Publishing research as an EAP practitioner: opportunities and threats

Mary Davis, Oxford Brookes University

1. Introduction

This UK-based study focuses on the current issues for EAP practitioners in their efforts to publish research in journals in terms of opportunities and threats. My starting point for this study is that as an EAP practitioner, I consider publishing research to be crucial for the profession, because it is seen as 'the measurement of an academic's professional competence' (Hyland, 2015, p. 1). However, it is undeniable that the number of research publications by EAP practitioners in the UK is limited. This was commented on by Swales (2015, personal communication) in connection with BALEAP activity:

> I still remain puzzled at how few BALEAP folks actually publish in the accredited journals. BALEAP itself, and its PIMS etc are extremely lively and interesting, but somehow its enthusiasts do not seem to pass the final hurdle into publishing recognition.

Therefore, I aim to examine the reasons for this situation, by looking at the significant threats that may prevent EAP practitioners from carrying out research and publishing it, while also highlighting the emerging opportunities. In doing so, I intend to raise awareness of key issues that influence research publishing from a range of perspectives (those of EAP practitioners, EAP managers and editorial gatekeepers) and offer suggestions to my EAP practitioner colleagues to work towards overcoming these issues in publishing their research.

1.1. EAP development

EAP is a field. It has a role within universities as a 'specialist, theory- and research-informed branch of English language and literacy education' (Ding and Bruce, 2017,

p. 53).The status of EAP as a field of education has been agreed by prominent scholars (Charles and Pecorari, 2016; Hyland 2006; Hyland and Shaw, 2016). This is important because if EAP is considered a field, and not a 'peripheral support service' (Ding and Bruce, 2017, p. 3) or other often deprecating terms, then it is a legitimate academic discipline in which research and publication are component parts, integrated with teaching. Hyland (2006, p. 1) affirmed that EAP is a 'major force in English language teaching and research…situated at the front line of both theory development and innovative practice'; he also noted that a lot of exciting new development in EAP is 'unsung and not widely disseminated' (p. 5). Over a decade later, both of these points remain true: there are many opportunities, as Ding and Bruce (2017, p. 1130) also attest, but the number of EAP practitioner research publications still seems limited, at least in the UK, as Swales highlighted (above).

Currently, there are many discussions about the position of EAP and the EAP practitioner. Charles and Pecorari (2016) view EAP practice as involving three main areas: materials development, teaching and research. They explain their perspective: 'we often use the term 'practitioner' to indicate that the roles of an EAP teacher can be wider than classroom teaching alone' (p. 9). It is accepted that the role needs to be focused on much more varied learners' needs than in ELT teaching; for example, EAP practitioners need to facilitate the relationships between students and other subject teachers. As a field, scholars differ somewhat as to where they consider EAP is positioned. While Ding and Bruce (2017) contend that it is part of ESP, Charles and Pecorari (2016) position it within applied linguistics, Hyland (2006) argues that it is at the intersection of applied linguistics and education, and furthermore, Hyland and Shaw (2016) state that EAP is committed to research-based language education. The lack of agreement about where EAP belongs within

institutions can mean it has no clear niche in a faculty, which has negative implications for research.

Furthermore, despite its establishment as a field, it is evident that EAP practitioners tend to occupy a conflicting position in terms of their academic status and research/teaching role. Ding and Bruce (2017) describe the paradoxical situation in which EAP practitioners tend to find themselves: an essential part of their role is to induct students into academic literacy practices, yet their own academic literacy position may be uncertain in the university. Ding and Bruce also suggest that practitioners and researchers of EAP tend to be different people: practitioners are staff whose central role is teaching EAP, whereas researchers have a considerably smaller teaching role. However, Harwood (2017, p. 1) argues that practitioners should be researchers as 'EAP practitioners are in a position to contribute to our stock of knowledge in a way that researchers and textbook writers are not'. Nevertheless, what is certainly true is that the majority of EAP practitioners are not researchers or authors of journal publications, at least in the UK.

One reason that EAP practitioners do not pass what Swales (above) called a 'hurdle' into publishing appears to be that EAP is also a business, in ways that are not as evident in other academic fields. As Hyland (2012) emphasises, EAP is a 'major industry' (p. 10), operating widely wherever university teaching is in English, with a vast number of students. Ding and Bruce (2017, p. 125) argue that emphasis on the business of EAP is detrimental to research, as commercial terms such as 'market share', 'outsourcing', 'industry', 'competitors' tend to proliferate around EAP, rather than terms that indicate EAP's academic value in terms of scholarship, research and publication. In addition, EAP teacher contracts often require practitioners to teach all

possible hours of the week, as reported by Fulcher (2009), so that the emphasis shifts entirely to the teaching product for student customers.

The teaching vs. publishing conundrum is of course widespread: Murray (2013) explains that one of the most common reasons teachers from many disciplines give for not writing for publication is putting teaching and students first. In the UK, the impact of the recently introduced staff assessment termed TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) alongside the existing REF (Research Excellence Framework) seems to make research and teaching even more conflicting priorities (McCulloch, 2017). Hyland (2015) argues that in order to publish research, teaching must move to second place; however, achieving this is especially difficult in EAP where teaching tends to be prioritised over all other considerations.

1.2. Difficulties of publishing research

In addition to these unfavourable factors in the EAP context, the difficulties of the process of publishing research are well established for academics working in any discipline (Hyland, 2015; Murray, 2013; Murray and Moore, 2006). Hyland (2015) describes some of the arduous challenges of publishing as:

> a long and difficult road which not only encompasses research skills and the ability to craft an argument for a particular professional audience, but also comprises protracted, and sometimes bruising, interactions with gatekeepers. It is a process which hinges on convincing editors, reviewers and peers to accept a claim as interesting and valid; it involves engaging in local and international networks of support. (p. 1)

This process is getting even harder, as research publications become more and more competitive with higher stakes; many researchers are pushed to publish in the top journals and vast numbers of potential authors are working on submissions (Hyland, 2015). EAP practitioners tend not to get support with research from peers, and furthermore, few undertake PhDs (Ding and Bruce, 2017); this is significant

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because PhD supervision has been shown as the only opportunity for training in research writing (see, for example, the 'Academics Writing' project, Bhatt and Tusting, 2016). Thus, without support, it appears the research publication process presents even greater challenges to the EAP practitioner.

Support for practitioner publishing could clearly come from BALEAP, as the main organisation for 'EAP professionals'. Yet Ding and Campion (2016) suggest that the BALEAP competencies framework can actually hold back EAP practitioners by categorising research publications as an activity for more advanced teachers (BALEAP, 2014). Some BALEAP events have focused on helping practitioners go from presenting to publishing, including through the regular Research Training Events Series (ResTES) workshops (BALEAP, 2017, 2018). However, in the last five published proceedings of BALEAP conferences (held in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015), among the 86 papers, frequency analysis of the titles reveals only ten instances of 'practitioner'/'tutor'/'teacher' in total, four of 'research', and none of 'publish' or 'publication'. Almost all of the ten papers related to EAP practitioners were connected with the development of teaching skills, rather than research. The only study in the last five proceedings which focused on EAP practitioner research is that of Akşit (2013) under the conference theme of 'Promoting best practice in EAP provision'. Akşit reports on action research as a way to develop reflection on teaching as part of a one-year in-house teacher development programme in Turkey. Thus, with just one article on EAP practitioner research and none on practitioner research publications in the last decade, BALEAP conference proceedings regrettably do not reflect an interest or focus on the scholarly development of EAP practitioners and their publications.

Now turning to this journal, similarly, over the past decade, few publications have focused on EAP practitioners, and none have examined research by EAP practitioners, even though author guidelines state 'No worthy topic relevant to EAP is beyond the scope of the journal' (JEAP, 2018, p. 1). Most articles have looked at EAP in terms of teaching, learning, issues for different groups of students, and the influences on EAP of genre, academic literacies, corpora and different disciplines, as mentioned by Ding and Bruce (2017). Of the few which focused specifically on EAP practitioners, Atai and Nejadghanbar (2017) examined the challenges for EAP practitioners in dealing with specialised content areas in their teaching; Swales (2009) presented research-based approaches for EAP practitioners to use with materials development, while Campion (2016) looked at the challenges for new EAP teachers to transition from General English teaching to EAP. A large number of articles have focused on NNS publishing in English (for example, Li, 2014, on Chinese management academics publishing in the US) and a special issue in 2008 was dedicated to English for research publication purposes from various global perspectives, but not that of EAP practitioners. Nevertheless, in Hamp-Lyons' final editorial to this journal (2015, p. A3-4), she offered encouragement to EAP practitioners to publish in JEAP:

> Most EAP teachers do not have a research expectation as part of their job description, and may never get a grant…for research into the issues they face in their teaching; but these thoughtful, reflective teachers read JEAP and learn from it. They can also contribute to it, and we hope that the new Researching EAP Practice initiative will provide this opportunity.

Unfortunately, subsequent editions of JEAP seem to indicate that this opportunity to publish has not yet been taken up by practitioners. Furthermore, one of the areas not given enough focus on in the literature on EAP is actually EAP practitioners' own attempts to research (Ding and Bruce, 2017, p. 2).

Therefore, this study will attempt to follow Ding and Bruce's recommendation and contribute to filling this gap through a cross-sectional examination of practitioner, manager and editor viewpoints on publishing research. Only one other relevant study of publishing related to opportunities and threats has been found; Bocanegra-Valle (2014) examined the opportunities for authors to gain through publishing in English and the threats this posed to publishing in other languages. In order to assess EAP practitioner publishing at a time when there is both development and restriction, this study aims to examine the opportunities for EAP practitioners at UK universities to publish their research in journals such as JEAP, while also highlighting the threats in terms of barriers and problems that face them in this endeavour.

2. Methodology

The research philosophy guiding this study is constructivist, defined by Crotty (1998, p. 9) as 'humanly fashioned ways of seeing things whose processes we need to explore and which we can only come to understand through a similar process of meaning making'. In other words, my research was designed to explore data from my own position as an EAP practitioner 'insider'. As Cresswell (2003) explains, in this theory, knowledge is constructed from a wide range of experiences, which depend on the researcher understanding the context. To explore this wide range of experiences, I employed multiple methods (interview and two surveys) with three different sample populations (EAP practitioners, heads of EAP departments and journal editors). While the main focus of the research is on the practitioners who publish, it is also important to investigate those who impact on practitioners' publishing activities as gatekeepers or influential others, termed 'literacy brokers' by Lillis and Curry (2010).

2.1. Interviews with practitioners

The interview method was chosen as the best way to gather insightful, in-depth accounts from EAP practitioners about their experiences and perspectives. According to Dörnyei (2007), interviews can be seen as a means of using human interaction for knowledge production, which enable the researcher to discuss interpretations. To recruit participants, the initial step was to make a request on the BALEAP forum for EAP practitioners to be interviewed about challenges they may have experienced in publishing research in EAP (see appendix A for requests). A profile of the nine participants recruited in this way as a self-selected sample can be seen below.

Table 1: Profile of EAP Practitioner Participants

Practitioner	Type of department	Years of EAP teaching	PhD?	EAP Publications
A	English Language Centre	18	PhD	Journal of Academic Writing
B	International Department	8	About to start PhD	English for Specific Purposes Journal InForm
C	English Language Centre	18	-	International Student Experience Journal
D	International Department	30	-	BALEAP Conference Proceedings East Asian Learner InForm Books Others
E	English Language Centre	30	Started PhD	System Computer Supported Education Journal
F	English Language Centre	7	About to finish PhD	Journal of Studies in International Education
G	English Language Centre	15	PhD	BALEAP Conference Proceedings EATAW Conference Proceedings

H	International Department	20	PhD	BALEAP Conference Proceedings English Language Teaching Journal Book chapters Others
I	English Language Centre	25	PhD	BALEAP Conference Proceedings English Language Teaching Journal Journal of Second Language Writing Books Others

For ethical purposes, participants completed a consent form to permit interviews to be recorded and the use of anonymised quotes for research purposes. They will be referred to as practitioners A - I, and no personal or identifiable information will be reported in this study. Table 1 reflects the basic details about participants' departmental context and experience. The majority of participants worked in English Language Centres, three worked in International Departments, but none worked for departments outsourced to private providers. Interestingly, none worked in a location called an EAP department, but all of them identified themselves as EAP practitioners. They were very experienced teachers: seven out of nine had 15 or more years' EAP teaching experience. Thus, my sample contrasts with the novice practitioners transitioning to EAP or those with few years of EAP experience examined in another recent study by Campion (2016), which focused on participants' perspectives of challenges in developing their teaching of EAP. A further contrast with Campion's sample is that the majority of participants in my sample also had some experience of a PhD, including four already holding one, and three in progress; only two respondents had no PhD experience. This was not predicted, but is not a surprising finding; as mentioned in the review of the literature above, the only training

in writing available to academics tends to be through PhD study (Bhatt and Tusting, 2016), and indeed a requirement or at least expectation of PhDs is for candidates to submit manuscripts to journals (Huang, 2010). Thus, it seems that the factors of extensive experience of EAP teaching and doctoral study significantly influenced practitioners' decisions to respond to the request to participate in a study of publishing.

The most common publication was the BALEAP Conference Proceedings mentioned by four of the nine participants, which is understandable, given that my recruitment method was through the BALEAP Forum and my message would have been read by those who attend BALEAP events and subsequently submit to their proceedings. It is striking that none of the respondents had a publication in JEAP, given their experience and other accomplishments. Reasons for this emerged in the interviews which will be discussed later.

The interviews were held through *Skype*, lasted approximately 30 minutes and consisted of six questions (see appendix B); the first two established the participant profiles above, the following four focused on practitioner motivations and challenges in publishing which contribute to the results of this study. As explained by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the semi-structured interview method enabled me to follow up the initial questions with probing through individual questions on specific issues. The interviews were then fully transcribed and analysed for emerging themes. Throughout all the stages of interview making and analysing, the validity of the interviews was considered through ensuring, as far as possible, that the questions were careful and unbiased, that transcriptions were accurate and checked by both interviewer and interviewee and that the data was interpreted reflectively and

logically (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In these ways, I could benefit from my insider knowledge of EAP practitioner roles, but not bias the interview data.

2.2. Survey of Heads of Departments

Having completed the interviews, the second stage of data collection consisted of a survey of Heads of EAP Departments. I wanted to get more information about the context EAP practitioners worked in by approaching the line managers of EAP practitioners, who would be making decisions about their staff's involvement in research. This seemed especially important, since many of the EAP practitioner participants alluded to barriers to publishing imposed by their Heads of Departments.

For this sample, a short survey appeared to be the most appropriate method in order to gather a representative number of anonymous responses (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). I thought that an open request via the BALEAP forum was unlikely to gain a good response rate for an anonymous survey of this population. Instead I decided to approach individuals directly through email. I took a list of UK universities (in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) from the website of Universities UK, and systematically searched 120 university websites for EAP departments with search terms 'ELT', 'EAP' or 'international'. Sometimes it was extremely hard to locate EAP departments, as they were not apparent from the web pages (an interesting finding in itself, suggesting that some EAP departments operate in hidden parts of a university, referred to by Hadley (2015, p. 39) as being 'relegated to the Third Space'); eventually, I found approximately 90 departments. Then, I attempted to identify the heads of these EAP departments. This presented further challenges, as sometimes the apparent heads of departments were not the heads of EAP, and many individuals were named as 'directors' of programmes without an identifiable

head of EAP in the staff list. Finally, I identified, with reasonable certainty, 60 individuals who fulfilled the role of head of an EAP department. I emailed them individually with a personal request to complete a short survey of five questions (four multiple choice, one open question requiring a written answer (see appendix B), which I suggested would take two minutes to complete. The email contained a link to *Surveymonkey* for the set of questions, which I purposefully made very short, in order to gain concise answers and to encourage completion. Within a three-week time frame, the survey achieved a 50% response rate with 30 respondents, with the result that the sample is sufficiently large to be considered representative of the population (Dörnyei, 2007). However, one limitation is that presumably only those with some level of interest in publishing answered it. The survey questions asked if the heads of departments had published in EAP themselves, how many EAP teaching staff they had, whether the staff engaged in research and publishing, if they thought it important (all multiple choice questions) and a final question asking them to explain their view about the importance of EAP teachers publishing. 27 respondents answered this last question and their comments provided key data from the survey.

2.3. Survey of journal editors

The third stage of data collection was through an email survey of journal editors. This appeared to be the most effective method, as I was able to approach editors directly and make a relatively straightforward request for information by email. I contacted individual editors of seven journals; in the case of journals which have a shared editorship, I chose to contact those who had publications in EAP. The journals were selected firstly from my own reading which identified them as likely journals for EAP submissions. The choices of journals also matched up with the majority of those that

the EAP practitioner respondents had submitted to, apart from JEAP, which was nevertheless discussed by respondents. All seven editors agreed to participate in this research; the journal names are listed in alphabetical order in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Journal editor participants

Full journal name	Abbreviation where used
English Language Teaching Journal	ELTJ
English for Specific Purposes Journal	ESPJ
InForm	-
Journal of English for Academic Purposes	JEAP
Journal of Academic Writing	JoAW
Journal of Second Language Writing	JSLW
System	-

In my email, I asked journal editors three questions (see appendix B): where their submissions came from, to check whether my perception was accurate that few UK practitioners of EAP submit to journals; what they thought were challenges for EAP practitioners to publish; and advice for submitting to the journal. Some editors provided the approximate acceptance/rejection statistics, so I followed this up with each editor, but two were unable to provide this data. Co-editors gave me their views after consultation with their editorial counterpart/s. Some journal editors made the very reasonable request that their comments remain anonymous in order to respond more freely, so although all journals are named above for information, the respondents are referred to randomly as editors 1-7 (not in the above order) in the results, and identifiable information in their comments is not used. However, it is recognised that anonymising all accounts limited the depth and specificity of the data about journals and sometimes made it difficult to extract meaningful comments.

3. Findings

I will set out the results from the three informant perspectives of EAP practitioners,

heads of departments and journal editors separately below.

3.1. EAP practitioners

3.1.1. Opportunities

Practitioner participants highlighted both the opportunities gained through publishing

and the opportunities available to publish. Firstly, they conveyed the view that writing

for publication feeds into teaching:

> *[Publishing] means that I am a reflective practitioner and that to me is important, because I would like to be a good teacher. (Practitioner A)*
>
> *EAP practitioners should be carrying out research and publishing it. Otherwise we are finding guidance from someone else, or we are travelling along the same old route, doing things we have always done… [It] takes you deeper into things and increases your level of awareness and the effectiveness of your practice… looking at student engagement in class…once you probe below the surface and analyse what (is) happening, quite a different picture (emerges) (Practitioner C)*
>
> *Publishing is a way to stop yourself from burning out. It gives you a new perspective, brings you closer to your teaching and what your students are doing, and so it is very useful. (Practitioner E)*

These comments indicate practitioner beliefs that publishing has particular benefits

for practice in promoting reflection, raising awareness of issues and renewing energy

in teaching. As Practitioner C's example illustrates, carrying out research in class

can be very insightful and useful to practice. Practitioner E's comment that it 'brings

you closer to your teaching' is particularly interesting, since in the literature

discussed above, one view is that publishing research would have the opposite

effect and distract the practitioner from teaching (Hyland, 2015). This practitioner

also alludes to the value of engaging in the writing process to understand student

experiences of writing, which could also foster a more empathetic relationship between tutor and student.

Others described the opportunities that practitioners could create through publishing research to go beyond EAP and to connect with other disciplines and departments:

> *The most important thing for EAP people is to go and talk to other colleagues, outside of EAP. EAP is all about connecting with other disciplines… I think that publishing can be used to influence colleagues, including in other disciplines. (Practitioner E)*

> *[Another] head of department was really encouraging with my research and publication. They have been great, actually, far more than my own department. (Practitioner F)*

Establishing cross-disciplinary connections through publishing clearly offers opportunities for EAP practitioners to increase their professional status within their institution. In addition, opportunities to develop from the research publishing process were described by some practitioners:

> *One review not only helped with the article, but contained a plan for the next 2 or 3 articles. I felt there was somebody out there who really understood what we were trying to achieve, they were so engaged, they helped shape what we were doing. I was very grateful to that person. (Practitioner E)*

> *You can also maintain your skill as a writer after many years of teaching, by engaging in research and publication. You develop it, actually, by engaging in the process (Practitioner I)*

According to practitioners E and I, writing for publications can help practitioners with writing skills, and even with further research plans, thanks to the efforts of journal reviewers. Other practitioners also offered encouraging accounts of positive experiences with journal publications:

> *I got lucky with (journal name) because I think we just hit an idea that they liked, but I didn't have very much research training at all in order to do that. (Practitioner B)*

> *One of the things I have found is that often one is more likely to get accepted in a new journal, than one that has a long history, possibly because they need copies to get them going. (Practitioner A)*

Another participant suggests that presenting at conferences can create other advantages towards publishing:

> *The best kind of help can be at conferences, meeting people, editors of journals, other researchers who publish, talking to them, I think that's very important. (Practitioner I)*

Taking opportunities to talk to other researchers and even journal editors themselves would clearly be useful ways of gaining advice. As mentioned earlier, although BALEAP organises ResTES workshops, it does not currently host a research network group or organise any mentoring for research publications, which would offer practitioners useful support (Ding and Campion, 2016; Ding and Bruce, 2017).

Other practitioners argue forcefully that publishing by EAP practitioners is an opportunity to defend the profession:

> *I think publishing is part of being in the academic community. I think we have got something to contribute, and in terms of defending EAP's status as academic, it is absolutely vital. (Practitioner G)*

> *It is definitely important for EAP practitioners to publish research to develop and protect the integrity and wellbeing of the EAP profession, in order to prevent it disappearing into privatised obscurity. The more we publish, advertise ourselves, the stronger we become. We need to promote ourselves as a distinct, research-informed, linguistically knowledgeable group. (Practitioner H)*

These practitioners raise many current concerns in terms of professional status and reputation, and convey a powerful call to arms among EAP practitioners to protect the profession by publishing. In order to look at what practitioners felt prevented

them from publishing, I will now turn to the threats described by the EAP practitioners.

3.1.2. Threats

The main threat that impacted on individual career development mentioned the most by the practitioners in this study was the lack of time.

> *Once you get into the realm of trying to publish something more substantial, it's incredibly time consuming, and very often as EAP practitioners, we don't have that time. Unlike other academics, we don't get down time during the year, we don't get sabbaticals, we don't get supported in our research or for doing PhDs. (Practitioner C)*

> *Major journals – ESPJ, JEAP, they tend to be interested in major pieces of empirical research; for us as EAP practitioners, it's difficult to produce that volume of work, we don't have the time. (Practitioner I)*

These comments reflect the constraints of working conditions for some EAP practitioners which restrict them from submitting to high level journals such as JEAP. From practitioner C's perspective, there is no 'down time' and no research, sabbatical or PhD support for EAP practitioners. As previously discussed, other research has demonstrated that EAP practitioners often have no time to do anything other than teach (Ding and Bruce, 2017; Fulcher, 2009). Practitioner A provides a specific example of the conflict between their work schedule and efforts to publish:

> *The reviewers' comments were fairly damning and I was given 6 weeks to turn the paper round completely, for possible publication. The comments came at the height of the marking season, so I simply wasn't able to do it. (Practitioner A)*

Other practitioners reflected on needing a professional incentive to publish, for example:

> *I have never been in a position where I have had to publish in my job, good or bad, I might have done more if I had. I've never tried to publish in the top journals, I've never submitted to JEAP for example. (Practitioner D)*

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This practitioner gives another reason for not submitting to 'top journals' such as JEAP: that publishing needs to be a professional requirement, rather than founded in personal motivation. Nevertheless, another practitioner expressed a clear understanding of the need to publish for career development, and the barrier due to the conflict with EAP priorities:

> *I went for senior lectureship and didn't get it, and was told 'you've got to get it out there' – I needed [to publish] for promotion. I felt very peeved that I hadn't been given time, I had written 4 courses on the hoof and could not publish as well.* (Practitioner G)

Some participants voiced the view that there was a problematic or disconnected relationship between EAP and publishing:

> *There is a lack of publishing culture within the profession. There are a few people who do publish, but when you look at the big names in EAP, they are generally lecturers in TESOL or SLA or something. The publishing culture seems to move away from the chalkface of what we actually do. (Practitioner B)*

This comment comes back to the discussion of who is doing research in EAP and who should be; it reflects the view that practitioners and researchers are separate people. The problem of the separation between BALEAP events and subsequent publishing, discussed earlier, was explained by practitioner D:

> *The best things are the BALEAP PIMs when a lot of people really focus, but a lot of the things people do at PIMs are not publishable, because they are more 'teachery' things, this is what I did, etc (Practitioner D)*

According to this practitioner, presentations of EAP teaching ideas do not lead to publications. They were perhaps unaware of Hamp Lyons' (2015) encouragement to submit teaching ideas to JEAP (presented above). Related to the lack of research time is the 'teaching only' nature to many contracts and perceptions of the EAP role.

This was a strong theme among practitioner perspectives of the threats to publishing:

> *All EAP professionals would like to say we are a profession, but you are not encouraged, once you get to a certain point, to take it any further. I find that contradictory really. The message from the department is 'it isn't your job to research, this isn't what you're employed to do…this does not benefit the ELC so you're not getting any time for that'. (Practitioner F)*

> *In an institution of quality, you would expect it to be legitimate to research and publish. When I started here, I co-wrote papers, was encouraged to do research and take time for it. But when the department moved into Academic Services, the academic flavour dissipated, it was no longer legitimate to do research. (Practitioner H)*

The comments here highlight departmental objections to research and publishing, seemingly equally negative in the context of an ELC department (Practitioner F) and the international department (Practitioner H). The latter draws attention to the negative impact of restructuring and subsequent deprofessionalising, which is currently a common scenario for EAP practitioners (Ding and Bruce, 2017). Further comments reported open hostility to practitioner publishing:

> *My unit did not want me to publish anything. They threw as many bricks in the way as they could. (Practitioner E)*

> *I have encountered jealousy from certain managers, and have the feeling that management is sometimes unhappy about efforts to publish because it might undermine their authority* (Practitioner H)

The practitioner respondents clearly felt that some of the barriers to them publishing were due to their line managers or the management of their department; again, their experiences appear to be equally off-putting in an ELC (Practitioner E) and an international department (Practitioner H). These barriers will be explored in the following section based on EAP manager perspectives.

3.2. Heads of Departments

In the survey responded to by thirty heads of departments (hereafter HODs), participants were firstly asked if they had published any research themselves. The majority (60%) answered that they had not.

Regarding numbers of EAP teaching staff in the department, the majority (70%) answered between 11-30 (consisting of 35% 11-20 and 35% 21-30), 22% answered 5-10, and 8% answered other (more than 30 staff). This information was gathered in order to inform the following question which asked them to provide the numbers of EAP teaching staff in their department engaged in research practices: presenting at conferences, carrying out research and publishing research, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Number of EAP staff in HODs' departments involved in presenting, researching and publishing by percentage of HODs in survey

Numbers of EAP staff in HODs' department involved in activity	Present at conferences	Carry out research	Publish research
None	0%	17%	26%
1 to 2	25%	38%	41%
3 to 5	39%	28%	33%
6 to 9	29%	17%	0%
10 or more	7%	0%	0%

3.2.1. Presenting not publishing

In Table 3, it can be seen that all HODs reported that members of their EAP teaching staff presented at conferences. This is in striking contrast to the number who

reported that no staff carried out research (17%) or published research (26%). The most common response was that one or two EAP teaching staff carried out and published research (by 38% and 41% HODs respectively). Thus, as alluded to by practitioner respondents and in Swales' earlier comment, there seems to be a considerable gap between the more common activity of presenting at conferences and relatively rare activity of publishing research in EAP departments. One reason for the high result for presenting could be that in order to be funded by their institution to attend a conference, EAP practitioners are commonly required to present.

3.2.2. Importance of publishing

HODs were also asked if they thought it was important for EAP practitioners to publish: 90% said it was important or very important. This is an unexpected finding, given that the HODs had mainly said they had not published themselves and reported that few of their staff published. It suggests that while they might hold the view that publishing is important, they might find it more difficult to act on in practice. Finally, they were asked to give the reason for their view in question 4; the seven reasons given are listed below with frequency of occurrence and example comments from individual HODs:

Table 4 Reasons for considering publishing research in EAP important, by number of HODs

Reasons	Number of HODs	Example comment
Informs pedagogy	8	I think it is very important for EAP teaching staff to carry out research and to publish it - one can take informed decisions, when setting up or updating courses, with regards to teaching and learning methods, designing materials, student needs. (HOD2)

Keeps up to date	5	It is important that, like other academics in the university, that we keep up to date with current developments in our field (HOD23)
Enhances credibility within university	4	It enhances credibility of the staff and the department. Research is (or should be) valuable for its own sake. (HOD18)
Improves status of EAP	2	I feel very strongly that EAP is an academic subject. In order for us not to be perceived as a "service", we need to be as active in both "scholarly" and "research" activity as academic colleagues in other disciplines are. I am certain that we need to be presenting and writing in order to maintain and improve our academic status. (HOD1)
Supports professional engagement	2	In a teaching-focused department there is not a lot of support for research and publication, but it is important to have an intellectual as well as professional engagement in what we are doing. (HOD12)
Supports EAP community	2	It is important to develop knowledge linked to EAP education and to share that with the wider community of practitioners. (HOD25)
Engages practitioners in scholarship	2	I think it's important that EAP teachers engage in scholarship. For a subset of these, it's likely/realistic that this will take the form of research. (HOD9)
Total*	25	

*some provided comments with more than one reason while some did not provide a reason.
(See Appendix C for the full list)

It is interesting that the most common reasons given were to inform practice and keep up to date; HODs are likely to prioritise the quality of teaching practice among their staff. In general, the reasons given and the comments seem to closely echo the views of the EAP practitioners, as these HODs seem very supportive of practitioner publishing as a way to enhance credibility, status and professional skills. Turning to the three HOD respondents (4-6 below) who considered publishing was not important, they gave contractual reasons for their view:

This is in the context of pre-sessional provision. We rely on hourly-paid lecturers, so research is impractical. (HOD4)

The job is to support students... at the same time as being aware of current debates. (HOD5)

> *Staff here are not entered into the REF and nor were they recruited on that basis. We value all staff continually engaging professionally. (HOD6)*

It is noticeable that even if the HODs did not think publishing research was important, it still seems that they wanted EAP staff to remain scholarly active by being 'aware of debates' and 'engaging professionally'. At the same time, the reasons they gave for not rating publishing as important reinforce the concerns raised by the practitioner respondents with regard to their professional status. The following section moves to the perceptions of publishing from the other set of influential players, the journal editors.

3.3. Journal editors

3.3.1 Contributors and acceptance rates

In the email survey of the seven journal editors, firstly, the editors were asked where submissions came from. Several editors said mostly China and Iran, with the UK quite far down the list; only two editors said most submissions came from the UK. Related to this question, most editors (5/7) supplied approximate acceptance rates for submissions. This fell into the range of 5-20% acceptance (thus, 80-95% rejection) of manuscripts submitted. Therefore, the statistics clearly demonstrate how difficult it is to get published in these journals, confirming the perceptions of the EAP practitioner participants in this study.

3.3.2 Challenges

Secondly, editors were asked what they thought were the challenges for EAP practitioners to publish in their journals, illustrated in table 5 below.

Table 5: Journal editors' views of challenges

Criteria	Editor comment
Theme of journal	Many manuscripts that are submitted don't make it into (journal name) because they focus on language teaching and learning rather than on the theme of the journal. (Editor 3)
Journal requirements	Most of our articles are empirical or theoretical papers. We do like to publish work that is grounded in pedagogical concerns, so I don't know if it is a challenge for practitioners. (Editor 6) A challenge for all authors is our (number) word limit for articles and (number) references. (Editor 7)
Readership of journal	They need to identify something that readers in other contexts could utilize even though they work in different contexts. (Editor 2) The selection criteria require the subject matter to be of interest to the wider (theme of journal) community and not to be solely of interest to teachers of English for Academic Purposes. (Editor 5)
Knowledge of literature and research methods	[Challenges are] time, knowledge of research methods, ability to frame a relevant and interesting issue as a disciplinary problem, insufficient knowledge of the literature. (Editor 1) They tend to be in the form of 'Here are some materials I designed; publish my manuscript'. They aren't sufficiently grounded in previous literature or research; or they haven't been tested or evaluated in any way. (Editor 4)

It appears that the editors considered that the challenges for practitioners to publish relate partly to tailoring their submission sufficiently to the journal and its readership, and partly to expertise in research and publishing.

3.3.3 Advice

To respond to these challenges, all editors provided advice for EAP practitioners wanting to submit in their journals illustrated in table 6 below.

Table 6. Advice from Editors

Editor	Advice

1	Research and publish with someone who has done both before and can show them the way…Perhaps write for practitioner journals before writing for a research journal
2	They need to have a solid rigorous research design.
3	Provide the appropriate contextualising information for a wide audience.
4	We expect a section or more on pedagogical implications.
5	Ensure their article is relevant and suitable before submission.
6	Should situate their work within scholarly conversations in (journal theme).
7	Read any freely available papers … read author guidelines!

Thus, the advice takes potential authors through the process of publishing: start with a rigorous research design, prepare carefully by getting to know the journal, follow the author guidelines, make sure the paper is relevant to the journal, think about the readership and make the submission interesting to those working in a range of teaching/research contexts and locations. To complete all of these actions, as editor 1 suggests, it is a good idea to get help from more experienced authors. This was also suggested by EAP practitioner participant I. Overall, the message from editors seems to be that authors need to pay a lot more attention to journal requirements.

4. Discussion

In examining the data as a whole, it seems that there are many threats to EAP practitioner research publishing, but there are also some opportunities. The emerging themes are discussed below under these two contrasting categories juxtaposing the two sides of each theme.

4.1. Opportunities

4.1.1. Development as a teacher

EAP practitioner respondents reflected that publishing their research could make them a better teacher and writer by informing their practice. This significant benefit of publishing research is also advocated by Ding and Bruce (2017), who suggest that research and publications require a long-term commitment to professional development which can contribute to effective teaching. The practitioner respondents highlighted new opportunities in EAP and the possibility of finding one's own niche to research and publish. In doing so, they can draw on a large body of literature of genre, discipline, corpora and academic literacies (Ding and Bruce, 2017), and make use of their own teaching context to begin a research project, as suggested by the recent ResTES (BALEAP, 2018). As Harwood (2017) recommends, EAP practitioners also have an opportunity to bring their specific teaching expertise to pedagogical research by making use of their knowledge, training and awareness of current issues in the classroom.

4.1.2. Career development

It is clear from the EAP practitioner respondents' comments that publishing can be pivotal in career development to enhance their status within the department and institution. The opportunities that respondents expect to gain from publishing of achieving recognition, contributing to knowledge and developing a profile are consistent with the list of reasons to publish developed by Murray (2013). However, the opportunity for career development is particularly crucial for EAP practitioners, as their professional status can be fragile or limited. The HODs' responses indicate that they were largely in favour of practitioner publishing, but their comments do not make it clear how much practical support they provided.

4.1.3. Development of EAP profession

By publishing research, EAP practitioners emphasised that they were also contributing to the professionalisation of the discipline. This view was also shared by many HODs whose rationale for considering research publications to be important was that they contribute to the academic value of the EAP profession and ensure that teaching is research-informed. Thus, the views of both respondents are in line with the perspectives of Ding and Bruce (2017, p. 3) that EAP must be seen as 'a research-informed academic subject' and Hyland (2018, p. 389) that 'EAP has become a much more theoretically grounded and research-informed enterprise in recent years'.

4.1.4. Development beyond EAP

Several practitioner respondents illustrated how publishing research was taking them beyond EAP, and connecting them with other departments and the wider institution, drawing on and cementing their bridging role. In this development, practitioners recommended finding new journals as a means of getting started with publishing, and networking through conferences, taking opportunities to speak with journal editors. A further recommendation from Wisker (2013) is to review for journals, which enables academics to participate more in the wider research community, to focus on the articulation of knowledge and to learn from supporting the scholarship of others. As highlighted by Ding and Bruce (2017, p. 154), EAP practitioners need to 'accrue cultural capital'; clearly, a number of the practitioner respondents in this study were actively pursuing this goal.

4.1.5. Advice to succeed in publishing

In order to overcome the barriers to publishing, journal editors made key recommendations to read extensively, especially articles from the journal chosen for submission, incorporate a robust research design and focus on the journal theme and requirements. As discussed above, the ResTES events (BALEAP 2017, 2018) can also help to bridge the challenging gap for practitioners between presenting and publishing. In addition, informal publications such as blogs have been suggested as a developmental first step in other studies (Kuteeva (2016).

4.2. Threats

4.2.1. Teaching only

All of the EAP practitioner participants mentioned lack of time and that this affected their ability to do research. As explained by Murray (2013, p. 34): 'time is definitely, absolutely and across all the disciplines *the* inhibiting factor for academic writers'. However, in the case of many EAP practitioners, the lack of time is connected to their 'teaching only' contractual status, in which they are teaching or preparing classes throughout all the working hours in the week, as reported by Fulcher (2009). Therefore, it is hard to see how to fit in any extra hours, unless they are in their own time, which several participants alluded to. While academics in other disciplines are under extreme pressure to publish (McCulloch, 2017), EAP practitioners may face pressure not to publish, or at least discouragement from publishing, in their workplace. Indeed, the HODs in this study who did not think publishing research was important connected their view to practitioner contracts in which they were hourly paid and not in the REF.

4.2.2. Lack of career development

Some practitioners explained that they were not encouraged to produce research publications, or indeed that there was no support from their manager or department beyond a certain level; based on the survey of HODs, it seems most support was for presenting at conferences. Hyland (2012, p. 19) sees publishing as 'the stick of institutional demands and the carrot of personal motivation', but for some practitioners, it seems there is only the 'carrot of personal motivation' that encourages them to publish, while the stick is actively trying to keep them away from this activity (throwing 'bricks' at them and responding with 'jealousy', Practitioners E and H respectively).

4.2.3. Lack of publishing culture in EAP

A view emerging from the practitioner data is that EAP lacks a publishing culture, as it comprises a teaching-focused subject that tends to have a different academic status to other disciplines. This coincides with the view of Ding and Bruce (2017) that EAP operates only on the edge of academia. Some practitioners connected the lack of publishing culture to BALEAP's activities. While many practitioner participants had published in BALEAP proceedings, they were concerned that presentations at BALEAP events tended to be unsuitable for publishing because they focused on teaching only without a rigorous research focus. This gives a partial answer to Swales' question (see introduction) as to why few practitioners seem to publish, despite actively presenting at BALEAP events. As Ding and Bruce (2017) suggest, there may be 'a growing divide between the research community and practitioner community' (p. 187)

4.2.4 Lack of support

For several practitioners, a lack of support and restrictions imposed by their line managers made it difficult for them to publish; furthermore, some practitioners stated that they had encountered more serious problems in the form of hostility and jealousy from managers. This finding contrasts with other studies of publishing (Hyland, 2015; Murray, 2013). While the views of many HODs in the survey indicate that they recognised the importance of EAP practitioner publishing, it is not known how much they directly supported staff.

4.2.5. Fear of failure

Some practitioners admitted being daunted by the 'substantial' or 'major' work needed for submissions to the 'top journals'; these concerns were also reported by Murray (2013), who suggests that writers may limit themselves by forming very definite views about which journals they are capable of submitting to. Given that several editors said the number of submissions to their journals from the UK was quite far down the list, there is also some evidence to suggest that many UK-based EAP practitioners avoid submitting to certain journals. Furthermore, the journal editors reported extremely high rejection rates for submissions, and the problems of submissions they receive which do not take into account sufficiently the journal requirements. It has been argued that journals should be more supportive of EAP practitioners: 'We would …urge journals such as JEAP to adopt a more proactive, inclusive, supportive and generous stance to incorporate practitioner work in the genres and forms that best represent their contributions' (Ding and Bruce, 2017, p. 163). However, as reported above, journal editors also provided very constructive advice for practitioners to develop their writing for journals and to try to gain more success in publishing.

5. Conclusion

This study responds to the recommendation by Ding and Bruce (2017) that research is needed into scholarship in the profession, by examining publishing by EAP practitioners. The findings draw attention to the opportunities and threats for EAP practitioners to publish research, by considering teaching, career development, EAP development, institutional support and advice about publishing. While practitioners could exploit the opportunities for pedagogical research due to their teaching expertise, the significant focus on teaching as the most important aspect of their work and frequently their 'teaching only' contracts, act as impediments to undertaking research. Opportunities for practitioners to develop their career through publishing can be pivotal, but according to the practitioner respondents, lack of support or even opposition from managers and institutions is a barrier to development. The survey of HODs reveals that many value research publishing by their EAP staff, particularly because it can inform practice and keep them up to date: this finding should encourage practitioners, although it may still not translate into active support for research publication.

It is currently an exciting time to research in EAP, yet the profession, at least to some, has no publishing culture, and publishing is not expected. As reported by Murray (2013), networking and collaborating offer very valuable opportunities to research and develop, but EAP practitioners may struggle to achieve this without academic status. Lastly, heeding constructive advice from editors, such as focusing on the readership of the journal, could make a major difference to the success of a submission, but it must be recognised that passing the review and editorial process is extremely demanding and there are very high rejection rates. Many practitioners may feel the bar is set too high for them to attempt and they fear failure.

Although this study is limited to the UK context in terms of the EAP practitioner and HOD participants, the findings of this study contribute to our understanding of the opportunities and threats to publishing in the profession, which can inform and encourage EAP practitioners with their own attempts to publish. Further research in different EAP contexts could build on this study, for example, by examining the impact of undertaking a PhD on EAP practitioner publishing in more detail, or by involving other stakeholders, such as EAP students, to assess the extent to which they value publishing by their teachers.

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Appendix A Research participant requests

    1) Request for EAP practitioner participants

Dear BALEAP colleagues

I am conducting a study of the challenges for EAP practitioners of publishing research in EAP. If you have experienced challenges in publishing research in EAP and would like to participate (via a short *Skype* interview), please contact me off list.

Many thanks

    2) Request for participants in EAP survey

Dear
I am conducting a UK-based study of research publications by EAP practitioners.

As part of this study, I am contacting Heads of EAP departments for their views.

Could I ask you to complete a very short survey? It should only take 2 minutes. https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LGGYH6N

Many thanks

    3) Request for journal editors to respond via email

Dear -
I am writing to you in your capacity of editor of the Journal of-. I am doing some research into the challenges for EAP practitioners to publish research in EAP (a UK based study). So far, I have interviewed EAP practitioners and surveyed Heads of EAP Departments. As my next step, I would like to try to get the perspectives of editors of journals that EAP practitioners may try to publish in, with the following questions:

(*see appendix B.3 below for questions*)

Could I ask you to comment on the above, in your role as the editor of Journal-? (I am also asking these questions of the editors of other named journals.)
I am aiming to submit a paper to JEAP based on this research. I would want to include your responses as editor of - would you be happy for me to do this?

Many thanks for your help

Appendix B Interview, survey and email questions

1) Interview questions to EAP practitioners

1. Can you tell me briefly about your current position, EAP qualifications and teaching experience?
2. What have you published and where?
3. What is your motivation for publishing?
4. What specific challenges have you encountered with your publications?
5. How have you dealt with these challenges? Eg Have you had any help to overcome these challenges from a colleague, mentor, line manager, editor, other?
6. What is your view of publishing in EAP?

2) Survey questions to Heads of EAP departments

1. Have you published any research in EAP?
2. How many staff teach EAP in your department?
3. How many members of EAP teaching staff in your department do the following:
   a) Carry out research   b) present at conferences c) publish research
4. How important do you think it is for EAP teaching staff to publish research in EAP?
   a) Very important   b) important c) not important
5. Please explain the reason for your view in question 4.

3) Email questions to editors of EAP journals

1. Where do submissions to (journal name) tend to come from, in terms of the author's base and professional role?
2. Do you see any specific challenges for EAP practitioners to publish research in (journal name)? If so, please explain.
3. Do you have any advice to EAP practitioners who wish to publish research in (journal name)?

Appendix C HOD Survey responses to question 5.

HOD1 I feel very strongly that EAP is an academic subject. In order for us not to be perceived as a "service", we need to be as active in both "scholarly" and "research" activity as academic colleagues in other disciplines are. I personally am not concerned with REF level publications, but I am certain that we need to be presenting and writing in order to maintain and improve our academic status.

HOD2 I think it is very important for EAP teaching staff to carry out research and to publish it - one can take informed decisions, when setting up or updating courses, with regards to teaching and learning methods, designing materials, student needs, etc. It is also good practice to share findings and ideas.

HOD3 EAP teachers have to go beyond a focus on study skills in order to help students to understand study competence. For EAP this means an understanding of the place of research at university. In my view it is not really possible to teach students about research and writing up research if you haven't done this yourself.

HOD4 This is in the context of pre-sessional provision. We rely on hourly-paid lecturers, so research is impractical. The in-sessional support at our institution is managed by a separate department with many full-time staff, who are more research focused.

HOD5 The job is to support students... at the same time as being aware of current debates

HOD6 There is real value in all staff researching but all staff here are not entered into the REF and nor were they recruited on that basis. We value all staff continually engaging professionally. However, in a field which recruits primarily around teaching ability, it is often more active research around this area which is more obvious i.e. Not setting out with the aim of returning this under REF.

HOD7 Recently all staff have moved across to Teaching only contract and so research is not required, however, some staff still do research in their own time.

HOD8 It is important for credibility within the university. I am including action research or other classroom based research in my definition as I think applied research is important in EAP.

HOD9 I think it's important that EAP teachers engage in scholarship. For a subset of these, it's likely/realistic that this will take the form of research. For most, research resulting in formal publication is not an appropriate target.

HOD10 EAP as a discipline is at risk of deprofessionalisation, whether it be through privatisation or institutions only seeing it as a service. As in education more widely, ongoing research is necessary; without it EAP risks becoming ossified and unresponsive.

HOD11 I think it is good to be up-to-date with the research and, if one's contract allows for research, then doing research is good in a number of ways, but many of our EAP lecturers are on 'teaching only' contracts, which means they get no support for research. In this case, it is important that those who are in a position to do research do it, while those who are not supported to do research keep abreast of developments.

HOD12 In a teaching-focused department there is not a lot of support for research and publication, but it is important to have an intellectual as well as professional engagement in what we are doing.

HOD13 The nature of UG and PG study is changing significantly and it is clearly important that EAP practitioners are responsive to the real needs of their students, so there will always be a need for research to inform practice.

HOD14 I think it's important for research to inform teaching and for teaching to inform research - however, as most EAP practitioners are on teaching-only contracts - this is the ideal rather than the reality.   A work in progress and one I am trying to push a bit more in my own institution.

HOD15 It's important to keep up to date and to share ideas

HOD16 Research can inform teaching and help understand underlying processes that our students need to master. However good teachers do not necessarily require the same skills as good researchers

HOD17 It has become more important and more of an issue for a number of reasons but is not practical/realistic for most teachers given all the other demands on their time. Academic teaching contracts do not emphasise published research as a criterion for promotion and workload allocation models likewise don't allow enough time for larger scale or more in-depth, time-consuming research projects.

HOD18 It enhances credibility of the staff and the department. Research is (or should be) valuable for its own sake. Research data may be a useful tool for developing EAP courses.

HOD19 Internal (to the university) face value Pushing forward, externally, relevant knowledge

HOD20 My personal opinion is that action research and information from the chalk-face is crucial for contributing to a balanced library of referential material accessible to all interested parties.

HOD21 Ensures they are engaging with academic practice and familiar with conventions of Universities; keeps them up to date I have said no to 'research' but we do engage in Scholarship of teaching and learning for teachers on teaching only tracks and we are on a big drive to get people to engage much more and disseminate and write more

HOD22 We do not have a research brief but think we should! Teaching in the rest of the University is able to benefit from research (research-led teaching is used to describe it in promotional material). If this is desirable - teaching informed by recent research, staff with more space to reflect on what they do - then it applies to EAP as much as any other subject.

HOD23 It is important that, like other academics in the university, that we keep up to date with current developments in our field and make our own contributions to the discussions. Sadly, most of us have little time to carry out the research we would like to because of heavy workloads-teaching and administration.

HOD24 It is critical that EAP teaching staff remain engaged in up-to-date professional practice, reflect on evolving pedagogies and actively contribute to discussions about directions of EAP.

HOD25 It is important to develop knowledge linked to EAP education and to share that with the wider community of practitioners.

HOD26 It is important for teachers of EAP to engage with the academic process themselves - in some way; this ensures a deeper and more authoritative understanding

HOD27 To provide a scholarly approach to teaching