Chapter 2

EAP and EAP Teachers

2.1 The Concept of EAP

Since its development as a variant of ESP, EAP has been influenced by the theories of general language teaching and literacy movements. However, its concepts and approaches can, at times, appear too diverse for learners and practitioners to identify. This literature review aims to extract shared features of popular EAP approaches to then locate them into the broader context of EAP development, language teaching and literacy history, and the changing history of the educational landscape. It will also critically thematise current EAP theories and aims, in order to examine the nature of EAP's multiple literacies, which include academic literacy, disciplinary cultural literacy, critical literacy and digital literacy.

Theories in the field of EAP are sometimes confusing, not only because there are quarrels over defining EAP, battles between schools, mixed use of jargon, and debate over instructions, but also because a wide range of concepts have been associated with EAP. In addition to ELT theories, it has, since its creation, been influenced by diverse theories, including: “linguistics, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, communicative language teaching, writing across the curriculum, learning theories” (Benesch, 2008, p. 4), register analysis, genre analysis, systematic functional linguistics, writing in discipline (WID), American second-language composition, critical theory, and new literacies.

In terms of the problems encountered when defining EAP, this literature review claims that the EAP definition is undergoing a constant change in the content and scope. Even those exemplified here is not an exhaustive menu of the EAP theoretical development.

Part of the section is a revised version of the same author's publication (Li & Wang, 2016). Li and Wang (2016) was originally published in *World Journal of English Language*, Vol 6, No 2, 2016. Its original title was *English for Academic Purposes A New Perspective from Multiple Literacies*, which can be accessed at <http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v6n2p10>. The journal holds the license of CC BY 4.0, and the author retains the copyright.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p. 34) define EAP as “any English teaching that relates to a study purpose”. Meanwhile, (Gillett 2004, p. 11) describes EAP as “the language and associated skills that students need to undertake study in higher education through the medium of English”. It has also been defined as having “the aim of assisting learners’ study or research in that language” (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001, p. 8). Considering all these definitions inadequate, Hyland (2006, p. 2) characterises EAP as a “specialised English language teaching grounded in the social, cognitive and linguistics demands of academic target situations, providing focused instruction informed by an understanding of texts and constraints of academic contexts”. However, this interpretation seems to fail to satisfy Gunning’s (2009, p. 16) scope, which argues “all tertiary English education should fall under the rubric of ESP/EAP”. Hadley (2015, p. 23) then has his own EAP definition and he describes it as “tertiary level English instructional training that enables learners to improve their language proficiency within higher educational institutions, irrespective of the country within which that instruction takes place”.

What being even more confusing is that some EAP concepts completely contradict others. For example, Benesch (2008, p. 60) signposts critical EAP as the protection of the “interests of greater equity and democratic participation (of students) in and out of educational institutions”. She also argues that without criticality the EAP teachers’ practice would be diminished: “EAP is at the point in history where it is ready to consider its ethics... Are they (EAP teachers) to be trainers, carrying out target aims uncritically, or educators... imaging students a more just world?” (Benesch, 2008, p. 130). However, this view is later challenged by Deane and O’Neil (2011, p. 32), who tease that, “WID, from this perspective (of critical EAP), be critiqued as being naïve, or even as complicit in disciplinary power and dominance and in silencing alternative voices and ways of doing... but we argue that they may be misplaced”.

Arising from the sometimes-mixed use of jargon associated with EAP, is the term academic literacies. The terminologies “EAP” and “academic literacies” have been used interchangeably, but sometimes to refer to different concepts. Such mixed use might be because of the plethora of contributions from researchers with different backgrounds and standpoints, as evidenced in the following examples. McWilliams and Allan (2014) use the term “embedding academic literacies”, rather than EAP, to refer to approaches towards training students in academic English. Wingate and Tribble (2012) and Lillis and Scott (2007) separate EAP and academic literacies, using the former in reference to text and the latter when describing the practice of teaching or learning. Lea and Street (1998) consider academic a broader concept, claiming it brings together all other elements of academic English including EAP. Hyland (2006) opines that EAP is an overall concept, and that academic literacies form only one of the approaches of teaching EAP, encapsulating disciplinary socialisation and study skills (Hyland, 2006). But as an approach of teaching EAP defined by Hyland (2006) has come under attack not only for its impracticality (Lillis, 2006) but also for its focus on the critical pedagogical ideology (Deane & O’Neil, 2011), which arises from its critical pedagogy orientation. However, these critiques have forgotten the very nature of Lea and Street’s (1999, 2000) academic literacies, which refer to an inclusive system comprising more than merely the critical pedagogy approaches.

EAP instruction also incurs fierce and divergent debates. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) define EAP as essential to teach the four macro skills of speaking, listening, interacting, and literacy (namely reading and writing) and macro skills (e.g. being able to use discourse markers when writing). The macro and micro skills are named by them as EGAP (e.g. generic skills transferrable through disciplines) and ESAP (the teaching of language related to a specific disciplinary discourse) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Lea and Street (1999, 2000) introduce the critical approach and disciplinary cultural socialisation of EAP, in addition to generic skills. Deane and O'Neill (2011), as proponents of WID, confirm that the language related to disciplines is an appropriate skill of academic writing, similar to the view of ESAP held by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998). However, Deane and O'Neill (2011) dispute the affordance of generic skills and even academic literacies. Bearing in mind the conflicts inherent in approaches to EAP instruction, Wingate (2015) suggests an integrated model of EAP, one that would absorb all the advantages derived from previous approaches. However, with the development of ICT, Wingate's (2015) integrated model appears to neglect the affordances and new meanings created by new digital ICT, which Chun (2015) further argues should be included in EAP instruction.

2.2 Redefinition of EAP as Multiple Literacies

In the absence of efforts to reach a conclusion of EAP concepts and instructions, it can be difficult for learners and practitioners to decide upon what course of action to follow. Stern (1983, p. 76) states that, "Knowing the historical context is helpful to an understanding of language teaching theories". This study thus aims to organise different schools in EAP in order to have some conclusion. It, therefore, extracts the common features of popular EAP approaches, before placing them into the broader contexts of EAP development, language teaching and the changing history of the educational landscape. The following four subsections are listed under the educational trends of traditionalism, progressivism, criticalism and digitalism, aiming to demonstrate the landscape of EAP as combining multiple literacies.

2.2.1 *Under Traditionalism: Language as a System and EAP as Academic Literacy*

From Ranciere's perspective, modern education undergoes three theoretical stages: traditionalism, progressivism and criticalism (cited in Bingham & Biesta, 2010). Traditionalism views education as the dissemination of the necessary common sense and knowledge required for people to live in society. However, this knowledge is generally regarded as structural, authoritative and objective information delivered

by knowledge authorities like professors to students, and the knowledge are not usually associated directly with or produced by students' experiences (Bingham & Biesta, 2010). In such circumstances, from the early twentieth century onwards, a structuralism influences linguistics, and language has been believed to be a system of structures, firstly as stated by Saussure (Stern, 1983) and later as defined by Chomsky (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Both of the structural linguists believe that "language is a highly integrated system" (Langacker, 1972, p. 18) with mutually connected and supportive structural components (Stern, 1983). By the following structure, people could "combine phonemes to form words, words to form phrases, phrases to form sentences, and sentences to form spoken or written texts" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 5). From this perspective, learning a language is viewed as mastering autonomous and objective knowledge structure and codes containing prior meaning (Stern, 1983; Hyland, 2012).

Such school of thought produces a belief with considerable similarity between language use across disciplines in ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), and it also advocates English language skills as generic and transferable (Hyland, 2006) in EAP. For example, EAP instruction like register analysis involves teaching sentence grammar through subjects (Halliday, McIntosh, & Streven, 1964); another EAP instruction rhetoric analysis analyses how sentences are connected into paragraphs to provide meaning (Allen & Widdowson, 1974); similarly, EGAP emphasises the need to learn EGP before moving on to learn ESP (Dudley-Evan & St John, 1998).

Such language as system in its application of EAP has been accompanied by an increase in the number of non-traditional and international students studying at universities in the UK and the US (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2006). These students reportedly encounter difficulties in universities not only with academic English but also with the short of common knowledge of academics, which, however, is generally familiar to students educated in a traditional grammar school background. Thus, requiring an EAP programme that delivers a range of academic skills in addition to linguistic systems.

Therefore, in general, in the context of EAP, under the guise of traditionalism, students not only learn English as a code and set of systems, but also practise generic academic skills likely to be required in order to complete assignments and dissertations at university. This description reflects Henderson and Hirst's (2007, p. 26) traditional and neutral definition of academic literacy: "Academic literacy is just a set of skills that students must master in order to perform successfully as 'scholar' ... its norms and conventions are considered unitary and monolithic". So EAP can be seen as academic literacy.

2.2.2 *Under Progressivism: Language as Discourse and EAP as Disciplinary Cultural Literacy*

The second wave of the education model was defined by Ranciere and is cited by Bingham and Biesta (2010, p. 110) as progressivism: “the progressive orientation shares the desire to create a common body of knowledge that will enable the communication of citizens in the public sphere”. It is an approach concerning the legitimatization of individuals as entry ticket holders to a knowledge body recognised by in the society. In Foucault’s (1980) word, knowledge is the product of power discourse, and those who own the language of a recognized discourse possess the power; while those who do not own the language are marginalised and, thus, disempowered. Language is thus regarded as a discourse,

In applied linguistics, a large body of evidence has identified components of textual difference between the genres in a number of different disciplines (Bracken & Oughton, 2006; Hyland, 2008, 2009). Different disciplines have also developed their own professional discourse, making it challenging for those working outside the discipline to understand (Hyland, 2006), in another word, disempowering those not using the language of a disciplinary discourse. Wingate (2015) indicates that the use of different English by members from different disciplines is designed for the purposes of intra-disciplinary communication.

As with EAP, in order to let the students possess the discursive power, genuine immersion and interaction with peers in the discipline is necessary (Wingate, 2015). In other words, it is necessary to become a participant member (Norton, 2003). Moreover, proficiency in disciplinary discourse not only concerns whether new members are clear about the English language’s use of expert members, but also involves insight of disciplinary epistemology, context and conventions and norms (Wingate, 2015).

In practice, Hyland (2006) encourages the attainment of discourse membership by learning about specificity in relation to the targeting of individual disciplines in EAP. A representative of this school of thought is disciplinary socialisation, which encourages students to adopt roles as novice members of the discourse community to be guided, modelled and educated by some senior members (Lea & Street, 2000; Hyland, 2006). In addition to disciplinary socialisation, researchers also recommend WID (e.g. Deane & O’Neil, 2011), genre analysis (e.g. Swale, 1990; Thompson & Diani, 2015), and ESAP (e.g. Dudley-Evan & St John, 1998) to study disciplinary discourse. However, Benesch (2008) has criticised such approaches for assuming an unequal academic hierarchy in a discipline, in which the mature members having absolute authority over the novice.

Many scholars also advocate methods requiring that disciplinary membership be attained via pedagogic discourse and participation in EAP instruction. For instance, many EAP scholars insist on the authenticity of their disciplinary discourse; some having begun to use authentic research articles to teach EAP in a number of different disciplines, while others suggesting that subject teachers should join forces with

language teachers to deliver specificity to the EAP class (Dudley-Evans, 2001; Deane & O'Neill, 2011; Wingate, 2015).

A disciplinary discourse group, from the perspective of Giroux and McLaren (1994), could be a subculture group. As the members of the discourse might share similar norms and forms of behaviour valued by the discourse (Hyland 2009, 2012). Moll and Arnot-Hopffer (2005, p. 33) stated, "Culture provided particular rules for behaviours". Thus, members of the same culture are expected to share genre, register, and language, which is just like the purposes of academic socialisation mentioned above. Furthermore, Hyland (2012) added that the identity of a person is not something that proceeds from him/herself, but is instead formulated in confirmation by others, and whether a person is established as a member of a disciplinary discourse community depends on whether he/she is recognised by other members of that community.

Such description of disciplinary identity by Hyland (2012) is also influenced by the concept of culture. To be more specific the cultural literacy theory, in which identity is seen as a by-product of culture: "the development of identity is a result of interactions in social settings... how one engages with cultural symbols and tools, such as texts, how one interacts with others ... (lead to) who one becomes" (Clark & Flores, 2007, p. 10). Generally speaking, in the progressivism strand of EAP, learners need to obtain knowledge about the culture of the disciplinary discourse community to which they belong or are preparing to enter; in other words, they must acquire disciplinary cultural literacy.

However, the above opinions and methods are not without problems. Woodward-Kron (2002) found the discourse for students to interact with in the class is only a pedagogical discourse. Even students' writing task in the pedagogical discourse will differ from the writing in genuine mature discourse (Freedman & Adam, 1996). Woodward-Kron's (2002) and Freedman and Adam's (1996) opinions are supported by Widdowson (1998, p. 707), who states that: "The classroom context serves a learning community, and the purpose of any discourse enacted therein is a pedagogic one. So whatever pragmatic activity goes on has to lead to the internalisation of the language as a semantic resource".

2.2.3 Under Criticalism: Language as Ideology and EAP as Critical Literacy

The third wave of the educational paradigm shift is criticalism, which is derived from post-modernist thinking (Bingham & Biesta, 2010). It exists as a critical reflection on previous traditionalism and progressivism, revealing both as creating some degrees of inequality in education: traditionalism creates hierarchies of knowledge in education and progressivism establishes hierarchies of people in discourse community (Bingham & Biesta, 2010). The previous two educational models are, according to Ranciere, making "truth ... to be found in the ideological and structural inequality that privilege some people and oppress others" (Bingham & Biesta, 2010, p. 111).

Bingham and Biesta (2010) further assert that the guiding principle of criticalism in education is the aim of unveiling the ideological obfuscation before students obtain a truth.

A postmodern deconstruction movement has begun in the field of linguistics. Derrida (1978) points out that traditional linguistics were severely influenced by a modernist logocentrism, in which language are for passing down a prior meaning and ever-present ultimate truth. So in a modernist tradition, what people write and speak are not their internal meaning, however, the language they use are the prior meaning early defined by others. Similarly, Foucault (1965) in his *Madness and Civilisation* uses genealogy and finds out that language speaking about madeness keeps on changing throughout European history along with the change of discourse made by human beings. Therefore, postmodernists, spearheaded by Derrida and Foucault, deconstructed a modernist or structuralist view of language as objective codes and tools, and they weave an inseparable ideology into the view of language ever since.

Accordingly, in the field of language teaching, postmodern thoughts like the post-method in English language teaching (Kumaravadevelu, 2003, 2006), critical literacy (Wray, 2007), and critical discourse analysis (Hammersley, 1997) emerges. These thoughts maintain a common value as said by Thompson (1990, p. 56) to “study the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination”; most importantly, these thoughts, according to Kroskrity (2000, pp. 8–18), promotes a mission to let the students to have “the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interests of a specific social or cultural group... (to have) varying degrees of awareness of local language ideologies”.

In this vein, Lea and Street (2000) point out the dangers inherent in treating and teaching disciplinary discourse as grand theory or static knowledge in EAP. Benesch (2008) reckons that the practices and values of EAP are not innate, but are instead formed in response to sociocultural and historical factors, the tradition of a disciplinary discourse should not be deemed sacred, but should rather be subject to challenge, regardless of whether it is part of a coercive curriculum (Benesch, 2008).

Therefore, scholars of critical EAP is determined to compensate for the limitations of seeing the EAP stages as static and to uncover the “mystifying epistemology and practices of disciplines, which may not be clear to students” (Deane & O’Neil, 2011, p. 32). Benesch (2008) confirms EAP has arisen as a product of history and social economic development. Methods of the critical approach can involve helping students to gain a critical understanding of their discipline (Hyland, 2006), and giving them the skills to question the academic status quo (Cherryholmes, 1988; Benesch, 2008).

Critical approaches in EAP are framed by Morgan and Ramanathan (2005) as critical literacy. However, Wray’s (2007) definition of critical literacy can make the critical EAP approach even more self-explainable. Wray (2007, p. 2) argues that critical literacy encourages students to investigate and question the “relationships between language and social practices that advantage some social groups over others”. Critical literacy admits that texts in whatever form are inseparable from “the cultural and social practices in which and by which they are constructed... the way we use language ... is never neutral or value-free” (Wray, 2007, p. 2). Benesch’s

(2008, p. 130) words can be used as a slogan of stressing critical EAP: “EAP is at the point in history where it is ready to consider its ethics... Are they (EAP teachers) to be trainers, carrying out target aims uncritically, or educators... imaging students a more just world?”

However, criticalism has been criticised for a lack of pedagogy (Wingate & Tribble, 2012), it is arguably misguidedly spreading ideology (Deane & O’Neill, 2011) and twisting the true meaning of academic literacy, as students learn by participating in discourse activities (Wingate, 2015), and it seeks to deconstruct the discourse they have yet to enter or become established within (Haque, 2007).

Hearing such voices of questions on the critical EAP, Macallister (2016) advocates a turn in the aim of critical EAP. Rather than focusing on deconstructing EAP discourses, Macallister (2016) supposes critical EAP should help the students from untraditional backgrounds to over-come being marginalised by the academic discourse, and to use these untraditional students’ background to support their study. Macallister’s (2016) opinion was actually realised already by some earlier EAP scholar, like Ivanic (1998). She uses a large body of evidence to show how learners’ heritage, identity, and context can be neglected and become voiceless in the face of learning a new target discourse, and how students’ heritage, identity, and personal contexts are reciprocated in their EAP learning (Ivanic, 1998).

2.2.4 Under Digitalism: New Meanings of Language and EAP as Digital Literacy

Along with the popularity of ICT and mobile devices, the Internet and mobile digitalism have become ubiquitous, rendering learning portable, affordable, accessible, situated, immediate, connected, individualised, and personalised (Melhuish & Falloon, 2010). Language and language teaching have also been influenced by this digital trend. Walker (2014, p. 581) states that “digital technologies are becoming part of the way that people communicate and part of the context in which language is used”. It may result in a “decline in more linear approaches to reading or more reflective approaches to writing” (Dudeney, Hockly, & Pegrum, 2013, p. 14).

Apart from the practical changes, meaning making in language has also been transformed by the ubiquity of digital data, for example, people now have to manage and understand language printed using electronic materials, they are exposed to more written language because of the increasing volume of material available online, and they can also contribute themselves to sites such as blogs and Wikipedia (Walker, 2014). Conversely, the form of language has also changed, due to the existence and structure of presentation skills, such as PowerPoint and Prezi, which require language being consistent with the format of software (Walker, 2014).

In reference to the growing abundance of digital resources, Cope and Kalantzis (2009, p. 175) suggest redesigning EAP pedagogies to nurture learners as “fully makers and remakers of signs and transformers of meaning” of the “multimodal

discourses in textbooks, websites and classrooms” (Chun, 2015, p. 29). As early as 2002, Hyland and Hamp-Lyon (2002, p. 8) argued that the domain of EAP includes not only the skills for textual production, but also the ability to produce visual materials, stating: “the ability to produce and understand text-visual interrelations is now an essential component of an academic literacy, and the EAP research is to understand and detail these meanings”. For example, students not only have to learn to produce the oral academic language required in the form of PowerPoint or Prezi, but also to submit assignments or ideas in the form of either an online discussion forum or e-portfolio (Walker, 2014), and using multi-media tools such as YouTube videos (Jewitt & Kress, 2010). Moreover, the widespread availability of digitalised materials and digital resources requires that EAP teachers should assist their students on how to select, manage, and understand those resources; for example, this includes determining how to add links or footnotes to e-materials, how to search for materials from digital databases, and how to quote and reference e-materials (Walker, 2014). Hyland and Hamp-Lyon also failed to mention the dangers of online plagiarism, the possibility of purchasing assignments and collusion (Walker, 2014). It is critical, therefore, that EAP teachers teach students about how to use software like Turnitin and further emphasise the importance of maintaining their academic integrity in a digital world (Walker, 2014).

The aim of introducing new components to EAP pedagogy is, Cope and Kalantzis (2009) argue, to keep abreast of methods for communicating meaning and knowledge. Indeed, Chun (2015) opines that it is essential to provide students the skills to keep well informed about the ongoing changes in academic language formation. Either way, it is necessary to level up the nature of literacy, because according to Dudeney et al. (2013, p. 16), literacy is partially “grounded in language” and partially “connected with the communication of meaning.” To be specific, this involves leveling up digital literacy, which is defined by White (2015, p. 24) as literacy involving “all aspects of developing the knowledge, skills, competencies, confidence ... capabilities ... to make use of digital technologies in a productive, creative, critical, safe, and ethical way”. These features of digital literacy are consistent with what EAP policy makers suggest should be taught under the auspices of digitalism.

However, some EAP teachers are themselves lacking in the ability to use the available technology proficiently. Thus, they are obliged to learn how to prepare students to study in ubiquitous technology environments, and enhance their teaching using the Internet and associated technology (Walker, 2014). Some researchers dispute the supposed significance of the role of the Internet in changing the landscape of learning. For example, Bowen (2012) claims the Internet and new technology have simply added new tools for learning that are no different from those offered by paper and pens. However, it is apparent that today, generally speaking, EAP involves teaching a variety of literacies; e.g. academic literacy, disciplinary cultural literacy, critical literacy and digital literacy. Understanding EAP as communicating multiple literacies reduces the demand on readers’ cognitive processing of the meaning of EAP overall, by classifying it according to its separate components.

2.3 EAP Teacher Development

Influenced¹ by the neoliberalism, higher education worldwide is inevitably being engulfed in a process of vocationalism and corporation (Hadley, 2015). Such changes are also influencing EAP units leading to a career crisis among EAP teachers. For example, reports from institutions attest to make EAP department a Student Processing Unit, which only provide short-term training for massive students (Hadley, 2015). Hadley (2015) also directly quotes Allman (2001, p. 71), who uses a metaphor to describe the crisis in EAP teachers' status: "... are no longer educationalists – professional educators – but technicians."

Despite this crisis, Hamp-Lyon (2011) notes that there has nevertheless been too little professional development provided for EAP teachers, and too few empirical studies within this community. Elucidating further, Hamp-Lyon (2011) observes there is little choice in terms of EAP teacher development, given that EAP now includes many approaches of teaching, but EAP practitioners must refer to "a large body of work that has both expanded and deepened the intellectual, theoretical and empirical foundations available to inform and direct praxis" (Ding & Campion, 2016, p. 13). EAP organisations such as BALEAP have produced a standardised Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes (CFTEAP) (BALEAP, 2008) to state the requisite knowledge and skills to communicate, to guide less experienced teachers, and the BALEAP TEAP Accreditation Scheme was launched in 2014 to offer qualifications for EAP teachers, either as Associate Fellows, Accredited Fellows, or Accredited Senior Fellows (BALEAP, 2014).

Despite the apparent availability of a multitude of resources, there is a lack of materials and training opportunities available to EAP practitioners to explore the multiple literacies they are expected to teach (Ding & Campion, 2016). Thus far, there are a limited number of published journal articles and chapters in books on the subject of EAP teachers and their education (Ding & Campion, 2016). When combining this small number of existing publications, and expanding the parameters to include unpublished MA dissertations and conference presentations, it emerges there are currently only a handful of people carrying out empirical studies on EAP teacher development (e.g., Post, 2010; Alexander, 2012, 2013; Campion, 2012; Martin, 2014).

Furthermore, although some standards, such as the CFTEAP and TEAP Accreditation Scheme of BALEAP offer suggestions and benchmarks for EAP teachers, the former are targeted at professionals in the UK and are not readily translatable for use in contexts elsewhere. Moreover, they do not aim to produce critical EAP teachers, rather they simply provide teachers with membership rules defining necessary knowledge and skills, and favouring descriptive discussion over criticism (Ding &

¹Part of the content in this monograph was revised and used in the same author's journal article publication (Li & Wang, 2018) titled with "*An ethnography of Chinese college English teachers' transition from teaching English for general purposes to teaching English for academic purposes*" in *ESP Today*, Vol 6, No 1, 2018. The author has obtained the permission from the publisher on 15 November 2019 to reuse this publication upon the condition of proper citation. The article can be accessed at <https://doi.org/10.18485/esptoday.2018.6.1.6>.

Campion, 2016). This raises the possibility of establishing an orthodox among some teachers, and thus, the theoretical foundation of accreditation practices has now come under scrutiny (Ding & Campion, 2016). Generally speaking, EAP teachers are a heterogeneous rather than monolithic group (variation exists in terms of the type, context, position, tasks and target audiences of their teaching). Thus, standards forcing them to conform to a somewhat institutionalised benchmark, made by “armchair” scholars damage their autonomy and their role as reflective professional practitioners, as well as accelerating the process of marginalisation (Ding & Campion, 2016).

Little research has been carried out to collate practitioners’ opinions and information about their development (Ding & Campion, 2016), and the few studies conducted (Campion, 2012; Alexander, 2012, 2013; Martin, 2014) have all been UK-based. In particular, little attempt has been made to evaluate discrepancies between the cultures in which the guidance materials were prepared and the contexts in which they have been used. Campion (2012) conducted a series of semi-structured interviews at Nottingham University to investigate the experience of six teachers who had made the transition from EAP to EGP, focusing on the challenges they encountered in terms of training, and their experience overcoming challenges. Consequently, it was found that disciplinary specificity existed, as did “specialised knowledge of language in academic contexts, with all the added disciplinary variations that this may entail” (Campion, 2012, p. 60).

Between 2002 and 2009, English language teachers at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, where Alexander (2013) works, were required to switch from teaching communicative language teaching (CLT) to EAP, despite a lack of formal teacher education. As a result, many teachers complained that they were deprived of opportunities to gain the necessary expertise and confidence, and that they were consequently downgraded in status from experienced to pre-service teachers (Alexander, 2013). However, other members of the teaching staff stated that they required no formal orientation to process academic materials, as they were simply teaching communicative competence in oral English (Alexander, 2013). Both points demonstrate to some extent a defensiveness among teachers during the transition to EAP. As a consequence of the findings, Alexander (2012, 2013) felt it necessary to enquire into the teachers’ personal beliefs about CLT and to inform them that their knowledge of CLT might not be sufficient to teach EAP. As Alexander (2012, 2013) asserts; if teachers are aware of their own presuppositions, drawn from their life narratives and beliefs regarding English language teaching, this supports change, and will almost certainly influence their effectiveness when teaching EAP. By interviewing two teachers regarding their opinions about CLT and their experience of using newly provided EAP textbooks, and subsequently collecting evidence via online questionnaires from more teachers, Alexander (2012) found the difference between CLT and EAP led many to feel uncomfortable.

Martin (2014), based at the London campus of the University of East Anglia, employed narrative methods to investigate the experiences of EAP teachers who had previously trained as EFL professionals. The researcher examined how the teachers overcame any uncertainties about becoming EAP teachers, what occurred during their transition, and their beliefs regarding the relevance of EFL to EAP courses. In

terms of the relevance of EFL to EAP, Martin found “there is clearly a well-trodden path between the two (EFL and EAP), linked not just by the fact that both fields have *English* in the title, but by the discipline of linguistics, and the linguist’s ability to analyse texts and to recognise patterns of language” and “EAP teachers drawing more on their academic qualifications rather than their TEFL qualifications”, “EAP is (somewhat) an extension of EGP”, and “knowledge of academic processes is not a requirement for EFL teachers, but it undoubtedly plays a large part in EAP” (Martin, 2014, pp. 309–311).

In terms of changes to their identity, it was found that the EAP teachers had a “heightened sense of responsibility for the progress that students should be making”; “pedagogically, participants recognised a shift from verb grammar to receptive and productive skills”; they also expressed “a heightened sense of professionalism and of having a clear role in students’ development”, “a more negative view of the EFL teachers’ role, describing it as vague and having ill-defined targets”, and felt that they were obliged to be aware of disciplinary specificity (Martin, 2014, pp. 309–311). Moreover, the teachers surveyed did not feel insecure about the transition, perhaps because they had all had completed postgraduate programmes themselves.

2.4 Research Rationales and Research Questions

The existing handful of research exploring EAP teachers’ views (Campion, 2012; Alexander, 2012, 2013; Martin, 2014) is subject to a number of significant limitations. For example, it has routinely obtained data from interviews or questionnaires only, has either marginalised the author(s) role as outsider, neglected the impact of the identity of the researcher(s) on the produced knowledge, or belittled the subjectivity of the stakeholders’ interpretations of investigated behaviours, as well as crucially been conducted in the UK only.

When examining previous research, it should be noted, from the perspective of interpretivism (this will be explicitly discussed in the methodology section), that the presence of researchers (often with positions of superiority or influence over the participants) in the above mentioned studies is likely to have changed the data the participants’ provided (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, this might not represent fully what they genuinely thought or did.

Similarly, from the perspective of phenomenology (as will be discussed in next chapter), the aforementioned studies (except for Martin, 2014) lack a detailed discussion of the EAP teachers’ personal history and background, without which the designation of EAP teacher is unhelpful. Meanwhile, a valid interpretation of teachers’ intended actions might not be possible. In phenomenological research, any behaviours, including those described in words, do not simply have a superficially physical or literal meaning, but also comprise different possibilities, which could prove problematic to identify (Pring, 2015, p. 101) unless, “one might go further and seek to explain why people behaved in the way they did by trying to re-enact their life history, of which this particular action is part”.

Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of clarification regarding what teachers mean by EAP (Campion, 2012; Alexander, 2012; Martin, 2014). Although the teachers in each of these studies were asked about their experiences when transitioning into EAP, but their personal understanding of EAP differed. This is particularly possible because as discussed in previous chapter, even in academia, the concept of EAP can be divisive. In phenomenology, the “meaning of an action or of a situation refers to the wider significance of the action at situation for the agent” (Pring, 2015, p. 101), in other words, a teacher’s schema for EAP might not share commonalities, and might not be wholly comparable.

Most importantly, as the researcher has observed, the authors of previous studies preferred to maintain outsider objectivity, using surveys and prepared semi-structured interviews to decipher the EAP teacher’s views. However, phenomenological research considers actions and aims to decipher the shared “understanding among a group of people of the rules, which give this behaviour that meaning” (Pring, 2015, p. 102); thus, the limited extent to which the participants felt free to express their thoughts should be carefully considered.

Furthermore, EAP research published in China, as Cheng (2016) points out, has focused on debating the availability of reforms, which has led to too few empirical studies among students and teachers of EAP. This study therefore aims to address these gaps, both in China and worldwide. The current study aims not only to understand the transition of EAP teachers but also to reinterpret them in an anthropological way. Therefore, it proposes an anthropological approach, with careful consideration of interpretivism and phenomenology, to investigate EAP teachers contextually and historically, with the researcher as a participant to some extent, becoming aware of his positionality and reflexivity (as will be discussed later). In consideration of these research rationales, the current study aims to address the following specific research questions, to obtain a clear understanding of university English teachers’ transition from the teaching of English for General Purposes (EGP) to the teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Shanghai, China:

RQ1: How do the teachers in a pedagogical transition from EGP formulate their epistemology of EAP?

RQ2: How does the transition from teaching EGP to EAP influence teachers’ career as college English teachers?

RQ3: How do teachers perceive the challenges and opportunities posed by the Shanghai EAP reform?

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