space to experiment and innovate in areas such as materials development because of the freedom from departmental restrictions. She suggests that EAP staff should cross boundaries to share their expertise on internationalisation and second language development, for example. She also suggests links between the EAP unit and academic departments, where the focus is on collaboration. The latter may frequently take place to a greater or lesser extent in UK universities, but the type of collaboration aimed for is that where neither party is in the position of the ‘butler’s stance’.

2.4.5 Summary

This section has highlighted how discussions regarding professionalisation are complex and contested, and this can be seen in the case of EAP. The uncertainties evidenced in other aspects of the EAP tutor role also seem to be reflected in discussions regarding professionalisation. Although the professional status of EAP is disputed, it is clear that EAP has taken significant steps towards professionalisation and that there are further opportunities for development.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how an interrogation of the literature from three areas, EAP, the position of EAP in universities, and professionalisation, provides the background to this study into the position and professional status of EAP tutors. Although it is recognised in the

literature that the EAP tutor is an under-researched area, several key themes have emerged, including: the contested nature of EAP; variations in the designations and roles of EAP tutors; issues regarding status in academia; the pressures placed on EAP units by neoliberal universities; differences of opinion regarding whether EAP can be considered a profession; and the steps EAP has taken towards professionalisation. Despite the thorough nature of existing studies, the voices of EAP tutors in UK universities are missing from the data. This research, therefore, aims to build on the themes highlighted and add EAP tutors' views of their lived experiences to existing research. It is hoped that this will create a fuller understanding of these themes.

Through listening to the lived experiences and opinions of EAP tutors, this study aims to find answers to the following research questions that have emerged from the three strands of literature:

- How do EAP tutors view their role in universities?
- How do EAP tutors view their position in relation to other groups in universities?
- To what extent can the role of the EAP tutor be considered a profession?
- What are the implications of this research for the field of EAP?

Chapter 3 – Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodological considerations behind this study and describes the process followed in order to answer the following research questions:

- How do EAP tutors view their role in universities?
- How do EAP tutors view their position in relation to other groups in universities?
- To what extent can the role of the EAP tutor be considered a profession?
- What are the implications of this research for the field of EAP?

Firstly, the methodological perspectives underpinning the research are presented, followed by details of the sample. The method employed to collect data is then outlined, and the ethical considerations are considered. The procedure followed for analysing the data is described, and finally the methods used in this research are analysed and their limitations considered.

3.2 Methodological perspectives

3.2.1 Exploratory study

The current study can be seen as exploratory in nature. Stebbins (2001 p.3) describes exploratory research as:

a broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertaking designed to maximise the discovery of generalizations leading to description and understanding of an area of social or psychological life.

He states that this type of research takes place when researchers have limited scientific knowledge about the object of their investigation but believe that what it will reveal will be worthwhile (Stebbins 2001 p.5). As discussed in the literature review, research investigating the EAP tutor has not been widely carried out but the literature that does exist and my own experience of working in the field have shown that this is a rich area to be explored.

As can also be seen from the literature review, theories related to three strands of research informed this exploratory study. Firstly, in terms of EAP, I considered Bruce's (2019) views regarding the knowledge base of EAP, and Raimes' (1991) metaphor of a 'butler's stance' for EAP. Secondly, Whitchurch's (2008) theory on the emergence of *third space* between professional and academic domains was significant in my understanding of the position of EAP in the university. Finally, in order to define the concept of a profession, I used four of the tenets from Millerson's (1964) list of common features of a profession. I also refer to Whitchurch's (2008) taxonomy of professionals in the *third space*. The interrogation of the background literature to the topic provided the research questions for this research, and in turn the research questions drove the design.

3.2.2 Research strategy

It is clear from the research questions above that this study requires the participants to reflect upon the experiences of their working lives and give detailed descriptions of their perceptions of these. The questions "need to be explored to obtain a deep understanding" (Creswell 2008 p.62) and it is vital that individual voices can be heard and narratives told. As a result, I considered a qualitative research strategy to be the most appropriate to generate this kind of personal data as it "emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman 2008 p.697). Definitions of qualitative research emphasise the individual, constructed nature of the process involved and the focus on the context, all of which resonate with this study:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. ... This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

(Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p. 3)

In terms of ontology, the approach adopted is broadly interpretivist. My aim is to "derive interpretations, not facts or laws, from respondent talk", which Warren (2002 p.83) argues is the purpose of most qualitative research.

3.2.3 Data collection technique

In order to generate the qualitative data required, I chose interviewing as the tool for data collection. It is appropriate for this research as it allows the respondents to give lengthy answers to questions posed and for a full exploration of these by the researcher. Perakyla and Ruusuvuori (2011 p.529) note that interviews enable the researcher to “reach areas of reality that would otherwise remain inaccessible, such as people’s subjective experiences and realities”. I conducted the interviews on a one-to-one basis. This is “ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably” (Creswell, 2008 p.226), all of which are true for the sample of EAP tutors selected. One-to-one interviews were also appropriate for the kind of data generated: the interviewees’ lived experiences which may include private or potentially sensitive information.

Although Kvale (2007 p.20) comments that “research interviews have not been developed from any specific theory or epistemological paradigm”, his metaphor of the interviewer as a traveller is appropriate to understand the knowledge created by the study. The interviewer-traveller is on a journey in distant lands and the conversations she has with people she meets and the experience of roaming form the basis of “a tale to be told upon returning home”. Through the journey, new knowledge is created, and it is anticipated that the interviewer-traveller will change too as a result of experiencing this process. The interviewer is a “knowledge producer”, who plays a role in the social construction of knowledge, and the qualitative research interview is in turn “a construction site of knowledge”.

I did not consider that questionnaires would be an appropriate tool for the collection of such data. The data required to respond to the research questions in the study involve participants giving lengthy, detailed answers which explore their lived experiences. The responses given in questionnaires are by nature much shorter and would not have given me a full understanding of the participants’ views. In contrast, in an interview I would be able to “follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings” (Bell 2005 p.157), all of which help to generate the rich data required.

I selected a semi-structured interview format where I would have “a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered” (Bryman 2008 p.438). I felt that this format would allow me the flexibility to pursue topics that are of interest to interviewees, and for further questions to be asked as significant responses arise. I deemed an interview schedule to be important to provide a loose plan that serves as a guide to ensure that key points were covered.

Overall, a semi-structured approach allows the interviewer to be “flexible and attentive to the variety of meanings that may emerge as the interview progresses” (Warren, 2001 p.83) and to respond accordingly with follow-up questions. I considered this to be appropriate for the personal data that need to be generated to answer the research questions. A further benefit is that the structured nature of the process means that the answers generated can be coded and processed more easily (Bryman 2008 p.437).

3.3 About the sample

3.3.1 Sampling strategy

The choice of sampling technique ensured that the sample of participants for the research was selected in a strategic way to guarantee sufficient variety to provide the rich data required to respond to the research questions. I felt that a number of features were required in the sample cohort. Firstly, the inclusion of both men and women was important in order to discover whether the experiences of the group were influenced by gender. Secondly, I sought tutors who had been working as EAP tutors at UK HEIs for over five years: this meant they would have had the chance to experience any changes happening in the field of EAP. Thirdly, participants on different types of contracts, permanent and temporary hourly paid, were also included to add to the range of voices (see below for details of the context of the research and diverse types of university). Finally, I decided that the sample should comprise a maximum of ten interviewees. This was to allow an in-depth exploration of the points raised in responses to questions and the ensuing detailed analysis, which a greater number of interviewees might have precluded.

In order to achieve the above, I used purposive sampling as the main sampling strategy for the participants. Creswell (2008 p.214) notes that purposive sampling provides people or sites “who can best help us understand our phenomenon” and develop a detailed understanding: the data provided may be “useful”; we may “learn” about the phenomenon and a voice may be given to “silenced” people (inverted commas used in the text). The criteria described are relevant to this research and although EAP tutors have not been “silenced”, this reflects the fact that they have been an underrepresented group in the literature. It should be noted that I also used opportunistic sampling in relation to the selection of participants as the research developed. This was to “take advantage of unfolding events” (Creswell 2008 p.216) that would help provide answers to the research questions. It also helped me to capture the breadth of voices required when opportunities presented themselves throughout the research journey.

With regard to contexts of the research participants, I felt it appropriate for three different locations of EAP units to be sampled: EAP units that are part of an academic department; separate EAP units within the professional services section of a university; and those that are part of a different professional services section within the university, for example library services or academic development. These locations were selected as it was felt that they reflect the contexts that the majority of EAP tutors in HEIs work in. I did not consider it opportune to include EAP tutors who work for private providers working with HEIs, such as Study Group or INTO, because of the wider range of circumstances this would encompass and the small scale of the current project. Including different types of institutions, ie new and old universities, was also taken into account. In order to achieve the range described here, purposive sampling can also be seen in relation to participants’ workplaces. Thus, two levels of purposive sampling can be seen in the study: of contexts and participants (Bryman 2008 p.414).

Although the number of EAP tutors interviewed is small, it is felt that the sample obtained for the study is a fair reflection of the wider EAP population, and thus, as with many other small scale projects, “the data gathered are meaningful beyond the particular cases, individuals, or sites studied” (Silverman 2014 p.72).

3.3.2 Approaching the sample

Prospective interviewees, some of whom were known to me, were approached informally and asked whether they would be interested in taking part in the study. If they responded positively, I then sent them a formal 'invitation to participate' email outlining the purposes of the research, what participation would involve and providing assurances of confidentiality and anonymity [See Appendix 1]. If they then agreed to be interviewed, subsequent emails arranged a time for the interview, and also a location if it was to be face-to-face. Once these details were finalised, I sent participants an email, confirming participation and setting out the interview details [See Appendix 2]. Attached to this email, was the 'information for participants' sheet, which summarised details of the research outlined previously and provided a list of themes to be discussed in the interview [See Appendix 3]. It explained that participants could think about these themes in advance if they wished to but did not have to prepare for the interview in any way. Thus, participants had the opportunity to consider fully whether they were happy to take part in the interview before the interview took place, or to withdraw if not.

The interview data obtained are the participants' own views and not those of the institution they work for. Therefore, I did not feel that institutional permission from a gatekeeper at the universities in question was required. Participants were interviewed in their own time.

3.3.3 The sample and research sites

The cohort of participants included the desired features set out above: ten EAP tutors who work in a variety of roles at a number of HEIs in England and Wales; five male and five female participants who have been given pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity. They are all aged from their late thirties upwards and have taught EAP for over five years. Eight are employed on permanent contracts and two are on temporary ones. Further details can be seen in Figure 7.

The research sites for the study comprise largely older, pre 1992 universities, plus two post 1992 universities. Two of the participants work in EAP units attached to an academic department; seven of the sample are situated in a separate EAP unit, which is part of their university's professional services directorate; one participant works in a university where

Figure 7 - About the participants

Name	Role	Location of EAP section	Type of contract	Qualifications	Additional information
Dylan	EAP manager and tutor	Separate centre within university	Permanent	DELTA qualified	Describes career history as “quite a traditional pathway in the world of EFL and EAP”
Barbara	Tutor	Separate centre within university	Permanent	DELTA qualified & Masters in Applied Linguistics	“My professional development is something I’ve done myself as opposed to the institutions”
Dominic	Tutor	Separate centre within university	Temporary / hourly paid	Masters in unrelated subject	“I started doing it because I wanted to travel. And I kept doing it because I couldn’t think of anything else. And I always quite liked it. Never too much of a burden compared to other jobs I did”.
Ellen	Tutor	Separate centre within university	Permanent	Masters in unrelated subject / PGCE in secondary teaching	“We’re all slaves to policy that’s passed down from invisible higher levels or from HR who we never see face to face”.
Steven	Tutor, some management depending on time of year	Centre is part of an academic department	Permanent	PGCE in secondary teaching	Went abroad because he hated Margaret Thatcher’s education policies.
Mary	Tutor	Teaches as part of a student support service within university	Temporary / hourly paid	Masters in unrelated subject	Feels extremely disillusioned with EAP because of employment conditions
Isla	EAP manager and tutor	Centre is part of an academic department	Permanent	MA in TESOL & PhD in language-related topic	Would like to see an independent centre for academic literacy in her institution where EAP could support home and international students.
James	Tutor with additional responsibilities	Separate centre within university	Permanent	DELTA qualified & MA in TESOL	Thought that EFL was just “a gap year job” and only realised it could be a career when he went abroad.
Gregg	Tutor	Embedded within an academic department	Permanent	PGCE, DELTA qualified, & Masters in unrelated subject	Subject background is similar to the department he is embedded in.
Tina	Tutor and supervisory role	Separate centre within a university	Annually renewed contract	Masters in unrelated subject	Feels that you are seen as a second-class citizen in her institution if you have the title tutor.

the EAP provision is part of another professional services section within the university.

3.4 Data collection process

I carried out ten interviews over a period of two years between November 2017 and the end of 2019. Although four of the interviews were face-to-face, the majority took place via mobile or landline telephone. I considered the reservations about this form of interviewing described in the literature. For example, Creswell (2008 p.227) comments that a lack of direct contact between the researcher and respondent means that communication is limited and “that may affect the researcher’s ability to understand the interviewee’s perceptions of the phenomenon”. Without the use of telephone interviewing, however, the research would have been limited to local sites as a result of time and monetary constraints, and it would not have been possible to gain the views of a range of participants from across England and Wales. Thus, for this project, the advantages of telephone interviewing in terms of scope, outweigh any potential disadvantages. Additionally, there did not appear to be any difference between the richness of data generated by face-to-face or telephone interviews. I did not consider video interviewing for the research because of the range of different technology available for this and the chances of equipment not being compatible.

All of the interviews lasted between twenty minutes and an hour and were recorded; I made participants aware that the interviews would be recorded from the outset. The use of a recording device seemed to be considered a normal part of the interview process and no objections to this were raised by participants. I considered whether the effects of recording the interviews might constrain the participants’ responses. However, I felt that the benefits of being able to transcribe the data outweigh any possible disadvantages.

As mentioned above, semi-structured interviews were used as the research instrument to gather the data – see Appendix 4 for a sample interview schedule. The literature related to the topic of this project had outlined particular lines of enquiry, which had fed into the research questions. I developed the interview schedule from these key issues and from other areas of personal interest. Warren (2002 p.86) suggests that “the interviewer develops ten to twelve specific questions”; I considered this to be an appropriate number of themes for the interviews, and then a greater number of specific questions were centred

around them to ensure the topics were fully explored. These questions were open questions, again to allow the maximum opportunity for detailed responses.

In conjunction with this thematic dimension related to knowledge production, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009 p.131) argue that interview questions also need a dynamic dimension, in terms of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. These thematic and dynamic elements relate respectively to the what and the how of the interview and work together to be most effective. Delamont (2002p.8) also highlights the fact that “good research is highly tuned to the interrelationship of the investigator with the respondents”. I bore this in mind as I carried out the interviews. I responded flexibly and was aware of the need for “a permanent mediation between the course of the interview and the interview guide” (Flick 2009 p.171) in order to ensure the interview flowed naturally, that participants were at their ease, and to maximise the quality and amount of data collected. All the interviews started with a request for background information about the respondents’ career history in order to help them relax, before moving on to the more focused questions.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval to carry out the study was obtained from the School of Social Sciences Ethics Committee of Cardiff University. In accordance with ethical best practice, I obtained consent to participate in the study from all the interviewees. Where face-to-face interviews took place, a consent form was signed by the participant at the start of the interview; on the occasions when the interview was held by telephone, consent to participate was given verbally and recorded along with the data. Pseudonyms were given to participants in order to ensure anonymity.

Throughout the research process I was aware of the potential impact of my own role as an EAP tutor working in a UK HEI and the interviewer effects that this could lead to. Rather than trying to eliminate such effects, Delamont (2002 p.8) argues that the researcher should try to understand them. In order to do this, I kept an awareness of reflexivity, “a social scientific variety of self-consciousness” (Delamont 2002 p.8) in mind to remain cognisant of the impact of the influence of the self on the interactions that would take place during the

research. Delamont (2013) also suggests the following strategies, which I aimed to put into practice:

- Thinking much harder about how arguments are constructed and presented
- Being much more 'present' in texts
- Working harder to convey the voices of all the informants (polyvocality)

I was aware of the need to make the familiar, ie my own EAP context, strange in order to fully understand it. It was important to avoid complacency and the danger of overlooking points that may be invisible to me because I take them for granted but which might be noteworthy to someone who is not a member of the EAP community. It should also be noted that in my own workplace, the EAP unit is situated as part of a separate unit, making my context similar to the majority of interviewees. It was important that this did not impact any of the interviews. I was also aware of the potential for bias and unfairly influencing interviewees as a result of my own views on matters I had grown to form strong opinions on. Despite these possible negatives, the fact that I am part of the community I am investigating provided me with knowledge of the field and the issues that were raised, which greatly enhanced my understanding of the project.

3.6 Data Analysis

I transcribed the recorded interviews using the pseudonyms given to the participants to ensure anonymity. In order to analyse the data, I followed the relevant stages suggested in the research methods literature (for example Bryman 2008; Creswell 2008). I did not use data analysis software to scrutinise the transcriptions as I found that features such as the colour coding and copying and pasting functions of Microsoft Word were adequate for the analysis required.

After an initial reading of each transcription to form a general sense of meaning, I reread each one and began to note key words and ideas that appeared frequently, using these to form codes. A significant example is the notion of 'status', which occurred with regularity throughout the interviews and therefore became an important code. I also looked for

connections between the codes and overlapping points. For example, linked to 'status' is the incidence of 'hierarchy', which encompassed similar ideas. I used these connections to form themes from the initial codes that had emerged, leading to some of the codes becoming redundant. As can be seen, rather than having a single overarching framework through which the data were interrogated, both coding and thematic analysis were used. It should be noted that the distinction between these two approaches to qualitative data is blurred in the research methods literature. Bryman (2008 p.554) comments that a code and a theme are considered to be approximately the same by some theorists, whereas others see a theme as being "built up out of a group of codes".

The overall aim of the process was to condense the data into "analysable units by creating categories with and from" the data (Coffey and Atkinson 1996 p.26) and this goal was achieved. I related the "analysable units" from the data (Coffey and Atkinson 1996 p.26) to the research questions and the literature. The emerging themes were often connected to these areas in a number of ways and I again had to be mindful of overlapping themes and repetition. A further example can be seen with 'status' as it was such a dominant theme, which appeared in relation to all of the research questions and also theories in the literature such as Raimes' (1991) butler's stance. The recurrence of certain themes informed the structure of Chapter 4 of this thesis, the data chapter, which I divided into two parts (4.1 'The EAP tutor' and 4.2 'The EAP tutor and the university') to limit repetition; I felt that following the three-part structure of Chapter 2, the literature review, (2.2 'EAP and EAP tutors', 2.3 'Position within the university' and 2.4 'Professionalisation') was not appropriate given the recurrence and overlap of certain themes .

Through the emergence of these themes, I was able to relate the voices of the participants to theories highlighted in the literature and grounded generalisations about the data were developed. In the writing up of the data, I was mindful of interviewer effects, as described above. Creswell (2008 p.226) comments that information given in interviews is "filtered" through the views of the researcher as he/she summarises the interviewees' responses when writing. Thus, I was aware of my role in the construction of knowledge and the lens through which I viewed the data as I wrote up the interviews in the form of a text.

3.7 Evaluation of methods used and limitations

The sampling strategy and the methods chosen for this study helped generate rich data in sufficient quantity to answer the research questions posed. As a result, they are considered to be successful.

As this is a small-scale study, I had not intended that the results should be generalisable to the wider EAP population. However, the study illustrates the views of a sample that is a fair reflection of the EAP community and as such, wider inferences can be made. This is in line with Coffey & Atkinson's view (1999 p.163) that although extrapolation from small studies is not normally anticipated, qualitative data "should be used to develop theoretical ideas about social processes and cultural forms that have relevance beyond those data themselves". This again reveals the appropriacy of the methods chosen.

Part 2

Chapter 4 – Data

4.1 The EAP tutor

This thesis examines the position and professional status of the EAP tutor and asks how the trends described in the literature manifest themselves in relation to EAP tutors today. This section presents the data in response to this theme and examines a number of key areas through the eyes of the EAP tutors in the sample: participants' views on the job title of EAP tutor; what their role of EAP tutor comprises; the way EAP tutors view their role and their relationship with the students they teach; and the varied careers that the sample of EAP tutors has had. This section, therefore, presents data on the EAP tutors' lived experiences. The data in the following section focus on the position of EAP tutors within the university.

4.1.1 Job title

EAP Tutor is the designation of staff who teach EAP at the universities of the majority of the sample. Most consider this to be appropriate but with some strong reservations relating to the status and connotations of the title. Despite the range of job titles seen in EAP job advertisements (for example BALEAP 2020a), a clear, widely accepted alternative to EAP Tutor does not appear in the data.

The responses, however, reveal some variations in terms currently used: in one institution, the title English Language Tutor is used instead of EAP Tutor. The word 'Associate' also features in three of the titles: the two interviewees on hourly paid contracts are an Associate Tutor and an Associate Lecturer, with 'Associate' reflecting their temporary status. However, another interviewee, who is on a permanent contract, has the official title of Professor Associate on the university system; despite this, she identifies with EAP Tutor, and this is the title she uses on her electronic signature. The use of the designation EAP Tutor in the official job titles of the sample supports the point raised by Ding & Bruce (2017 p.121) that EAP Practitioner is not a designation that has institutional recognition.

Participants were also asked about their feelings regarding their job titles. EAP Tutor is generally considered to be applicable despite some reservations. Two interviewees relate strongly to the title 'teacher':

I think of myself as a teacher. I find the word teacher very honest, a down-to-earth word that says what we do, and teaching is the thing I think I'm most proud about within all the roles I've had. It's still the thing which I feel is at the heart of what I do.

Dylan

When I say I'm a university teacher, people assume that I'm a lecturer. But if I think about my job, I don't think that I do lecture to students, I'm really a teacher as we have smaller groups and it's quite interactive whereas a lecture would be a much bigger group and just delivering information.

Ellen

For some participants, their title can change throughout the academic year, to reflect their changing roles:

I'm reasonably happy with the term EAP Tutor. That is a fair reflection of what I do. I do teach most of my time. In the summer I can put Course Coordinator.

Steven

Gregg, however, sees himself as a linguist and believes that other EAP tutors should do the same:

My ambition would be that we stop being EAP practitioners and start becoming linguists that work within discourse communities. I think that's how we should position ourselves.

Gregg

However, he bases this on his belief that most EAP tutors will have an MA in Applied Linguistics and a DELTA giving them "a highly specialised body of knowledge". This, however, is not necessarily the case. For example, for this study, the majority of participants

have master's degrees that are not related to TESOL or applied linguistics. This point is discussed later in this chapter in relation to the professional status of EAP.

Another participant, Barbara, states that she is happy with the title but wishes that "it had a better standing amongst other people". Other points are also raised regarding status:

Sometimes EAP teachers are seen as a poor cousin to academics, I think, either by other people or by themselves perhaps.

Dylan

One participant comments that with the designation 'Tutor' there is the sense that you are there to support the work of others or to fix problems:

A tutor is someone you see on an individual basis almost or in a small group to help you a little bit more with your work. Whereas lecturer suggests someone who is a specialist in a certain field and delivers knowledge as well as encourages the development of skills, provides support, mentors and encourages reflection on all these things.... I think I would be happier if I was acknowledged as a lecturer.

Isla

The feeling that 'Lecturer' would be a more appropriate term is echoed by another participant (Gregg), who, as described above, also sees himself as a linguist with specialised knowledge to impart. These comments echo the literature regarding the complex knowledge base of EAP (for example Charles 2013; Hyland 2018) and the two conceptualisations of EAP suggested by Ding and Bruce (2017) in Figure 2 above: when EAP is seen as an academic subject in its own right, EAP tutors are regarded as subject specialists and discourse analysts as opposed to language technicians who fix students' faulty language in line with a deficit view of EAP (Hadley 2015).

Interestingly, it is the term 'Associate' used in the titles of three of the participants that seems to cause the most dissatisfaction. Dominic asks, "Associate to what?" and Isla comments, "Whatever that means I haven't got a clue".

Participants were asked about their feelings towards some of the other terms that are referred to in the literature, such as EAP Specialist, Professional or Practitioner. As mentioned in the literature review, it is the title EAP Practitioner that is adopted by Ding & Bruce (2017) throughout their seminal text. They acknowledge that it is widely recognised in the field but that it is "self" or "community-designated". Despite this, it is not a title that participants in this study would feel comfortable using, reflecting a possible discrepancy between the EAP literature and practice. Participants did not feel that any of the terms mentioned above were more appropriate; rather it was considered that they were less clear and would require explanation:

I prefer the term tutor because essentially we are teachers and those terms distance you from....They seem to obfuscate your role. I prefer the term tutor or teacher.

Ellen

With regard to these other possible titles, reference to status was again made. Steven comments that the terms mentioned are "a little bit more flash" and "they might give us a bit more credo than a straight tutor". One participant (Isla) felt that she would not be able to identify with any of the other terms suggested because of her route into EAP, which involved research. For this participant, what was important was what she was actually doing, not the words used to describe it, and she made a significant point regarding words themselves:

It's not the fault of the words but it's how they are used in different contexts and what kind of connotation they gain. Nothing wrong with tutor or professor but what's the shared understanding in a community and in a UK academic community a tutor is regarded as someone of a lower ranking in the way of delivering knowledge.

Isla

It is evident that a number of the participants feel that the connotations of the title tutor contribute to the lack of status of the EAP tutor in academia. This theme of lack of status is reflected throughout the data for this study and, as has been seen in Chapter 2, the EAP literature (for example Ding and Bruce 2017; Hadley 2015; MacDonald 2016); it is developed later in this chapter in relation to Raimes' (1991) theory regarding EAP and the 'butler's stance'. The range of comments made regarding the designation EAP Tutor highlights that this is an important theme in the data. As mentioned in the literature review, a job title has a significant impact on the lived experiences of employees and is important in terms of feeling "understood and accepted" (Grant et al. 2014 p.1202). The lack of certainty over EAP job titles may well contribute to a wider insecurity in the university in general.

4.1.2 EAP tutor role

The data gathered from the study reinforce the points raised in the literature that the role of the EAP tutor comprises a variety of responsibilities and is difficult to define precisely (Ding and Bruce 2017). The participants have a range of roles in their institutions and work on a number of courses; although teaching and giving tutorials to international students is common ground, how interviewees view what is taught differs. Similarities, however, can be seen in the fact that very few participants teach home students and research is not formally included in the role of any of the participants. The theme of the status of the EAP tutor again appears throughout the data gathered.

Role

Even though teaching EAP is included in the remit of all of the sample and can be considered to be at the heart of the role of an EAP tutor, what EAP tutors teach is not always straightforward as it varies according to the context:

We provide English classes and English support.

Ellen

What we do is not English language education but academic literacy which subsumes research skills, academic English, study skills.

Isla

Steven comments that over the course of his career, he has come to realise that EAP is not just about the English language. In other places he has worked, he “didn’t have to know very much”, just pieces of grammar, and how to encourage people to listen strategically:

Now I have to be able to look at a text from any department and be able to work out what’s going on in that text in terms of genre, genre moves, structure all kinds of things...and I have to be aware of how that is different from all the other different genres that are around. And I also have to think that my job is to help students with the more general academic skills e.g. critical thinking.

Steven

Gregg is embedded in an academic department and as a result many of the classes he teaches are tailored to the subject areas of the students. He emphasises the specialist nature of his role:

I effectively do discourse analysis on the texts that are produced by that community of practice and I try to determine the features of that community and I try to teach that.

Gregg

Dominic’s comments reflect the flexibility of the role and the autonomy it can provide:

I like analysing texts and I do that in my unpaid time really. To do with making materials, I like picking things out and highlighting them to students...which is moving a bit closer, a bit beyond just a tutor. The informal nature of it allows me to do it when I have time and not do it when I don’t.

Dominic

These comments again underline discussions in the literature regarding different definitions of EAP (Bruce 2019) and the debate highlighted by Ding and Bruce (2017 pp.7-11) and discussed in Figure 2. Ellen’s comment reflects a ‘support service’ role, whereas the

comments of four of the participants reflect a wider view of EAP as an 'academic field of study'. This latter view encompasses the more "multifaceted", "thicker" accounts of EAP (Charles 2013 p.137-8) in contrast to a narrower, more practical focus (Bruce 2019). Two of the interviewees with the 'academic field' perspective are those whose EAP unit is situated within an academic department.

The number of teaching hours, the types of courses tutors in the sample teach on and the range of other aspects included in their roles vary greatly. The majority of the participants teach on pre-university courses in the form of pre-sessional summer courses when EAP programmes are most in demand. The majority also provide in-sessional EAP for students who have already started courses in their subject areas. The types of students that participants teach comprise a varied range, including art and design, business and journalism international students; pre-registration African nurses; and Chinese academics. Giving one-to-one tutorials to students is also a component of the sample's roles.

Home students

Only four of the participants are involved in teaching home students. Some of this is EAP teaching, for example to home foundation year students, and to students who are in classes with international students as part of the embedded support provided in the university of one of the participants. Another participant teaches on an introduction to TEFL course with modern foreign language students before they go abroad as assistants in the 3rd year of their undergraduate degrees. This appears to be more of a teacher training role than an EAP one, reflecting the broad range of activities that can be included.

Some of the participants feel that EAP units should be more involved in teaching native speakers as it would fill a much-needed role:

I think we do have an important part to play and I think we could play a more important part by offering our services to the whole of the university, native speakers as well as non-native speakers.

Barbara

I don't see why we couldn't look after the home students as well.... lots of undergrad students whose English is absolutely perfect but there are still things they could learn about how to write papers, different genres, how to link ideas, build up an argument etc

Isla

It is felt that teaching home students would help to raise the profile of EAP units as it would involve more students:

It might help us to become more visible.

Steven

In Steven's university, the In-sessional section put in a bid for the teaching of home students to come under their remit but the work was awarded to Academic Services. Home students in some of the other universities in the sample are also taught study skills by professional services sections.

The participant who is embedded in an academic department, Gregg, teaches home and international students in his classes, and sometimes the ratio can be up to 50:50. He describes his classes as aimed at students who speak EAL (English as an Additional Language) but that home students are welcome. In his institution, some members of staff argue that the EAP section should not teach home students as it "perpetuates imbalances" that some international students feel. Our participant, however, has argued that it is appropriate to teach both groups as sometimes there is no significant difference in academic literacy competency between the two. This situation and the inclusive attitudes of participants shown in the data will help to counteract the argument that a major feature of EAP teaching is the idea of deficit and difference (for example Tannock 2018 p.164).

The situation described above regarding the teaching of home students illustrates the range of practices within the participants' sample institutions. Another illustration is the variety of roles participants have within their organisations. The roles of some participants change throughout the year as a result of different courses taking place. One participant has a

management role during the summer when coordinating a pre-session course. He comments that his summer role includes so much more, for example recruitment, inductions for tutors, appraisals, and observations, and it is “well beyond an EAP tutor level”. He adds that as a result, “everyone is getting fed up”. Other participants may be responsible for other teachers in certain roles or on certain projects, for example curriculum design or assessments without having direct management responsibility.

Two of the cohort have management roles so aspects of their positions are inevitably different. One interviewee is a manager in an EAP unit and only has a small number of teaching hours per week. Despite this, he is extremely committed to the teaching aspect of the role and feels that first and foremost, he is a teacher. One of the interviewees in the EAP unit that is located within an academic department also has a senior position as a curriculum lead, which comprises one day of her five-day week.

Research and scholarship

Research and scholarship are not formally included in the roles of any of the participants in the sample. Given that none of the participants is situated in an EAP section that is an academic department in its own right, this is perhaps not surprising. Different attitudes towards whether research and scholarship should be included in the role are shown in the data but they do not support the view in the literature (for example Bell 2016; Ding and Bruce 2017; Harwood 2017) that this should ideally be a fundamental part of the EAP tutor’s role.

As Dylan points out, context is key: when an EAP unit is located in a professional services department there are no opportunities for research. If it sits in an academic department, however, he feels that:

...there is room for a healthy sharing and crossover between those two parts.

Dylan

This is clearly an ideal and does not happen for the two participants in the academic department in the sample.

Another emerging theme is the practical way some of the participants view research. Dylan comments that although there is a place for research, its focus should be to inform teaching. He recognises the importance of more formal academic research but argues that every class a teacher teaches could be considered to be research because of the way he/she is able to reflect on what happens in the classroom and develop in that way. This practical focus is echoed by James who recognises a role for research as part of professional development (for example doing a master's). Ellen can also see the value of research:

I think that would be a great way to develop the staff in the department. It would be great on a number of levels. It would deepen staff interest in it (EAP), help them to develop other skills, and perhaps we'd increase our profile as a department

Ellen

Perhaps the role that incorporates the most practical investigation without it being formalised is that of Gregg. As previously mentioned, this participant is embedded in a university department, collaborating with course tutors and tailoring content of EAP workshops to the needs of students in that particular discourse community as much as possible. The preparation of such material will inevitably involve practical investigation, with the students and the work they are doing at the core. Although this is true of all in-sessional teaching roles, where classes are tailored to the demands of students' subject areas, it is particularly the case in an embedded role such as this. It is perhaps worth noting that the participant who is embedded has a background in the same subject as the students he is supported, enabling him to fully understand course content.

For Steven, talking about research in the role of an EAP tutor in the same way as it is considered in an academic role is missing the point:

My big grouse is that they judge us on academic terms and that's not

fair. We do research but it's of a different nature and it's more piecemeal and we don't get paid for it. We don't get income from it and we don't get grants for our research but that doesn't mean to say that we're not as expert at what we do as anyone in academia.

Steven

The lack of a research focus in the roles of the sample ties in with Ding and Bruce's (2017 p. 7-11) 'support service' view of EAP. The 'academic field of study' approach they set out affords the EAP tutor an identity in which theory and research underpin their own practice. They also recognise research in other more practical ways, for example EAP tutors developing their voices for publication through activities such as writing book reviews and contributing to online discussions or publishing teaching materials.

The theme of a lack of status reappears in relation to the question of whether research should be included in the role. Barbara refers to this but is ambivalent about the effects:

It might lead to having a bit more respect. Unless people have PhDs
I don't think our profession is going to be respected.

Barbara

However, she then acknowledges that there are already EAP staff with PhDs and it hasn't raised the profile of the unit.

The link between research and status also emerges from the two interviewees who work in an EAP unit attached to an academic department. In their EAP unit, staff are fighting for scholarship time and there is resentment that scholarship and research are not recognised in the tutors' workload.

We are constantly told that's not for us that's for the big boys.

Isla

If staff choose to present at conferences, such as those organised by BALEAP, preparation work is done in their own time. Isla laments that “It’s unfair and I feel so strongly about it”, saying that this is the reason she agrees to take part in studies such as this as it is her only opportunity to speak out. It should be noted that this participant is the only one in the study with a PhD and this may be why she feels such a sense of anger and frustration. She refers to the fact that she feels deskilled and deprofessionalised as she has not had the chance to improve on what she gained through doing her PhD. This participant has a managerial aspect to her role so she may fit into the category of BLEAP put forward by Hadley (2015). His research found that feelings of “professional disarticulation” are common amongst this group as they find they are increasingly distanced from their original vocation.

4.1.3. How EAP tutors see their role

Although the EAP tutors interviewed agree that their role is to support international students, a range of strong views emerges in relation to the metaphor of a ‘butler’s stance’ (Raimes 1991 p.243), which positions EAP in a lower status role where language courses are “service courses, in service of the larger academic community”. It is not possible to find a clear majority view on this theme as such a wide range of comments is made, possibly reflecting the diversity of tutors’ contexts and roles. However, there is the sense that this image is inadequate for EAP tutors and that it does not do justice to all they have to offer. A further emerging theme is that of international students being at the heart of the EAP tutor role, and there is some dismay at how they are viewed by universities.

The majority of participants agree that as EAP tutors their role is one of support. For Dylan this is very much the case and he does not perceive this in a negative way in the context of his EAP unit ie in a professional services section:

...whether that’s in terms of bringing students into the University via Pre-sessional or Foundation Programmes or in supporting students once they’re in their Schools. We’re even told sometimes by Professional Services elite that that’s our role to serve the Schools.

Dylan

Some of the participants also agree that the metaphor of the 'butler's stance' is appropriate. Ellen feels that it is a good description as "We definitely provide a service", largely because support is being bought in and tailored to the needs of the department. She adds that the image of a butler also "gets across that idea of hierarchy. That we're slightly lower in the pecking order. There to serve", emphasising the theme of status which continues to appear throughout the data.

Although Steven agrees that supporting international students is his main role, he differentiates that from the term support service. He does not like the latter as he feels it has negative connotations in terms of status:

I feel that in terms of professionalism, I have as much to offer as most academics do but in a different way. I think I know as much about what I do as academics know about what they do. It's just that what they do is different from what I do.

Steven

He adds that he does not feel that his EAP unit is supporting anybody to do anything in the institution; similarly, "And to be frank I don't think they support us either".

The image of the 'butler's stance' does not resonate with all the participants. Tina sees EAP as "a preparation service" as opposed to a support service because EAP tutors are preparing students for their university courses. This reflects the nature of this tutor's role on foundation and pre-university courses as opposed to in-session support. For Barbara, EAP does not even have that status of a butler as that role suggests something that is "essential and necessary":

I would prefer to be a kind of butler where they see us as providing an essential service to them and feeling that they could say to us could you look at this could you do this for us.

Barbara

Dominic dislikes the metaphor of a butler, seeing it as “A bit snooty. A bit weird. Who thinks about butlers these days? A bit old fashioned”. He questions who we are serving: “The chief servant. Servant to who?”. He does not consider that EAP has enough contact with “the hoi polloi, the toffs” to be able to butler for them.

Although he acknowledges that the image of a butler might be appropriate, Steven believes that it’s not really fair because we do something different; he feels that the image of “a relative” would be more favourable. Mary also grudgingly acknowledges the suitability of the metaphor commenting that it “devalues us but we are there trying to support them”.

Isla argues that it is the responsibility of EAP sections to show the rest of the university what we can offer them and that if we fail to do that, we must take responsibility for how we are viewed. This theme is also referred to in the literature. Hyland (2018 p.395), for example, comments that EAP must recognise that it has failed to value its skills and has too readily fallen into a lower status role in relation to academic departments. Isla does not feel that her unit has done enough:

I’d complain about being called a butler if I’d tried year after year to persuade departments, I gave them research and then departments rejected me.

Isla

The views of this participant, with her vision for a separate centre for academic literacy to house EAP provision, are the antithesis of the ‘butler’s stance’. The research done by such a centre would create greater equality with other academic departments and make EAP more like “a relative”, the image suggested by another participant.

Gregg echoes Isla stressing the importance of making academics aware of what the EAP unit can offer. He recognises that he is “a service provider” and he is happy to adopt a ‘butler’s stance’ if that is what the course leaders require him to do. He justifies this by saying that it is “quite effective” but also:

Once a relationship has started, course teams realise that there are other possibilities and could be using us more effectively. Then status position can change.

Gregg

He recognises that in his role as an embedded EAP tutor, he both supports students through helping them with a course tutor's assessment task but at other times he's teaching them how to write or the writing conventions in their discipline. "That content is not being taught by anyone else on that course". This supports Hyland's (2018 p.388) reminder of the value of EAP tutors in this role because of subject lecturers' lack of interest in teaching academic discourse. It also reflects the EAP as an 'academic field of study' argument (Ding and Bruce 2017 p.3) as shown in Figure 2 which posits that subject specialist lecturers are not discourse analysts and should not be expected to fulfil this role. It is Gregg, who is embedded in an academic department, and Isla, whose EAP unit is part of an academic department, who recognise that EAP has the ability to adapt to different circumstances and become the different conceptualisations of EAP (Ding and Bruce 2017) as required.

The student-centred nature of the role is also recognised in the data. Dylan sees the dual focus of the role of an in-sessional EAP tutor:

I think within in-sessional support we serve different stakeholders.

We are serving the School, trying to serve the students and help the students.

Dylan

He notes that the students do not usually differentiate between EAP and academic staff and just see EAP as part of the programme that is available to them; students often feel more comfortable with EAP staff as they are not being assessed by them.

For Dominic, it is the students that he most identifies with in terms of other groups within the university as they are the group that he has the most contact with. He also comments that in cases where students are not getting enough contact with their subject tutors, they come to EAP staff and want them to play that role and they have to be careful not to "get

dragged into telling them what they are supposed to be doing on their course, which tutors are supposed to be doing”:

My job is not to open the door for them. I don't mind doing it. I think I do it better than they do sometimes. Have more awareness of international students (laughs)
That's a bit offensive, isn't it?

Dominic

Overall, there is a sense that the tutors in the sample find the work they do valuable and feel appreciated by the students:

The very fact that students come to our classes...lots of people waiting for tutorials. They obviously value it.

Barbara

4.1.4 Varied career backgrounds

It is clear from the data that the majority of respondents in this study are not linear careerists who went into the field of EFL with a clear plan to become EAP tutors. They have taken a less than direct route to the roles they are currently in, with chance and unplanned opportunities being an emerging theme. The participants with a strong teaching focus have the clearest career paths but the lack of a definite career plan is evident for the majority of the group.

All of the participants in the study have a background as EFL teachers and taught abroad and in the UK before becoming EAP tutors. That experience typically includes teaching general English to adults and young learners, and some ESP classes, including exam classes, and Business and Academic English.

An interest in or previous experience of teaching is an emerging theme in the data. Three of the participants had trained as teachers and had PGCEs before going into TEFL. Another participant became interested in EFL after being inspired by someone in the field. For four of the participants (Dylan, Ellen, Steven and Gregg) a focus on teaching has been the most

common thread throughout their careers, whether it was in private language schools, state schools or universities. Despite this interest in teaching, no one mentions a vocation for teaching or a particular desire to disseminate the English language.

The other six participants all mentioned various jobs that they had done before going into EFL. These included a mortgage advisor and warehouse worker, and work in HR and in a pharmacy. This emphasises the permeable nature of EFL and the fact that people can enter at any stage in their lives and return following breaks. This permeability is one of the factors that impacts on the professional status of EAP.

Dominic was asked how he would describe his job:

A job. It's a job. Not like it's a calling or something. I started doing it because I wanted to travel. I wanted to work abroad. And I kept doing it because I couldn't think of anything else. And I always quite liked it. Never too much of a burden compared to other jobs I did.

Dominic

Like Dominic, in terms of their original motivations for becoming EFL teachers, half of the participants cite the desire to travel abroad as their reason for going into the field. This is perhaps not surprising, as EFL provides a practical way to achieve this and fund travel abroad. Bell (2016) also found that the majority of his participants became English language teachers with the aim of travelling. He (2016 p.262) also comments on the fact that entering the field of English Language Teaching was "arbitrary" and "circumstantial" for his interviewees and this also seems to be true for the current sample.

Several interviewees mention that they saw becoming an EFL teacher as a temporary move, planning to return to other work after a year or so. James, for example, comments that his perception was that teaching English was "a gap year job" and that it was only when he went abroad that he realised it that he liked it and that it could be a career. This echoes the common narrative around EFL teaching, as mentioned above in relation to Johnston's article (1997) 'Do EFL Teachers Have Careers?' and the need to ask such a question. It is possible

that this reputation that sprung up around EFL's early development has been and continues to be influential in its low status (Bell 2016 p.265).

Social conditions were also factors in terms of original motivation, and the following are mentioned by different participants: a dislike of Margaret Thatcher's education policies and therefore a desire to teach elsewhere (Steven), and the unstable work conditions in the UK (Gregg).

The sample showed an initial commitment to teaching by obtaining EFL qualifications, either through completing the one-month CELTA course or through their PGCE training. As can be seen in Figure 7, four of the sample went on to complete the DELTA and eight of the sample have master's qualifications (one in applied linguistics, two in TESOL and the other five in other unrelated subjects). One of the sample has a PhD in a subject that is connected to language learning. The range of qualifications evidenced in the sample reflects the discussions taking place in EAP circles (Campion 2015) regarding what is most appropriate: from the data it is evident that both the DELTA and master's qualifications are acceptable for EAP teaching. It is also interesting to note that only the minority of the sample have master's degrees in subject-related areas. This reinforces Bell's (2016 p.260) comments that EAP is a relatively easy field to enter; he notes that that most academic subjects require practitioners to have doctoral qualifications. As mentioned above, EAP, however, is a permeable area with weak boundaries and this impacts on practitioner status and EAP's status as a profession.

In terms of the move from EFL to EAP, for most of the participants the change was opportunistic and not because of any particular career plan or desire to become an EAP tutor. Barbara, for example, started teaching on a university EAP course instead of the General English programme she had been employed for as another teacher dropped out and she was the only other person there with a master's qualification. Another theme is the desire or need to move and that leading to an EAP job: Dominic followed his partner who moved for her job, and he subsequently found an opportunity teaching EAP; Ellen wanted to move to be nearer home and that led to an EAP job. Steven comments that on returning from abroad, it was easier to find EAP jobs than EFL ones and that they were better paid.

This is similar to other tutors in the sample (Mary, James and Tina) who found EAP opportunities attractive despite not having planned for this.

It is interesting to note that apart from one interviewee mentioning that she took the EAP modules as choices on her Diploma, none of the participants received any specific EAP training prior to starting their EAP roles, again emphasising the lack of a strategic career plan in this direction. The EAP qualifications that do currently exist (see BALEAP 2020b for examples) are a recent development over the past few years and would not have been available when the cohort started teaching EAP. The fact that EAP tutors used to, and may still, come into the field lacking subject-specific knowledge supports Ding and Bruce's (2017 p.217) argument that EAP tutors lack "*cultural/symbolic capital* within academia" and need to be socialised into their role. These arguments are amongst those given by the authors to show that EAP is not yet a profession, and this is supported by the data.

4.1.5 Conclusion

In terms of general themes, gender differences do not appear to emerge from the data. Differences relating to the location of EAP units, however, do appear to have some influence on how participants regard EAP. The interviewees whose EAP units are located within an academic department or whose role requires them to be embedded in an academic subject area seem to be more likely to have a broader view of EAP as an academic subject.

The data gathered regarding the EAP tutor show a number of common overall themes. The designation EAP Tutor is the most commonly used and there is broad agreement that this is the most suitable of the proposed EAP-related titles despite strong reservations. The roles of the sample comprise a number of significant differences but common threads have emerged: teaching and one-to-one tutorials are integral but there are discrepancies in how teaching is seen; there is a lack of a research component in all the roles and the majority of participants do not teach home students. The theme of supporting international students is also a common thread although how this is viewed generates diverse views, particularly in relation to the metaphor of a butler. The issue of a lack of status appears throughout the data. Common themes in relation to career background include the absence of a definite

career plan, an EFL background and having become an EAP tutor because of circumstances. All of these factors contribute to a lack of certainty in terms of how EAP tutors see themselves. The following section examines the role of the EAP tutor in the university and considers the wider impact of this uncertainty.

4.2 The EAP tutor and the university

This section builds on the picture of the EAP tutor already illustrated and presents data on the EAP tutor in the wider context of the university. The participants' views on the following themes are revealed: the position of EAP in the university; EAP as a profession; the professionalisation of EAP; pay and conditions; and hopes and future trends.

4.2.1 The position of EAP in the university

As can be seen in the table 'About the Participants' at the start of Part 2, the EAP units of eight of the sample are situated within a professional services section of their university. The majority of these EAP units are separate entities under one of these sections but one tutor works as part of the Learning Development Unit with the Academic Enhancement team as there is not a separate English Language unit in the university she works for. Another of the participant tutors is embedded within an academic department meaning that although his EAP unit is separate, he spends his time working for one academic department and tailoring the work that he does to the specific needs of the students there. Finally, two tutors in the sample work for an EAP unit that is situated in an academic department.

The typology of universities created by Hadley (2015 p.35), which comprises Sausage Makers, Mass Providers, Dreamweavers and Ivory Towers, is referred to in the literature review. It is intended as a general guide only and is not examined in detail in this study. However, in order to provide a context for the research, the vast majority of the participants could be said to work in Dreamweavers, and the minority in Mass Providers.

Position

Participants were asked how they feel about the location of their EAP unit and whether they consider it to be an appropriate position within their university. The majority of participants

do not feel that the position of their EAP unit in the university is an appropriate one. Despite this, the data show that most of the sample do feel part of the university as a whole.

There are a range of answers from those in professional services sections, and several do not generally feel that this location is a good fit:

(Being in professional services) makes us seem more like technicians or something like that and not on the academic side. I would prefer to be on the academic side.

Barbara

...no, I don't feel like I'm a professional service. I don't feel marketing [sic]. The University might see it that way sometimes because that might be one of the things they use to advertise but no I don't feel like that.

Dominic

It is clear that the role of EAP tutor often does not fit neatly into either category, professional or academic. James, whose EAP unit is part of Professional Services, describes the difficulties he had completing his annual Professional Development Review (PDR) form. His designation "Tutor" meant that he was labelled "academic" but the sections on that form were largely irrelevant to his role. He notes that it would have been the same if he had been allocated a professional services PDR form: "We are kind of in the middle".

Ellen mentions the fact that the unit EAP she is in has been restructured a number of times and put into different divisions. One of these is the International Division, which she does not feel is appropriate because of the differences in ethos:

We were with lots of people who were doing marketing and they had no notion of what we do....I don't see myself as following profit at all. I see myself as a teacher.

Ellen

She acknowledges however that her managers might disagree as she knows that the aims of the department are to make money for the university. She feels that the current position of her EAP unit, in the same section as Student Support and Library Services, is much more appropriate.

For the two tutors whose EAP unit is part of an academic department, the situation does not seem more straightforward. Steven feels that even though the academic department pays lip service to who they are, his section is not integrated. He feels that this is partly to do with being located in a separate building but that generally:

They find us troublesome and we don't really fit in as such; they don't want to get rid of us because we bring in a huge amount of money every year.

Steven

The other participant from an EAP unit in an academic department, Isla, does not feel integrated into the department either but likes the idea of an “intellectual home” and thinking about where EAP belongs in the university and who it should be associated with, even though her preferred location would not be where they are currently located.

The theme that has emerged from the data is the sense of EAP staff existing in a liminal space, and not fitting in with either professional services or academic staff. In Whitchurch's (2008 p.385) diagram illustrating the *third space* between academic and professional domains (see Figure 3), the position reflected in the data can be seen in the ‘perimeter’ roles on either side of the *third space*. As mentioned in the literature review, Hadley (2015) defines the Third Space differently: in his view it refers to the area that separate EAP units inhabit when they are positioned here away from academia. However these spaces are referred to, the experiences of the participants support the literature's contention that it is in these liminal spaces that EAP is situated.

Despite this, when asked a related question about whether they feel part of their university as a whole, the majority of participants (six out of ten) feel that they do although their comments often qualify that and reinforce the liminal nature of their position. For example:

We're a support service. We are put on the edge of things, I think....
we're sometimes on the perimeter rather than being at the heart.

Dylan

Barbara, in contrast, does not feel part of her university but for the same reasons: "We are kind of at the edge of town if you like". The answer from Dominic is more ambiguous: he does not feel especially connected nor completely disconnected. The actual building contributes to his sense of dislocation as "the building [ELP Unit] is kind of separate, with professional staff" and "I don't have a base anywhere".

It is perhaps not surprising that the tutor who is embedded in the academic department, Gregg feels very much a part of his university. Before his current role, however, he describes feeling like "an itinerant ronin: a samurai who doesn't have a master" as he would "parachute in and out of different colleges, deliver a two-hour session and then leave".

Mary, the interviewee who teaches as part of a support service within the university, feels part of the university but belongs to a team that feels very demoralised as a result of the threat of job losses. The bigger picture is also mentioned by Ellen, who notes that although part of the EAP unit has been nominated for various awards, she finds it "a little empty" as there has been a reluctance to increase salaries. She also notes that a management culture is prevalent:

We're all slaves to policy that's passed down from invisible higher levels
or from HR who we never see face to face but they've got the most control
over things, which I don't think is right actually. The University is about teaching
and learning and some of that control and power should go back to the lecturers and
teachers.

Ellen

Steven also acknowledges the "platitudes" from Heads of Faculty but feels "it's all flannel":

When it actually comes down to paying us a reasonable wage for what we do...which is really at least a level above what we're being paid for....I'm a bit wary of what they say I'm afraid"

Steven

Overall, it seems that those participants who are most satisfied with their location within the university are those who feel part of another structure within the institution that they feel a sense of attachment to. This is the case with Gregg, who is embedded in an academic department and Mary, who teaches as part of a student support service. This is not seen in the case of the two participants located in an academic department as they feel dislocated from the department. In terms of Whitchurch's (2008 p.385 – Figure 3) diagram, it is those tutors who find themselves in less of a 'perimeter' role that seem to be most satisfied if they feel a sense of belonging with 'Professional staff' or 'Academic staff' on either side of the diagram. Such locations enable greater collaboration with professional or academic staff, meaning that EAP tutors or managers have greater opportunities to work on third space projects. As mentioned in the literature review, Whitchurch (2008) is particularly referring to managerial level staff here and although EAP tutors do not appear to fit into her definition or categories of professional identity (Figure 6), there are opportunities for them if they are positioned in this way.

Preferable locations

The emerging theme described regarding 'perimeter roles' can also be seen in the data regarding preferable locations. Interviewees gave a range of answers when asked about the location they felt would be preferable for their EAP unit. For example, two of the participants who are located in an EAP unit that is a separate section, Dylan and Ellen, would like to see their unit sitting alongside other support teams in a large support centre where they could work more easily with other support services and have a home, again showing this desire for a greater sense of belonging:

I think that's one of the difficulties here is that we don't have a great sense of a home, in terms of a physical building, for example.

Dylan

Dylan also states that he would like to see closer links with academic subject areas, and Barbara agrees. For her, it would be desirable for EAP to be more embedded within the academic departments, working alongside academics much more; this she believes is what would make students see EAP as important and more central to their degrees as opposed to somebody who pops in a few times a week:

We could do what we're both good at, put that together to be able to help the students. But at the moment I don't think that is happening.

Barbara

Isla's vision is for an independent centre for academic literacy for international students, although she recognises that that could play an important role for home students too, helping them with different genres and argument building. She believes that strong ties with all the academic departments where EAP delivers specialist courses are crucial:

I think the departments will keep us alive. Unless we tag onto departments and become an integral part of them, I think we might get in trouble in future.

Isla

She comments that students come to a particular university to study engineering, science, art and not because of the reputation of the EAP section.

Gregg believes strongly that EAP is positioning itself incorrectly and that the "insecurities about status" heard from the community are a result of this. As mentioned above, his ambition is that EAP practitioners start becoming linguists that work within discourse communities and that this positioning would be the answer:

As a community we need to be advocating. There's a danger that EAP gets siloed. That it's a remedial class that happens in some backroom somewhere, disassociated from the course for students that are perceived to be failing. My position is that I think we should be much more ambitious

than that.

Gregg

Similarly, Steven is also in favour of much greater visibility for EAP within the university so that academic staff really understand what EAP does and recognise that it has something to offer that they aren't doing themselves:

Academic departments are well behind us in terms of teaching. However hard we try, and we could try harder, we never get anywhere except with individuals. As a whole the institution doesn't recognise us.

Steven

The previous data chapter showed that the participants who are located as part of or embedded in an academic department tend to have an awareness of the academic possibilities for EAP that exist. In terms of the position of EAP units, tutors situated in different contexts share a range of views on preferable locations. The benefit of greater ties with academic departments, including embedding tutors, is recognised by the majority of the sample. However, some tutors situated in separate EAP units in professional services sections also recognise the possibilities afforded by links with other support services and so have a broader view of the options available to EAP.

Different attitudes towards international students

Some of the cohort express strong views about how they feel international students are treated by the institutions, showing a sense of dislocation of EAP tutors from the university. Overall, the tutors recognise the financial importance of international students to UK universities:

Universities are businesses and they need the income from international students so there's a huge amount of growth and particularly from certain markets.

Dylan

However, Barbara feels that her EAP unit does not prioritise international students enough:

They do put students at the centre of the teaching, but I don't think they really consider what the students want or listen to them enough. It's very much, this is what we do, so the students have to have that.

Barbara

Steven feels very strongly about the attitude of his university towards international students, who he believes are seen as "a cash cow". He sees this as a reflection of the fact that the university has become "more and more like a business and all they are interested in is making money". His view is that to the university:

...it doesn't matter once they're there. They can be fobbed off with anything and I think that's a) disrespectful and b) immoral. And I keep saying so and that's probably why I don't get any promotion, never mind,

Steven

This opinion is also reflected in comments about the pre-sessional summer courses run by universities across the UK:

As far as I can see it's a massive moneymaking machine and the students are customers and they're being brought into the university and passed on to other courses to make money for the university.

Ellen

The backdrop of the neoliberal university is discussed widely in the literature (for example Hadley 2015; Ding and Bruce 2017; Hyland 2018) along with the range of pressures that puts on EAP units, including to function as a business. References to international students as 'cash cows' have also been made in the literature, particularly in Hadley's (2015 p.34) study in which he presents his typology of universities, and EAP units are referred to as Student Processing Units (SPUs), where large numbers of students are churned out at as low a cost as possible. As mentioned above, the majority of the universities in the sample for this research could be described as Dreamweavers. These are universities that have adopted

neoliberal practices but maintain their brand, which emphasises “their history, character, social status, and contributions to society” (Hadley 2015 p.36). In these types of universities, Hadley (2015) notes that EAP often comprises a greater variety of approaches with autonomy for staff, and international students are not processed to the extent they would be in Sausage Makers or Mass Producers. It is for these reasons perhaps that although discussions regarding how international students are viewed are occasionally raised in the data, they do not appear as significant themes.

Lack of awareness

A further theme that is evident in relation to a sense of dislocation and marginalisation is that of other parts of the university being unaware of the role of EAP or of EAP being undervalued. This feeling is common for the majority of participants wherever the EAP section is situated. Dylan comments that the University has other priorities and as a result the EAP section is not always recognised or prioritised. He gives examples of timetable clashes as lecturers have planned classes at times that should be dedicated to English language classes, and the struggle to book rooms for summer pre-session courses:

So we are part of the University and we are recognised for contributions we make, to onward income and things like that, but I think our profile could be higher and we deserve greater recognition for the amount of preparation and teaching and support we provide.

Dylan

These sentiments are echoed in the data, with Barbara commenting that “EAP is very neglected”.

Sometimes it is even the EAP unit’s own department that doesn’t recognise them. One interviewee gave the example of a team awayday where the English language section was overlooked in relation to the mission statement and team activities. Staff had to form their own last-minute breakaway group and request an extra flip chart for an activity as managers had forgotten that teaching was part of the department’s remit. Understandably this interviewee described feeling undervalued by his institution.

Ellen points out that it is different according to which department you are in:

Some Schools work well with us and seem to be quite appreciative of what we do and other Schools just see us as a bit of an add-on unfortunately and don't work with us.

Ellen

Steven states that even though In-sessional works with some departments, there are very few who know what they do, who invite them in or who want them to support their international students.

Hierarchy

Connected to previously mentioned points about the lower status of EAP, language related to hierarchy appears in some of the data. Tina states that if you have the designation "Tutor" then you are "a second-class citizen" in her institution. When asked about position in the university, Ellen comments that EAP is "towards the bottom of the hierarchy definitely". The reason for this is, she suggests, because we don't fit:

It's a funny role because we're not academic staff and we're not working in admin. But we are teaching. So I just don't think we fit very easily with anything at all.

Ellen

Again, the feelings are similar in the EAP unit located in an academic department. Steven claims that "on a regular basis we are made to feel we are at the bottom of the heap". He does note, however, that there are advantages to this as it means there is still scope for creativity within the role and you aren't pushed in various directions. He feels "so insignificant no one is really interested in what we do as long as we fulfil our obligations".

In Dylan's experience, academic staff see EAP tutors "on an equal footing". He believes that some EAP tutors have an inferior perception of themselves which is not the case:

I think it's that they're concerned that other people will think that they are lesser in some way although it's not necessarily the reality.

Dylan

The majority of the sample do not see themselves as academic staff and do not want to be. There is a sense that what EAP tutors are doing is different, which is valuable in its own right, and should be recognised as such:

I don't think we've ever been considered as academics and in a sense that's fair enough because I don't think a lot of us are.... [it's]not bad that we shouldn't be considered part of academia.

Steven

He feels that Ding & Bruce (2017) are trying to intellectualise or "academicise, if there is such a word" EAP and encourage everyone to research, write and publish. Whilst he is not against this, he believes EAP has advantages to offer in its own right but these are not appreciated by his institution. For Ding and Bruce (2017) and other writers, for example Bell (2016) and Hyland (2017), the way for EAP to secure its position is through tutors developing a research identity. This is not a theme that is reflected in the data.

Another reference to hierarchy comes from Isla, who reveals that over the past 7 years, top down pressure in her institution has increased and it is difficult to push back against this. She feels there are now "taboo subjects and lines you can't cross" in a way that is almost "communist": you can't approach people who are higher up, you have to go through certain channels and you can't bypass certain people:

I've seen a deterioration in ability to speak out, stand up. It's become very hierarchical and quite oppressive.

Isla

The irony is not lost on her that in the university library so much is written about critical thinking and freedom of thought but the reality of the workplace is completely different.

Taking responsibility

As mentioned in the previous section in relation to the data regarding how EAP tutors see their role and the 'butler's stance', some participants argue that EAP tutors need to take responsibility for EAP sections' lack of visibility in institutions. When asked why there is a lack of awareness, Barbara says it is partly because "we haven't popularised what we do" and when schemes of work for EAP courses were sent out academics were surprised at the range of support being provided.

Isla also believes that her EAP unit needs to be more proactive and make it clear to the departments what they can do. She feels that people have gone into departments and talked about practicalities and helping students with sentences but not about ideas "to make a professor's jaw drop" regarding what they can do to enhance students' levels of academic literacy; she isn't surprised if academics aren't impressed:

It is our fault as well. You have to gain that credibility.

Isla

Similar themes appear in the data for Gregg, who comments that "it depends how much someone knows about our capabilities". Some course tutors perceive EAP tutors as "people who can provide remedial support" ie they send students so tutors can correct the language or give students the mechanisms to do it themselves but are unaware that EAP tutors are able to offer much more. As EAP tutors, we need to say this is what I can do and give the course team "a palette of possibilities" and then ask them what they would like.

4.2.2 A Profession

It is clear from the data that the EAP tutors interviewed see EAP as a profession; all but one of the participants in the sample sees EAP tutoring in this way. Responses to the question 'Do you see EAP tutoring as a profession?' included the following comments:

I've been involved in it for over 14 years, 15 years, I do see it as a profession. I consider myself to be a professional EAP teacher....and I take a lot of pride in that. *Dylan*

Dylan's sense of being a professional is strongly connected to his feelings about being a teacher. He believes that some EAP tutors have a "chip on the shoulder" about not being "a proper teacher", whereas he feels very strongly that he does fit into that category and he has no hesitation in telling people:

People ask me what I do, I say I teach English for Academic Purposes to international students in a university, supporting students to help them do better in their subjects, and I'm proud about it. Some people feel they have to go through this process of admitting what type of teacher they are. It's unfortunate. I think people should take more pride in what is a very very worthwhile job.

Dylan

Ellen's response, however, indicates the difficulties those outside the field of EAP have in understanding the role and the sense of frustration that can bring:

When I explain my job title to other people they usually say 'So you're an EFL teacher basically'. I used to explain, no not exactly, we're teaching EAP, at a university, we're trying to teach study skills and go into the details....and now I'm just like 'yeah', that's fine. I can't be bothered to explain anymore.

The response from Barbara regarding EAP as a profession is more qualified, and reflects discussions in the literature in relation to the role played by qualifications in determining the status of an occupation (for example Millerson 1964). She states that she would like to think EAP is a profession but added that if there was a minimum qualification that universities insisted on for working as an EAP tutor at a UK HEI, then it would help to raise the profile of EAP, along with the following:

If we could work more closely with the academics and if we were on the academics' side as opposed to the technicians' side that would raise our profile and our professionalism.

Barbara

Barbara also relates comments about professional status to conditions of work, indicating that certain aspects of the role lack the autonomy usually associated with professions. In her university, EAP tutors, like other professional services staff, are obliged to keep to fixed hours and be on site from 8:30-4:30, for example. This, she feels, is demeaning:

We have office hours and are treated more like junior members of staff as opposed to qualified professionals in charge of our own workload.

Barbara

This has not been the case in other places she has worked:

We were treated as professionals there. Nobody questioned what time you were in the office until and what time you came in in the morning. You were trusted to do your job.

Barbara

As mentioned in the previous data chapter, when describing the role of the EAP tutor, Steven feels that EAP involves so much more than knowing the English language and includes having an extensive knowledge of academic literacy and different subject genres. This is reflected in the literature where a theoretical knowledge base is not only recognised as an important feature of EAP (Charles 2013; Hyland 2018), it is also considered to be a key feature of a profession (Millerson 1964; Whitty 2006 – Figure 4). Steven recognises this complexity in EAP and feels it isn't something just anyone can walk into a class and do as it requires:

...thought, preparation, discussion, imagination. All the things which are part of a profession. You also need to take action when things go wrong.

Steven

He asserts that the tutor has fifteen or sixteen people in the class who have all got their own individual needs, adding that doctors or lawyers usually deal with people one at a time.

Ok, ours isn't life and death but it's still quite important and a difficult job to do well.

Steven

Like Dylan, Steven's sense of professional status is firmly linked to being a teacher. In response to the writers he feels are trying to make the field more academic, he states:

We do teaching. It's professional.

Steven

And for James, it is because of its connection to EFL:

EFL is definitely a profession. EAP? It's a branch of a profession. Yes, I think so.

James

Mary's sense of EAP as a profession is connected to the following:

We are constantly trying to develop ourselves. Continual learning process. I've invested quite a lot of money in it.

Mary

4.2.3 Professionalisation

Some of the participants discuss changes they have seen throughout their careers and how the field of EAP has professionalised. Many of these themes are reflected in the professionalisation literature. Isla notes that EAP is becoming more established and people are starting to push for it to become recognised; there is research coming out (for example Ding & Bruce 2017), and this is helping EAP to become recognised as a field, along with initiatives organised by BALEAP. However, she notes that:

I think it depends on each institution and how much recognition they give to their EAP centres.

Isla

She feels that despite what is going on in the outside world, individual universities do not recognise EAP as a field of study in terms of their own EAP units. As mentioned previously, Isla feels that it is only when EAP has a degree of autonomy, for example through a Centre for Academic Literacy which brings together research, teaching, training, and development, that EAP will be recognised in its own right. She compares her idea of an academic literacy unit to an engineering department where different strands of the subject are brought together.

Another theme which comes up in relation to professionalisation is that of qualifications and development, and reflects discussions in the field of EAP regarding which higher level qualification is the most appropriate (Campion 2015). James comments that over the past three years, since he applied for his current position, he has seen a growth in jobs requiring master's qualifications. Previously, the DELTA was the qualification specified:

I did my master's as I was aware that more and more people had them and I was competing against them whether the ad specified that you needed one or not. Now lots specify it as essential.

James

The commitment in terms of time and finance was all James's own although his organisation provided flexibility in terms of his attendance at his master's classes and organising his teaching around that:

A bit of a bone of contention. I was strung along a bit then nothing really happened. They did help it happen.

James

However, James recognises that as his workplace did not pay for his master's, he is not tied into working for them for a number of years to come and the benefits of this.

Reference to qualifications is also made by Barbara, who believes that a master's (in TESOL, Applied Linguistics or a related area) is much more appropriate for teaching EAP at a university than the more practical DELTA qualification. Through doing a master's:

...you've gone through the process that a lot of the students are going through whereas DELTA is very different, and you spend one paragraph on different syllabuses whereas in the master's you can spend pages on that.

Barbara

The importance Barbara attaches to qualifications is clear. As mentioned above, Barbara feels EAP tutors should be associated much more closely with academics (as opposed to ("technicians")), and qualifications are a way to help them to do this:

There should be a minimum level of qualification. I think that would help take our position more seriously.

Barbara

A minimum level, she believes, would help raise EAP tutors' "profile and professionalism". This is despite the fact that attaining these qualifications is all done at the EAP tutor's own expense. At another stage in the interview she notes that:

My professional development is something I've done myself as opposed to the institutions.

Barbara

This echoes the experience of James and Mary who also funded their own development and is discussed further in the section 'Pay and Conditions' below.

The topic of qualifications is also raised by Gregg who asks two important questions:

How do we acquire our knowledge?

Where is the professionalised qualification for teaching EAP?

Gregg

He feels that there should be a course that is analogous to the DELTA for EAP with a systemised breakdown of its features. Such a qualification, he argues, would “legitimise interest as a route in”. This theme is seen in the literature regarding EAP and professionalisation. Bell (2016) comments that it is not difficult to enter EAP and its permeability and weak boundaries have a negative impact on the status of the profession. Currently EFL teachers trying to break into EAP need experience but this difficult to obtain. Entry is often through teaching on a pre-sessional summer course, which is short term:

The route into EAP is highly unstable and you’re required to commit time and money to try to get in without even a strong indication that you would get work on a regular and professionalised basis afterwards.

Gregg

Only one of the interviewees does not see EAP as a profession and comments that he went into teaching in the first place because he “didn’t want a fulltime career” and he has remained in his current position because of his children:

....someone says profession, I’d see that in a negative...profession seems to be bad faith, it seems to be boring. It seems to be limiting...where you get stuck in a job you’re not any good at and then you don’t get promoted anymore.....So I have all these negative connotations to it...I suppose there are positive aspects to it.

Dominic

He feels that he is not alone and that there are others who go into EFL for the same reasons and who are equally as fatalistic about where they end up:

There is that kind of EFL thing where people get into it, as I did, because you don’t want a career. And then EAP, if you carry on progressing, if you’re lucky that’s where you end up. Because you’ll get paid more, more than a private language school.

Dominic

Dominic also describes a different type of person, for example, someone who teaches English overseas for the British Council who went into EFL for different reasons and who is more focused and “a bit more professionally minded”:

...rather than people that travel around and end up...now I want to live in the UK again and there's a job, a few hours going at X university, that's much better paid and getting into it that way.

Dominic

Two of the interviewees mentions the professional organisation for EAP professionals, BALEAP. For example, Isla recognises the impact it has had on the field:

BALEAP threw a lifeline to us. It was our escape community.

Isla

The latter reference is to the sense of dislocation from the university she works in where she feels it has become increasingly difficult to speak out and there is an increasing workload. She recognises that BALEAP has its issues, for example, regarding disagreements over best practice and how their accreditation system should be run; however, it has been invaluable in terms of providing a forum for people to hear each other's views and to find out what is happening. This is not only in the form of conferences and professional issues meetings but also the BALEAP mail base which enables tutors to find out how other EAP sections are run, for example, that Leeds has a scholarship component to their workload.

4.2.4 Pay and conditions

Several minor themes emerged in the data regarding pay and conditions. The interviewees are generally accepting of the pay and conditions in their workplace, with issues raised depending on people's individual situations. The complaints include some reference to pay, a lack of career progression, temporary contracts, increased workload and fixed hours on site.

Pay

In general, the majority of the participants seem to be generally accepting of the pay they receive for the work they do. A few comments that a higher salary would be appreciated were made in passing but did not appear to be serious concerns:

I'm well placed on the pay scale but I feel like for the work I do I'm underpaid. But I'm sure most people in the university feel that.

Gregg

I earn plenty for me!

I'm not so worried about the money it's the fact that we don't get any official recognition

Steven

Two of the participants have stronger complaints. Barbara has worked as an EAP tutor in universities abroad where the pay and holidays were much better than in her current UK HEI and feels dissatisfied with the salary in her current institution.

Ellen appreciates the benefits of her job at a university in terms of holiday pay and other entitlements such as maternity leave but is unhappy with the pay, commenting that the "salary has pretty much stayed the same". Tutors in her EAP unit applied for regrading but were not awarded it, adding to her feelings of dissatisfaction; she also observes that some other universities are paying their EAP tutors at a higher grade.

Career progression

Ellen links this lack of increase in pay to the limited career prospects in the field of EAP, describing "a kind of ceiling" for teachers who don't go into management and therefore can't go any higher up the pay scale, which she describes as "quite demotivating":

When you think of your long-term career, it definitely makes you question whether it's a good option to stay long term. And I don't want to become a manager at all. *Ellen*

Asked what she would do to solve this problem of a lack of career progression, Ellen mentions mainstream teaching where in a primary school a teacher could progress by having a special responsibility for numeracy or art, for example:

...without becoming a manager they could go onto higher responsibilities. Something to aim for. And something to recognise their experience and skills as well. It just helps your development, I think.

Ellen

Dominic also mentions this idea of a ceiling and the fact that it is “quite a low ceiling”; if you want to go beyond it, you have to stop teaching and become a manager:

People tend to go for management jobs. I’m not sure why they do that. I guess it’s just for the money. It’s not a love of managing ELP, I imagine.

Dominic

Grading

Some of the interviewees state that their position in the university grading system does not suit the amount or type of work they are required to do. As mentioned above, EAP tutors’ application for regrading in Ellen’s EAP unit was turned down. James also feels that his current grade reflects the position of a tutor and not his curriculum and assessment responsibilities. Steven, who mentions the increasing workload, feels that the work he is doing is:

...really at least a level above what we’re being paid for.

Steven

Temporary contracts

Two of the cohort, Dominic and Mary, are on temporary contracts, but have very different attitudes towards them. For Dominic, it is a very positive experience as he is “hourly paid by choice” as a result of his personal circumstances and also because of his desire to avoid a career and progression. He describes the benefits of being hourly paid:

I don't have to do the boring stuff that seems to grind a lot of people down. Not so much of it anyway and I can focus on the teaching.

Dominic

Additionally, because he has been at his institution for a number of years, his position is relatively secure despite his temporary status:

I'm not just someone they can drop.

Dominic

Mary, on the other hand, gives a very different view of working life based on temporary contracts. At the time of the interview, she was contemplating switching to shop work to have a steady income as she was uncertain whether her institution would have teaching hours for her the following semester; as a result, she feels totally despondent. She describes how tiring and unsettling the past few years have been for her generally as she has had to move regularly according to where the work is. As mentioned above, Mary has invested in her development and sees EAP as a "continual learning process". Despite this, it has not led to the opportunities that she has hoped for:

I'm spending all this money on improving myself [DELTA, travel expenses to attend conferences] but it's not getting me a job.

Mary

In the conclusion to his study, Bell (2016 p.324) warns of the effect of short-term contracts and casualisation on EAP. In addition to the impact on status and professional standing, he comments on the danger that EAP tutors would become reluctant to invest in professional qualifications if there are uncertain career prospects. This is clearly the case with Mary as she is finding it increasingly difficult to have faith that she will be able to develop a career in EAP. Mary's comments also echo discussions taking place in the field of EAP, on the BALEAP mailing list for example, with regard to the poor conditions for some EAP staff such as those on zero-hour contracts and those in permanent positions. There has been a focus on the

issue of precarity and the fact that tutors in unstable work situations should not be forgotten as part of the EAP tutor community.

Increased workload

As mentioned above, the EAP tutors interviewed are generally accepting of the pay they receive and appreciate the benefits of working for a university. However, two participants mention the increased workload that they face, particularly in the summer, and the pressures that it brings. Neither participant feels that they receive appropriate recognition for this.

For Steven, the situation varies from term to term but he describes the summer as “a nightmare” because of the increase in the number of students on pre-sessional courses and the changes in his role to deal with this.

Very very stressful. We're doing stuff we're not supposed to be doing.

Steven

The pressure and long hours cause health issues amongst colleagues and problems for people with families as it is difficult to get time off during the summer holidays. Isla also talks about the pressure over the summer where EAP roles change from classroom tutors to being in charge of courses with two to three hundred students and twenty to thirty tutors.

It takes people a whole term to recover.

Isla

Isla also feels the money is acceptable but the problem is:

the creeping workload that is imposed upon us on that kind of pay.

Isla

She is clear that she wouldn't want more money to cope with the workload but would prefer to “keep the workload sensible”. There is also more pressure in non-teaching time

which used to be referred to as “down time”, but now is subject to increased demands as tutors are expected to take on “non-teaching time development”, in addition to preparing for the coming term.

They are squeezing every ounce of energy people have left.

Isla

Steven also comments that virtually every hour of what he does every week is accounted for with teaching and marking and that it is even hard to find half an hour to have a coffee with someone or not to have lunch at your computer. He feels that this is largely due to the fact that EAP tutors do most of their own administration work, such as putting classes together, assessments and spreadsheets, and that they are expected to do more work in a week than they are contracted to do. This means there is no time to talk about new ideas and there is a loss of:

the opportunity to discuss interesting things with interesting and knowledgeable people.

Steven

4.2.5 Hopes and future trends

Interviewees were asked about future trends they can see happening in their own EAP sections and in the field of EAP in general. The majority felt positive.

When asked about the future of EAP, Gregg believes it is based on trends in globalised education. He does not see current trends declining although there could be changes. He comments for example that the prestige of a British university degree has diminished in China recently, but China is a big market.

In Gregg’s university, there is evidence that attitudes towards EAP tutors may be changing. The number of international students has risen to “critical levels” and the pressure on course tutors has mounted. Now some courses are made up of entirely Chinese students and this causes pressure on course tutors in terms of language and intercultural issues. He comments that from a management perspective, there is increased pressure to reduce

attainment differentials ie the differences in terms of performance of international and home students, for example on dissertations:

EAP tutors are now being seen as instrumental in trying to reduce attainment differentials. More funding is available and there is a more pressing need to have us to try to help.

Gregg

Dylan's EAP unit is very much focused on growth as the perceived needs of his university lie in this direction: their aim is for international students to make up twenty-five percent of the student population. In response to this, there will need to be greater in-session provision to ensure that the larger intakes can be catered for. This requires an increased number of EAP tutors and also premises:

I think it becomes more and more necessary to have a dedicated home for English language.

Dylan

This is echoed by Ellen, who would like to see EAP as "part of some kind of centre for student life?", as a way of helping to raise EAP's profile within the university. The comments again reflect the participants' desire to feel less marginalised.

Despite the increases in numbers, however, Dylan feels that the actual role of the EAP tutor will stay the same:

I don't see that role as changing enormously.

Dylan

Barbara, however, does see the EAP tutor's role changing. With the widening access initiatives that universities have seen, and "more and more non-traditional people" coming to university she believes that there may be moves to create more equality in terms of the provision available. She fully supports this and echoes the feelings of other tutors

interviewed that it would help to raise the profile of EAP through greater recognition, and would be extremely useful for native speakers:

If it was done as an academic literacies approach and we look at language and things that are needed to teach a particular subject or report, that would be useful for native speakers as well.

Barbara

Both she and Dylan would like to see greater embedding of EAP tutors in departments in order for support to be more tailored to students' needs. This is in line with changes that have already taken place at Gregg's university, where he is fully embedded.

Dominic, however, sees the growth taking place in universities in more negative terms, based on continued marketization and the student as a client or customer. This is a trend that has been seen in the literature where the increase in neoliberal policies in universities and their effect on international students and EAP has been discussed (for example Hadley 2015; Ding and Bruce 2017; Tannock 2018):

So more of the same really. More students, packing more students in; more standardised presentation materials and approach; more fixed outcomes; testing...I don't know anything, all those kinds of rubbish, crap stuff.

Dominic

Dominic's description can be seen in Ding and Bruce's (2017 p.108) conceptualisation of EAP as a support service, where EAP has become "commodified" and "commercialised". As a teacher, Dominic struggles to see the people in front of him as customers, but that is what is expected. At the time of the interview, the University and College Union was on strike and Dominic made reference to that, saying that it isn't just about pay:

It's about the whole ethos of the university.

Dominic

Mary's view is also negative, based on her personal circumstances and the fact that she may not have teaching hours in her institution the following term. She would simply like a full-time EAP contract with a pension and opportunities for professional development. She has heard rumours, however, that approximately thirty UK universities will close over the next few years and she believes that the one she is currently working for will be one of them.

The future is bleak.

Mary

Whilst James considers that his own position is secure, he feels that there will be increased reliance on fixed term contracts by universities in the future, creating less stability. He also predicts increased use of outsourcing of EAP provision to private companies such as Study Group, Navitas and Kaplan. Universities seem to be moving more in that direction, and this will mean changes in EAP tutors' roles. Friends of his who have worked for such organisations report that you are required to work a lot harder and the teaching workload is greater than in traditional university teaching roles. His comments are in line with fears over the increase in private providers and the impact of this on EAP tutor roles, status and professionalism (Bell 2016).

Isla refers to the role that technology will play in the future and wonders whether digital tools, such as 'Google Translate' or reading apps where students read pages which have been translated into their own language, will undermine teaching of EAP and foreign languages. She feels that in future, it is going to become more about communicating knowledge in writing and orally as opposed to learning a language for academic purposes. Maybe people will be totally reliant on software, for example going to Sweden to study through Swedish thanks to the use of software, making languages immaterial. Even though she recognises the fact that our EAP world may be threatened by this, there are measures that could be taken:

It would be fantastic if we had the space and time, and it was given the recognition, to investigate the learning environments that we have for our students. How can we help them learn better? Can we help them rely on

themselves not on technology?

Isla

She also echoes Gregg's thoughts about the lack of a pedagogy for teaching EAP. At the moment, it is "eclectic":

Eclectic is fine but I'd like to see it as an established field with its own theory, pedagogy and methodology.

Isla

4.2.6 Conclusion

As evidenced in the previous section regarding the EAP tutor, there is a lack of certainty over how EAP staff view themselves and their role. The data in this section show that the same is true regarding their position in the university: EAP tutors do not fit in with either professional services or academic departments, and exist in 'perimeter' roles. This contributes to the sense of EAP being undervalued and poorly recognised within institutions. EAP staff feel they are positioned in a subordinate way to academic sections and that they are at the bottom of the university hierarchy. A range of suggestions were made regarding alternative positions for EAP units, including positions with greater links to academic departments and professional services sections and there seems to be a desire for stronger links where greater collaboration is possible. A minor theme is that of attitudes towards international students and a difference between EAP tutors' views and their universities' views. It is clear that the majority of the sample do not see themselves as academic staff and do not want to be. EAP tutors do not feel that their own skills are in any way inferior; there is the belief that EAP tutors are different and should be recognised for that. All but one of the sample consider EAP to be a profession, with some reservations; they also recognise that the field has professionalised. Other themes that appear in the data regard pay and conditions. Although these relate to individual circumstances, some represent serious concerns such as issues of increased workload, grading and precarity. Overall, however, the cohort is generally positive about the future of EAP and their own positions if current market trends continue. The following chapter examines the data in

relation to the research questions underlying this study and attempts to draw the data together in response.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This exploratory study sets out to examine the position and professional status of the tutor of English for Academic Purposes in higher education. The qualitative data gathered were presented in the previous chapter under the headings the EAP tutor, and the EAP tutor and the university. This chapter attempts to draw together the themes evident in the data in response to the research questions that underpin this study. Unresolved issues arising from the data are discussed in relation to each question. The limitations of the study are considered and recommendations for possible future considerations for EAP and EAP tutors are made.

5.2 Responses to the research questions

I will first summarise and explore the responses to the research questions in turn, and discuss any unresolved issues.

5.2.1 How do EAP tutors view their role in universities?

The data indicate that there are common themes regarding the way that EAP tutors view their role in universities. These themes primarily include those of doubts about identity and a feeling of a lack of status in the institution, which reinforce the contested nature of the role highlighted in the literature. The designation EAP Tutor is the most widely used, and although the majority of respondents do not consider any of the other possible EAP designations more appropriate, there are significant doubts over the identity, status and connotations the title Tutor may confer. Responsibilities included in different tutors' roles are varied and a definition is elusive; even the common core of teaching is viewed in different ways. Only a small minority of participants regularly teach home students but several believe that this could be a part of their role. Research is not included in the responsibilities of any of the cohort but it is felt by some that there could be a place for this. The respondents agree that theirs is a support role but there is no consensus on the metaphor of a 'butler's stance'; for some participants it is appropriate at times, but they do not feel it defines what they do.

All of these findings represent issues that remain to be considered in the field of EAP. As mentioned above, some are in line with the current literature, such as the uncertainty surrounding the role of the EAP tutor and tutors' feelings of a lack of status in universities. Before considering different findings, it is important to note that some of the uncertainties that exist in relation to the EAP tutor's role are a result of factors that are determined by the university, for example regarding designation and responsibilities. A precise definition of the role of an EAP tutor is location dependent and, therefore, an all-encompassing definition is elusive given so many variations. The institutional view of the EAP unit and where it is located will determine these fundamental factors and there is little room for flexibility. Although EAP tutors have a certain amount of agency, their limited ability to bring about institutional change is recognised in the literature (Hyland and Hamp-Lyon 2002; Ding and Bruce 2017). This seems to be particularly the case with regard to the move towards private providers in the sector; EAP tutors alone cannot fight against the tide of neoliberalism and for many EAP units it is already too late. Given the institutional limitations discussed here, it is important for EAP tutors to recognise the constraints of their situations.

Recognition of EAP's location in a university is also integral to the fundamental conundrum set out by Ding and Bruce (2017) throughout their book and summarised in Figure 2. EAP is both a support service and an academic subject depending on its position within the university, and the context determines what it will be. Ding and Bruce's (2017) two conceptualisations of EAP appear to represent two polar opposite views of EAP. Indeed, if a tutor only has experience of working in a 'support service' context, they may not be aware of other conceptualisations of EAP and they may not know of the existence and importance of BALEAP or have had the opportunity to participate in its activities. However, the reality may well be much more complex with EAP units falling on a continuum, between the two views described and between each of the points mentioned in Figure 2. For example, on certain pre-university courses where the language levels of students are lower as a result of the demands of the market, the aim may have to be "language acquisition for general proficiency development"; however, on other types of courses, within the same institution, "discourse competence" and tailoring courses to the needs of students could be a priority in in-session classes.

A further point regarding Figure 2 is that the 'support service' approach appears to be presented as a negative position, in contrast to the golden ideal of the 'academic field of study' approach. It is important to note that the 'support service' role is not necessarily seen as negative, and this is reflected in the data. For example, several of the participants are happy with their role and do not want to be in an academic position, indicating an acceptance of the boundaries of their post. Developing a stronger collective voice to highlight common ground despite different locations and conceptualisations of EAP could contribute to increased confidence among EAP tutors. It is hoped that this will go some way towards helping resolve the issues of uncertainty and lack of status raised in the data.

A further theme that emerged from the findings was the sample's attitudes towards the designation EAP tutor. In relation to this theme, however, there was a discrepancy between participants' views and the EAP literature. Although participants have strong reservations regarding the use of Tutor, they still consider it to be the most appropriate. This is despite convincing arguments in the literature (for example Ding and Bruce 2017 p.121) for the use of other titles. Participants may well be unaware of these arguments and of the strength of feeling among academics regarding the adoption of another designation. I feel that a stronger sense of collectivity amongst EAP tutors across different locations would encourage discussion on issues such as this and disseminate ideas put forward in the literature, which is a first step towards their becoming a practical reality.

In order to create this stronger sense of collectivity, the online EAP community can continue to be a useful tool. The BALEAP mailing list is already significant in contributing to this and there are further possibilities outside BALEAP to ensure that non-members have a voice. BALEAP, however, may consider strategies to present itself in new ways and make itself more accessible to new members. An example might be offering free temporary membership to new EAP tutors for the duration of summer pre-session courses and making certain benefits available to them during this time. In this way, new tutors could become part of the online community.

Tutors can also be encouraged to develop an external identity, along with an internal one inside their institutions, as suggested by Ding and Bruce (2017). Developing an external

identity through an online EAP community, for example, will strengthen EAP tutors' collective voice. For EAP tutors situated within an academic department or in an EAP unit on the edge of academia, this external identity may include a research perspective. However, being situated in an academic context may mean the expectation of carrying out research and scholarship is raised and there is a greater sense of frustration if this is not recognised. For tutors who are distanced further away from academia in a context where research is not expected or included in the role, academic research seems an unrealistic and impossible expectation. The data show that whereas carrying out research is seen as a lifeline for EAP in the literature (for example Ding and Bruce 2017), it is not viewed in this way by the sample.

The fact that themes are evident in the data regardless of the EAP tutors' positions in universities indicates that there is common ground here and in the wider EAP community. Encouraging EAP tutors to recognise the constraints of their institutions, understanding the common ground between different conceptualisations of EAP and building their voices externally may strengthen EAP tutors' feelings about their position. It is hoped that developing a stronger collective voice and having greater confidence in this way will help to increase feelings of status within their own community, and by extension, their institution.

5.2.2 How do EAP tutors view their position in relation to other groups in universities?

The EAP tutors interviewed consider their role has an uncertain position in the university and has a lack of status compared to other groups. Although the cohort feels part of the university as a whole, there is a clear sense that the majority of the sample does not feel that EAP fits naturally into a professional services position or academic department, and as a result, it exists in the margins where tutors often feel neglected and overlooked. When tutors were asked about the ideal location for an EAP unit, the suggestions included a desire for greater collaboration with academic departments including embedding, or greater links with a support service, indicating a desire for a greater sense of belonging to other structures within the university. The theme of lack of status is also evident throughout the data that relate to the wider university. Language used in the data reflects tutors' feelings that EAP is at the bottom of the university hierarchy. Some of the participants feel their attitude to international students is different to the university's profit-generated approach.

Although EAP tutors value their role and consider it is important to students, some point out that they should accept responsibility for their poor status and should make their presence and skills more explicit. The majority do not see themselves as academic staff and do not want to be.

From the results in response to the question of how EAP tutors view their role in relation to other groups in UK universities, several issues remain to be resolved. Of these, the two principal ones are that EAP tutors in the sample feel that they do not fully fit into the university's structure, and that they experience feelings of a lack of status compared to other groups. The points raised in response to the first research question above are also relevant here. The EAP unit's fundamental position is determined by the institutional view of EAP, and EAP tutors, who have no control over fixed structures, are powerless in the face of this. For example, although the possibility of her EAP unit becoming a centre for academic literacy and research in its own right is longed for by one of the participants in the study, this seems an unrealistic and impossible goal for the majority of EAP units, especially those already positioned outside academia.

It is interesting to note that the majority of EAP tutors in the sample would like to see further links with other branches of the university, whether those are academic and/or professional services, and in the university as a whole. Forging these connections helps EAP tutors to move away from 'perimeter' roles (Whitchurch 2008) and feel more central to university services. The question remains how best to achieve these links.

In terms of academic departments, EAP can continue to look for opportunities to collaborate with academics as many tutors already do. As evidenced in the data, the success of an EAP tutor being embedded in an academic department is apparent. A structural change such as this is, of course, difficult and would rely on EAP tutors and managers to raise and push for opportunities such as these at an institutional level. This is also true to some extent for other fundamental changes such as teaching home students. However, there is a sense in the literature that EAP needs to take responsibility for the way others see it, and to be bolder in terms of what it aspires to. This is also reflected in the data for this study.

With regard to student support services, the data show that some tutors would welcome greater links with these sections, for example being located in a centre for student life. In such situations, there may be some overlap in services, for example with the delivery of study skills courses. EAP tutors will need to continue to highlight their skills as subject specialists to ensure that these are appreciated. A minority of the sample sometimes teach home students but this comprises only a small part of their role. The data show, however, that the other participants would not be averse to this. This would also strengthen the position of EAP within the university and the position of tutors in relation to other university staff.

As mentioned in the literature review, in her plenary talk at a BALEAP conference 'State of the Union: What Union?', Furneaux (2017) emphasises "going mainstream". By this she means for EAP to behave as other academic departments do within the university, and through this secure a greater sense of collaboration and belonging. Her suggestions include teaching home students, sharing our pedagogic and linguistic knowledge with academics, and publishing to raise EAP's profile outside individual universities. The key here is to make the rest of the university aware of what EAP has to offer and ensure that they recognise the unique skills EAP tutors have. This will help EAP to be seen as equal and not as a lower status occupation. Initiatives to seek such connections will require the support of both EAP tutors and management. BLEAPs and EAP managers in particular are better positioned to take advantage of the third space opportunities highlighted in the literature (Whitchurch 2008; Hadley 2015).

I feel that by strengthening EAP's position in the university through greater involvement with academic departments, professional services and the institution in general, this will contribute to an increase in EAP tutors' feelings of belonging and, in turn, status within the institution. I would anticipate that the strategies suggested here will be more difficult if the EAP unit is run by a private provider, as tutors are already positioned further away from academia. This highlights the need for further research in this area, focusing on the effects of these types of partnerships.

5.2.3 To what extent can the role of EAP tutor be considered a profession?

As mentioned in the data chapter, the vast majority of the sample consider EAP to be a profession, with some reservations; they also recognise that the field has professionalised. Comments made in relation to professionalisation include the desire for the following: a minimum-level qualification to teach EAP in universities; a practical course analogous to the DELTA for EAP; and a pedagogy for EAP. The role of BALEAP is recognised by a small minority of participants.

When the data are considered in relation to the criteria set out as a benchmark in the literature review (Figure 4 - Common features used to define professions) it can be seen that EAP partially meets the requirements of a profession. This reinforces Ding and Bruce's (2017) view of EAP as an emerging profession.

The use of skills based on theoretical knowledge

The first criterion is that of the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge. This can be seen to be true for EAP to a certain extent. As is clear from the EAP literature (for example Hyland 2018), EAP does have a theoretical knowledge base. This and the specialised nature of EAP teaching were recognised by some of the participants in the sample, particularly those with a more 'academic subject' view of EAP. However, it was not possible to assess the influence of this knowledge base on participants' teaching or to consider the extent that they make use of it. Given the variation in the roles of EAP tutors, it could be said that participants may draw on the theoretical knowledge basis depending on where they are working and which course they are teaching on. For example, a subject-specific in-session course may well require greater reference to the academic discourse of different subject areas than an intensive pre-session course with lower level students. The different conceptualisations of EAP as a support service or an academic subject in its own right (Ding and Bruce 2017) are also significant. Where the effects of the neoliberal policies of universities are most evident, and EAP tutors are working in commercialised EAP units, SPUs (Hadley 2015), with little autonomy, using pre-packaged materials, there will be less opportunity for tutors to draw on this theoretical knowledge base to inform their teaching.

Education and training in those skills certified by examination

The vast majority of the participants in this study have higher qualifications, some of which are practical advanced teaching qualifications. Of the eight who have a master's qualification, the majority are in subjects unrelated to EAP and no one completed a full EAP-specific qualification before entering the profession. As mentioned in the data chapter, however, when the cohort started their EAP careers, specific EAP courses were extremely rare. Although higher qualifications are a requirement for most long-term EAP positions, the type of qualification is not restricted to the specialised knowledge base of EAP. As a result of the disparate routes into the profession and a lack of specific qualifications, EAP tutors tend to acquire the cultural and social capital required to work in the field as they start teaching (Campion 2015). The requirement for a minimum qualification to enter the profession was suggested by two of the participants and this would be a step towards fulfilling this criterion. The lack of subject-specific EAP qualifications and its impact on professional status has been recognised in the EAP literature (for example Bell 2016 p.319). These types of qualifications are becoming increasingly common, but the fact remains that EAP tutors are often expected to make this investment themselves. In an uncertain employment market, where job prospects are not secure, EAP tutors may become more disillusioned by what is required to progress. To continue the professionalisation of the field, it is important therefore that EAP management not only encourage tutors to complete EAP qualifications but also provide financial support, and in-house training.

The data also show that the sample are not linear careerists and their routes to become EAP tutors were varied and lacked planning. This reflects the permeable nature of the profession, which can be regarded as a sign of a lack of professional status. I anticipate, however, that as the field of EAP develops with more widely recognised opportunities, entry will become more desirable and career advancement more planned.

A code of professional conduct oriented towards the 'public good'

The data show a minor theme in relation to this criterion. Some of the EAP tutors in the sample note that their attitude towards the international students they teach differs from that of the university. One interviewee, for example, comments that the profit-focused nature of universities is immoral, and this is a theme that is reflected in the literature, with

reference to international students being seen as ‘cash cows’. A code of professional conduct oriented towards the ‘public good’ does not exist for EAP tutors. However, this is something that could be initiated by BALEAP or which could be developed through online input from EAP tutors, as suggested above.

EAP tutors’ experience of supporting international students on both academic and pastoral levels means there is clear potential for EAP staff to work with the university as a whole, including academics and professional services staff who advise international students, on joint projects to ensure international students are in the best position to benefit from their time at university. These developments will already exist in many universities as part of internationalisation initiatives, but where they do not, they could be suggested as examples of good practice and the ‘public good’ of international students. Such projects also provide opportunities for third space collaboration as mentioned above, and a movement away from ‘perimeter’ roles (Whitchurch 2008) for EAP.

A powerful professional organisation

BALEAP has made significant progress in terms of professionalisation but it could not be described as a powerful professional organisation. The steps it has taken are generally appreciated in the field and they present many advantages: opportunities for discussion with colleagues in other institutions; conferences and professional issues meetings; the Competency Framework for Teachers of EAP, clarifying skills and knowledge; and the individual and institutional accreditation schemes, both of which will help to raise standards. Criticisms of certain BALEAP initiatives noted in the EAP literature are discussed in the literature review, and some reflect the organisation’s lack of power: for example, the fact that it has no influence on university policy; membership is not compulsory for EAP units or individuals; it is not involved in ensuring adequate pay and conditions for its members; it has a UK-centric focus; and its influence on standards is limited as it carries out inspections but only of member institutions.

Although BALEAP was only mentioned briefly in the data, there is a recognition of its role. Tutors were not specifically asked about BALEAP but the fact that it was only mentioned in passing perhaps indicates the minor influence it has on the majority of tutors’ day-to-day

working lives. This is an area in which BALEAP could consider developing in order to extend its influence and thus further contribute to raising standards.

Other themes that appear in the data include issues regarding pay, conditions and grading but these relate to individual circumstances. Although they are minor themes in the data, they are extremely significant to the participants who raised them.

EAP's position as an emerging profession is an issue that remains to be discussed. The fact that professionalisation is considered important in terms of increasing professional status and improving the standards of service offered (Hoyle 2001) means that it is still a worthy goal. It is particularly important to continue to strive for this, given the perceived attacks on professionalism as a result of the increase in private providers, and the lowering of standards that it is believed that that entails. As mentioned below, this area is one in which further research is required in order to understand the impact on the field in relation to professional status and other areas.

5.2.4 What are the implications of this research for the field of EAP?

Overall, the participants showed optimistic attitudes regarding the future of EAP and made a range of pertinent suggestions which are highlighted in the data chapter. The cohort is also generally positive about their own positions if current market trends continue.

The data show a significant number of unresolved issues for EAP with work to be done to clarify EAP tutors' roles and to secure their position within the university. It is to be hoped that moves to resolve these issues will help contribute to feelings of increased status within universities. Whilst there have been important developments in EAP in the area of professional status, this is a further issue that remains contested. The overall implications of the study are that there is a long road ahead for EAP in terms of professionalisation but that it has already taken important steps. There also remain significant issues to be resolved in terms of increased pressure and workload, the precarious nature of temporary contracts and grading of the work tutors are carrying out.

5.3 Limitations of the research

The study was exploratory in nature and was therefore intended as an initial assessment of the area under investigation. The sample of ten EAP tutors met the aims that were set out in terms of the number and type of participants, and rich data were generated. Although a larger study could be considered if more time and resources were available, care would need to be taken not to jeopardise the in-depth nature of the data for the size of the sample.

The data illustrate that there are a number of areas that would be worthy of follow-up research. Further small-scale studies which would allow a greater focus on the lived experiences of participants in different contexts and situations would be welcome. Firstly, participants in the study are on different contracts (eight permanent and two temporary), which provided the different perspectives required. Recruiting participants who are on the same types of contracts would allow trends amongst different groups to emerge, and a comparative study could then follow. Given the increased use of short-term contracts and the increased awareness of the potentially negative effects of this on employees and the field of EAP itself, a particular focus on this group would be timely.

Secondly, in terms of contexts of the research, the sample's EAP units are in a range of locations and the study has different numbers of participants from different locations. A study focusing on the same number of participants from each type of location would enable trends from different sites to emerge more clearly. Again, a comparative study could follow.

Other contexts for research that did not form part of the sample include EAP tutors who work for private providers and those who are on academic contracts in an EAP section which is an academic department in its own right. Researching these contexts would also generate rich data. Given the recent increases in the number of private providers in the field, it seems particularly important to investigate this area to understand the impact that this is having on EAP.

A further area for research is the particular situation of non-native speaker teachers. It is recognised that their lived experiences will present different themes and that these are also important topics for investigation.

5.4 Recommendations

The responses to the research questions have highlighted several possible recommendations discussed above and summarised here:

5.4.1 EAP tutors

It is helpful for EAP tutors to understand the constraints which are a result of the institutional view of EAP in their context. It is also important to recognise that a range of other conceptualisations of EAP exist in other contexts. It is hoped this will narrow the gap between different views of EAP and thus create a stronger base from which EAP can develop.

Tutors can also work to strengthen their identity in a way that is appropriate to the situation they are in. For some this may be through academic research. For others, it may be through joining the EAP community online via BALEAP or other platforms. It is hoped that these measures will help to build a stronger collective voice for EAP, increase EAP tutors' confidence in their role, and thus counteract feelings of a lack of status within their universities.

EAP tutors should continue to look for connections within the university in order to strengthen their position. These could be links with academic and/or professional services departments and the university as a whole. Possibilities may involve teaching home students, embedding EAP tutors in academic departments or being positioned as part of a more general student support function.

It is important for EAP tutors to continue to put international students at the heart of what they do and to continue to see this group as students, despite neoliberal university policies that focus on the financial benefits of their presence. The idea of a practitioner-generated professional code of conduct has been suggested above. This is important not only in terms

of a professionalisation agenda, but in continuing to provide the best possible service for students.

5.4.2 EAP management

In the same way that EAP tutors should continue to seek out opportunities to build ties and become involved with the university, EAP managers also have a role to play in looking for stronger links. BLEAPs, Blended EAP Professionals, (Hadley 2015) are more likely to be better placed to do this as they may have more opportunities to collaborate in this third space environment.

Despite urging a sense of acceptance regarding institutional constraints for EAP tutors, EAP management and BLEAPs may be in a better position to fight for change when needed to secure the interests of EAP. One example might be presenting a case for EAP tutors to teach home students.

EAP management also has an important role to play in terms of encouraging and supporting tutors financially to pursue EAP-specific qualifications which will help to raise professional standards in the field.

The importance of the wider EAP community and a collective voice for EAP has been discussed. EAP management has an important role to play in encouraging EAP tutors to have a broader awareness of the field of EAP and developing an external identity through attending BALEAP events or joining an online community. There is a particular need for this in relation to newer tutors who may be unaware of these.

5.4.3 The EAP community

The EAP community as a whole, including BALEAP, should continue to build on the advances it has already made in terms of professionalisation and raising standards. There is still significant work to be done but this can be achieved through continued efforts and new initiatives.

BALEAP should continue to contribute to the collective voice of EAP by providing a valuable platform for EAP tutors to discuss ideas online and in person at PIMs and conferences.

BALEAP could also support a collective voice by encouraging wider membership. For example, tutors who are working on summer pre-sessional courses could be encouraged to join on a temporary basis. This would help extend BALEAP's membership base to include new members in contexts where research is not a focus.

This could in turn widen areas of discussion to a broader base of more topical concerns and provide greater influence on the day-to-day working lives of tutors. This can already be seen in recent developments such as an increased focus on conditions of work and social justice in EAP on the BALEAP mailing list. It is hoped that greater inclusivity will help bridge the gap between different conceptualisations of EAP and thus strengthen the voice of EAP tutors. This unity is important in the face of continued advancement of private providers in the field.

5.5 Conclusion

Comments made by Dominic in this study seem to ring true for the current state of EAP. When asked about the position of his EAP unit in the university, he comments on the fact that EFL "came along late" and was never part of any sort of regulated industry that had status, security and decent pay. He feels that EAP is similar in the sense that it has been "tacked on" and "you're not one thing or the other". There is the sense from the data that despite considerable advances in the field, EAP is still playing catch up and is still struggling to find its place in academia.

Even though EAP is an academic subject in its own right, because of where it is positioned in many universities, in a separate unit where the aim is to make money, its academic status is not appreciated. Tutors are often forced into a support role, and thus, students are unable to benefit from the full knowledge and expertise of the EAP section. As Hyland (2018 p.395) points out, it is "local contexts, rather than universal narratives, which define what EAP is, how it is taught, and the potential it has to improve the lives of those who study it". Recent

studies, for example Ding and Bruce (2017), and professional developments are helping EAP to rise above the limitations of local contexts and find strength in universal narratives.

Reflecting my own local context, I consider myself extremely fortunate. Over the years, I have benefitted greatly from working with colleagues whom I consider to be dedicated professionals, in a workplace where professional standards are respected. I have also been fortunate to be able to attend BALEAP events and take part in professional training. I feel particularly grateful to have had the opportunity to carry out this study to investigate the position and professional status of EAP tutors, and to reflect in greater depth on some of the issues that I have found perplexing throughout my own career as an EAP tutor. It is my hope that studies such as this one will help to safeguard and build on this experience of EAP for colleagues in other circumstances, and thus ensure that international students benefit from the full range of possibilities that EAP can provide.

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Appendix 1 – Sample invitation to participate email

Dear,

I am emailing to invite you to take part in an interview I am carrying out as part of the studies for my Professional Doctorate in Education, in the School of Social Sciences (SOCSI), Cardiff University. This email outlines key information about the project and asks you to think about whether or not you would like to take part. Participation is totally voluntary and you can change your mind at any time, even after you have agreed to be involved.

What is the research about?

The project aims to investigate the position and professional status of the tutor of English for Academic Purposes in higher education and seeks the views of EAP tutors on this. In order to gather the data, I will be conducting interviews with current EAP tutors at different universities.

What would participation involve?

If you decide to take part, we will arrange to carry out the interview over the phone at a mutually convenient time. The interview could take anywhere between 20 minutes and an hour, and will be recorded. Before we chat, I will email you an information sheet, including a list of the themes that I will raise in the discussion, so that you can think about them in advance if you wish to; there is no obligation to prepare in any way, however. When we chat, I will also ask you to give your consent to taking part in the research for the purposes of the recording. This is instead of signing a consent form.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Your University will not be named in the research and you will not be identified. Interview recordings will only be made available to me and my supervisor (Professor Sally Power) and all data will be stored securely. Please note that this is an independent study and is completely autonomous from English Language Programmes at Cardiff University.

Any comments you have regarding my research will be greatly valued. Please feel free to offer suggestions or ask questions at any stage.

If you would like to participate in the research, please let me know.

Thank you for your time.

Kate

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Catrin (Kate) Jones

Appendix 2 – Sample confirmation of interview email

Dear,

Thank you again for agreeing to take part in the research project I'm carrying out. As discussed, we'll carry out the interview on atpm. I will ring you then on the landline number you gave me. The interview could take between 20 minutes and an hour, and will be recorded.

I've attached an information sheet for participants, which summarises details of the research I outlined in my previous email, and gives a list of themes that we'll discuss in the interview. As I mentioned, the list of themes is just to give you an idea of what we'll be talking about and you don't need to prepare in any way.

Please get in touch if you have any questions. Otherwise, I'll look forward to speaking to you on

All the very best,

Kate

Appendix 3 – Information for participants

School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University
Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue
Cardiff CF10 3WT

Information for Participants

Working Title: The Position and Professional Status of the Tutor of English for Academic Purposes in Higher Education

Name of Researcher: Catrin (Kate) Jones

Contact details: JonesC8@cardiff.ac.uk

Purpose of the research

The research is being carried out as part of my Professional Doctorate in Education, in the School of Social Sciences (SOCSI), Cardiff University. The data gathered will form part of a thesis; it is hoped that the research will be published in a relevant journal.

What is the research about?

The project aims to investigate the position and professional status of the tutor of English for Academic Purposes in higher education and seeks the views of EAP tutors on this. In order to gather the data, I will be carrying out interviews with current EAP tutors at different universities.

Themes covered in the interview will include the following:

- Your career history
- The work you do
- The English language unit you work in
- Your relationship with the university you work in
- Whether you consider teaching EAP to be a profession
- The future development of EAP in the university you work in and in general

What does participation involve?

Participation in the research involves taking part in an interview, which could take anywhere between 20 minutes and an hour. You will be asked to give your consent to taking part in an interview which will be recorded. Participation is totally voluntary and you can change your mind at any time, even after you have agreed to be involved.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Your University will not be named in the research and you will not be identified. Interview recordings will only be made available to me and my supervisor (Professor Sally Power) and all data will be stored securely. Please note that this is an independent study and is completely autonomous from English Language Programmes at Cardiff University.

Any comments you have regarding this research will be greatly valued. Please feel free to offer suggestions or ask questions at any stage.

Thank you for your time.

Kate

.....

Catrin (Kate) Jones

Appendix 4 – Sample Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Aim: To explore the position and professional status of the tutor of English for Academic Purposes in higher education

Background:

Tell me about your career history.

Possible follow-up questions if needed

How long have you been doing this? When did you qualify? What did you study?

How did you end up here?

How many years in your current institution?

Type of contract – permanent, hourly paid etc

Did you work in a similar position in another uni before coming here?

NB Talking about experience of EAP teaching in a university context in general so OK to draw on work in different institutions if relevant

Theme	Possible questions
Role & what it includes	<p>What does your current role involve? Eg: which programmes do you teach on? Pre-university / Insessional / home students?</p> <p>How would you describe your job? What do you actually do?</p> <p>How do you feel about the work you are doing?</p> <p>Is academic research part of the job? It is sometimes argued that academic research should be included as part of the job? What do you think about this?</p> <p>The word 'support' is sometimes used to describe EAP teaching. What do you think about this?</p>
Job title	<p>What is your current job title? Are you happy with this? Is that how you see yourself? What title do you give yourself?</p> <p>Lots of different terms are used to describe us....EAP practitioner, EAP specialist, EAP tutor, EAP professional. Do you see any of these as being more appropriate?</p>

<p>Position of EAP within uni</p>	<p>In Cardiff Uni we are a separate unit, positioned as part of 'Professional Services'. Is that the same in your university? Or part of academic department?</p> <p>Do you feel part of the University as a whole? Why / why not?</p> <p>Is it important to feel part of the organisation as a whole?</p> <p>Can you think of an instance where you particularly felt part of the organisation / you felt particularly separate from the rest of the organisation?</p> <p>It is sometimes argued that EAP should be more fully integrated into the University. What do you think about this?</p>
<p>Position of EAP in relation to other groups in uni</p>	<p>Does the position the EAP unit is in (eg: Professional services in Cardiff) a good fit? Does it accurately reflect your position?</p> <p>Do you see yourself as a member of academic staff?</p> <p>How do you feel about your position in relation to people in other parts of the uni? Academic staff? Admin staff? University management?</p> <p>Can you think of any examples which reflect/have contributed to how you feel?</p> <p>Is there a particular group within your university that your section... - has closest links to? - has most in common with? - that you feel there should be closer links with?</p> <p>EAP has been described as having a 'butler's stance' in relation to other parts of the uni? What do you think of this?</p>
<p>Work conditions</p>	<p>How do you feel about your conditions of work? Eg: pay, holidays etc</p>

<p>About the students</p>	<p>How does the EAP unit see its students? And the Uni? Is that different?</p> <p>How is the relationship between EAP tutors and the students?</p>
<p>Professionalisation of EAP</p>	<p>Do you consider teaching EAP be a profession?</p> <p>Why do you think this? Can you think of any examples of why you think this?</p>
<p>Future developments</p>	<p>How can you see things developing for...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the English language section in your university? -your career within that section? <p>Are you happy about these developments? What would you like to see happen (if different from the above?) What would need to happen for this to take place?</p>