

Yulong Li

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# Educational Change Amongst English Language College Teachers in China

Transitioning from Teaching for General  
to Academic Purposes

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ISBN 978-981-15-3052-4                      ISBN 978-981-15-3053-1 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-3053-1>

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# Abbreviations

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BALEAP	British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes
BBS	Bulletin Board System
CECR	College English Curriculum Requirements
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CET	College English Teaching
CET-4	College English Test Band 4
CET-6	College English Test Band 6
CETs	College English Teachers
CFTEAP	Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DC	The Capital of America
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EdUHK	The Education University of Hong Kong
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGP	English for General Purposes
EGAP	English for General Academic Purposes
ELT	English Language Teaching
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes
Gaokao	The National College Entrance Exams in China
GCET	Guidelines on College English Teaching
HKIED	The Hong Kong Institute of Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
MA	Master of Arts
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses

PBL	Project/Problem-Based Learning
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QQ	A social media software in China
RenRen	A social media website in China
SFL	Systematic Functional Linguistics
SPU	Student Processing Unit
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TED	Technology, Entertainment, and Design Talks
TEM-8	Test for English Majors Band 8
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
UK	The United Kingdom
US/USA	The United States of America
WeChat	A social media mobile phone apparatus in China
WID	Writing in Discipline

# Chapter 1

## Introduction



In today's world, the ties of globalization increasingly connect people, and the communication networks between different countries and cultures that underpin these connections are largely reliant on English as a medium language. In the case of academic institutions, English has become a lingua franca of teaching and learning (Liddicoat, 2016); evaluations of research staff's quality and reputations worldwide depend on their English publishing on international platforms, which is the so-called "publish or perish" academic survival system (Lee, 2014). In response to this demand, English for academic purposes (EAP) has gradually become an important subject for those working and studying in higher education institutions. Particularly in the recent two decades, "there has been a prolific increase in scholarly activity in the field of English for academic purposes" (Thompson & Diani, 2015, p. 1). In China, the first framework concerning the introduction of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at Chinese tertiary institutes was published in 2013 by the Shanghai Education Bureau (Shanghai Education Bureau, 2013). Its advent marks several milestones; first, in relation to the revitalization of the previously unsatisfactory pedagogies practiced when delivering English for General Purposes (EGP) (Cai, 2012) at most universities; and second, as a pioneering program, implementing a large-scale hybrid EAP framework (integrating characteristics unique to the Chinese context) in China (Gao & Bartlett, 2014). Cai (2013, p. 11) claims the objective of the EAP course offered in Shanghai is, "the cultivation of professionals in various disciplines" through students learning English "to study their academic subjects."

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This monograph was an adapted version of the same author's Ph.D. dissertation titled "A *Phenomenological Ethnographic study of Chinese college English teachers' transition from teaching English for General Purposes to teaching English for Academic Purposes*". The dissertation was submitted to The Education University of Hong Kong in 2017. The copyright of the dissertation belongs to the author (Li, 2017).

## 1.1 An EAP Reform Coming to China

Approximately 25 million students are enrolled at tertiary level (Bolton & Graddol, 2012) in China, and for the majority English is a compulsory course, meaning China has become a “major site of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)” (Borg & Liu, 2013). Following general improvements in the English proficiency of university students, more scholars have begun to discuss the best pedagogy to adopt when teaching English to university students (Cheng, 2016). Some of the most robust arguments espouse the benefits of EAP. EAP is a pedagogy targeted at college English teachers who are responsible for teaching students from non-English majors. Cheng (2016) introduces that ELT (English language teaching) in Chinese universities are two kinds: the one for only English majors and the other for the non-English majors, which has more students’ population. The teachers responsible for educating non-English majors, namely college English teachers (CETs), have been accused of being disengaged in academic research (Borg & Liu, 2013), and many suffer from a relatively low professional status not enough for teaching EAP, as Cheng (2016) quotes.

Indisputably, EAP is completely new in China, as English for General Purposes (EGP) has long dominated EFL teaching (Cargill, O’Connor & Li, 2012). Since the 1980s, English language teaching for non-English majors in higher educational settings in China has taken place within the scope of the EGP curriculum (Gao & Bartlett, 2014), which focuses on the holistic and humanistic education of students in English. The EGP curriculum typically neglects disciplines; instead, covering topics relating to “campus life, personal growth, politeness, appreciation of music, health and hygiene, friendship and human emotions, paths to success, and cultural values” (Cheng, 2016, p. 213).

To elaborate further, the most recent version of national EGP language policy was the *College English Curriculum Requirements* (CECR), published before the Shanghai EAP reform, which was stipulated by the Higher Education Department of China’s Ministry of Education in 2007. In the CECR, the policymakers defined the teaching goal of college English courses for the non-English-majors as

[T]o develop students’ ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China’s social development and international exchanges. (CECR, 2007, p. 18)

It required colleges and universities across the country to design tailored 16 credit-bearing CET courses, taking their students’ English proficiency into consideration, by matching the below ability requirements printed in CECR (taking intermediate level as an example, see Table 1.1). In most cases, the requirements depicted in the CET goals were generic language skills and daily communicative skills in English, with little emphasis on the learning genres of their disciplines and academic English.

Such was the prevalence of EGP, that until recently, EAP was not formally acknowledged in China (Cai, 2012). Except the direct transplantation of EAP courses

**Table 1.1** Intermediate level of CET requirements in CECR (adapted from college English curriculum requirements, 2007, pp. 19–20)

	Listening	Speaking	Reading
Intermediate requirements	<i>Students should generally be able to follow talks and lectures in English, to understand longer English radio and TV programs on familiar topics spoken at a speed of around 150–180 wpm (words per minute), grasping the main ideas, key points and relevant details. They should be able to understand, by and large, courses in their areas of specialty taught in English</i>	<i>Students should be able to hold conversations in fairly fluent English. They should, by and large, be able to express their personal opinions, feelings and views, to state facts and reasons, and to describe events with clear articulation and basically correct pronunciation and intonation</i>	<i>Students should generally be able to read essays on general topics in popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries at a speed of 70–90 wpm. With longer texts for fast reading, the reading speed should be 120 wpm. Students should be able to skim or scan reading materials. When reading summary literature in their areas of specialty, students should be able to get a correct understanding of the main ideas, major facts and relevant details</i>
	Writing	Translation	Recommended vocabulary
	<i>Students should be able to express, by and large, personal views on general topics, compose English abstracts for theses in their own specialization, and write short English papers on topics in their field. They should be able to describe charts and graphs, and to complete within 30 min a short composition of no less than 160 words. The composition should be complete in content, clear in idea, well-organized in presentation and coherent in discourse</i>	<i>With the help of dictionaries, students should be able to translate on a selective basis English literature in their field, and to translate texts on familiar topics in popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries. The speed of translation from English into Chinese should be about 350 English words per hour; whereas the speed of translation from Chinese into English should be around 300 Chinese characters per hour. The translation should read smoothly, convey the original meaning and be, in the main, free from mistakes in understanding or expression. Students are expected to be able to use appropriate translation techniques</i>	<i>Students should acquire a total of 6,395 words and 1,200 phrases (including those that are covered in high school English courses and the Basic Requirements), among which 2,200 are active words (including the active words that have been covered in the Basic Requirements)</i>

from the UK to universities such as the University of Nottingham's China Campus, in Ningbo near Shanghai, the first official mention of EAP was in 2012 in *A Framework of Reference for EFL Teaching at Tertiary Level in Shanghai* (Cai, 2012). The framework was designed to target students needing to use English to study their subjects at the undergraduate level; and the suggested framework was as follows:

1. "An elective, remedial English enhancement course (0–2 credit hours) for those who need to improve their comprehensive general English skills";
2. "A series of required English for general academic purposes (EGAP) courses (8 credit hours in total) to enhance students' EAP listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills";
3. "A series of elected English for specific academic purposes (ESAP) courses (2–4 credits hours in total), such as business English and legal English, based on the students' subject areas" (Cheng, 2016, p. 101).

This pedagogy proposed by Cai (2012), would thoroughly overhaul the original EGP-based CET. However, due to the potentially large scale of the change, it has been the subject of much debate amongst researchers (e.g. Wang, 2013). The general opinions shared on both sides are evaluated below.

Arguments against EAP reform in China begin with reference to the extensive variation in students' English proficiency, arising from regional differences in pedagogy and resources, and rural–urban disparities. This discrepancy in levels means that once enrolled at university, some students need EGP to enhance their English (You & Dörnyei, 2014). For this reason, EAP might prove not so relevant to first- and second-year students, who may not yet have narrowed their studies to a particular discipline (Wang & Yao, 2013). Others argue that the focus on skills in most EAP programmes diverges too far from the CET's goal of nurturing humanistic students (Wang, 2013). Furthermore, the professional standard of CET teachers might not be sufficient to meet the requirements of teaching EAP (Borg & Liu, 2013).

However, supportive voices of the urgent demand for EAP reform in China are also many. The deficiencies in the current ELT Chinese higher education curriculum have been a source of grievance. Cai (2012) attributes this to Chinese university students' lack of direction, and low motivation to learn English in EGP, which could be addressed through the promotion of EAP in Chinese higher education contexts. Some attention has also been drawn to the unsatisfactory academic output of Chinese scholars and students (Hamp-Lyons, 2011), as many scholars imply that the lack of familiarity with academic English among Chinese intellectuals explains their limited success in terms of publishing in international academic journals (Zhong, 1998; Cargill et al., 2012).

Academic misconduct of a number of professors and students is further raised as a serious issue (Douglass, 2012). Hamp-Lyons (2011) observes that teaching good practice through EAP has the potential to improve scholars' academic moral fibre. A new intake of students requires knowledge of EAP and other academic skills. According to statistics, an increasing number of Chinese students plan to undertake further study after completing their initial degree in China (01/02/2015 URL: <http://www.eol.cn/html/lx/2014baogao/content.html>). Hennebray, Lo and Macaro (2012)

note that when Chinese students choose to study abroad, much like other international students studying in the UK, they consistently require additional EAP support despite having gained reasonable marks in their IELTS assessments.

Gao and Bartlett (2014) suggest that understanding of the content of EAP curricular remains unfamiliar, potentially leading to misunderstandings that adversely influence the attitudes of teachers and policy-makers. This has led to hesitancy from universities and other institutions in terms of adoption. EAP is referenced in new national guidelines for English teaching. The most up-to-date *Guidelines on College English Teaching (GCET)*, were published by the Education Bureau of China in 2015, which highlights and recommends English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The Guidelines also suggest courses such as academic communication, academic writing, academic literature review, and academic translation should be taught.

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# 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.

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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, & Strevens, 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 (Kumaravadivelu, 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” (Dudenev, 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

Influenced<sup>1</sup> 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 &

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<sup>1</sup>Part 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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# Chapter 3

## Research Methodology



### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the research process the author employed in depth, highlighting the underpinning paradigm, methodology, methods, data analysis process, and trustworthiness measures. The underpinning philosophy, interpretivism, is the theoretical foundation of the qualitative research methodology: phenomenological ethnography. Such a foundation not only offers an etic-emic-combined lens through which to view the research context but also a hermeneutic approach to interpreting data. As mentioned, phenomenological ethnography, which combines hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography, is the methodology for the current research, and it requires a series of fieldwork research methods to be employed to collect data. These research methods include: participant observation online and offline, ethnographic interviews, phenomenological interviews, analysis of the research participants' class materials and teaching diary, and using the researcher as a tool.

Just as interpretivism in current research deters an etic-emic combined vision to read the research (that will be covered in later sections), the ethnographer's positionality and reflexivity symbolize such a vision. The data analysis includes three stages, including a thick description, case studies, and theory generation; and in more detail, qualitative data analysis techniques, such as life histories, thematic analysis, discourse and multimodal discourse analysis, and systematic and cross cases comparison to carry out the three steps of data analysis. Positionality and reflexivity are employed to reflect the nature of interpretivist research; this lets the readers know the entire study offer nothing but the author's interpretation of reality. To increase readability and benefit readers, the map (Fig. 3.1) has been produced.

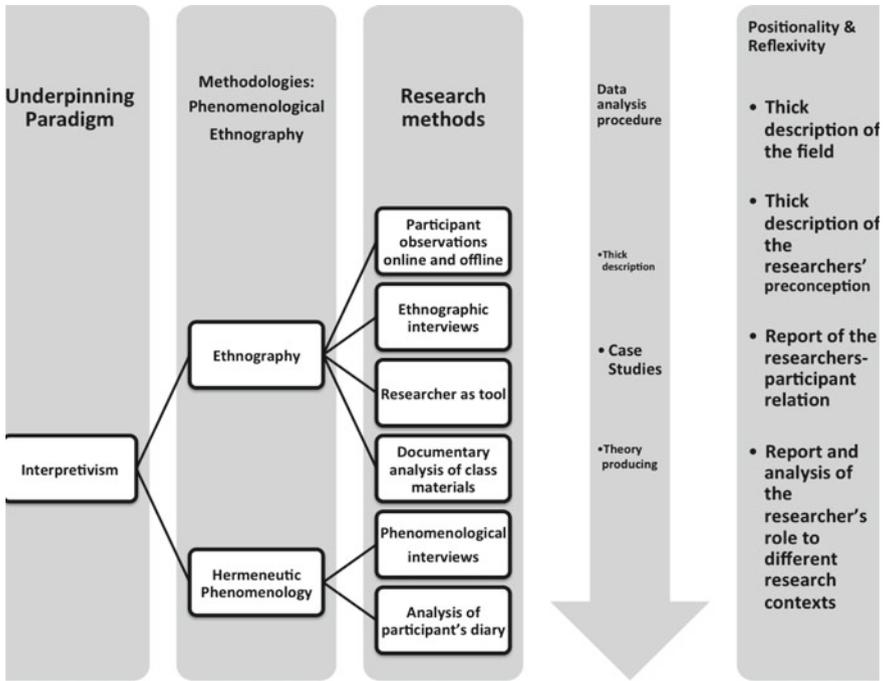


Fig. 3.1 Map of the research design

### 3.2 Philosophical Paradigms: Interpretivism

Interpretivism is the philosophy underpinning the current study. Interpretivism does not argue that reality is objective and independent of beholders' observation, but rather that the world is a complexity of multiple realities, subjectively understood according to the beholders' values and interactions via certain social, historical, and cultural contexts (Creswell, 2013; Hammond & Wellington, 2012; Lincoln & Denzin, 2011; Yin, 2014).

When defining multiple realities interpretivist researchers pose research questions that are relatively open-ended, amiable, and exploratory, to encourage participants to relinquish their mental barriers to allow the truth to emerge (Creswell, 2013). They also ensure research is undertaken that pays attention to their own background and identity, the process(es) of interaction with the participants, and the embedded research environment, potentially influencing the data; the research they produce then offers their own interpretation of the data with some bias reflecting their backgrounds (Creswell, 2013).

Generally speaking, the difference between interpretivism and positivism research is that the former confirms the subjectivity of the study, and is proactive about demonstrating it, while the latter attempts to avoid discussions of subjectivity. However, research cannot avoid being subjective (Yin, 2014).

### 3.3 Methodology

#### 3.3.1 *Ethnography*

Ethnographic studies support a qualitative approach, comprising extended participant observation periods and ethnographic interviews (Christensen, 2011; Creswell, 2013), in which researchers investigate and interpret the meaning of values, behaviours, thought processes, customs, the interactions of members, and the communal language in a shared culture (Harris, 1968). EAP teachers in Shanghai, as a subculture group, lack contextualised and in-depth research for interpreting their cultural “totem”. This rationale fits well with the objective of ethnography, which is to explore the underlying meaning of behaviours and beliefs (Wolcott, 2008).

Contrasting with other forms of qualitative or quantitative research, data collection and analysis in ethnographic design is spiral, and should not be expected to be planned in a traditional order, such as when designing research techniques to data collection and data analysis, as followed by interpretation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; O’Reilly, 2008). Ethnography is very similar to the natural process people use to understand phenomena; understanding increases as people interpret their observations in context. Sometimes, something suddenly happens that can change established impressions. People then renew the established understanding. As O’Reilly (2008, p. 190) states, “Doing ethnography mirrors ... how we all learn about things in our daily lives”.

Similar to unknown expenditure, ethnography causes researchers to remain in a state of “waiting for surprise”, although they may also prepare research questions. These are just initial directions, they may “know very little about your (their) topic (s)...might not even know who ... to talk to ... or where to go to... certainly might not know what questions to ask” (O’Reilly, 2008, p. 190). Faced with unfamiliarity, ethnographers might therefore be unable to produce a rigid research design; instead, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) suggest, they might act naturally. Similarly, when Nader (1986, p. 98) sought advice from Kluckhohn, a famous anthropologist in the US, the advice he received was, “Go forth and do likewise”.

It is therefore unsurprising that Christensen (2011) lists “researchers” as one of the three pillars of ethnographic fieldwork. Indeed, the interpersonal charisma and communication craft of the researcher determines the extent to which he/she secures access to the field and the richness of the data. Importantly, however, “Ethnographic fieldwork and writing take a long time. They depend on intimate ties and attachments, and they entail a good deal of travelling” (Scheper-Hughes, 1992, p. 534).

#### 3.3.2 *Phenomenology*

Phenomenology emerged as a critical reflection of the popularity of “scientism” in philosophy in the nineteenth century, echoing the ancient Greek philosopher seeking wisdom (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990) and drawing a stark boundary

between the natural-physical sciences and people's lived experience. Within phenomenology, there is a process of division between transcendental/psychological phenomenology, which objectively seeks descriptive phenomena, forsaking the researchers' hermeneutic experiences (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994) and interpretive/hermeneutic phenomenology, confirming the subjective hermeneutics of the phenomenon itself (Riazi, 2016; Van Manen, 2014). In the current study, the phenomenology under discussion draws on both interpretive and hermeneutic strands.

Derived from Husserl's belief that the human consciousness is free from any presuppositions, phenomenological researchers admit the "social world is nothing other than our interpretations" (Pring, 2015, p. 99). They further acknowledge that people's experiences of the world are often selective, and dependent on the needs of consciousness; especially on whether an experience is one of joy, pain, or danger. Thus, experiences hold significant meaning, according to how an individual realises them. However, the experiences of different people could be perceived differently according to their consciousness. That is, the world cannot be interpreted with objectivity (Pring, 2015). In other words, everyone's perception of the world differs.

The nature of individualised consciousness means each person makes sense of things according to their own personalised life experiences. Experience therefore works as a lens, filtering everything that one perceives. As Schutz (1964) analogised, when an individual is a newcomer, he/she already carries with him/her preconceptions based on his/her previous life experiences. The result can often be a failure to understand the meanings of what is taking place in unfamiliar contexts. Thus, in order to survive in a new place, an individual need to learn to express the novel preconceptions of local people.

Generally speaking, the hermeneutic phenomenology paradigm belongs to interpretivism, confirming people or social actors living in multiple realities and living by their own rules for survival, also having the following features (Curtis, 1978, in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011, p. 18):

1. A belief in the importance, and in a sense the primacy, of subjective consciousness;
2. An understanding of consciousness as active, as meaning bestowing; and
3. A claim that there are certain essential structures to consciousness of which we gain direct knowledge by a certain kind of reflection. Exactly what these structures are is a point about which phenomenologists have differed.

Phenomenology was not considered a research methodology until recently (Van Manen, 2014). However, it has been widely adopted for use in the disciplines of sociology, healthcare, psychology and education (Creswell, 2013). It supports researchers acknowledging subjectivity in human lived experience and psychological experience, and phenomenological studies are concerned with interpreting the social actors' common experiences in a phenomenon (e.g., experience of having cancer) (Creswell, 2013) via in-depth and multiple interviews, observations, and documentary analysis (Van Manen, 2014). More precisely: "phenomenology concentrates on the need to study human consciousness by focusing on the world that the study participants

subjectively experience... (in order to achieve) deeper insights into human nature” (Maggs-Rapport, 2000, p. 221). As has been stated in the research rationale, all EAP teachers hold different epistemologies concerning relevant concepts, as well as personal recognition and experience of the pedagogical transition, and clarifying the insider teachers’ interpretation of their experience, and ethnographic decoding the cultural totem of Shanghai EAP teachers, enriches their understanding as a cultural group.

### 3.3.3 *Phenomenological Ethnography*

Adaptations of ethnography have evolved in recent years; for example, critical ethnography, feminist ethnography, linguistic ethnography, interpretive ethnography, narrative ethnography, and phenomenological ethnography (Wolcott, 1999). Drawing on the characteristics of both approaches, phenomenological ethnography makes it possible to “discover how people construct their own cultural and political subjectivity within the context” (Gabay, 2015, p. 8). Sorrell and Redmond (1995), and as Van Manen (2014) once stressed, highlights the distinctions between the two approaches: with ethnography probing the rituals of a culture, phenomenology unveiling the meaning of a phenomenon; and ethnographers acting as observers in the cultural field, while hermeneutic phenomenologists interpret research participants’ experiences of phenomena.

Despite the potential differences between their affordances and objectives, these two approaches share a wealth of similarities, justifying the significance of phenomenological ethnography to the current study. As two of the three sub-branches of naturalistic or interpretivist philosophy (Cohen et al., 2011), both are exploratory research and welcome multiple realities in the subjective sense (Gabay, 2015). Ethnographers do not base their studies on armchair hypotheses, nor do they use data to support a decontextualised research hypothesis (O’Reilly, 2008), rather, similar to phenomenologists, they suspend all their presumptions before approaching data (Creswell, 2013). Both approaches require researchers to clarify their preconceptions of studies, and their positionality and reflexivity (Creswell, 2013) in order to demonstrate the limited nature of the researchers’ interpretation, showcasing studies as revealing the subjective hermeneutics of the participants and researchers (Harper, 2012; Riazi, 2016; Van Manen, 2014); the procedures when handling these studies are generally similar, both adopt interviews, observations, and documentary analysis, and both require the researcher to act as the instrument of data collection (Christensen, 2011; Gabay, 2015). However, differences exist in terms of the necessity for naturalistic fieldwork, as phenomenological methods do not demand the researcher to enter the field (Gabay, 2015), and the impromptu and on-site nature of ethnographic interviews differ from the repetitive and prolonged off-site interviews demanded by phenomenology (Gabay, 2015; Ogden & Roulon, 2009). There are notable possibilities and potential benefits for combining the best practices of both methodologies into phenomenological ethnography.

Maggs-Rapport (2000, p. 223) claims the following as advantages of phenomenological ethnography:

1. Both researcher and participant are empowered to play an important role in the research study for both are essential elements of data collection analysis;
2. The provision of a more holistic outlook;
3. Offers both an element of descriptive narrative and wider interpretation (data triangulation); and
4. Promotes both methodological and data triangulation suggesting a more thorough research base.

Traditional ethnography relies on ethnographers' contextual observations, and the entire data set being produced as the result of the researchers' second hand interpretation (Christensen, 2011; Creswell, 2013); whereas, phenomenological ethnography includes the hidden voices of the research participants when deriving meaning from contexts to which traditional ethnography would not afford equal importance. Phenomenologists are concerned especially with how people comprehend their own social world, and how they describe their experiences in reference to context (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995). This thereby empowers the researcher and participants to contribute to the research. Traditional ethnography has been criticised for dwelling on researchers' observations at a fixed time and space, with insufficient consideration for either the past or the future: "phenomenological ethnography interrogates the approach of simply studying a particular group of people in a particular place at a particular time" (Gabay, 2015, p. 8). Therefore, inviting the contributions of research participants who have experienced the past and are involved in planning for the future should make the study more holistic. Just as Pring (2015, p. 101) claims, "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" in order to surpass superficial understandings of phenomena and encompass alternative possibilities.

Data and methodological triangulation are defined by Lincoln and Denzin (2011) as two of the four basic instruments of triangulation in social research, intended to ensure research is both ethnographic and phenomenological, and enriched by data comprising a naturalistic narrative, and leading to an understanding of culture and its actors both contextually and historically. Hermeneutic phenomenology, which differs from a structured data analysis of transcendental phenomenology (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994), "cannot be fitted to a rule book, an interpretive schema, a set of steps, or a systematic set of procedures" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 31), as it could fail to capture the subtlety and complexity of human consciousness. Therefore, merging phenomenology into ethnography would not alter the procedures for doing ethnography, it would just add to the research by requiring one or two methods, such as repetitive and in-depth unstructured interviews and analysis of the participants' personal teaching blogs; although all the results would be pooled together and discussed thematically.

In a current study of teachers transiting from teaching EGP to EAP, the data benefited from combining both ethnography and phenomenology to contribute to

the research rationale. The ethnographic data derived from participating and observing the EAP teachers' teaching and their contexts complemented previous decontextualised studies in EAP teacher development; while the phenomenological data came from tracing the EAP teachers' professional experiences in a demographic and historical manner, seeking an understanding of their transition more metaphysically and personally, rather than from the onlookers' angles. This explains how phenomenological ethnography is utilised in context.

## 3.4 Fieldwork Methods

### 3.4.1 *Participant and Non-participant Observations*

Participant observation can be regarded as the foundation of ethnography as Christensen (2011) implied; the researcher enters the field and deduces information independently. For example, Harper (2012, 2016) ate, slept, and worked with homeless people in the US to interpret the status quo of that subculture, representing a model of participant observation, and Patrick (2013), a former teacher, assumed the role of a member of a gang in Glasgow, attending gangster gatherings and participating in conversations and other activities to understand them. As is the case with espionage, without entering and becoming a participant in the field, an ethnographer will not be able to gain an insider's view.

In this study, the researcher followed and sometimes participated in EAP teachers' daily activities, both online and off-line. Apart from the already established relationships with EAP teachers, which were maintained by frequently seeing and speaking with them, the researcher was invited to join a WeChat (a social media app) friends list and participate in chat rooms (designed for EAP teachers to communicate with each other and with their students). This made it possible to support observation of some of the arguments and opinions shared about EAP. Becoming a member of the EAP community enabled the researcher to contribute new ideas and to comment on the topics introduced. Furthermore, to connect with some EAP teachers, the researcher was invited into classrooms to interact with students to tutor some of them. This made the researcher more likely to gain an insider's perspective of the teachers' views and the problems they encounter.

Non-participant classroom observation was also used. The data obtained from both the programme setting (such as the way in which the teacher arranges classroom activities and the feedback and instructions given to students) and the human setting (such as students' genuine reactions to the EAP lesson) (Morrison, 1993).

### ***3.4.2 Ethnographic and Phenomenological Interviews***

Discussing the style of ethnographic interviews, Hammond and Wellington (2012, p. 104) stated that, “Ethnographers are long familiar with less formal, more conversational styles of interviewing”. This type of interview requires ethnographers to start short and seemingly casual conversations with research participants and researchers, showing interest in the behaviour of the participants, in order to explore a more contextual understanding (Ogden & Roulon, 2009). This type of interview approach benefits the current study, as it means when the researcher identifies an interesting teaching practice among EAP teachers, further explanation can then be sought from the teachers, and if the researcher notices members’ ideas or activities then a further explanation can be provided by insiders.

However, such interviews are bound up with naturalistic context and ideas can be too quick to develop; therefore, Maggs-Rapport (2000) commented that only focusing on things that happen in a particular space and time can prove inadequate to understand the research participants at the historical and metaphysical level. Thus, the current research also employed decontextualised unstructured interviews, or phenomenological interviews to repeatedly and insightfully enquire about the research participants’ (EAP teachers) experiences during their pedagogical transition, and the factors that influence the participants’ lived experiences (Creswell, 2013).

In unstructured interviews, no interview guides or lists of questions are prepared; and interviews can sometimes originate from a single preliminary question or brief reference to a topic. The flow and quality of the interview are all determined by the closeness of the relationship between the two parties and the social skills of the interviewers (Hammond & Wellington, 2012). Held in a casual environment, unstructured interviews were beneficial for the proposed study, because teachers were more open and relaxed in some informal encounters, such as in cafés or restaurants; the more often the researcher met with individuals in casual settings, the lower they set their mental barriers, and the greater the likelihood that their true feelings were revealed, illustrating a key benefit of prolonged engagement in the field; the research participants were able to quickly voice their opinions. Not all the interviews in this study were face-to-face, and social media apps were used to carry out follow-up interviews with teachers and students when face-to-face interactions were impossible.

### ***3.4.3 Researcher as Tool: Etic and Emic***

In ethnography and phenomenology, the researcher should position himself or herself to act as a useful research tool to generate knowledge; because, as Christensen (2011) emphasised, the interpersonal skills and sociability of the researcher to a large extent determine the quality of an ethnography research. In other words, the extent to which the research participants see the ethnographer as one of their “peers” influences their behaviour and determines the quality of the ethnographic data obtained by the

researcher (Christensen, 1999). This is why ethnographers negotiate their possible identities/identity from the perspective of their participants (as stated by Christensen, 1999; Liang, 2015).

Conversely, from the participants' perspective, the ethnographer's empathy as a participant is vital (Nadia, 2013). In the case of Nadia (2013), who was sometimes also a participant in the online innovative learning space communities under investigation, this involved sharing the feelings and experiences of others. Establishing the author's empathy or personal feelings and experiences as an involved member also contributed to the cultural interpretation.

Therefore, in the current study, to gain access to and understand the EAP teacher community from the inside, an intimacy with EAP teachers (Scheper-Hughes, 1992) was established based on interpersonal relationships between the author and EAP teachers. The researcher was furthermore directly involved with some of the participant teachers' EAP activities.

Emic (insiders) and etic (outsiders) perspectives are equally important for the current study. According to Berry (1999), researchers should not aim to be exclusively insiders emic or etic. Employing common sense, when conducting a top-down approach the etic perspective "echoes an outsider's presentation of reality" and "conforms with the scientific approach to research pertaining to an objective reality... and use logical scientific analysis... to explain social phenomena" (Riazi, 2016, p. 3007). In contrast, emic perspectives are most useful with a bottom-up approach, which attempts to understand social phenomena from the viewpoint of insiders. This fits with an ethnographic directive to researchers to "address the questions that are important to the participants' lives so that they can relate themselves to the questions and find values in discussing them... (and) to learn the special terms and words (emic terms) they use... (which) may not be used and accessible elsewhere" (Riazi, 2016, p. 2917). Thus, the contradiction between etic and emic characterises the conflicted relationship presents in positivist and interpretivist research, and explains why many scholars claim ethnographic research should only be performed by insiders.

However, for an ethnographer to be wholly an insider is impossible according to Wolcott (1999, p. 150), who observes, "by definition, the ethnographer was always an outsider for whom virtually everything could be regarded as 'different'". This is because, in many settings, ethnographers are frequently attempting to infiltrate an unknown discourse to which they do not originally belong. Moreover, perception of the ethnographer as an outsider is unavoidable for research participants. In the case of this study, as the author is not a colleague of the EAP teachers in Shanghai who comprise the research participants, thus, it is inevitable that the target group's culture would inevitably blend with my preconceptions and interpretations. Similarly, as "ethnography [is] grounded in the study of differences" (Wolcott, 1999, p. 151), being completely immersed into the insiders' view with no access to the outsiders' view, would not be a holistic way in which to understand the target culture. To remedy this, Rogoff (2003) suggests a "derived" etic approach, which welcomes cross-cultural comparison and contextual interpretations; thus, Hammond and Wellington (2012, p. 72) claim that a single account can include both perspectives, as long as "the etic

may be, and frequently is, developed from emic accounts, though emic accounts may be valued in their own right”.

Thus, in the current study, potential preconceptions and the experience of entering the field were acknowledged as components of positionality, not only symbolising how the researcher differed from real emic research participants, but also describing how preconceptions inform knowledge production. The researcher’s roles in the different contexts presented by each case further revealed how the researcher’s identity, regardless of whether etic or emic, influences data production. When taking on an emic identity, the researcher sometimes directly participated in the teaching and communication of EAP to students; whereas, his etic identity emerged because, as a researcher from Hong Kong, the investigated teachers and students never mistook him for their peers. Therefore, this research was both etic and emic in character, making it possible to formulate broader holistic findings.

### **3.4.4 Documentary Analysis**

The current study applied documentary analysis to investigate the relevant textbooks, PowerPoint slides, preparation of materials for classroom activities, documents describing teachers’ communication, teachers’ blended EAP teaching materials, personal online blogs on EAP teachers’ experiences, feedback on students’ assignments, and their published materials regarding EFL or EAP, in order to establish the content covered proportional to the themes featuring EAP teachers. By definition, documentary analysis is “concerned with the problems of selection and evaluation of evidence” (Robson, 2011, p. 187), which “has as its central feature an inscribed text” (Scott, 1990, p. 5). Some teachers’ EAP teaching experiences were recorded along with their emotional and metaphysical responses in personal diaries, which can be analysed as exemplifying the participants’ awareness of their own experiences in pedagogical transition. This feature of phenomenological research makes it possible to understand insiders’ interpretations of their contextual experiences (Maggs-Rapport, 2000).

## **3.5 Positionality and Reflexivity**

Interpretivism is a paradigm that requires acknowledgement of research as value-laden (Hammond & Wellington, 2012) and knowledge as situated (Thomas, 2011). Positionality and reflexivity are employed as approaches to reflect this. Positionality is an explanatory process that involves unpicking the researchers’ background, assumptions, values, and intentions when conducting a study, to justify how identity might influence the research itself (Hammond & Wellington, 2012). In this study, positionality, combined with the author’s impetus when doing the research and accounting for the authors’ field experience is described. In order to avoid what

Hammond and Wellington (2012) described as the narcissistic and self-indulgent potential of positionality, the researcher only offers examples of field experience rather than narrating his life history, and frequently referring to the research aims. Thus, positionality confirms the researcher’s “lens”, being bound with his own background assumptions; whereas reflexivity is a specific “snapshot”, as seen through a “lens”.

More specifically, reflexivity is the practice of positionality, or the researchers’ interpretation of how their own values influence concrete research processes and outcomes (Hammond & Wellington, 2012; Riazi, 2016) (see Fig. 3.2).

Another explanation afforded by Rose (2001, p. 130) is that “reflexivity is an attempt to resist the universalising claims of academic knowledge and to insist that academic knowledge like all other knowledge, is situate and partial”. Harper (2012) compares this to reflexive filmmaking; demonstrating to audiences the processes of making a film and notifying the audience that the film is fiction rather than reality. Ethnography was once marginalised as “not scientific and not objective” and viewed as an over-indulgence in social research (Harper, 2012). However, as Yin (2014) argues, research is never wholly objective. On the creation of the term reflexivity to recognise the researchers’ subjectivity, ethnography is finally revived, but sarcastically. In ethnography, a practice exists in which the researcher admits his/her values relating to the research; formerly this was not termed reflexivity (Harper, 2012).

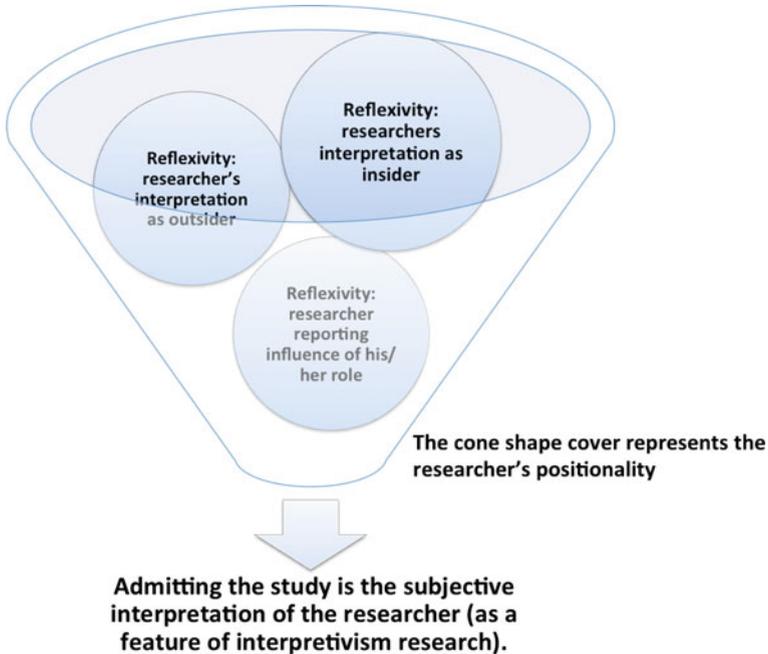


Fig. 3.2 The relationship between positionality and reflexivity

Reflexivity as currently understood has two subdivisions, objectivist and epistemological reflexivity; the former attempts to objectively bracket the researchers' influence on participants. It is frequently used in transcendental phenomenology; while the latter confirms the researchers' epistemology when co-constructing research outcomes that are suitable for hermeneutic phenomenology (Creswell, 2013; Riazi, 2016).

In practice, reflexivity means accepting a stakeholder's interaction is a component of the research (Finlay, 1998). For example, Mazzoli Smith and Campbell (2012), who studied gifted children in working-class families in northern England, found that during each interview, the couples being interviewed would look at each other, intending to obtain the other's support before or while speaking. They sometimes also complemented the other if they did not want to lose the researcher's esteem, which indicated that their answers were partially constructed under the influence of the presence of the researchers and the other stakeholders. When Liang (2015) researched Cantonese speaking among pupils and their associated identity, some of the pupils with parents from places other than Canton chose not to speak their mind when interviewed, to save face with the other (Cantonese) participants and Liang herself (who is Cantonese).

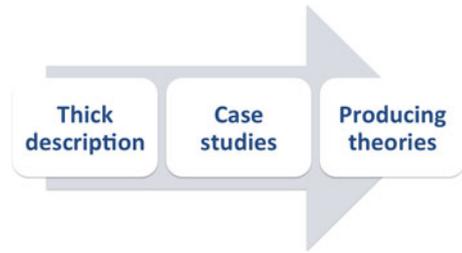
Considering the above, careful attention was paid throughout this research to the effects of context, and other influential non-verbal symbols on the participants (e.g. how you felt; how others told you they felt; background murmurs; and, misunderstandings that were later clarified). These potential influences will be examined from a narrative viewpoint, which also works to report the researchers' personal contribution to the findings (O'Reilly, 2008, p. 195). Meanwhile, as advised by Liang (2015) and Harper (2016), the researchers' role is also negotiated in respect of the participants' points of view. As Pink (2003, p. 187) argues, "reflexivity should be integrated fully into processes of fieldwork and visual or written representation in ways that do not simply explain the researcher's approach but reveal the very processes by which the positioning of researcher and informant were constituted and through which knowledge was produced during the fieldwork".

### 3.6 Plan for Data Analysis and Organisation

In this study, the data is analysed and organised into three stages, as shown in the illustration below (Fig. 3.3). In the first stage of the data analysis, the researcher describes the context of the field, and uses a first person angle to describe how he gained access to EAP teacher communities in Shanghai, as well as his encounters and experiences of meeting people when conducting fieldwork. This contributes to a thick description of the setting, to establish the background to the story and the researcher's positionality.

At the second stage, the researcher carefully examines data from multiple sources for each teacher; for example, interviews, observations, and documents from both the etic and emic view. The researcher concludes by elaborating key concepts featuring

**Fig. 3.3** The data analysis process



different aspects of the teachers' experiences of EAP. At the third stage, all the concepts derived from each EAP teacher, in conjunction with some excerpts from thick descriptions of the researchers' other experiences and feelings are integrated and categorised relative to the research questions, in order to produce an anthropological interpretation of the EAP teachers' culture in transition in Shanghai.

### ***3.6.1 Thick Description: The First Layer of Data***

A so-called thick description, is one in which, as described by Hammond and Wellington (2012, p. 61) "a detailed account of an aspect of human behaviour through reference to the context in take place". Narrative, as shown by its literal meaning, is a form of storytelling, demonstrating "the way participants make meaning of the events that shape the way, in which they have lived their lives" (Hammond & Wellington, 2012, p. 120), or how the hero/heroine in the story understands their own life. In the ethnographic tradition, there is a tradition of analysis that is enriched by thick description and narrative. O'Reilly (2008) states that this allows the data to have its own voice.

Scott (1985) emphasises the purpose of such links between thick descriptions and data analysis in ethnography as intended to inform readers. However, O'Reilly's (2008) interpretation is somewhat easier to follow. He references two of his former students' ethnographic research. Firstly, Frederick, who investigated the experiences of two males who gave up their jobs to look after their children full-time and narrated two stories about them. Frederick carried out a thematic analysis based on hands-on fieldwork and later found the life details informing the narratives could (one was a single parent and the other had a wife who worked full-time) mirror the thematic findings well (that men felt guilty staying at home doing nothing when women were working hard outside the home). Secondly, Claire carried out ethnographic fieldwork with fishermen in a village for over a year; when she started to write her thesis, she was unsure of whether she was being too descriptive when introducing the research field and the people involved within it. In contrast, O'Reilly (2008) reassured her that a thick description of the context and people is a prerequisite to delivering a convincing argument overall. As O'Reilly (2008, p. 203) argues, "What appears to be merely descriptive is actually part of the analysis". In other words, if readers are

not aware of the details relating to the field and other people, they might be less able to comprehend lives and cultural implications that are outside their experience.

In the current study, the researcher employs a thick description, concretely depicting his experiences of entering the research field to explain how he encountered the research participants. Furthermore, the author describes the transformation of his metaphysical movement throughout the entire research process: ranging from his original perception of the EAP reform in Shanghai and his initial impressions of what EAP teachers were like, to how these perceptions transformed as he became immersed in the field. The author particularly describes his identity as a scholar from Hong Kong in contrast to the EAP teachers in the field. All these descriptions expose to the reader the subjectivity and bias the author used when interpreting the EAP teachers' words and actions.

### ***3.6.2 Multiple Case Studies: The Second Layer of Data***

Multiple case studies explore the uniqueness and complexity of several issues that are related to each other and normally conducted in naturalised environments; a thick description of reflexivity from the researcher's and participants' identity, relationships and their produced influence on data is often discussed (Bassey, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Pring, 2015; Robson, 2011; Stake, 1994; Thomas, 2011). This is similar to the four case studies in the current research, which all begin with a phase, introducing the life history of the teachers, followed by a report of reflexivity, describing how the author interacted with them and how the relationship grew and influenced the knowledge produced, and finally how to outline the perceptions of each character at the end of each case by using thematic analysis, discourse analysis and multimodal discourse analysis.

#### **3.6.2.1 Life Histories**

Life histories as a qualitative data analysis method (Cohen et al., 2011) were used to introduce the research participant teachers, and their general experience of EAP. A primary reason for introducing these teachers was to contextualise the readers with as many thick descriptions as possible, as required by ethnographer experts like O'Reilly (2008). Apart from this, the life history of the participants enriched the research with a more longitudinal eye witness perspective on their experience of the EAP pedagogy transition themselves: life histories could expose "the inner experience of individuals, how they interpret, understand, and define the world around them" (Faraday & Plummer, 1979, p. 776). In other words, the heroes of a saga know most about their experience and themselves. This quality is absent from most social research methods, not only because they have a limited view (Payne and Payne, 2004), but also because most methods tend to ignore the phenomenological emotions and metaphysics of research participants (Pring, 2015). Thus, the researcher collected

clues from interviews with the research participants, examining some materials provided by them, and the hearsay of others while conducting fieldwork to compile a life history of each participant teacher's experience with EAP. Each piece of the history was returned to the teachers for member checking and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2013).

### **3.6.2.2 Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis was used to link verbal interview data with the aspects about each EAP teacher participant. Discourse analysis as a qualitative data analysis technique “of ‘reading’ texts, conversations, and documents...explores the connections between language...and social practices” (Muncie, 2006, p. 2). After the manual transcription of the interviews and ethnographic field notes was completed by the researcher, the transcription was read carefully to extract commonalities to describe the characteristics of each teacher during the pedagogic transition.

Multimodal discourse analysis was also used to analyse the non-verbal data collected from the research participants, such as pictures, screenshots from the internet, and teaching materials related to research in current research. It is an approach that “focuses on how meaning is made through the use of multiple modes of communication as opposed to just language” (Jones, 2013, p. 1). Multimodal data is particularly abundant in this ethnography, because much of the data were obtained through the researcher observing the participants online, and screenshotting some critical moments. Furthermore, the teachers also offered samples of their teaching material, some of which was in the form of pictures.

### **3.6.2.3 Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis was another important data analysis method used to describe each teacher case. It is based on themes, and each theme can describe some features of data. The common stages of a thematic analysis include, e.g., transcribing and inputting materials, developing thematic categories derived either from literature reviews or taking the form of emergent inspiration from the data, and coding of relevant content under each possible category and theme (Sage Research Methods, 2016). In each case, many themes were extracted to describe the characteristics of the teachers, and there are some predefined themes like the teachers' definition of EAP, but the majority of the themes drew on inspiration when interacting with the participant teachers. Thus, the themes in each case were combined to describe the respective teachers transitioning to EAP.

### 3.6.2.4 Producing Theories: The Third Layers of Data

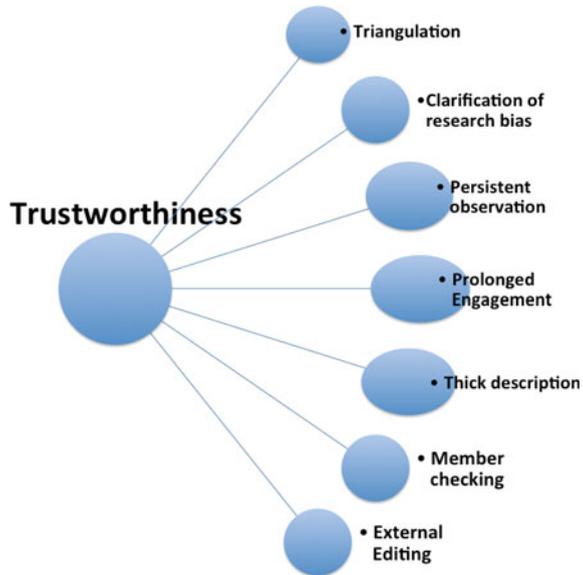
This portion of the data analysis was intended to formulate a discussion chapter to answer the three research questions. In other words, all the previous data was deconstructed, compared and organized by research question. According to Cohen et al. (2011, p. 552), organizing data underneath each research question can provide “relevant data for the exact issue of concern”; it affords a systematic comparison among data from different sources and increases the coherence of the materials (Becker & Geer, 1960) (for example, the researcher used several rounds of interview results, observation, and relevant documents to explore each particular teacher’s circumstance and he also used his ethnographers’ etic-emic-combined vision to compare the phenomenological perspective of the teachers’ as insiders). It also supports cross case comparisons, meaning “examination of ... a collection of cases in order to learn something about a concept, theory, social process, and so on” (Schwandt, 2011, p. 2), in order to summarize the commonalities and difference among the four EAP teachers.

As with other qualitative research, ethnography, although claimed to be a spiral process of data analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), also needs to extract common themes or concepts from the collected data to reveal the hidden meaning associated with the culture under investigation. The formulation of thematic concepts is often written once the author concludes thick description and narratives, and by the matising data, the researcher interprets meaning with “startling facts, themes and patterns (derived from the data), or (and) for inconsistencies which need explaining” (O’Reilly, 2008, p. 205). However, either the researcher or the participants can identify key concepts. In the case of concepts derived from the data, ethnographers base their theories upon them. Theories are composed and integrated by extracting principles from concepts, in order to explain and interpret cultural behaviour and to fulfil the aim of the research questions (O’Reilly, 2008).

## 3.7 Trustworthiness

In interpretivist research, Hartas (2010) suggests using trustworthiness to replace the positivist measures, validity and reliability (Hammond & Wellington, 2012) to ensure the research is rigorous. Creswell (2013, pp. 243–245) recommends a set of approaches to guarantee the trustworthiness of qualitative research, the majority of which are considered in the current ethnography (see Fig. 3.4): “prolonged engagement and persistent observation”, “triangulation”, “clarifying researchers’ bias”, “member checking”, “thick description”, and “external audits”. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation are core requirements when completing an ethnography, as is the clarification of researcher bias, positionality and reflexivity, and a thick description of research field. Member checking is also carried out by sharing the narrative accounts with the research participants and inviting them to check them. External audits, in which supervisors are invited to perform quality

**Fig. 3.4** Approaches to maintaining trustworthiness



controls, are also performed. Triangulation is realised through both methodological and data triangulation, after the philosophical and methodological blending of phenomenological ethnography, as discussed in the preceding chapters.

### 3.8 Generalisability

Generalisability or representativeness is a consideration that frequently arises in criticisms of ethnography (O'Reilly, 2008). As a case study form (Hammond & Wellington, 2012), ethnography faces the same challenges as case study research in terms of its limitations as regards representing a sufficiently representative population (Yin, 2014). As a highly contextualised research methodology, subject to the researchers' interpretation, and aiming to enrich people's awareness of a certain culture, criticism of statistical generalisation is inappropriate (Yin, 2014). However, in contributing to the theories posed, it is indeed generalisable; and is termed analytical generalisation (Yin, 2014). In other words, theories generalised in the current case might allow people to learn lessons and reflect on other contexts. Ethnography is a research method that avoids brining preconceptions into the research arena, including into the research design (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Representativeness is essential, beginning with the sampling method. However, regardless of what kind of sampling is performed (i.e. predefining sample size, age group, genders, work experiences, etc.), it is likely to reflect somewhat the assumptions or theories associated with the research forms. Such idea is inconsistent with the naturalness of ethnography

(Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Similarly, before entering into the field, it is also impossible to predict whom the researcher might meet, as ethnography by nature is a sequential or spiral approach (O'Reilly, 2008).

### 3.9 Ethical Concerns

The necessary written confirmation was attained from the Shanghai EAP teachers themselves. This followed distribution of letters seeking informed consent (following gatekeepers to institutes recognising HKIED, now EdUHK) from the relevant departments and research participants (disseminating information concerning the research aims and processes), expressing the participants' rights to participate voluntarily and withdraw at any time, and any benefits and potential dangers (none are foreseen) of the research. The names of the participants and institutions were coded for anonymity, and their answers secured on a password-protected personal computer, in order to ensure their confidentiality.

### 3.10 Summary

Influenced by interpretivism, the current research adopted a phenomenological ethnographic methodology. When completing the fieldwork, ethnographic and phenomenological interviews, participant and non-participant observations were used to provide the etic and the emic perspectives of the teacher cohort. Additionally, a documentary analysis of teachers' teaching materials, lesson preparation materials, and some of the teachers' diaries were carefully integrated into the rest of the data. The researchers' reports regarding reflexivity and positionality were mentioned in order to corroborate the ethnographic data. The collected data was also analysed in a three-layered process, a thick description, case studies teachers, and thematic analysis. Trustworthiness was guaranteed via a "prolonged engagement and persistent observation", "triangulation", "clarifying researchers' bias", "member checking", "thick description", and "external audits". Generalisability was then maintained analytically.

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# Chapter 4

## Findings



### 4.1 Introduction

As O'Reilly (2008, p. 203) argues, "What appears to be merely descriptive is actually part of the (ethnographic) analysis". This chapter commences with a thick description of the research field (the city in which the research was conducted, and the three universities at which the research participants are based). A detailed description of the author's positionality or how the researcher as ethnographer gradually approached and familiarised himself with the field is provided and examples of the reflexivity practices engaged in are given. Ethnography requires acknowledgement of research as value-laden (Hammond & Wellington, 2012) and knowledge as situated (Thomas, 2011). Positionality and reflexivity are employed as approaches to reflect this; in another word, the function of positionality and reflexivity is to let the readers use the researcher's eyes and see the current study in the researcher's view. The four cases involve EGP teachers transiting to teaching EAP, each of which begins with a narrative elaborating the life history of the teacher, and continues with the author's interactions with them (demonstrating how his position and relationship to them developed and influenced the data production). Concepts and themes extracted from each case were also listed and analysed.

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Some of the findings and discussion were reused by the same author in his two other journal publications with essence different from the monograph. They are Li and Wang (2018) and Li (2019). Li and Wang (2018) is an article named "An Ethnographic Exploration of Adopting Project-Based Learning in Teaching English for Academic Purposes", published in *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, Vol 15, No 2, 2018. It not only uses some of the data from the monograph but also includes new data and theoretical frameworks. Li and Wang (2018) can be accessed at <http://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/v15n22018/li.pdf>. The journal is under the license of CC BY-NC 4.0.

Li (2019) is an article named "Constant self-initiated teacher change, factors, and mechanism: A narrative inquiry" published in *Cogent Education*, Vol 6, 2019, which can be accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2019.1588089>. This article uses a case study from the monograph and gives new interpretation regarding teacher change. Cogent Education holds the license of CC BY-NC 4.0.

## 4.2 Thick Description

### 4.2.1 *Field Context*

Shanghai is a municipality in China termed the “Oriental Manhattan”, experiencing a period of metamorphosis. As the economic, financial, information technology, and cultural centre in China, Shanghai had a population of 24 million in 2014 (14/Feb/2017, [http://www.geohive.com/earth/cy\\_notagg.aspx](http://www.geohive.com/earth/cy_notagg.aspx)). It is an internationally recognised global financial centre (Yeandle, Mainelli, & Berendt, 2005). Shanghai is also an important centre for higher education in China, with more than 70 universities, 30 of which are nationally celebrated.

University A specialises in commercial, finance, management, economy and foreign language studies. It has an exceptionally international outlook and it recruits overseas students. To date, the students at university A have been given multiple opportunities to participate in studying abroad programmes; the majority of its student body is from Shanghai. EAP courses are taught by college English teachers in the Business English Department, and EAP pedagogy takes the form of project-based learning. All newly recruited students are tested and grouped into three levels: A, B and C, and then only students at the first two levels study EAP.

University B is a polytechnic-oriented comprehensive university, listed among the top 50 universities in China, and between 400 and 500 in the 2015 Times World University Rankings. It is managed directly by the education ministry and its history dates back to the 1950s. The university does not officially recommend EAP; however, some teachers advocated EAP reform under the instruction of the Shanghai education bureau. University C is a practice-based industry-oriented public university managed by the Shanghai education bureau. EAP reform is implemented there with the support of the university.

### 4.2.2 *Positionality of the Author as a Researcher Entering the Field: Summary of Field Notes*

Ethnographic fieldwork and writing take a long time. They depend on intimate ties and attachments, and they entail a good deal of travelling (Scheper-Hughes, 1992, p. 534).

Befitting the nature of positionality, this section provides a first-person account of the researcher’s relationship to the field of study.

I first heard about the Shanghai EAP reform from my roommate, Yixuan, with whom I had studied for the same major at Edinburgh University in the UK. At that time, it was my second month after returning to China having completed my MA at Warwick University. I called Yixuan, who had just attained a lecturer post at University C. When I asked about his current situation, he told me that his university was participating in the Shanghai EAP reform and so in the process of making

changes to the CET course. As a student who had undergone many difficulties with academic English, I was excited when hearing that universities in China had started to pay attention to EAP. I was delighted and eager to learn more about this. I also realised the Shanghai EAP reform could become my research topic.

In early April 2014, I was offered a Ph.D. position by The Hong Kong Institute of Education, now The Education University of Hong Kong. I chose to investigate students' academic writing in Shanghai's EAP reform, at which point I had no resources with which to conduct my study but Yixuan, my old friend. Thus, I started to connect with people in my telephone address book, particularly searching for those teaching English in universities.

After some searching, I connected with Michael, a friend I had once studied with at the University of Birmingham. He is the head of department in college English at a key university in Shaanxi province. When I asked him whether his university was also implementing a similar EAP reform to that described by Yixuan, he said yes and encouraged me to observe his class. I booked my flight ticket to Xi'an and went directly to Michael's university. Michael was very hospitable and gave me the entire set of textbooks his university uses, arranging for me to listen to his lessons, introducing me to his students and arranging for me to meet the Associate Dean of the foreign language college to discuss my research, and inviting me to audit the meetings his colleagues held regarding the course reform.

When observing Michael's teaching, I noticed that his students' English proficiency was very poor, at times Michael even had to use full Chinese to teach and interact, and many of the students were poorly motivated, with some even reading books unrelated to the lesson in class. Michael allowed me to question several cohorts of his students and I asked them how many were planning to pursue further education. To my surprise, only two–three out of the seventy–eighty students responded affirmatively. This discovery led me to start worrying about the feasibility and benefits of teaching these newly enrolled college students about academic English and research.

Later, while attending Michael and his colleagues' meeting, I witnessed a very loud quarrel as the teachers were feeling both overloaded and confused about the new reform. Coordination among teachers, the registry and other departments was chaotic, and even the classroom numbers were too few. However, during my conversation with the Associate Dean, he told me the university was not implementing the EAP reform as this was just for the universities in Shanghai. My visit to Xi'an seemed to have been wasted, although I had acquired a lot of information from it. I felt the Shanghai EAP reform might have similar symptoms. I also felt that if students' English proficiency in Shanghai is as low as those in Michael's class, it is unlikely that significant changes in their writing will be observable in a short timeframe, and my Ph.D. study period is very limited. Therefore, I decided to sway my attention away from students' academic writing, as noted in my first fieldwork entry.

After returning to Hong Kong, I reported my experience and reflections to my supervisor. Before making another visit, I, therefore, chose to read materials about language policy and to read the printed policy concerning the Shanghai EAP reform carefully, to see whether I needed to employ it in future research. At the start of Nov

2014, the third month of my Ph.D. studies, I booked a train to Shanghai with the intention of speaking to Yixuan in person to see what kind of research I could do in Shanghai.

On the train, I kept writing down ideas and reading reflections until I arrived at Shanghai station. I met Yixuan at his wedding, helping him to take charge of the chorus and using appropriate moments to ask his opinions about the EAP reform. At the wedding, I also met other colleagues of Yixuan, both of whom gave me their opinions. They both expressed their objections to the reform, in particular citing their students' unsatisfactory English proficiency and confused future career paths and the unsuitability of the reform to the situation in China, which was thought-provoking for me. However, they had not taught EAP at their universities, they were teaching other English courses instead. Nevertheless, in view of their opinions, I urged Yixuan to introduce to me teachers directly responsible for teaching EAP at his university. Just one day before I left Shanghai, Yixuan introduced me to Rui. I invited her to lunch and casually asked her some questions about EAP; however, the meeting was overly short and she seemed very careful when talking to me and refused to let me visit her class for my research. After the meeting, I made some rough records on my laptop, but I felt I did not quite understand the relationship between Rui's experience of EAP teaching, and the data presented in the academic sources I had been reading. However, at least I now knew a teacher teaching EAP, and with some hope and trepidation, I concluded my first academic visit to Shanghai.

Upon my return to Hong Kong, I felt that maybe my knowledge of EAP had been too limited to the investigations of language issues, resulting in an incomplete understanding of other EAP teachers' epistemology. Thus, I started to expand my reading selection, moving from updated EAP materials to philosophy and education theories. Leading up to my second academic visit to Shanghai, I remained in regular contact with Rui, and during the interval, I linked my reading with the teachers' opinions of EAP and my own reflections, which I thought might be useful for my research. My second academic trip to Shanghai was in February 2015, after the winter vacation. I took some of my writings to Yixuan and Rui, intending to discover their ideas about my new understanding and to learn about the EAP pedagogy being implemented. We all met in a Starbucks, and after several months of contact, Rui was a little more familiar and relaxed with me and so shared some of her ideas about the current EAP reform. However, I started to puzzle over the relationship between my designed EAP pedagogy and the contexts in which the reform was being implemented in Shanghai. With many questions remaining, I once more returned to Hong Kong.

In the following months, I continued discussing my thoughts with my supervisors and peers and reading literature on EAP. I decided to contact the Shanghai EAP policymaker by email. I explained in the email who I was and that I would like to investigate the reform; fortunately, he replied expressing a willingness to see me in person. I booked another train ticket to Shanghai.

It was beginning of July of 2015, when I arrived in Shanghai, I took a taxi for the hour-long ride to Fu Dan University where the policymaker, Cai, was located. I gave him a present I had carefully chosen in Hong Kong, and we discussed the current reform and our different ideas about EAP. From the conversation, I realised

his knowledge of EAP pedagogy was old-fashioned, and began to understand the reasons why I had sometimes had difficulty comprehending what Rui had told me about the EAP reform guideline. Cai gave me some materials and told me I was welcome to discuss my research plan with him in the coming semester.

Attaining the support of a higher level individual reassured me and I began to sense a pathway opening up for me. I thought that with Cai's help I would not only be able to access EAP teachers and students, but also see how the curriculum functioned at different universities. I redrafted an entire research proposal, aiming to compare EAP teaching at different EAP participant universities. After sending the proposal to my supervisor at the beginning of October 2015, I decided to discuss my intentions with Cai in order to make sure my research plan could go ahead. However, when I once again sat beside him, he persuaded me to change my Ph.D. objective once again, asking me to help design an EAP test so he could assess Shanghai students, otherwise he would not be able to help me. Later in the discussion, no matter how hard I tried to explain the potential significance of my research to the Shanghai EAP reform and the possibility of introducing an effective EAP pedagogy subsequently, he rejected my suggestions out of hand.

I knew I could not rely entirely on Cai anymore, I decided to use my other human resources to connect teachers teaching EAP under the reform. At that time, I made telephone calls, and sent messages to many old friends working in universities in Shanghai, hoping they could introduce some clues to me. However, none of my friends knew anyone involved in the EAP reform in Shanghai. I felt cornered, so to help me, my mother contacted a friend named Z (pseudonym) who was working as a university Chancellor in Beijing, and had some relationship to the Chinese education system.

I bought a train ticket and travelled to Beijing to meet Z. On the train, I was unsure that these family connections would help me contact teachers. The next afternoon, I met Z in her office, and as the top person at the university, she was busy. She spared ten minutes to catch up with me, and told me she had arranged the department's Dean of English to connect professors in Shanghai for me, and passed me a list of phone numbers for all the recommended professors, she comforted me for having the resilience to keep studying and sent her best regards to my mother. On the way back to the hotel, I texted all the listed professors politely and decided to go directly to Shanghai to wait in case some of them wanted to see me in person.

Arriving in Shanghai, I devised a full schedule to see the different professors. I saw all the professors recommended by Z across Shanghai, and one of them (Professor Ella from university A) was luckily the Associate Dean on the committee for the Shanghai EAP reform. With Ella's help, over the next three weeks, I established initial contact with some EAP teachers directly, finally setting foot in the field. In order to make sure what kind of research I wanted the teachers to help me with, I decided to return to Hong Kong to share my experiences and discuss the possibilities for my research. Weighing the resources, I could access, and after attaining the permission of my supervisory panel, I decided to look at the EAP teachers' EAP knowledge and teaching. Preparing a rough research direction, I sent it to Prof. Ella

for further agreement, and with the promise of her support, I bought another train ticket for Shanghai in what was already the middle of November.

This was my sixth academic visit to Shanghai, having established cooperation with several EAP teachers, including Fielding and Lisa. In the coming two months, I almost packed my schedule full in order to fit into the investigated teachers' timetables. On this field trip, I got to know some EAP teachers from other universities in Shanghai, and even travelled to other cities to meet them at EAP conferences.

In an EAP conference in Suzhou, I met Bluewitch from University B in Shanghai. In the following days, in my communications with Bluewitch, no matter in person or online, I found she and her colleagues were fighters for the EAP reform. I started to become interested in not only the EAP teachers' pedagogy and understanding of EAP, but also in the experiences they had in transiting to EAP. Balancing all the data I had acquired, I suddenly found over the years since 2014, I had been immersed in the environment of EAP reform, and most of the data was generally ethnographic and phenomenological. When I finished this academic trip, I proactively put my research into a systematic research proposal, which was approved by my supervisor panel and examiners. Everything was then on track. In the year after my confirmation for Ph.D. candidature, I collected ethnographic data daily online from WeChat, and conducted another two field trips to Shanghai to complete the data analysis, sometimes as a participant and sometimes as an observer.

To summarise, the field trip to Shanghai to observe and interact with EAP teachers spanned from 2014 to the end of 2016, in those two years I took one trip to Xi'an, one trip to Beijing, one trip to Suzhou, and eight journeys to Shanghai, connecting with whoever I could to get closer to the EAP teachers and establish relationships. What I experienced, or my positionality, to different extents had formulated my interpretation of the field; a thick description of such experiences will thus help readers to contextualise the study and crystallise my value and "lens". Though Hammond and Wellington (2012) warned such reports of positionality might appear narcissistic and self-indulgent, it is better to include them than not, because:

With ethnographic research, we start by imparting some descriptive findings. We might want to give...some storytelling...what appears to be merely descriptive is actually part of the analysis...descriptions enrich ethnographies, providing crucial background information. (O'Reilly, 2008, p. 203–204)

In terms of reward, I met the teachers below and by interacting with them, I gradually joined their community as variously an EAP teacher, helper and/or an EAP scholar. Most importantly, these experiences facilitated the crystallization of my understanding of the EAP reform in Shanghai and the development of four ethnographic case studies as shown below.

## 4.3 Case Study 1: Fielding

### 4.3.1 *Life History of Fielding*

Born in the early 1980s, when China had just started its Opening-up policy, Fielding always held different opinions from his peers about learning English. Fielding's statement: "I don't believe rote remembering vocabulary would make one study English well" (Fielding interview 1), questioning the approach taken by thousands of Chinese students learning English. Learners traditionally memorised huge amounts of vocabulary, and recited recognisable grammatical patterns. However, Fielding assured his readers, claiming, "I believe English can be learned from doing as John Dewey suggests" (Fielding interview 1).

This story dates back to the Shanghai of twenty years ago, when there were few automobiles on the streets, no tall towering buildings, no internet, no air pollution, few commercial advertisements regarding English language training and not many foreign visitors. Children at that time had not started learning English at a young age. Fielding started learning English only in his final year of primary school at the age of 11.

At that time, English textbooks were written and edited by the education bureau, and their content was closely associated with the status quo in China and the lives of Chinese students. Few students perceived the relevance of learning English, although Fielding was an enthusiastic student of it and studied hard. When he later became an English lecturer at university, he continued to express gratitude towards these textbooks for enhancing his grammatical foundation, although his knowledge of English based upon them was not satisfactory in his own opinion.

Upon admission to secondary school, Fielding learned from friends that the series, *New Concepts English*, published by Longman had been imported into China. He was also aware that a training school had begun teaching using these textbooks, and so he joined without hesitation. *New Concept English* triggered a new wave of English learning in China, becoming a compulsory course at many training centres in China. Fielding skipped the first book, due to good English proficiency and started learning directly from the second book; impressed by its interesting articles and the clipped Received Pronunciation accents on the audiotapes.

Within a year, Fielding finished the second book, from which he gleaned a lot of knowledge that he would otherwise not have acquired from existing school textbooks. During the three years at higher secondary school, while preparing for Gaokao (National College Entrance Exams in China), he taught himself a third book, *New Concept English*. Later he was recruited into the East China Normal University, majoring in English literature.

Unlike the students recruited from places outside Shanghai, many received a weaker English education in their hometowns. Thus, as Fielding had a better foundation of English he quickly stood out among his peers. However, his excellence did not make him arrogant; he modestly followed his teachers in each class and felt empathetic for his classmates with social justice in mind: "my roommate is from

Sichuan, majoring English like us, however, his English foundation is weaker, while the assessment for him is unfair” (Fielding interview 1). Fielding realised that problems within the education system meant his roommate was unfairly treated, rather than the English programme itself; therefore, the only solution would be to improve equality in education. By chance, Fielding read a book on education and social justice translated by one of his sisters, and this book enlightened him with theories in education, which later became the focus of his research interests.

In his spare time, while majoring in English literature, Fielding showed less passion for reading classic world literature in English. In contrast, he hunted out a job in local training centres, teaching English to everyone, ranging from young beginners to adults. While teaching, Fielding realised his English dramatically improved, particularly when teaching English grammar. He benefitted considerably from learning through teaching, later coming to understand this in reference to a theory proposed by the American educationist John Dewey: learning by doing. With these experiences in mind, he reinforced the notion of learning English by using and doing, and in the following years, he persisted in his habit of “learning in a random manner”, successfully passed important English tests, including the TEM-8 (Test for English Majors band 8).

After a 4-year study at university, Fielding developed his identity as an English teacher and an educationalist, concentrating not only on furthering his disciplinary knowledge but also on education of students. He completed his BA, writing a dissertation on educational social justice. Following graduation, he began his Master’s studies at the same university, majoring in English literature. His supervisor had a developed research interest in Australian higher education, aligning with his own interests.

During his postgraduate studies, Fielding started reading academic journals pertaining to Australian higher education and the internationalisation of higher education, gradually coming to recognise differences between academic and colloquial English. After graduation, he was recruited by the university he now works into teach English for General Purposes; he has taught using TBLT (Task-based language teaching), and CLT (Communicative Language teaching) pedagogies. After years of sustained effort, he became a head teacher within his department and a teacher trainer. Meanwhile, his concern for international higher education brought to his attention the IELTS exam that non-native speakers of English are expected to take before going to study in Australia. He began to study the exam and then teach it in other training centres. By teaching and relating IELTS to his academic experience, he found the academic part of IELTS was essential for Chinese learners if they were to access international higher education successfully.

Later he was appointed as the director responsible for designing the EAP curriculum at his university. He directed his educational ideals and experiences towards English language teaching and designed an EAP curriculum based on project-based learning. To better facilitate his research and teaching, Fielding applied for a part-time Ph.D. position in the East Normal University. As an EAP teacher, many years of experience of teaching and research made Fielding feel his experiences were

“saliently changing his opinions on learning English... particularly in understanding what should be like in university level English teaching... and understanding students’ characteristics” (Fielding interview 1). Fielding has also been invited by a variety of organisations to demonstrate his EAP teaching.

### **4.3.2 *Getting to Know Fielding***

#### **4.3.2.1 Initially Rejected but Later Accepted My Invitation**

Befitting the nature of reflexivity, this section provides a first-person account of the researcher’s relationship with Fielding. Professor Ella, who is the Dean responsible for the EAP reform at a university of Shanghai, recommended Fielding during my first visit with her. Ella was once Fielding’s mentor and is now a department head; furthermore, they are close friends. Fielding and I did not meet each other until my second visit to Shanghai. However, before that, when I had finished my first grand tour of the research site in Shanghai and returned Hong Kong, Ella had forwarded my general research aim and research questions to Fielding, and stated that Fielding was willing to help. However, a few days later I emailed, texted, and phoned Fielding to double-check his availability but I got no response. As an educational researcher I was following the principle of recruiting voluntary participation, so assuming that Fielding was not happy to participate I decided to look for another participant.

On my second visit to the research site, Ella asked me about Fielding’s reply, and I revealed to her that Fielding did not appear to be available and I was fine with that. However, Ella insisted that Fielding was the right person for me to do this research with and phoned him in front of me, reminding Fielding about the study and his interest in participating. I felt grateful but was also embarrassed by Ella’s hospitality, and was afraid that if the participant did not join on a voluntary basis, my research might violate ethical rules and the results might not be valid. As urged by Ella, I made another phone call to another of Fielding’s mobiles, and in the phone call I rechecked his willingness to act as a research participant. During the call, he confirmed his availability and we made an appointment to meet each other the next day in a restaurant.

The first impression Fielding gave me was of a noble and polite teacher, and he spoke with confidence, firmness, resilience and some pride. Educated at a first-tier university in China, he had already completed his Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees, and is now pursuing his Doctorate part-timely. From the conversation, it emerged that he has broad research interests, including English language teaching methodology, educational studies, higher education, learning theories, cross-cultural communication, discourse analysis and English writing. Currently holding the post of course leader for EAP at his university, he is responsible for work including teacher training, course and student management, and teaching. Compared with myself, he is a more experienced teacher.

During the initial meeting with him in the restaurant, I did not audio-record our conversation, as the purpose was to get to know each other and most importantly win his trust and cooperation. I also gave him a present to thank him for participating in the research. At this time, I showed him the informed consent, so that he would be aware of the need for details and that his name, position, university he is affiliated to, personal opinions and classroom behaviours would not be shared with anyone else including Ella, as I was concerned that his participation had been coerced by Ella. Besides the necessary induction process, I let Fielding dominate the conversation, and we covered topics ranging from personal hobbies to work-related experience.

#### 4.3.2.2 Did Fielding Tell Me What He Really Believes?

After the initial meeting, Fielding agreed to be interviewed in his office. I used a prepared interview guide for the first semi-structured interview, which was similar to the one Ella had forwarded to him, but I added a few questions that had arisen from the content of our talk over lunch. I felt he was very cooperative and open when giving me his answers. When speaking about examples of class practice he gave specific details; in terms of his personal history in learning and doing research, he explicitly related information to his current teaching and spoke with confidence. When I asked for his comment on the EAP course at his university, he was positive and expressed his critical opinions about the EAP reform. During the interview, Fielding started to speak before I finished, and this was beneficial, because it meant he could dominate somewhat and proactively contribute. From the cues mentioned, Fielding demonstrated confidence and authority when elaborating. However, when asked how he defined EAP, he seemed more reserved about his answer, compared with how he answered other questions. Furthermore, Fielding's replies in most cases sounded authoritarian, and he seldom used hedges; however, when asked what he thought about EAP, he used many tentative discourse markers; for example, “吧” (a discourse marker of negotiation in Chinese):

(M: the researcher, A: Fielding)

H How do you define EAP? Do you think....

A I think EAP is a teaching pedagogy, a curriculum, focusing on using English in a particular discourse, a context. Because it is English for academic purposes, it is used more frequently in academia and higher education (Fielding interview 1).

My interpretation of this is that after learning my role as an EAP researcher and someone “expert” in the field, he might be confident about how he teaches and his perception of EAP in Shanghai. However, when asked about his understanding of EAP, he might have felt he was being judged or assessed by an “expert in EAP” or “someone Ella sent to me”. Therefore, he gave me a definition that was quite close to what was reported in the general Shanghai EAP framework (Cai, 2013). It could also be that he was unsure whether his other classroom behaviour or beliefs belong

to EAP concepts; thus, he gave me information relating to a concept he had acquired from somewhere else. Either way, Fielding feared judgment, and so chose to stay in a safe zone. Therefore, I assume that the above definition does not reflect his entire understanding, partially as I am the first outside researcher he has met.

### 4.3.2.3 Uncertain of What Is EAP Himself at the Beginning

As Fielding and I got along with each other from the time of the first interview, I frequently observed his classes and joined in talks with him on his private social media, and we sometimes communicated after class time about topics ranging from tea drinking, to activities within society. Therefore, his trust in me gradually increased. However, although we were able to engage in open communication, I felt that the communication between us was confined to a working relationship rather than being uplifted to that of a personal friend level. Perhaps distance remained between us because of the power relationship I perceived. Due to the difficulties I had encountered accessing EAP teacher discourse, when I met with Ella or Fielding, I was positioning myself as a student seeking help from them, so I demonstrated my humbleness in order to achieve access. In addition, Fielding was a little reluctant to admit me to his innermost thoughts, and as mentioned based on his background, I assumed that he was somewhat proud at that time, and this meant I was kept at a distance from him.

However, after some subsequent incidents, the power relationship between us changed. In a conversation over lunchtime, we spoke about which EAP theories we knew to be applicable to Shanghai. I also casually mentioned a few EAP researchers and some EAP terminologies I had read in books. Ph.D. researchers in EAP recognise EAP concepts as common, so I did not realise the impact on other people when I quoted the academic literacy theories of Lea and Street (2000) to Fielding. However, he seemed to get a glow in his eyes and repeated: “yes, Lea and Street!” (the author’s field note, 25 November 2015). Seemingly, he was surprised to discover the person in front of him was not simply a student as he had once thought, but was actually an EAP expert. After this conversation, he spoke more about his own research to me. Later during the class break, Fielding came up to the seat I usually sat in the classroom, although when I first began observing his class he seldom spoke with me. He spoke about his own research ideas and sought recommendations of books, asking if I had known any materials relating to academic writing and critical thinking. I instantly remembered an essay written by one of my supervisors, and quoted the name and the year of publication to Fielding. Exceeding my expectations, Fielding became even more excited and animated, he said: “I just read his article! He is your supervisor!?! Yulong, we must have more communication in the future!” He then always introduced me to his students, telling them my real identity and encouraging them to cooperate with me. Just before I finished my field trip in 2015, I received a call from Fielding. He said he had just had a meeting with the EAP teachers in his department, and warmly welcomed me to conduct a seminar about EAP for his colleagues. Hearing that, I was very happy but as a gesture of modesty, I said: “I

don't know whether I have sufficient knowledge", but Fielding's reply really assured me that his trust in me was firmer than before: "Even with 1/10 of your ability you could give them a seminar" (the author's field note, 4 December 2015).

From that moment onwards until now, Fielding and I became good friends; we often talk over social media, giving each other new information about research opportunities, and encouraging each other. We even hope to embark on an exchange to study in London in the future.

#### **4.3.2.4 He and His Colleagues Were not Clear About EAP**

In a further unstructured interview over lunch with him, we once again referred to his understanding of EAP and his practice when teaching it. During this conversation, I could feel that he had become more open and less reserved. He abandoned his reserve and directly informed me that he and his colleagues were not clear about EAP themselves: "Because there were no guidelines or a document telling us how we should teach EAP, except for the policymaker of the reform who required that we teach certain academic skills ... we started to think of what academic purposes are and to refer to our own learning experience" (Fielding interview 2). This reply corresponds well with why he gave me a definition of EAP, as this obviously did not represent his understanding.

#### **4.3.2.5 Designing an EAP Course Out of His Own Life Experience and Belief in Education and Language**

Fielding agreed that his experiences had a tremendous influence on his EAP teaching: "First of all, my English teaching background laid a fair foundation ... then my BA and MA were neither on just linguistics but ... on broader education theories" (Fielding interview 1).

#### **4.3.2.6 Fielding as a Believer of Learning by Doing**

According to Fielding's narrative, he has been tremendously influenced by macro theories of education, and as such has been reluctant to position English learning in a micro and technical manner: "I finished my BA in English by submitting a dissertation in educational justice and my MA is also about English but my dissertation is about higher education in Australia" (Fielding interview 1).

For this reason, his focus on EAP teaching always differs from that of "those who study literature or linguistics ... their emphasis might formulate their learning and teaching habit" (Fielding interview 1). On the contrary, "I did not put my focus onto English linguistics and literature" said Fielding, "albeit there exists some micro focus, at the end of days, I am used to looking at education in a wider context... make (ing) me not stress the learning on specific points of language" (Fielding interview 1).

In an excerpt from Fielding's EAP course induction, a sentence reflects his ideology about learning English by using: "We do NOT study English, but we do learn how to USE English" (Fielding class material).

Just as he said he does not stress language learning knowledge, he encourages students to learn EAP by engaging in research projects:

We are using problem-based learning in EAP course. There are tasks under each project. By doing task one after another, students could step by step make progress...we put our emphasis of EAP teaching on guiding them to complete projects, letting them experience it like what John Dewey suggests "experiential learning"; learning by doing... it is our current focus (Fielding interview 1).

Fielding coordinates the EAP course at his university with this belief in mind, and has developed an EAP course characterised by project-based learning (PBL). Recalling an observation made by students at Fielding's university, reporting their entrance into society and conducting research in shops and on the streets in order to complete projects for EAP, I confirmed with Fielding if this reflected his thinking.

Fielding: Yes, I ask them to do research.

Into a real context, do they become real researchers?

Yes, they may still feel they are students in front of the teachers, but when they are outside the campus or they do research on campus, they have become researchers, and everything around them, no matter people or contexts, becomes their research objects and research background, which involves students into realistic contexts. This is what experiential learning emphasises: putting learning in contexts... knowledge will transfer... when classroom learning and out-of-class learning is connected (Fielding interview 2).

Another aspect of learning by doing, as Fielding explains, is letting students learn by trial and error:

During their project making, they would design questionnaires, but at the beginning, they would design it from intuition and life experience, which would be absolutely different from making a questionnaire supported by theories and tools; thus in our classroom interaction, they would challenge each other (and their questionnaire design) and they would know what difficulties they may face in data analysis, validity, and reliability... via such constant review of their own thinking and doing things... their original identity... may clash with the environment or the standards our teachers and students made for them... such clashes gradually assimilate them, and their identity turns... and see everything in the eye and identity of researchers, which is identity construction... they will see things differently before and after the course... we are able to achieve that (Fielding interview 2).

However, Fielding is modifying the pedagogy: "we are reflecting in the process, and we feel just doing projects is still problematic, because the students are learning English; so we are making an equilibrium between them" (Fielding interview 2) (Fig. 4.1).

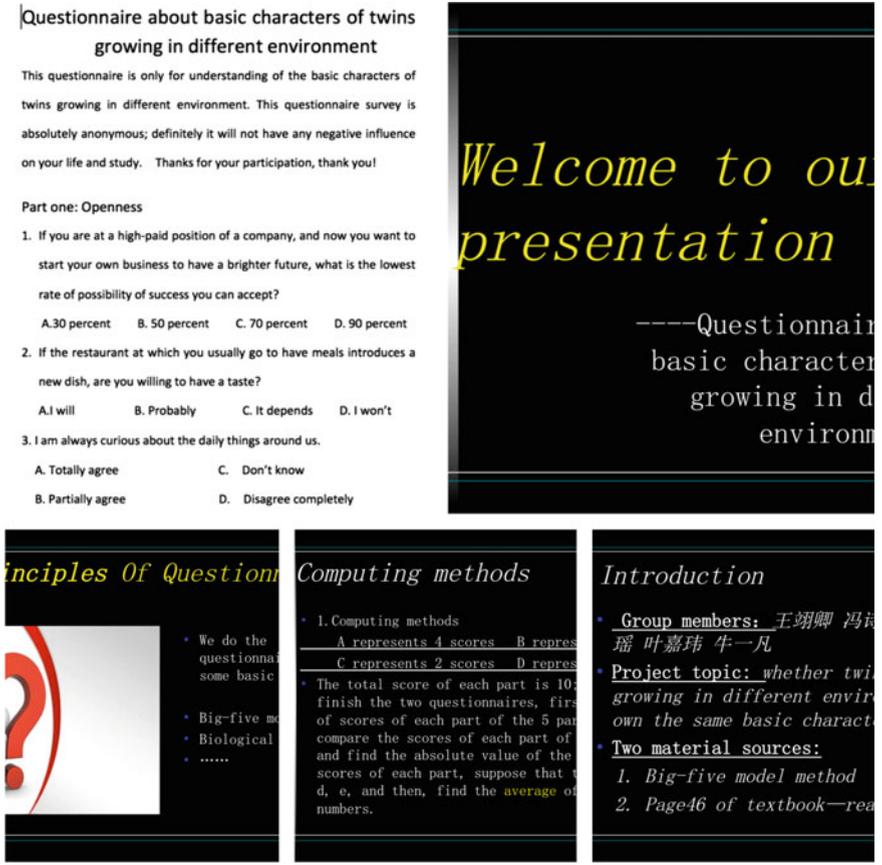


Fig. 4.1 Examples of students' questionnaires and presentations

### 4.3.2.7 Fielding as a Believer in Language Acquisition Theory

Fielding told me, "I assume that language should be acquired" (Fielding interview 1), reflecting his recognition of the importance of language acquisition theory, in order to avoid neglecting student's English language learning in EAP:

Why do we ask them (students) to do projects? Because the most authentic academic English is in academic journals. If they want to do projects, they have to do a literature review, and they will read and input this into their writing, and they may unconsciously imitate (academic English), no matter they are copying or paraphrasing them; we are using such organic integration (PBL) to help them to understand what academic English is like and master it at last... It will become their organic component in their integral literacy. Reading for the project is input, so is watching and listening; constant writing and rewriting is output; when input is with output, language proficiency is forged (Fielding interview 2).

These views were not only applied to his EAP teaching; Fielding had transferred his belief in language acquisition from CLT to teaching EGP. However, Fielding also

pointed out that there is concern among his students and maybe all Chinese English learners: “some students feel unsafe when teacher is not asking them to recite and rote” (Fielding interview 2). Analysing the origin of such insecurities, he related the possible reasons for his years of teaching experience: “having been teaching English writing for years, I found Chinese students’ writing is highly institutionalised by their teachers asking them to rote templates and fixed structure” (Fielding interview 2). “Writing itself is an art form, if such an artistic creation becomes institutionalised, it is problematic ... everybody is different, so what remains in their head should be different after reading” (Fielding interview 2), by pointing out the danger of such institutionalised “security-giving” mode of English teaching, Fielding also explains the reason why language should be acquired: “it (reciting words and phrases) is still an artificial environment, which is inadequate for learners to remember” (Fielding interview 2).

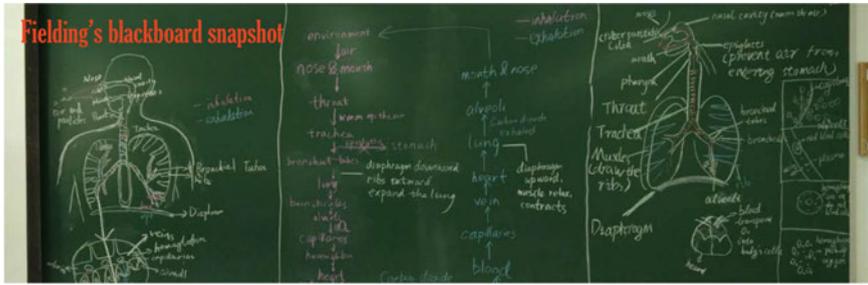
Therefore, he comforts students that express worry: “I suggest students broaden their reading, which could offer them a natural language context, when new words and expressions appear in a natural context, their meaning and implicit meaning will make sense holistically, then the understanding of words may be more accurate” (Fielding interview 2). In this vein, students being taught in a framework based on PBL are broadening their reading.

As mentioned earlier, students learn from the experience of doing project work, as this should be well balanced with how they acquire academic English while preparing for and producing the results of the projects, which characterises their EAP pedagogy. These two activities seem to have been finished mainly by the students themselves, in other words, Fielding’ EAP class concerns students’ autonomy. Moreover, Fielding’s learning and teaching experience is influencing his EAP teaching. In an excerpt from Fielding’s course induction, he also demonstrated: “We do NOT learn vocabulary and grammar, but you have to ACQUIRE that by yourselves” (Fielding class materials).

#### 4.3.2.8 Teaching IELTS Helps EAP

Fielding told me that he teaches IELTS writing, and that in his opinion, IELTS as a representative of academic writing to a large extent corroborates his teaching of academic writing in EAP: “I began to teach IELTS in 2009. IELTS reading and writing are bent to EAP, as its purpose is for doing academic study not for immigration... I teach A band (Academic Band of IELTS) and thus it thoroughly transfers to teaching EAP, and while teaching IELTS, I acquired knowledge (of EAP)” (Fielding interview 1) (Fig. 4.2).

More specifically, Fielding compares the requirements in IELTS with the practice of teaching EAP: “I do recommend incorporating IELTS writing into our current EAP teaching, if students could master them, they could master their EAP writing”; because, “those IELTS writing prompts are classical, created by authority; they made those tables, and if students can write these prompts, they will be able to describe their own charts and tables in their studies; so such good authoritarian materials should



**Fig. 4.2** This picture demonstrates how Fielding use IELTS writing materials to meet lesson objectives to guide students to integrate what they learn from textbooks into graphs, drawing and writing

be well used” (Fielding interview 1). He then relates the different components of the IELTS writing test to the specific needs of EAP students:

[T]he small writing task of IELTS assesses students’ data description and analysis, which almost covers all the needs of students across majors, for example, flow charts are how medical and polytechnic students describe their experiments... the big writing task (of IELTS) are divided into discussion, argumentation, and problem-solving, which are all important in academic writing; all that is assessed in IELTS writing is what is required in students’ assignments (Fielding interview 1).

In this vein, apart from the autonomous learning Fielding has been encouraging, he also incorporates prescriptive English writing suggestions for students to prepare for their project writing.

#### 4.3.2.9 Supporting Learner Autonomy as a Reflection on Chinese Students and Their Education Contexts

Based on the theory underpinning Fielding’s PBL and his description of language acquisition theory I imagined that he also supports autonomous learning. I particularly looked for evidence of this when speaking with him. For example, from what Fielding described his expectation of students: “We hope they can gradually learn the language from doing projects”, and his suggestions for his students are also about language acquisition: “you can choose what you think is important to you and acquire that” (Fielding interview 2).

His search for learner autonomy is also a result of his in-depth insider’s views of higher education and the challenges encountered by Chinese students:

To me, a very important part of higher education is socialising (students), I want them to become proactive participants, rather than what they were in foundation education (in China), to accept whatever the authority offers; particularly, in such a booming internet world [however] from the hangover of foundational education in China, Chinese students are used to the state of being passive learners, or consider themselves receivers, or are treated as containers (of knowledge) by others; (their learning principle is) do not drop

any knowledge the teachers give them to become successful learners. However, in higher education, we know that students should be active learners, and sometimes will transfer to researchers (Fielding interview 3).

Thus, this mode of teaching is clearly different from his description of the traditional English class, in which students wait to be taught by teachers. In a recent online discussion among EAP teachers, I observed some EAP teachers were arguing about how to teach the philosophical thoughts of Socrates and Confucius' philosophy to students as a warmer to build learners' cultural awareness of differences between China and the West (as shown in the picture below, some of their dialogue is selectively translated). Fielding, after seeing the other teachers' opinions finally claimed: "As we are teaching academic researchers, the students' autonomy is what should be considered, which is also a guarantee to keep students' motivation in a long run, thus we should avoid over-directing (them)" (Fielding's comment is circled in red, see Fig. 4.3).

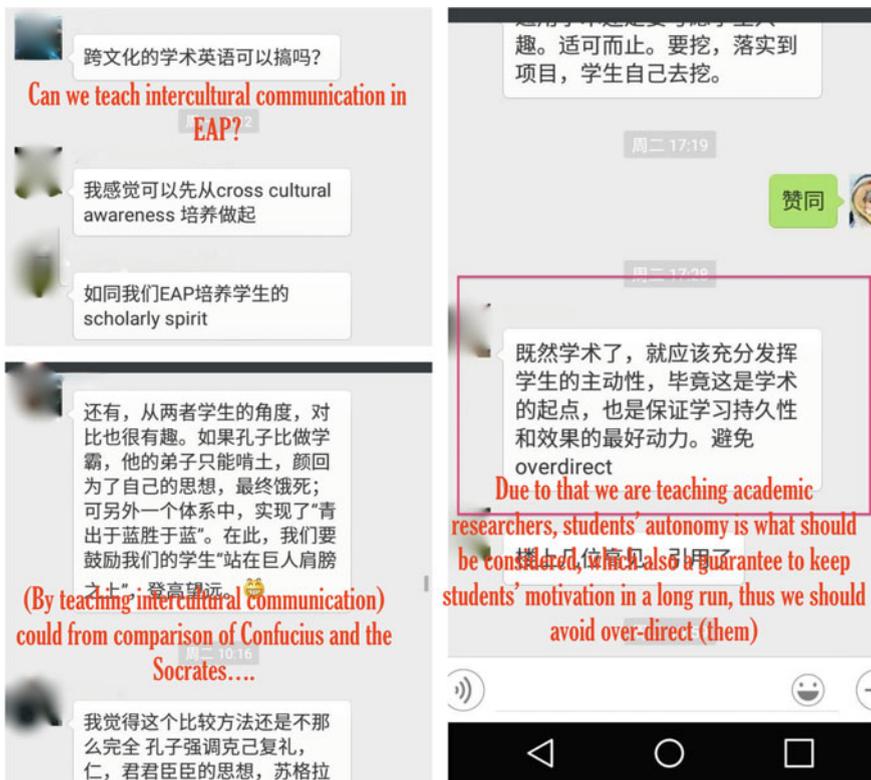


Fig. 4.3 Fielding's communication with other EAP teachers online

### 4.3.2.10 Understanding Chinese Students

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, Fielding has a set of famous metaphors to describe the obligation of transforming the “container of knowledge” form of Chinese students to active researchers (Fielding interview 2). As a man being raised to receive a foundational education in China, and to later pursue education abroad, the researcher cannot agree more with this comparison. I am sure Fielding’s in-depth understanding of Chinese students arises from his long years of teaching: “having taught English to students from all age groups, I have an in-depth understanding of their needs, lacks and wants” (Fielding interview 2).

Although I did not directly ask Fielding how he defines the needs of EAP students, in our conversations he criticised some expert-level course developer for taking students for granted and only cares about knowledge giving:

[T]he experts ... are highly motivated (when they are designing some English courses) ... but our students are even unmotivated ... many of their interests (in learning English) have been vanquished in the past, besides they have many disciplinary modules to take, and in this case, they often sacrifice their time spent on learning English for other modules ... (if they) sit there with ‘no brains, souls, and motivations’, professors from Harvard or Stanford cannot teach them well; but we are a group of common teachers with mediocre academic preparation and limited teaching skills, better than the students anyway, as long as we design the course well (students may still get involved)... (Fielding interview 2)

However, Fielding did not explain explicitly the needs of Chinese students; although in many communications with him and his students, and after immersion in his classroom, I gleaned that Fielding believes empowerment is what the Chinese EAP learners really need: “the process of education depends on students (and their learning) rather on teachers”. Otherwise, “ignoring such requirement, even if the course designed is ideally academic, they may not be interesting (to students)”, as Fielding hypothesised: “So I assume we should have ideal goals (to tailor the course more for an academic direction) but what is more important is how to pass on the best content to the students” (Fielding interview 2).

Just before I finished my research journey in the field, I spoke with Fielding’s students in a group interview, and some of his students’ feedback really interests me. They claimed that having taken Fielding’s EAP course they had come to realise that their previous English writing would never have been accepted by the relevant academic units (if they wanted their work to be published), and so now they are using the eyes of researchers, and understand what the academic register demands. When I referred this back to Fielding, he confirmed this view, adding that:

The entire design (of the PBL EAP pedagogy), intends the students to complete different tasks in different stages of learning, and in order to satisfy the requirement of the course and the teachers, they have to switch their perspectives to look at things; during the process (of students’ switching their perspectives), we assume the occurrence of reconstruction and recognition of their identity (Fielding interview 3).

#### 4.3.2.11 How Does Fielding Understand EAP?

Between the first interview and the end of the research, almost two months had passed. During those two months, Fielding and I had had many opportunities for communication and discussion about his teaching principles. We reviewed his English learning history as well as the pedagogies and principles underpinning it, and our discussion to some extent prompted Fielding to rethink what EAP means to him. In addition, where my hypotheses were not supported he was more open about giving me different answers. One day when I was walking with Fielding in a lunch break, I once again asked Fielding how he understood EAP: “Now what do you finally think of EAP after so many conversations?” He replied, “I used to have such sophisticated feelings (about his EAP), but had not formulated them into a complete conceptual framework... but I have been implementing them” (Fielding interview 3).

At this moment, as a researcher believing in the benefits of interpretivism, I was happy that our constant communication had not only enriched me with the knowledge I needed for my ethnography but had also helped him untangle his understanding of EAP; which is, as Alexander (2012) emphasised important for all who teach it. As defined by Fielding:

EAP is based on English teaching, aiming to transfer students’ awareness and identity (as a researcher), helping them to act as a member of the academic community to solve problems in reality; however, as we are faced with Chinese EFL learners, we cannot ignore nurturing their English language skills and literacy while teaching critical thinking and research methods (Fielding interview 3).

However, in May of 2016, when I paid another visit to Shanghai, I observed several sessions of his class and when I later spoke to Fielding, he seemed to have developed a new and higher understanding of EAP, thus: “students being able to use English to understand the world, and to think critically with an international horizon via the lingua franca, which could later equip them to be on the cutting edge in their future work” (Fielding online interview, May 2016).

#### 4.3.2.12 What Does Fielding Think About the EAP Shanghai Guideline?

The local education bureau printed the Shanghai EAP guidelines, claiming they were a critically important policy and instructing all EAP teachers at participating universities to abide by them, covering specific theories and pedagogies of EAP. Meanwhile, the EAP reform committee organised some teacher training sessions aiming to help previous EGP teachers to adapt to EAP teaching as swiftly as possible. With this in mind, I attempted to seek information from Fielding regarding how much information of value he could deduce from the formal EAP guidelines.

In the first meeting with Fielding, I asked him what he thought about the guideline and to what extent his EAP teaching differed from the instructions given in the guideline. He stated, “they are more or less similar, because we refer to the requirements

of it when we design our teaching goals” (Fielding interview 1). As our friendship grew, I asked him again about how the guidelines instruct his teaching, and received a different answer from that given in previous interviews, he admitted “the framework is relatively general and failed to provide some specific teaching methods” (Fielding interview 2).

As I was struggling to align his different opinions on the Shanghai EAP guidelines, he gave another justification for his disagreement with the guideline, which assured me of his honest sentiment: “we agree with him (the policy maker) that EAP should be taught in universities, but I disagree with his (the policy maker) ideology and approach” (Fielding interview 2). In addition, he noted that the framework in the guideline was too broad, failing to offer a detailed pedagogy and teaching method. As Fielding also noted, the teacher training organised as part of the Shanghai EAP reform committee is not especially systematic: “they normally organise some seminars and workshops; I was invited to teach at a workshop; the job was to introduce how I teach, which is more like communication; but in terms of the training in (EAP), there is less systematic training due to many reasons.” For Fielding, there is insufficient formal EAP training available to help himself and other former EGP teachers to adapt to EAP.

Furthermore, Fielding spoke at great length about the guidelines for the Shanghai EAP reform. Firstly, he suggested that the Shanghai EAP framework’s theoretical position is SFL (systematic functional linguistics), which he considers shallow:

His (the policy maker) suggested EAP pedagogy is skill based... perhaps it is under the framework of SFL, due to his (the policymaker) background as a linguist, and he is more likely to teach EAP from a linguistic perspective... but success for a person arises from the combination of all their different abilities, even though students can produce abundant vocabulary in an accurate register, they are not able to have their own ideas, and are unable to communicate, unable to do research, and unable to propose their own arguments in a group discussion... thus, they (students) will ultimately turn into craftsmen rather than Masters (of academia) (Fielding interview 2).

Fielding criticises the guideline as missing the clear requirement of encouraging students to learn EAP through doing research, asking:

How come Chinese students do not need to investigate a real problem? They need it... in such a globalizing world ... (if without it) how can they (students) cooperate with researchers from abroad? ... (if without it) they (our students) would be disadvantaged, for they could only write report (for others) ... but the idea is other’s, they will never enter the core (Fielding interview 2).

On the other hand, to Fielding, the Shanghai EAP framework is not concerned with the potential identity transformation of EAP students:

To me, a very important part of higher education is socialising (students), I want them to become proactive participants rather than what they were in foundation education (in China) to accept whatever the authority offers; particularly, in such a booming internet world, in such circumstances, how many teachers can claim they are authorities, when students can google everything out... (Fielding interview 3)

Furthermore, Fielding is dissatisfied with how the policymakers responsible for designing EAP guidelines separate out teaching content. For example, when I mentioned that the policy-maker said he engaged in critical thinking about what he thinks of as the essence of his EAP concepts, in the fourth (last) textbook he published (which is recommended for students to use in the last semester of their EAP courses), Fielding criticises this approach:

Critical thinking should not be taught separately and confined to the last textbook; not letting students know what critical thinking is until they start to use the last textbooks is unreasonable... thinking should accompany all class activities... I often mingle things together in order to teach... I think teaching critical thinking separately itself leads to a lack of critical thinking (Fielding interview 2).

#### 4.3.2.13 Teaching EAP Concepts Holistically

As with the discussion concerning critical thinking above, Fielding also preferred to mingle other components of EAP when teaching.

In the first interview, he offered me a description of how he mingles the different elements of EAP holistically in a single class:

(EAP) as a language course, I ask students to read the input after and before the class, and in class, I encourage them to output the language they learn; in order to do that, I organise group discussions and debate ... let them listen to different opinions and thus help them to learn to discuss when opinions are divergent, and even to learn how to argue back... (To achieve this aim) I also emulate some similar contexts... I brought them an IELTS writing topic: do you think education should focus on higher order thinking... for we (at that moment) were going to learn a lesson about college experience ... in order to prompt their discussion, I also found an article, in which the author complained that university students in the US lack critical thinking (a kind of higher order thinking) ... after I analysed the texts for them, they should manage to locate some arguments, from which they could choose a topic for debate... normally before class they have to do background research and after class they still have to do more research and reading (Fielding interview 1).

As Fielding commented, when completing lesson tasks, students not only learn to devise arguments, but also to read, search for resources and build their awareness of critical thinking. This then makes it possible to teach EAP as an inclusive whole.

During a classroom observation session of Fielding's class, his holistic teaching was in evidence. The lesson was to introduce psychology to students. Before the class, some background materials handouts were distributed to students as pre-reading materials. On one of the handouts, Fielding wrote a guide for readers, reminding the students to recall and revise what they had learned from the previous chapter when reading the new handouts:

#### ***Readers' guide***

*When reading this article taken from the official website of the American Psychological Association, remind yourself of the knowledge and skills you learned*

*from Chapter 1, such as definition writing, topic sentence writing and paragraph structure. Meanwhile, this reading material will provide you with the needed background information to the learning of Chapter*

When introducing different psychological concepts to students to raise their awareness, Fielding also encouraged group activities to share their reading and complete some group tasks. When reviewing reading materials for psychology, Fielding highlighted the academic reading and writing skills he expected his students to learn. For homework, Fielding asked students to read an article entitled *The Trait Approach to Personality* and then to work in groups of four to five to use one of the psychological theoretical models as the basis of a questionnaire in English. The assessment of the homework would be based on the learners' performance in the group presentation of the questionnaire and the quality of the questionnaire itself. Fielding also encouraged students to conduct research in the library or/and online to learn how to design questionnaires. He particularly emphasised the value of students using theoretical models to construct questionnaires (Table 4.1).

Two weeks later, as a continuation of the class, the students were asked to deliver group presentations introducing their questionnaires, while Fielding and the rest of the students gave comments. During the observation, I recorded the feedback Fielding gave to students, which reveal his holistic blending of EAP knowledge for delivery to his students:

#### **4.3.2.14 Benefiting More from “Self-trained” Than Sponsored EAP Training**

In my first meeting with Fielding, knowing he was one of the model teachers invited to demonstrate for other teachers, I asked him for some details regarding the EAP training he has been receiving. I said: “Did they (the Shanghai Education bureau and EAP reform committee) train you to teach EAP? Or anything similar to that?” He responded, “Very little, they often organise some workshops, in which I was invited to introduce my own EAP teaching; it is more like communication not systematic training” (Fielding interview 1). He also mentioned the EAP reform committee was cooperating with the *Education First* (EF school), providing teacher training for EAP teachers in Shanghai; however, the program is self-funded, and most teachers cannot afford to attend.

Fielding claimed that before they started the EAP course at his university, his department organised a two-week-long teacher training event in conjunction with some universities in the UK. When I asked about the relevance of the event to EAP, he explained it was the teacher training summer course held at language centres in universities, and dealt with teaching methodology, teaching objectives, activities organisations and comparative education and identifying differences between EGP and EAP in terms of teaching goals. Rather than feeling well informed after completing it, Fielding said: “it is just very general”; and when I asked him to what extent the

**Table 4.1** Tally for content coverage in Fielding’s class (content adapted from classroom observation of Fielding, Nov–Dec, 2015)

	Tally times	Some examples
Feedback on academic language and expressions	6	Using discourse markers students have learned when doing presentations
		Using “cannot” instead of “can’t” in academic writing
		Pointing out the word “addicted” was not appropriate in the questionnaire
		The phrase “hand in” should be replaced with “submit”
Feedback on questionnaire making, research methods, and statistical problems	9	Telling students that without careful consideration of words in questionnaires, misunderstanding may arise for readers
		Fielding constantly reminded the class to always keep in mind the purpose of the questionnaire, and he required the presenters to re-arrange the order of choices to maintain the validity and reliability of the questionnaire
		Challenging students’ statistical methods
		Fielding also suggested his students use a Likert scale when he found some students’ questionnaire choices were not representative enough
		The importance of using theoretical models to construct questionnaires
Mentions of academic thinking	3	Fielding asked the remaining students to question and challenge them: “by using critical thinking to find out the presenters’ logic (problem) and methods (questionnaire)”
		Being an academic is being open to being challenged
		Do not be influenced by groupthink
Mentions of academic rituals	1	When he found some students’ use of words was too absolute, Fielding commented to the class: “there are no absolute answers in academic research and writing, there are only reasonable answers... no research can offer absolute answers”

(continued)

**Table 4.1** (continued)

	Tally times	Some examples
Feedback on presentations	3	<p>Some group's power point background colour was too bright to let others see the content</p> <p>When a student was writing some concepts on the blackboard while giving a presentation, Fielding pointed out that it may distract the spectators' attention</p> <p>Visual aids are good practice to enhance presentations</p>
Comments on inviting students to participate in discussions or critiquing	3	<p>Asking students to jot down notes of the presenters' potential problems when listening</p> <p>Asking students to question and challenge the presenters</p>

training helped his EAP teaching and knowledge, he stated that: “Not that effective, because I had already known what I should teach in EAP, it (the training) just further enhanced it” (Fielding interview 1).

His reply did not surprise me, because as indicated in previous sections, his current EAP awareness and teaching principles were highly related to his previous teaching and research experiences. Quoting his words, “we started to think of what academic purposes are and to refer to our own learning experience” (Fielding interview 1). Being a doctoral researcher himself, he is proficient in EAP and aware of the differences between EAP and EGP. He described: “the distinctions between their purposes (EAP and EGP) will lead to everything hereafter”; and also remarked: “having taught English to students from all age groups, I have an in-depth understanding of their needs, lacks and wants”, and “ignoring such requirement (the needs, lacks, and wants), even if the course designed is ideally academic, they may not be interested (to students) ... what is more important is how to pass the best content onto the students”. Thus, his EAP teaching is built upon his experience and he can be termed “self-trained” (Fielding interview 2).

#### 4.3.2.15 EGP-EAP Relation: Using Different Tasks for Different Purposes

Fielding uses one sentence to describe the differences between EGP and EAP: “The distinction in their literal meaning, is what I think, the most direct distinction (between the both)” (Fielding interview 2). Fielding further explains the results generated by the different aims between EGP and EAP; hinting that there are differences in discourse, “EAP stresses on some different linguistic features, perhaps in the perspective of systematic functional linguistics... yes, discursively different”. He explained that,

in teaching practice, “when I design an EGP course, I stress the linguistic training (of students), but for EAP I am probably concerned more about if their skills could be actualised in linguistic activities and I ask them (EAP students) to make arguments, during which they will use some corresponding language structures” (Fielding interview 2).

Fielding is currently teaching both EAP and EGP at his university. He seemed to have no prejudice against either approach, when answering my questions regarding whether there are differences between teaching EAP and EGP. He claimed that there is a somewhat small difference between them, but said such differences are not that complex, explaining that Fielding provided the example of teaching EGP students critical thinking skills in the later phases of teaching, rather than merely English sentences and phrases.

He also expressed vague differences in how he offers teaching resources and materials for students in EAP and EGP: “for general topics (in EAP), I provide them with general resources, but if I could find some materials with more academic orientation that would be even better” (Fielding interview 1). When I asked him about the extent of the academic orientation of materials for EAP students, he responded, “I would not look for much academic journals for them (students), unless they are asked to do research project (PBL) and write literature reviews... in common classes, my resources come from, e.g., *American Times*, *Economist* (semi-professional magazines on economics; Fielding’ students are majoring in similar disciplines with economics)...” (Fielding interview 1) Although he did not identify the materials he used for teaching EGP, he established that the materials he used for EAP are not on at the extreme in terms of being academic, except when preparing for some academic tasks. However, in Fielding’s EGP classes, he also favoured using tasks for communication purposes: “I prefer task based language teaching (TBLT) and communicative language teaching (CLT), both of which I use more frequently; these two methods (TBLT and CLT) could be applied ... to EAP... (in EAP) we use PBL, which contains many tasks for students to do” (Fielding interview 1). To him, teaching EAP involves using different language tasks to teach English for a purpose that differs from EGP; thus, the former is not an extension of the latter but diverges from it.

#### **4.3.2.16 Nurturing Ethical EAP Learners: Do not Become an “Exquisite Egoist”!**

In two of his EAP classes in May 2016, in relation to the topic *Business Ethics*, Fielding distributed three scenarios to students majoring in international business and management for critical thinking and discussion: “Is it ethical for you to sell cigarettes to those who are not aware of the bad effects of smoking, like young people?” “Is McDonalds ethical when selling children junk food with toys?” “A US company manufactures pesticide, although their products were banned from use in the States. Is it ethical for them to sell the products in India?” (Class observation of Fielding, May 2016).

In the class discussion, many students expressed agreement or disagreement over whether the above scenarios are ethical. Fielding also used questions to provoke students to consider the ethical decisions they made; for example, he asked: “From the perspectives of business, it is good; from the perspectives of a CEO, do you think it is applicable?” “If I connect smoking with a successful business man, do you think it is ethical?” (Class observation of Fielding, May 2016)

When a student explained why he believed that selling junk food together with toys to children is “legal”, Fielding responded with some emotion: “Can being legal represent being ethical... being legal does not equate to being ethical.” Another student added: “McDonalds selling junk food is fair enough, for in China, many restaurants sell worse food than McDonalds” (Class observation of Fielding, May 2016).

After several rounds of discussion, Fielding concluded by reminding all the EAP students to be ethical in their future careers, for fear of them to become “exquisite egoists” when making commercial decisions. After the class, I asked Fielding the reasons why he had designed such a session involving students. The answers he gave astounded me, for I had not previously been aware that Fielding has an in-depth perspective on education in China: “Influenced by the negative environment, education has become utilitarian and short-sighted, and so it is my responsibility to lead students to think responsibly and uprightly, and this is my obligation as a teacher”. Continuing by linking this class activity with his EAP perspective, he added:

The core of EAP as I understand it is students being able to use English to understand the world, and to think critically with an international horizon via the lingua franca, which could later equip them to be on the cutting edge in their future work. So commercial ethics is associated with my understanding of EAP... because (students) have to understand how to make ethical decisions in consideration with specific cultural norms, territorial features, and contextual factors (Fielding online interview, Jun, 2016)

#### **4.3.2.17 Unveiling Fielding’s Smooth Adaptation into EAP from EGP**

Fielding explains that he did not feel it is being unusual to be teaching EAP when he transited from teaching EGP, as not only does he use TBLT for both EGP and EAP, but his long years of EGP teaching have familiarised him with local students’ English learning needs and the characteristics of education in China. This enables him to design a more tailored EAP class for his students; therefore, as he himself summarises, “I feel my background of English teaching offers me a solid foundation” (Fielding interview 1). In terms of his academic background, apart from his familiarity with academic English and research knowledge, what he values most is how his research interest in educational social justice, international higher education in the contexts of Australia and issues of overseas students allows him to see EAP not from “a micro perspective focusing on only linguistic knowledge like those (EAP teachers) who learn linguistics and literature” (Fielding interview 2). In other words,

his academic background gives him a broader perspective from which to view EAP as part of internationalised higher education and society.

On the one hand, Fielding has a critical understanding of Chinese students and China, but on the other, he is aware of what it means to be an overseas students seeking higher education abroad. He, therefore, positions his PBL EAP course at the intersection between both, following his own critical reflection:

How come Chinese students do not need to investigate a real problem? They need it... in such a globalizing world... (if without it) how can they (students) cooperate with researchers from abroad? ... (if without it) they (our students) would be disadvantaged, for they could only write report (for others) ... but the idea is other's, they will never enter the core... to me, a very important part of higher education is socialising (students), I want them to become some proactive participants rather than what they were in foundation education (in China) to accept whatever the authority offers (Fielding interview 2).

Generally speaking, Fielding's background, regardless of his previous teaching in EGP or academic knowledge, encourages him to see EAP teaching more critically and holistically: "my research and teaching experiences saliently changes my opinions of learning English... particularly in understanding what should be like in university level English teaching... and understanding students' characteristics" (Fielding interview 2).

## 4.4 Case Study 2: Lisa

### 4.4.1 *Life History of Lisa*

Lisa is a scholar in applied linguistics, whose area of interest is discourse analysis. Born in a family with a democratic approach in Shanxi province, she recited short articles in English from childhood. She was later accepted as a student at Shanxi University, studying English literature as her major and philosophy as a minor. As a postgraduate, she attended Xi'an Jiaotong University (a famous institute in west China) to study medical English. Influenced by her supervisor, she nurtured a broader interest in genre and register. As she recalls, being an English major graduate she was not interested in issues relating to medicine or medical English, however, when she was on the medical studies campus she reluctantly started to read materials related to medicine. Gradually she was able to understand professional patterns and terms, ignoring more sophisticated content that could not be understood; which, according to Lisa, was when her ESP learning took place.

After obtaining her Master's degree, Lisa was recruited by the university at which she is now working. Despite much experience learning and researching English, she seldom wrote any academic research in English. Indeed, she did not understand the meaning of academic English until she went to Birmingham University as a visiting scholar. While studying at Birmingham, she cooperated with other scholars and completed some research, which she was determined to publish. After submission,

her essay was returned by a journal editor who claimed Lisa's academic writing was poor. Feeling frustrated, she asked a well-educated, non-academic native speaker to correct her grammar and spelling for her before she made a second submission. To her surprise, the paper was returned again with similar comments from the editors. Feeling confused, Lisa started to use her discourse analysis experience to locate the problems in her academic writing and adapted her academic register and style accordingly; in her words: "learning the patterns used in published work", or "pretending to be academic". This experience helped raise her awareness of the importance and uniqueness of academic discourse, and it also assisted her in conducting research into using EAP.

In my first interview with Lisa, she told me the importance of being trained as an academic before teaching EAP: "I think many teachers nowadays, including some of my colleagues in our department, may not have a deep understanding of those academic patterns, unless they have some publication experience" (Lisa interview 1). When she returned from Birmingham, she became involved with the EAP reform in Shanghai, and by coincidence, the EAP curriculum at her university employed project-based learning.

Unlike Fielding, Lisa has an applied linguistics background, and her training at Birmingham University taught her that teaching students EAP actually means teaching them how to prepare for academic research and publication. Normally Lisa guides her students in a logical process before they can finally produce a research idea: "I started by giving them advice on research topics and planning... I evaluated the difficulty and availability of the students' projects" (Lisa interview 1). Later Lisa helps formulate students' academic English: "after that (research project supervision) I teach them academic writing, for example how to write an introduction, how to write a discussion" (Lisa interview 1).

In conjunction with her EAP teaching, Lisa gradually senses that she, as a language teacher, has limitations in terms of connecting EAP with students' disciplinary knowledge. Just as when I participated in Lisa's project supervision, I helped a group design a case study of a market-related project, but the case study they understood was entirely different from the case study I intended them to undertake, due to my educational research background. Therefore, I, as an ethnographer, immediately understood Lisa's challenge. Without a commercial background (the discipline of most of Lisa's students) ... she had gaps in her knowledge that made it challenging to supervise students' commercial related research projects.

With a background in English literature and philosophy, Lisa comments that she finds that EGP has the function of immersing students in humanity, but that EAP is utilitarian. The humanity that EGP welcomes should not be wholly negated by the utilitarianism of EAP: "I used to read English novels with students (in EGP), now I don't think I can... education is missing (in EAP) ... disregarding humanity in subjects of university education is horrible" (Lisa interview 1). For Lisa, merging humanity into utilitarian EAP is an ideal format of EAP education, so she has done her best to include articles written by philosophers, sociologists and literary figures, to encourage her students to consider the value of knowing their roles in society, the goals of academic research, and the importance of critical thinking.

### **4.4.2 From Knowing to Participation**

Befitting the nature of reflexivity, this section provides a first-person account of the researcher's relationship with Lisa. After an initial introduction by Fielding, I came to know Lisa well. After sending her text messages, we made an appointment in her office for an initial interview. She was open-minded, and always responded quickly to my questions. She was late for the first interview, but she texted me apologising for the inconvenience. When we met we had a very easy conversation, and even found that we shared some common friends. Lisa and I swapped our WeChat contact details and added each other as friends. At Lisa's invitation, I later regularly visited her classes and helped tutor her students' research projects.

### **4.4.3 EAP Is a Logic and “Disguised” Language for Doing Research**

As mentioned in the narrative about Lisa, when I asked her for a definition of EAP, she explained it as a method for preparing students for the academic research and publication:

I think (EAP) is a kind of logic, which has two levels of thinking, the lower level is critical thinking, and then the higher level, logical thinking, is what researchers use for doing research... (the latter) is very important if students would like to deduce logically, for example how to have and resolve an (research) aim, how to experiment with the aim, and how to analyse it (Lisa interview 1).

Apart from the logic, Lisa had learned from her own international journal publication experience that EAP also involves teaching students to disguise their colloquial use of English by adopting “the patterns used in published work”, in other words, what she terms to “pretend to be academic” (Lisa interview 1).

### **4.4.4 Lisa's Perspective on the Distinction Between EAP and EGP and the Shanghai EAP Reform**

With her background in English literature and philosophy, Lisa believes that EGP serves to immerse students with humanity. Moreover, although it is utilitarian, the humanity that EGP welcomes should not be totally negated by EAP; she states, “I used to read English novels with students (in EGP), now I don't think I can... education is missing (in EAP)... disregarding humanity in subjects of university education is horrible” (Lisa interview 1). To Lisa, merging humanity into the utilitarian EAP is an ideal format of EAP education, so she does her best to add articles from a range of sources, as mentioned above to improve her students' criticality.

In the first interview, Lisa gave me the abovementioned understanding of EAP, which also informed her teaching. However, there was another underlying meaning of EAP for Lisa, which she did not tell me about until the last session of my observation. Lisa showed a video clip of the students, it discussed the goals of academic research and its contribution to humankind and society. Sitting among the students, I was attracted by the video, I was assured that there might be some students who would be similarly attracted to the video and became more aware of the reasons why they were studying EAP; i.e. to become researchers and contribute to society. In a further interview after class, when I shared with Lisa what I had learned from her lesson, she pointed out her advanced perspective on EAP, which she had earlier failed to mention to me:

This (EAP is a tool to hone academic research, which is potentially beneficial to humanity) is what people failed to understand in EAP, and it is what the policymaker (of Shanghai EAP reform) failed to do... he (the policymaker) merely focused on how to improve students' academic essay writing, but if we dig into the concept deeper... there is a lot to do (Lisa interview 2).

Generally speaking, for Lisa EAP has a humanitarian meaning to contribute to the human world.

#### ***4.4.5 Giving Prescriptive Discursive Samples***

Lisa often gives her students samples of academic writing, the following screenshot (Fig. 4.4) is a page of sample writing Lisa presented as an example for students:

Register analysis: In March 2016, Lisa proposed a new method of teaching EAP: after teaching the students different registers in the class, Lisa asked her students in groups to use different registers for writing about the same topic in groups. For example, one group member wrote a personal diary, one member wrote an academic article, one wrote a poem and another completed a news-style piece on the same topic; then working in groups the students posted their work online to enable more students to comment.

#### ***4.4.6 Inserted Humanity into EAP Teaching***

Lisa complemented many students on the philosophical articles. In one of the observations, Lisa led the students to analyse an article written by Alfred North Whitehead reflecting on modernity and modernism. By studying this article, the students not only learned how to write better English, guided by Lisa, they also discussed the ideas raised by the article author. Later Lisa told me that this article was from a book related to Western Philosophy, and she had chosen many articles from it: "I found this book by accident, I think it is suitable for EAP...there are materials related to

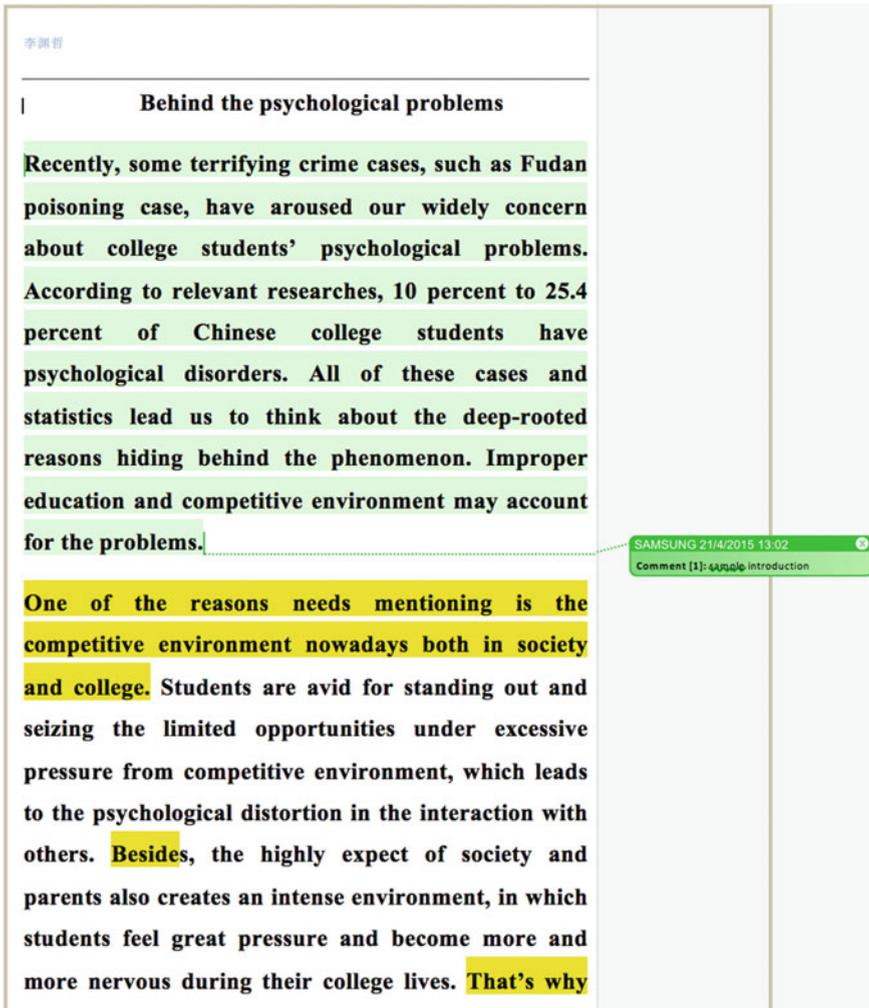


Fig. 4.4 A demonstration of student writing in Lisa’s class

science, philosophy, and economics... these are all from big names” (Lisa interview 1). Furthermore, Lisa quoted one of her students’ feedback after reading one of the articles Lisa had chosen for them: “she (the students) understood how to express personal opinions, how to express an existing reality...it is always a good phenomenon that she began to question” (Lisa interview 1). Lisa also uses media-based materials to inform students, as she recalled, around the military parade in 2015, she brought in media reports from different countries, encouraging students to compare and to think critically. Just as Lisa described herself during a classroom observation session: “my

philosophical background inevitably ushers students into in-depth thinking” (Lisa interview 1).

Lisa also reflected on the current reform when speaking with me:

(The EAP course recommended by the Shanghai EAP reform) is missing out some educational elements; it is so instrumental that it started to become utilitarian, which is so horrible... deserting humanity... it (EAP) would become just an instrument and it makes students utilitarian (Lisa interview 1).

Therefore, Lisa attempts to put as much human content into her lessons, stating: “I hope to embellish the course with humanity, then we are not utilitarian” (Lisa interview 1).

#### ***4.4.7 Empowering Students and Helping Them Make Their Voices Heard***

Lisa prioritised student’s empowerment by letting them decide upon and handle their own research projects, and she stepped back as a facilitator and a careful listener. As the product of a democratic family, Lisa passed on this quality to her EAP classrooms; returning autonomy back to students, which effectively supports the nature of experiential learning. Her approach to teaching encourages her students to share their experiences with her, and she was able to report on a lot of feedback she had received from students completing EAP research projects, as illustrated below:

It was a horrible morning. I still felt scared, I had intended to investigate the influence of traditional culture on companies, but I was involved in a place surrounded by big mountains. Actually it is good to do farming as practice (in mountains), but the people we noticed (in the company) looked brain washed, they each looked like walking dead, having little words but stagnant eyes. This company even asked its staff to read the mantras of Buddha and watch videos of religions... having a strange ceremony before meals... strange masters teaching the unity of heaven and earth. When we asked the manager about how to run a company, he even told us that the god will run the company for him... what is worse is that when they heard we planned to leave, their attitude turned bad... we were lucky that we are a group of students, otherwise we might not have got out... we finally sought our way out of the mountains by ourselves... (Lisa teaching diary)

The students’ openness with Lisa gave her some insights that an EAP teacher might not usually see, and these made her realise the limitations of her EAP teaching and the reform itself, as she noted when quoting from a students’ feedback:

“During noon break, a group of students doing PBL in the Song Jiang university town kept talking about their experiences in project interviews: last night a group of government officials from the Song Jiang university town met them, but all the officials were beating around the bush about answering the questions. The students could not find any statistical data to support the situation regarding entertainment, estate, and new enterprises. They suspected the relevance of such activities with English learning... they lacked social resources, specialised knowledge, they felt stressful and unsettled... I suggested they narrow down their research topic, for

example, they could just investigate the education companies, but they felt they could spare no more effort to knock on the door of society. There remain more examples of students lacking social resources while doing PBL EAP. For example, students could not find graduates to investigate their living condition, students could not find companies to do a case study. If the university does not link educational settings to society at large, how can we as language teachers guide students to do academic social research?" (Lisa teaching diary).

#### ***4.4.8 Locating Problems in EAP Reform and Teaching***

Lisa worked well with her students and this leads her to readily identify the potential problems of teaching EAP. Just as she reported in her presentation to the Shanghai EAP committee: there are currently four challenges as she sees them (see Fig. 4.5).

Through my supervising Lisa's students' EAP projects, I also encountered some challenges personally. For example, I felt that EAP teachers are confined by the gaps between their own and their students' disciplines. This is because in the tutoring session, I was giving one group suggestions about their case study in a research project, and when I shared my knowledge of case study as a research method in educational studies, the commercial background students were very confused. They told me that they had learned about case studies in marketing, and what they had learned is completely different from my schema for case study research. Realising the discrepancies, I shared my experience with Lisa, and she expressed her worries that disciplinary issues also posed a challenge to her own EAP teaching. Furthermore, I spent nearly twenty minutes tutoring a single group of EAP students; however, in each class unit, there are about ten groups, and Lisa teaches two classes each year. As research tutoring happens every other week, Lisa was using her extracurricular time to fulfil this obligation. Thus, EAP pedagogy was taking up a lot of Lisa's spare time, posing another challenge for her: "if I cancelled students' inter-group cooperation, my workload would be extravagant" (the author's fieldnote of Lisa, Nov, 2015).

As a tutor, when I was communicating with another group of EAP students, the students complained that they had to change their research methods repeatedly even though they had arranged their research topics with Lisa. This is because they needed

*Translation of selected excerpt:*

- 1. Limitations of disciplinary knowledge*
- 2. Limitations of research duration*
- 3. Limitations of social resources, and*
- 4. Limitations of the school internationalization*

**Fig. 4.5** Lisa's perceived problems with the Shanghai EAP reform

to interview a governmental department head, but the interviewee kept refusing to offer constructive feedback, making it impossible for the students to achieve valid results; and therefore, they expressed their expectation that the university should provide more social resources for them.

After commenting and tutoring many EAP students' research projects, I found that the very informal relationship between the university and the societal resources on which it depends were apparent in the dissemination of EAP students' research findings. Although the students reported on and demonstrated their research practices in class and at a forum at the university, the research sites and contexts barely afforded the student researchers any data. If the university and the local community had forged partnerships or had been working in cooperation, then the students' research might also have been more constructive, thereby benefitting society. Both aspects related to the loose relationship between the university and social resources are consistent with Lisa's presentation.

## 4.5 Case Study 3: Bluewitch

### 4.5.1 *Life History of Bluewitch*

Born into a military family in Sichuan Province of China, Bluewitch was not particularly interested in learning English until she was of middle school age. She spent most of her time concentrating on learning maths, physics and chemistry. In her national college entrance examination, she achieved 88 out of 100 for her English, and for this reason, in the mid-1980s she was recruited by East China Normal English to study international business as a major and English as minor.

At the beginning of the 1990s, after four years of undergraduate studies, she was admitted as a postgraduate without the need for any exams. Her postgraduate research area was applied linguistics and her specific research direction was English teaching methodology. What is noteworthy is that her batch of the postgraduate study was the product of cooperation between her Chinese university and the British Council, and one of the requirements of enrolment was that graduates must agree to be teachers and teach at the East Normal University after graduation. She taught English at the university for two years, and then moved to University B to begin teaching. However, University B is a science and technology oriented institute, so Bluewitch found the students there did not take English seriously. English was deemed a general course and the teaching time assigned for English was very limited, and English textbooks were considered too simple for students (students are required to learn a few English articles each semester).

Bluewitch is a responsible teacher and she believes that the approaches currently taken for teaching English might not fulfil students' needs, so she has been searching for effective theories and methods to improve the existing methods. At the start of her research journey, she believed the input hypothesis would benefit student learning.

Therefore, she edited an English reading book for students containing more than 100 articles with topics ranging across different areas. By adopting these methods, she intended that her students' English would improve in response to a large amount of input. She also paid attention to distance learning. She merged the online chat room, QQ (a social media software) and RenRen (another social media website) into her mixed learning pedagogy, encouraging her students to go online to study English.

She later realised that learning is also connected with students' psychology and cognition, so she commenced her probing of the hidden cognition of students' mistake making when learning English vocabulary. To achieve a deeper understanding of students' cognition of learning, she chose to study psychology at East China Normal University as a visiting scholar where she was supervised by a famous professor in psychology. With the help of her supervisor, she was taught to design questionnaires analysing students' psychological characteristics, which was predicted to be informative for her teaching. During the study, she coauthored several research papers in international journals with her supervisor. However, her supervisor was not competent in writing papers in academic English, so all the published papers were translated by Bluewitch. Bluewitch was depressed by the fact that all the studies and papers were completed by her, but her supervisor took the accolade of the first authorship. All these contacts with scholars during her academic visit to China East Normal University led her to realise the limitations of Chinese academia and in particular, the urgency to encourage knowledge of EAP.

Meanwhile, she also afflicted experienced objections and boredom from her students when reading additional English articles and completing psychological questionnaires. Some students thought Bluewitch's teaching was outside the sponsored English curriculum set by the university and they complained about this to the Chancellor. Although the Chancellor supported Bluewitch, the department was annoyed with her. After reflecting on her students' hostility towards spending extra time studying English, she realised their only motivation for studying English was to pass exams. Bluewitch thought that improving her students' English learning attitudes actually depended on altering their worldview of education and improving their autonomy of learning, rather than simply altering the teacher's teaching methods. She also felt that the reason for students being unmotivated to learn and infatuated with exams was a hangover from learning habits the engaged in a middle school; i.e. learning for exams. Therefore, she identified a need to help newly enrolled university students overcome the idea that the point of learning is to pass exams. Therefore, this opinion illustrates how her teaching switched from emphasis on pedagogy to emphasis on education.

Subsequently, when she was about to be promoted to a professorship, her deteriorating relationship with the department meant that some of her departmental superiors placed obstacles in her way, and as a result she did not attain the level of recognition she deserved. Feeling angry and gloomy, she flew to a university in Florida, USA to work once more as a visiting scholar. During her visit, she witnessed the higher education system in the USA, and how their undergraduates began writing essays and engaging in academic activities as soon as they were enrolled. She also saw

how the language centre at the university, as an academic language provider, cooperated with other academic faculties. After comparing this approach with the higher education system in China, she realised the Chinese higher education was lagging behind in her context and that undergraduate education in her university was unsatisfactory. Specifically, Chinese undergraduate students lacked academic training and mental acuity to become scholars. Moreover, the university in China had no palpably academic environment.

Her supervisor in the States is a professor in language and literacy, but Bluewitch was unfamiliar with what the term literacy referred to. After some research, she learned that literacy is based on language, but that it is more than a linguistic concept. She found a corresponding Chinese word for literacy is *Su Yang*, which she later added to her definition of EAP. She also rationalised concepts such as academic literacy and digital literacy. To Bluewitch, these terms were like a cure for an epidemic disease affecting Chinese students: Chinese university students needed to improve in these areas. So, when, after returning to China, she heard that the Shanghai education bureau was encouraging the teaching of EAP at universities, she attempted to combine her own education ideals with what she had learned in the US to start her own English teaching revolution.

She commenced her EAP journey; however, as I have narrated, Bluewitch encountered an EAP reform in Shanghai. Without any formal training in EAP, she integrated all her experiences in English teaching with her reflections on higher education into her own EAP pedagogy. This was a course directed towards nurturing students' multiple literacies from the perspective of mentality, culture, vision, academic research and language to enable them to realise their identity as scholars. She also received a large amount of funding from the education ministry to develop her EAP project. With this support, she organised a group of teachers to implement her pedagogy. These teachers, in Bluewitch's own words, were not taken good care of by the department, as they are unable to pursue their own research or study for doctorates. With the efforts of the EAP team, the teachers were expected to include a module ID for an EAP course in parallel with the original EGP course.

However, her actions caused fear within her department once more, as they claimed that some components of EAP pedagogy, such as critical thinking, are not suitable for the Chinese context. This led them to intervene in Bluewitch's course, unifying the exams for all the English courses (regardless of whether EAP or EGP) and demanding amalgamation and uniformity of teaching content. This prompted Bluewitch to shift her discussions about EAP onto her WeChat online social media forum, and using media she began sending EAP "MOOC" lessons daily to her students. As a result, the EAP reform in Bluewitch's university was halted, and some of the teachers in her EAP team left due to the pressure from the department. Although the implementation of the EAP reform at her university ceased, Bluewitch continues to express her educational ideals and her EAP team's unfair treatment via her online EAP platform.

### **4.5.2 *My Interaction with Bluewitch***

Befitting the nature of reflexivity, this section provides a first-person account of the researcher's relationship with Bluewitch. The first time I learned of Bluewitch was when I was an undergraduate student. I read an English book edited by her, and the book was an important English resource for me. Later after I switched my research interests to EAP, and I found her name on an ESP website. Later in a conversation with another EAP teacher in Shanghai, she mentioned Bluewitch and encouraged me to contact her for in their eyes Bluewitch is a pioneer of the Shanghai EAP reform: "This lady (Bluewitch) is very powerful, when the whole university was not cooperative, she organised the whole EAP curriculum" (the author's ethnographic fieldnote, November 2015). Remembering her words, I contacted an old friend of mine, who was working as a secretary for the EAP reform in Shanghai, and this old friend told me Bluewitch would be participating in an EAP teacher training session in Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University in Suzhou at the end of November 2015.

This, I attended the conference with the aim of establishing a relationship with Bluewitch. During the conference lunch break, I asked the secretary to introduce me to Bluewitch. The secretary asked the head of the ESP association to build this bridge for me, and the association head told me: "Bluewitch is having a difficult time, because her university is against her" (the author's ethnographic fieldnote, November 2015). He beckoned a middle-aged lady in a purple down jacket, and that was Bluewitch. "This is professor Bluewitch", the head introduced us: "and this gentleman is a scholar from Hong Kong, hoping to conduct research on EAP." I said, "I once read your books and I am an admirer, and I would like to interview you about your EAP course and about your opinions in EAP" (the author's ethnographic fieldnote, November 2015). So we exchanged our mobile phone numbers and agreed to meet the following week.

I texted messages to her the following Friday, and we fixed a time and place to meet. I called a taxi to a seafood restaurant near her home. As a demonstration of my sincerity, I ordered and paid the bill before she arrived. Bluewitch and I spoke as if we were old friends. She told me she would not be reserved while speaking with me, and we had an in-depth conversation that lasted for nearly three hours. The conversation topics covered her educational background, our respective research interests, her experiences in the US, the situation in Hong Kong, my photography, her understanding of EAP, her English teaching, the challenges she is facing, and even her and her daughter's future progress. As the interview was in December, she invited me to visit her class and colleagues in the forthcoming spring semester. In her view, my visit would benefit the identity recognition of her EAP team members. I did not use a voice recorder for this interview. As my objective was to make friends and establish a trustworthy relationship with her, I did not want to make our first meeting too purposeful. Therefore, I briefly sketched out some notes recalling the main ideas discussed after the meeting. Bluewitch encouraged me to use WeChat to keep in contact with her and to do follow-up interviews. She invited me into her EAP

team members' WeChat online group, and let me follow her EAP online forum on WeChat.

The meeting with Bluewitch was a great comfort to me at that time, as I was concerned about accessing a sufficient number of research participants, and was not yet quite sure of the research direction. Bluewitch's trust and willingness to cooperate gave me peace of mind. Her proactive attitude towards me could have been because I was introduced to her by the Secretary and Chair of the ESP association (Bluewitch's EAP fellows), but it could also have been because, as a scholar from Hong Kong, I afforded her access to EAP projects and information about the difficulties with EAP outside China. Our successful relationship might also have been a consequence of my passion, friendliness and sincerity as an ethnographer, which touched her and made her feel happy to share.

After the initial meeting with Bluewitch, I returned to Hong Kong, and on the train back, the difficult experiences Bluewitch and her team had encountered really struck me. I could sense that they were a unique group of people, whose voices were only partly heard and deliberately neglected. If I could record and reflect their experiences relative to the status quo over a prolonged period of contact, my research might be more natural in context and deliver down-to-earth to data, beyond simply reporting Shanghai EAP teachers' understanding and implementation of EAP theories gathered through semi-structured interviews or questionnaires.

Arriving in Hong Kong, I organised all the data I had collected in Shanghai. However, the materials I had for the case of Bluewitch did not seem adequate for a three-hour-long discussion. So, as well as observing the interlocations that took place in the team's WeChat group (invited by Bluewitch), I also frequently sent questions to Bluewitch through WeChat to support structured interviews. In response, she replied to my answers concerning every detail when she felt able to do so. During these interactions, I clarified her opinions about EAP, and worked to establish how she formulates her ideas.

As scholars in EAP, both of us typically exchange ideas linked to the EAP discipline. Living in mainland China, Bluewitch's EAP resources were less than those I had access to in Hong Kong. Whenever I wanted to debate authors and jargon she was unfamiliar with, I would share newly published resources with her. As we became more familiar with each other, we even discussed co-publishing some research papers. As both of us use WeChat, we can also see and like each other's pictures, so our social media connection served to deepen our friendship.

Bluewitch established several EAP forums through different social media software. These included a forum for EAP teachers at her university, an EAP teacher-student communication group, a critical thinking discussion group for all the Shanghai EAP teachers, and an official EAP WeChat account for accessing EAP lessons. I was lucky enough to be involved in all of these, following all four at Bluewitch's invitation.

For example, I had access to observe the forum for her EAP team, which is where her teammates communicated about teaching and managerial chores, exchanged ideas and sometimes made complaints. Bluewitch invited me into this group and

authorised me to observe their chats, and sometimes I also contributed to their discussion. Over a seven-month period, I kept records of their experiences teaching EAP at the university, their opinions of EAP, and most importantly, I gradually learned about their reality as EAP teachers in Shanghai. Although I did not have daily access to the teachers in person in Shanghai, with the help of the internet and social media, I was able to embark on a virtual ethnography of their real lives. As a member of the EAP teachers' WeChat group the EAP teachers (including Bluewitch) came to also understand my perspective.

Having been invited by Bluewitch, I also became a member of the critical thinking discussion group for all the Shanghai EAP teachers. The group comprises EAP teachers at different universities in Shanghai, they often negotiate how to teach critical thinking and other EAP skills in their classes, and share teaching resources. I participated in many of the discussions, and the following day, samples of screenshots of our discussions in the group would be selected and pasted to the daily e-lesson on Bluewitch's official account for her students and the rest of her EAP fans. Thus, my participation, to some extent, contributed to her EAP course structure.

The EAP groups she organised also used social media, and there were two. The former was on QQ (another popular social media), and functioned as a discussion board for her EAP students to reflect on what they had learnt from Bluewitch's class. I was invited to speak to the students on this platform in the New Year's holiday, and the content related to EAP and critical thinking is important to these students; moreover, the whole discussion was delivered in English, so I assumed my participation contributed to Bluewitch's students' scholarship.

From Bluewitch's perspective, her official EAP account provides the core demonstration of her EAP ideals, as her university constrains some of her classroom teaching practice. She applies the EAP strategies that cannot be used in her class in the virtual setting. On inviting her students to follow her official account, she sends her EAP lessons daily to the account followers thereby constructing an EAP MOOC of her own. The lessons are arranged into different series; for example, academic vocabulary revision, critical thinking, the world outside China, TED reading and writing etc., and this attracts many of her followers' attention. Around the Spring Festival of 2016, I became directly involved with her series regarding the World outside China. The goal of this series is to widen the EAP students' eyes to what is involved in studying abroad to motivate them to work hard to learn EAP and to escape the narrow mindset of studying in China. I wrote about some of my experiences studying in the UK in the series and described my academic visits to other countries. From these interactions, my name became familiar to some of Bluewitch's colleagues and students.

Before I visited Bluewitch for the second time, she helped me to search for nearby hotels around her university and sent screenshots of places to my mobile phone. However, as I wanted to be jogging every day I could not stay in hotels as I would not be able to leave my computers and cameras unattended. So I did not live in a hotel but a place near a close friend of mine, although this was a little far from Bluewitch's university.

On a rainy Sunday evening in May, I arranged another meeting with Bluewitch at a tea house close to where she lives. As I was unfamiliar with the place, I went there before she arrived. I found Bluewitch looked more tired than last time. She told me that her daughter had been ill in the United States, so she had been staying in the States and looking after her for almost a month. However, at this time her department in the university chose to break up the EAP team, imposing severe stress on Bluewitch. So, during this discussion, she complained that she could not suffer the attitude of the department anymore.

We started our conversation with an EAP paper I had recently published, and she mentioned how she had studied the concept of literacy when she was in the United States and those associated ideas informed her EAP pedagogy. She also told me the reasons why her department heads are hostile towards her. Later she expressed her concerns for her ill daughter, who had just returned to China on sick leave. Bluewitch told me she would prefer her daughter to go to Hong Kong to complete her postgraduate studies. Sometime later, she invited her daughter to befriend me and call me brother. So, in this way, Bluewitch became like an auntie to me.

Bluewitch organised a party for me and her team of EAP teachers, so that we could get to know one another. The place was at one of the teachers' homes, and each teacher brought some food they had cooked for the party. I did not bring any food with me, but bought bonsais for each of them. The people were very hospitable, and we already knew each other's names, since we had been communicating in the WeChat group. We covered topics ranging from students' demotivation, our respective opinions on EAP, the challenges the EAP team are facing and Bluewitch's history. This party deepened my understanding of how Bluewitch's previous experiences allowed her to formulate EAP theories and pedagogy. Similarly, this meeting contextualised my understanding of the challenges Bluewitch is facing.

I was later invited as a guest speaker and academic commentator at a student EAP conference held by Bluewitch. The aim of the conference was to let students disseminate their group's research results and establish their academic identity as researchers. Students presented their studies in groups via PowerPoint. Before the conference, Bluewitch and I discussed the conference process, and I helped her arrange snacks for tea breaks. I recorded the mistakes and the strengths of each group throughout the entire afternoon of the conference, and gave the students feedback at the end of the activities (Fig. 4.6).

At this conference, I became a participant just like other students. I witnessed the involvement and contribution of the students, and I observed potential changes in students. Respect touched the bottom of my heart: I realised the achievement and contribution Bluewitch made for students by insisting on teaching EAP, when her "enemies" placed so much pressure on her.

I also observed Bluewitch's teaching: firstly, as a non-participant observer, and later as a participant-observer. As a non-participant, I found that in her EAP class Bluewitch has to teach CET-4 or CET-6 mock test papers to students rather than EAP. Later I was invited by Bluewitch and another teacher to give a seminar to the students. They asked me to share my experiences of becoming a doctoral researcher as a former university-drop-out. However, I observed most of the students were indifferent to

**Fig. 4.6** A screenshot of some of the topics covered at the conference

domestic waste classification in Hangzhou -- present situation and countermeasures

Head Transplant - medical skills & ethics

Cool Pavement Design for the Mitigation of the Urban Heat Island Effect in Shanghai

Family background of post 90s female college students and their perspective on choosing spouse

The reflections and speculations on Europe migrant crisis

A study of shanghai subway and its correlation with urbanization

this type of knowledge sharing. They seemed unconcerned with their future careers and the potential relationship between learning English and their future careers, in contrast with those who were proactively involved with the research projects mentioned in previous sections. This indifference reflects Bluewitch's worries about her students' low motivation.

### ***4.5.3 The Uniqueness of Bluewitch's EAP Theory***

#### **4.5.3.1 Bluewitch's EAP Concept**

In my first conversation with her, Bluewitch explained how she thought of other teachers' teach EAP: for example, one of her colleagues, who teaches register to students, holds a doctorate in genre studies, and frequently emphasises discourse analysis and asks students to keep records of all the words they encounter when reading; however, Bluewitch disagrees to the notion of simply teaching English linguistics or socio-linguistics in EAP classes.

Continuing on this topic, Bluewitch shared with me her understanding of EAP. She explained that EAP includes three aspects: scientific mentality (a set of thinking skills, including critical thinking, to do academic research), students' self-study management (such as note taking), and academic English. This clarifies why she disagrees to simply teaching English discourse analysis to EAP students. Bluewitch also pointed out that the definition of EAP should not be static and should be adjusted

*Selected excerpt translation: The ‘academic English literacy’ for undergraduate students in University B is a threeterm long course, which is not similar to teaching students (English) thesis writing as many people might misunderstand... EAP is an educational concept, consisting of language learning, thinking skills training and students’ learning behaviour management...for the newly recruited undergraduate students, (EAP) should aim at correcting their previous learning behaviours to avoid classroom crisis.*

**Fig. 4.7** Bluewitch’s definition of EAP

**Our EAP Spirit: Trustworthy, knowledge-seeking,  
truth-pursuing, willing to share!**

**Fig. 4.8** Bluewitch EAP spirit

to meet the needs of particular students; for example, the EAP needs of postgraduate students are different to those of undergraduates.

After I joined her WeChat official EAP account, I saw a more concrete and holistically defined expression of Bluewitch’s EAP concept (see Fig. 4.7):

A few days later, I noticed Bluewitch announced the EAP core spirit as in the following screenshot: “Trustworthy, knowledge-seeking, truth-pursuing, willing to share!”

From the moment I saw these concepts, I appreciated the literal meaning of Bluewitch’s EAP approach, but there remained some confusion with regard to the meaning, like a riddle in terms of understanding each aspect of EAP, such as the detail of students’ behaviours, the so-called classroom crisis, and the necessity to develop an EAP spirit. I understood that I was missing the necessary context to perceive fully the logic and reasons underpinning her meaning. When I connected with Bluewitch, the riddles were unveiled, and the development of Bluewitch’s EAP theory became apparent to me (Fig. 4.8).

#### **4.5.3.2 The Formation of Bluewitch’s EAP Theory: Deriving from Teaching**

In the first interview with her, when I was discussing popular EAP strands around the world, Bluewitch showed some unfamiliarity with them, but she shared with me her own EAP concepts, derived from her practice and reflections upon her teaching experiences. According to Bluewitch, she completed her BA and MA long time ago, her studies had little influence on her understanding of EAP. During my nearly one-year connection with Bluewitch, I came to understand her bumpy career experience, linking it to the formation of her EAP concepts and pedagogy (Table 4.2).

Reviewing her academic publications, it is not difficult to locate the focus of Bluewitch’s attention when teaching:

**Table 4.2** Bluewitch's publications in chronological order

Publication year	Topic (translation)
2003	<i>The optimisation of language input when teaching university students English vocabulary through multi-media</i>
2006	<i>An exploration of teachers' roles in autonomous English class in universities</i>
2007	<i>Understanding the influence of students' cognition in their second language vocabulary learning, from students' mistakes making in learning English vocabulary</i>
2010	<i>A narrative of distant English learners' motivation and challenges</i>
2012	<i>A study of the combination of autonomous English learning and assessment for learning</i>
2012	<i>A study of the correction of learners' over use of vocabulary in English writing</i>
2012	<i>The establishment of Forum-Mediated Collaborative Learning</i>
2013	<i>A Case of Instructional Design for EAP Writing Program of Undergraduates at Research-oriented Universities: The Development Mechanism of College English Teachers' ID Ability</i>
2015	<i>A sociocultural exploration of teaching academic English writing in universities: from the perspective of building students' scholarly identity</i>
2015	<i>Academic English Literacy Curriculum for undergraduate Students: a backwards design</i>

From her publications, we can identify several switches of emphasis in Bluewitch's English teaching; first, from paying attention to vocabulary, to autonomous learning, and then to online learning. After 2013, she started to engage with EAP. Based on the clues I found in her publications, I was curious about what led to her changes in direction, and why she turned to EAP.

#### 4.5.3.3 Recognising Students' Demotivation Prompting Bluewitch to Search for a Better English Teaching Approach as a Panacea

I recalled that Bluewitch once told me that the transformation in her approach to English language teaching was a process of linking emphasis on education and the EAP reform in Shanghai, which she considers to be consistent with this change: "I have been stressing that the EAP reform is actually a reform helping English language teaching in China universities to become a real act of education from being simply somewhat shallow pedagogy, and EAP itself is education" (Bluewitch interview 3). I then went on to explore the hidden reasons: "what made you keep on changing your interest of teaching?" She replied: "My purpose has always been to improve teaching". When I asked the question, we were at a party with Bluewitch's EAP team members, and another EAP teacher's interjection deepened the conversation: "When did you (Bluewitch) raise the idea of correcting students' learning behaviour?" (Bluewitch interview 3).

Confirming the Chinese English learners and teachers' limited language learning awareness, Bluewitch replied:

You know that English teaching in early days of China was teaching vocabulary... because (students and teachers) believed that vocabulary is the bottleneck to learning English... before students entered the universities, they should have finished learning English grammar, so the only obstacle students had when learning English was how to remember as many vocabularies as possible. (Bluewitch interview 3)

Having mentioned the background, Bluewitch recalled her original motivation to improve her teaching practices: "No matter how studious students tried to remember the vocabulary, they forgot it immediately, at very beginning I diagnosed such problems as memory or the cognitive challenges faced by students". With such puzzles in mind, Bluewitch applied for a visiting scholar position at the psychology department of the East China Normal University, in order to learn how human cognition works. Improving her psychological knowledge, she also started to compose research about her students in English class, although to her surprise, the students were neither interested nor cooperative: "during the experiments, I found the students were not cooperative at all. At that moment I realised that it is not the vocabulary or my teaching methods that matter; no matter what kinds of teaching method I choose, it will not improve their learning as long as they resist it, because they do not want it" (Bluewitch interview 3).

Another teacher commented: "there were several years that your relationship with students was uneasy". Bluewitch replied: "Yes, yes, yes, when I adopted new methods, they refused to accept them, and they wondered why their English lessons were becoming so difficult" (Bluewitch interview 3).

Reflecting on this experience further, Bluewitch determined that improving students' cognition is not a means to improve their motivation. Thus, she traced her difficulties back to the critical moment when students were recruited by the universities. She told me: "The biggest challenge our teaching is facing is students learning so as to pass examinations, without examinations they would not learn... they would not learn English until before the exams... learning behaviour correction aims at encouraging them to learn English every day as a hobby" (Bluewitch interview 3).

The first measure Bluewitch adopted to correct students' learning behaviours was to make use of popular social media online. The earliest form of social media she tried was online forums:

I actually started to use computer-assisted language teaching as early as 2010 to reform my teaching, when there was no EAP in my context; this was called forum-mediated cooperative learning, (besides using computer in class to increase students' input of English), I used BBS an online forum to engage students' communication after class (Bluewitch interview 2).

When connecting with her students online, Bluewitch posted English materials to drip-feed her students, and to encourage them to interact with one another. However, she found that until just before exams, students seldom used the forum. She later used Renren, another social media tool specifically designed for university students; however, this tool afforded very limited scope for uploading and sharing English materials. Having witnessed the limitations of Renren in 2012, Bluewitch moved

on to using QQ, a software tool that provides a large space for uploading materials for students to share. Today, employing similar theories to guide students' English language learning, Bluewitch uses WeChat to communicate EAP ideas to students.

#### **4.5.3.4 Experiencing Academic Misconduct and Realising the Significance of EAP**

In terms of working as a visiting scholar in East China Normal University, Bluewitch's original intention was to learn about human cognition and memory; however, the department she was affiliated with tended to emphasise statistics. The supervisor she followed arranged a doctoral student to teach her. Besides learning statistics, Bluewitch was also responsible for translating her supervisors' research papers into English and getting them published in international journals.

According to Bluewitch, this experience made her realise the possible lack of academic English skills among Chinese scholars, the significance of using academic English, the process of international publication, and how to communicate effectively with journal editors (Bluewitch interview 1). Most importantly, she was disappointed in the academic spirit of some Chinese scholars, resulting in her strong intention to teach academic English and nurture students, as future scholars, and responsible academics:

I asked her, "What suddenly made you have the idea of teaching EAP in university?"

Bluewitch replied:

In 2008, I self-funded as a visiting scholar in East China University learning quantitative methods for two years, during which time I helped to write two research papers written in English: the first paper was written by an undergraduate student in Chinese, I revised it in English and modified it following the journal editors' suggestions; the second paper was theorised and partially written by me and the data was collected from my students. However, my name only appeared on one of them as the fourth author. Therefore, I cut off the relationship with the supervisor, but this bad experience gave me holistic concepts about academic English, the paper publication process, and communication with editors. The psychology department at the East China Normal University is a pioneering university in China, but the scholars there still have shortcomings in academic English, so by then I had realised the importance of academic English, though I did not know there was a term for it: EAP. (Bluewitch online interview, Dec, 2015)

#### **4.5.3.5 Gaining an International Outlook: The Perfection of Bluewitch's EAP Theory and Pedagogy**

After returning home from the East China Normal University, Bluewitch was bullied by her department heads when applying for a professorship. She was angry and left to become a visiting scholar in the education department at a university in Florida, U.S. During her studies, she found undergraduates in the US began their thesis writing

and project work in the first year of study, and she contrasted this with the university students in China who were cramming for exams. Bluewitch thought there was a gap between Chinese university students' learning styles acquired in high school, and the requirements for academic studies at international universities; because, many Chinese university students were expected to participate in international competitions. When studying in the US, Bluewitch also found university itself overly academic, and noted that students should learn academic skills while enrolled. This awareness later formulated her view of "academic", as an important component of EAP (English for academic purposes).

In a WeChat post on 31st July 2016, Bluewitch arranged a question–answer session, in which she explained the meaning of "academic", thus "University is academic". Similarly, in a post on 10th of September, Bluewitch reminded her students to think about the meaning of university: "Rather than how I should spend the four years at university, I (newlyenrolled university student) should think about what university is, and what does it mean to me. Such a definition (of university) is a core component of her theory. By figuring out what (is meant by university), we come to understand how (to spend our time there)."

Later Bluewitch explained the function of her EAP teaching was to bridge the gap between the university courses in China (which emphasise knowledge accumulation) and university courses internationally (which promote academic research): "The reason we offer EAP reform is to give you a tool to master resources from world renowned institutes; EAP is the bridge for equipping you with an international horizon; you should not be aiming at merely passing CET-4 and 6". The above quotations were translated from the below screenshot of Bluewitch communicating with her students in an online discussion.

The supervisor Bluewitch learned from was a professor of language and literacy; however, the term "literacy" initially confused Bluewitch, as she could not find corresponding words or phrases in the Chinese dictionary. However, this notion of literacy later bequeathed her an entire pedagogy, helping her to realise her dream of nurturing Chinese students' academic English and pioneering spirits: "I was wondering: what is literacy? I was searching for meaning and observing his lessons, then I thought literacy might be something based in language but with a meaning above language" (Bluewitch interview 2) (Table 4.3).

After returning to Shanghai, she indeed embedded literacy into her EAP as depicted in the table.

#### 4.5.3.6 Returning to China and Establishing an EAP Utopia

Having had international experience, Bluewitch gradually crystallised her mission back home: bridging the gap for students in China and relative to university education in the world. She then wrote up a research proposal based on her studies in the United States, and applied for a large amount of research funding from the education ministry to support her EAP academic literacy theory and pedagogy building: "I returned to Shanghai in the Summer of 2013, I started to work on my EAP project in 2014, and

**Table 4.3** Three-phased evaluation criterion of EAP curriculum literacy. Translated from Bluewitch's publication in Xth edition 20XX, XX (coded journal name and publication date)

Stage	Teaching target	Evaluation criterion (measurable behaviour based on a specific teaching target)
First half of the semester for freshmen/transition program with four credits	Literacy in language	Mastery of recognition of vocabulary items numbering more than 4500 and reading strategies such as skimming and scanning. Fast-reading of articles more than 1000 words to extract key information and textual logic. Conclusion about main idea for a five-minute lecture. Grasp of knowledge of cognitive styles like cause-result, argumentation, illustration and contrast, as well as writing competency on summary
	Literacy of thought	Early cultivation of advanced logical consciousness. Mastery of fundamental cognitive skills establishing critical ways of thinking (searching, screening, interpretation, extraction and conclusion on both visual and auditory information) to apply for summary writing in an effective manner
	Literacy in Study management	Basic correction of test-oriented study behaviour to form a study awareness initiative and develop the identity of active academic English learners

(continued)

**Table 4.3** (continued)

Stage	Teaching target	Evaluation criterion (measurable behaviour based on a specific teaching target)
The second half of the semester for freshmen/medium curriculum with four credits	Literacy in language	Mastery of recognition of vocabulary items numbering more than 6500 and output knowledge of Coxhead's list of 570 academic word families. Reading an original English article with a length of no less than 2000 words to collate relative information and textual logic and to acquire basic knowledge of multi-disciplinary cultures. Listening comprehension and note taking over a fifteen-minute period. Grasp of knowledge of different social genres such as report, news, speech, book review, editorial and literature as well as writing competency based on self-made topics and multiple source materials
	Literacy of thought	Establishment of cognitive knowledge on advanced logic ability; Mastery of advanced cognitive skills for critical ways of thinking (extraction, comparison, integration and evaluation of multi-sources visual and auditory information as well as formation of an independent viewpoint) to effectively apply for material composition
	Literacy in study management	Formation of initiative and a reflective study mode and familiarity with the Internet-based personal study environment

(continued)

**Table 4.3** (continued)

Stage	Teaching target	Evaluation criterion (measurable behaviour based on a specific teaching target)
<p>The first half of the semester for sophomores/improving the curriculum with two credits</p>	<p>Literacy of language</p>	<p>Mastery of recognition vocabulary items numbering more than 8500 words. Reading academic journals and literature on social sciences to gain knowledge of textual structures. Listening comprehension and note taking during lectures lasting over twenty minutes. Writing skills and coding knowledge for short essays based on the program, and a substantial boost in lexical density and complexity (academic words, usage amount of nominalisation phrases); PPT statement and poster displays on documentary information and search results</p>
	<p>Literacy of thought</p>	<p>Flexible application of critical logic to each segment of short essays from proposals, data collection, analysis and records, as well as concluding reports</p>
	<p>Literacy in study management</p>	<p>Sound communications on group writing, program planning and self-monitoring management; development of digital literacy, such as management, storage and withdrawal of digitalised information</p>

I created the three pronged (the aforementioned) literacy framework” (Bluewitch interview 2).

Meanwhile, the Shanghai Education Bureau was advocating EAP reform in universities, so Bluewitch went to communicate her idea to the chairperson of the reform: “I went to visit him in October 2014, and he confirmed my theory and pedagogy, and he also absorbed my concept of teaching critical thinking in EAP... he (the chairperson of the reform) had never considered the idea of (critical thinking) until I shared with him my three elements of literacy, of which critical thinking is an important factor” (Bluewitch interview 2). When visiting him, Bluewitch encouraged him to speak for her and promote her notion of academic literacy, and so the chairperson eventually arranged an EAP conference at Bluewitch’s university, inviting scholars across the country: “I used his voice to advocate my theory, and he decided to hold the conference in my workplace, and he said: ‘you can promote your three semester (EAP) course” (Bluewitch interview 2). Since then, Bluewitch’s EAP pedagogy has attracted many colleagues from other universities to learn from her.

#### **4.5.3.7 Involving a War: Calling on EAP to Nurture Students’ Academic Spirit**

Bluewitch told me a story about the conflict she experienced within her department, which influenced her formulation of an EAP theory:

I could never foresee that by doing such studies (EAP research) could involve making enemies with everybody. Do you know my situation? Even on the university bus, not a single teacher dared to sit beside me, because they feared they would be noticed by the heads in our department. They did not want to show their friendliness to me... sitting beside me as equals being hostile to the heads. (Bluewitch interview 2)

This saddened her as it reflected the Chinese scholars’ spirits, leading her to feel very disappointed.

Relating to the first interview, Bluewitch’s disappointment was not an exaggeration. Although the department heads knew that EAP was beneficial to students, they forbade Bluewitch to print the title EAP on examination papers, they did not allow Bluewitch and her colleagues to teach their EAP course in the university publicly. The teachers in Bluewitch’s EAP team had to keep their EAP teaching confined to their classrooms. Bluewitch also told me the department stopped her from using her preferred EAP textbook. According to Bluewitch, this was because the department purchased the textbook from a fixed publisher, and if the textbook were changed, the university’s and the publisher’s benefits would be affected.

As mentioned above, in April 2016, Bluewitch visited her sick daughter in the United States. During this time, the department chose to cancel the course and disband the EAP team. Hearing this news, Bluewitch was shocked. She took her daughter back to Shanghai before she had planned to deal with the sudden cancellation of the course. She wrote a letter on WeChat’s official account, calling for attention and assistance from society:

***Who can save academic English at University B?***

*My colleagues and classmates who have long close their eyes on this platform must know some of the reasons why Blue Witch returned to the Motherland with her daughter ahead of schedule: she wanted to deliver a formal communication to the managerial level at the foreign language school of university B regarding the survival of the literacy curriculum for English for Academic Purposes (EAP).*

*Once in Atlanta, a glimpse of a silver lining cheered her up as the university's EAP supporters stood up to safeguard their EAP classes, and looking at WeChat, the President left Bluewitch a text message saying 'I really expect to see you will revive EAP education at university B, and please free to find me if you have any difficulty.'*

*However, life is so changeable.*

*Now five days have passed, and despite her demands for a discussion by sending WeChat messages and emails for several times, she has received no responses as yet. Due to the President's concern, four Deans finally showed up at the school of foreign language for the hearing, but it is regrettable that this failed to change the decision of the school's top management about cancelling the EAP literacy curriculum.*

*Ultimately, the undergraduate educational reform curriculum which relies on tasks subsidized by funds for national social science, runs with the financial assistance from the university's teaching affairs office over three years. How can this decline in such a groundless way?*

*A spontaneously founded teaching team, which grows positively without concern for returns, is crowned a "so-called team" like this. How can it take control of its destiny?*

*A professor doesn't have any power over the academic discourse in his own class. Is this an individual case or prevalent in Chinese higher education?*

*The Humanity Forum of Polytechnic School of University B is actively organised by students from EAP association. Where does it go?*

*After two days, Bluewitch will return to her EAP classes. How will she face her students?*

*Bluewitch, founder of this platform, seeks help for educational reform field of EAP nationwide!*

*Seeks help from all EAP supporters!*

*Seeks help from the public media and society overall!*

In order to let more people to understand the comings and goings arising from the conflicts, Bluewitch made public a letter she had written to negotiate with the department heads:

*Thank you for your concern, Dean Z. Please forgive me if any misunderstanding has occurred in our communication. Here comes my explanation. In light of conflict between the teaching team and managerial level, which may be traced back to March last year, when an EAP teacher's conference was being prepared, and the foreign language school refused to attend. The President, Mr. Y, in an attempt to coordinate but in vain, finally appointed a publishing house to undertake this activity. And Mr. Z, the head of press and Mr. D, chief editor, as persons involved, all clarified the sense of the whole process. Until 9th May, when we met at university B, President Yu allocated funds and made a speech with the attendance of Mr. B, general secretary. However, in line with the absence of all leadership of school and the presence of 169 teachers nationwide, I promoted the EAP literacy curriculum. Another two statements followed from C, a Professor at Fudan University and N Professor of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU). Meanwhile, two trainers from the University of Leicester were invited to give us presentation. Afterwards, I was criticised for my reckless behaviour of skipping grades, and since then I have been treated by the leaders in senior management as a stranger with no greetings between us. The problem the second time was ignited by an application for an EAP test site. After I made an inquiry to many departments such as Departments of Science and Technology, Teaching Affairs and the Computer Centre, all rendered me support. Regrettably, without the signature of the Assistant Dean of the Foreign Language School, all attendees had to be scattered to their dormitories to finish the examination, and the resultant inaccessibility of the Internet led to student complaints. The third occasion was in the last semester, when none of the EAP teachers were examined for teaching quality by sitting in class with other college English teachers. After that, it was reported that some problems had emerged mainly because teaching contents differed completely from the target. The teachers on our team, under enormous mental pressure, immediately announced they would standardise the test, which led to the consequence that we not only lost independent right to set questions for exams in experimental classes, but they even failed to mark the title of the exam paper as academic. From then on, I sought a face-to-face talk with leaders on the issue of teaching-quality and examination response, while X also wrote E-mails, but we got no response. The fourth point was stirred up by the incident on the department's website, when a school-level leader made a work report, which hurt us greatly, in which he emphasised the many problems with EAP educational reform, casting doubt on teacher's qualifications in public. The fifth time relates to the recent news that the top management has decided to cancel the literacy curriculum and change it to an optional course. Members of the EAP association voluntarily protected their courses by sending WeChat messages and going to their classrooms to solicit public support. Many of them felt very agitated by the quarrels that were caused. As EAP had been introduced by the latest policy paper issued by Ministry of Education, universities all over the*

*nation were ready to engage in an experimental reform. University B would have taken the lead had the above events not occurred, and so I sincerely hope that our university may develop its own justified identity to avoid future contradictions and misunderstandings (Translation of Bluewitch's letter).*

After several months' struggle, in which Bluewitch carefully explained the importance of EAP to the department, it was necessary for the University's Principal and Registrar to intervene. They agreed to allow a quota of 450 students to study EAP; however, the remaining teachers in the EAP team decided to withdraw and the EAP team was eventually disbanded. The tale was very theatrical, and Bluewitch's revealed her strengthening suspicion that Chinese scholars' lack an academic spirit:

The external reason why our team was disbanded was the objection from those in a managerial position, but the internal reason was our member teachers. They did not realise the essence of EAP, they did not have an ontological understanding of EAP. If EAP had become a justified belief, even a self-justified belief, they would not have forsaken their lessons in response to an objection from the departmental heads. (Bluewitch online interview).

The experience of conflicts with the department made Bluewitch aware of the importance of spreading a scholarly spirit among students, future scholars, through their EAP lessons. She was concerned that the teachers, even in her EAP team, lacked the academic values of pursuing truth and rationality. She felt that though they were called scholars, they acted as temperamental intellectuals without an ethical stance. Reflecting on this, she started to blur her understanding of how to define and nurture students' academic spirit in EAP lessons: "(in order to establish) the identity of scholar, (students have to understand that) scholars are not intellectuals; scholars' only stance is truth-pursuing and freedom-seeking, but intellectuals have changeable stances (Bluewitch online observation)". After the breakup of her EAP team and the objections she faced from her university, Bluewitch continued teaching EAP unofficially, calling herself a self-sponsored teacher, and her teaching practice moved to WeChat online, although she taught the course required by the university in her classroom (Fieldnote with Bluewitch, 26 May 2016). Many of her planned EAP activities were organised by the students' association to avoid attracting criticism from the university.

During this fight, she not only met with colleagues and intellectuals but also scholars and politicians. Under these circumstances, Bluewitch created two sets of concepts for her EAP definition, in other words, establishing a set of long-term goals for her EAP pedagogy: "academic honesty, knowledge-seeking, truth-pursuing, willingness to share".

In order to offer her students such qualities, she merged her EAP pedagogy with the aforementioned core spirits and announced her course aimed at nurturing students' academic identity as scholars. Bluewitch believed that only by having an identity as scholars, could students gather sufficient motivation to learn EAP; Bluewitch emphasised that every component of her EAP lessons revolved around establishing a scholarly identity:

Bluewitch:

I just feel establishing a scholarly identity among students is the everlasting mission of EAP teaching; if they (students) consider themselves as scholars and are proud of such an identity, my EAP teaching is successful. Because the more students learn language or words, the quicker they forget; but an established identity is permanent, they may be motivated to learn later on. (Bluewitch interview 3)

#### **4.5.3.8 Winning Opportunities for University-Enterprise Cooperation: The Spring of EAP**

Engulfed in the above situation, and engaged in a persistent struggle, it was not until the end of 2016 that Bluewitch was able to send me a piece of good news. She informed me that the university Chancellor gave her EAP club the opportunity to bid for a long-term translation project organised by the Chinese Academy of Engineering. After some effort, they won the bid: “the Chancellor earmarked funding for our club, and gave us the translation task from the Chinese Academy of Engineering, he also helped us establish a place for EAP student interns, named ‘Daoqi EAPC technological translation group’” (Bluewitch online interview, August 2016).

For Bluewitch, this activity revived her EAP course; moreover, it symbolised the recognition of the university: “such establishment of EAP internship places equal recognition from the university regardless of the obstacles put in place by my department”. Therefore, the Daoqi EAPC translation group, led by Bluewitch, quickly advocated activities of different kinds, engaging the students in devoting time to academic translation after completing the EAP course. Bluewitch’s EAP course was finally on its way to establishing EAP students’ identities as scholars in real disciplines.

#### **4.5.3.9 EAP: An Act of Changing from Pedagogy to Education**

As concluded by Bluewitch, her EAP trial symbolised switching from simply pedagogy to education, as demonstrated in the screenshot below of a post from Bluewitch’s EAP official account:

We cannot change the title of course, because it will directly influence the establishment of students’ scholarly identity, when people have identity, they will have a sense of belonging, and then a motivation and passion to study. Our course is an attempt from a pedagogical perspective to support education; we should expand every effort to encourage the literacy of “sincerity, knowledge-seeking, truth-pursuing, and willingness to share (Bluewitch online observation).

EAP theory and Bluewitch’s pedagogy did not diverge from her original intention to improve students’ motivation to learn English: “you (students) are scholars, you should study like this (EAP), then you (students) may realise the reason; it is not the teachers that ask us to learn; it is your identity” (Bluewitch interview 3).

#### ***4.5.4 What Does Bluewitch Think About the EAP Reform and the EAP Courses Offered at Other Similar Universities?***

During all my interviews and casual chats with Bluewitch, we inevitably covered EAP in China and how teachers teach EAP in universities other than Bluewitch's. Bluewitch reported that "EAP scholars in China had not made clear the meaning of EAP before they engaged in the fighting (over whether EAP should be taught across universities)" (Bluewitch interview 3). Bluewitch also admitted that EAP pedagogy is only a more fundamental form of EAP, "if EAP teaching is actually responsible for nurturing students' research capabilities, only disciplinary teachers teaching students in the same discipline can provide the utmost efficiency; but our EAP course is more fundamental... our students are either in their first year or second year at university" (Bluewitch interview 3).

When I mentioned Fielding and his colleagues, we required that business major students to complete research project and design questionnaires, Bluewitch replied: "our students are in the majors of polytechnic, is it applicable for them to design questionnaires... it is not realistic" (Bluewitch interview 2). Furthermore, in the first interview, Bluewitch demonstrated her preferences in EAP teaching; i.e. making EAP not only an English language course. She also used to have a teaching partner who preferred teaching genre studies to EAP students, and her partner often asked students to complete discourse analyses and remember all the words they encountered. However, Bluewitch added many digital literacy components to her EAP courses, and ultimately the differences ended this partnership.

#### ***4.5.5 The Features of Bluewitch's EAP Course***

Just as Bluewitch told me, when confined by the department policies, her idealised EAP pedagogy could not be applied in the classroom. As was reflected in my observation, Bluewitch had to teach CET-6 mock test papers, while teaching EAP informally via WeChat. The EAP activities Bluewitch organised, were resisted by the department. For example, after I visited the university as a scholar from Hong Kong, Bluewitch was criticised by the department for inviting scholars from overseas without permission from the university. Thus, Bluewitch had to stop organising EAP activities herself, and so she established an EAP student association so the student members of the association could organise activities proposed by Bluewitch.

Generally speaking, Bluewitch adopted a mixed learning mode teaching EAP, and she effectively used resources inside and outside the class. As I stated previously, she used WeChat flexibly, as an approach to diffusing EAP knowledge, and the course she devised includes a variety of themes; for example, critical thinking training, academic vocabulary revision, knowledge of the world outside, EAP

pilot class summer school, Daoqi EAPC news and student communications. Bluewitch successfully utilised campus resources such as the Daoqi EAPC to organise academic conferences and English competitions to encourage students to get more involved into academic output. Similarly, Bluewitch also proactively imported social resources, such as inviting scholars (myself included) to communicate with students regarding the importance of EAP and students' studies at the university. Most importantly, she let students participate in academic translation projects related to their disciplines.

## 4.6 Case Study 4: Rui

### 4.6.1 *Life History of Rui*

Born in Henan province, Rui is a loving person highly engaged in reading and thinking. She had studied extremely hard due to fierce competition for National College Examinations. During the examination preparation period, she rose at around five o'clock every morning to recite short articles printed on English test papers. She was admitted to Shanghai International Studies University to study advertising, minoring in English. During her undergraduate studies, she kept reading English literature, ranging from prose to Russell's book. Generally speaking, Rui concludes that she prefers to read thought-provoking literature. Even today, she uses Russell's work to teach EAP. Due to her background in advertising, she did not write theses in English as an undergraduate, so she later studied an MA in cognitive linguistics. Rui became quickly accustomed to writing academic theses in English, and Rui explained that her quick adaptation to this was partially due to learning from Russell's work and other researchers' literature in the field of cognitive linguistics. Her MA dissertation did not involve conducting any empirical studies.

After graduation, Rui was recruited to the university where she now works. Rui said to me: "after graduation, my interests returned to English literature, if I ever do my doctorate, I will be researching comparative literature" (Rui interview 3). Based on her knowledge of English literature, Rui formulated a set of EAP teaching methodologies to provoke students' critical thinking in reference to literature. For example, she sometimes uses sentences by Confucius or Taoist to start an EAP class, she also uses Socratic questioning to encourage students' in-depth thinking and debate. After some EAP teaching demonstration, Rui's EAP teaching was admired and praised by her colleagues across Shanghai, and she was awarded first prize for EAP teaching by the Shanghai education bureau after her demonstration.

As well as teaching EAP by referring to classic literature, Rui also uses emotional teaching methods in her EAP classes. She quotes "the essence of education is a soul waking up another" (Rui interview 3). She also likes to spend time tutoring each of her EAP students face-to-face, despite the fact that this takes up her personal time, because she believes it not only enhances students' learning effectiveness, but also

increases the teacher–student emotional connection and cooperation. She has also been awarded an EAP teaching excellence award by the Shanghai education bureau.

### ***4.6.2 My Two Years of Contact with Rui***

Befitting the nature of reflexivity, this section provides a first-person account of the researcher’s relationship with Rui. In 2014, I got to know Rui through a roommate at Edinburgh University, as they were both colleagues and friends. Before I met Rui, I had heard from my roommate that she was a poetic and versatile teacher, who worked extremely hard. After her university had commenced the EAP reform, she was appointed as the star EAP lecture, with the result that her work pressure doubled squeezing her sleeping time, while all her salary and welfare remained unimproved. Aware of her stress, I was, on the one hand, curious about her stance in relation to the EAP reform, but on the other concerned about whether Rui would be happy to be my research participant. After my roommate’s proactive recommendation, I finally met Rui and her husband in a restaurant close to her house; I prepared a gift in advance expressing my thanks. After some time spent waiting, Rui arrived, dressed in a simple down jacket, with a tinge of fatigue on her face. Rui was polite and nervous, acting in a guarded way, particularly when answering my questions. Even though I convinced her that the information she provided to me would only be used for my own research, and would not be revealed to any other teacher in Shanghai. When I attempted to join her WeChat after the interview, she refused me saying she only used WeChat for her family. Before our second meeting, three months later, she occasionally sent me some files, and I sent her festival greetings whenever possible in order to win her trust.

The second meeting was during the Spring festival of 2015, when I took the train to Shanghai to specially to meet with her, and prepared some questions. With my roommate and his wife for company, we chose a Starbucks for the interview. Rui was reserved in terms of sharing her opinions when answering my questions about the Shanghai EAP reform, but when I asked about her classroom activities and personal history, she did not show any reluctance to speak. The third meeting was held in November 2015, and after such a long time connection, Rui and I had become friends to some extent, and she had become accustomed to me, and trusted that my research would not impact negatively on her. Although I also invited my roommate to participate in our meetings, I felt Rui did not bottle up her real feelings about the situation, and she shared with us a lot of her experiences in class and her opinions about EAP. After the meeting, she gave me some contact details of her students, allowing me to interview them. At this time, I asked her if I could also observe her teaching, and she agreed. However, after that meeting, when I returned to Hong Kong to prepare for my thesis examination I heard that she was pregnant and had started her maternity leave, so unfortunately, I did not have an opportunity to observe her class. However, Rui did send me some portions of her teaching diary for reference purposes.

### ***4.6.3 Rui's Understanding of EAP***

In the third interview, after hearing so much about Rui's EAP teaching techniques, I encouraged her to share her opinions about EAP, and she suggested two aspects: thinking and academic expression. She claimed, "when teaching EAP, I believe the most important issue is to teach a kind of thinking"; another aspect she mentioned was that "simultaneous, academic expression has to be equally stressed, because students are not doing well in this aspect" (Rui interview 3). She gave an example of the integration of the both aspects in an EAP class: "in each chapter, after I teach them the vocabulary they need to remember (as input), I would then integrate thinking training, when they started to think and discuss, I would tell them how to express themselves more academically, and how to avoid informal expressions" (Rui interview 3).

### ***4.6.4 The Difference Between EGP and EAP***

For Rui, the primary difference is the emphasis between the two. EGP concerns vocabulary and grammar: "Let me share some of my feeling towards EAP and EGP, like my own teachers, in the first year of my teaching (EGP), I spent much time teaching language, sometimes a little about culture, but I could never teach beyond them, I did not encourage my students to develop their thinking (like I do in EAP class)" (Rui interview 3). However, "in EAP lessons, I started to engage in a somewhat big change: I let students participate classroom discussion, enlightened them to think from different angles... another issue is to broaden their horizons or raise their awareness that there exist different opinions on different issues" (Rui interview 2).

### ***4.6.5 Rui's Opinion on Shanghai EAP Reform***

To Rui whether this reform will be successful depends on the proviso that "a good EAP (curriculum) should satisfy students' needs" (Rui interview 2). Without this, Rui explains, students' motivation might be overlooked, resulting in problems carrying out effective EAP teaching. Having mentioned this, Rui then gave me an example of a counterpart university that has conducted an EAP reform: "the flipped EAP class in \*\*university is not catering for the demotivated Chinese students... their expected outcomes might not be reached. Without ensuring the capability of students, EAP teaching cannot be guaranteed" (Rui interview 2). "I know that this reform was to improve students' ability to carry out academic research... just like the example he (the policy-maker) often raised of a student named Liu Lu... Liu Lu was good at mathematics even world class, but just due to her weakness in academic English, she could not spread her ideas around the world..." (Rui interview 2). Rui disputed

the assertion that policy maker's intention to use EAP to replace EGP would benefit most students; rather she believed it was originally directed at an elite group: "what would be the proportion of Liu Lu-like students in the whole population? He should have made the position clearer" (Rui interview 2). Rui also unveiled a problematic issue concerning training students' academic thinking:

[Y]ou want the students to have a somewhat in-depth thinking capability, which could be attained only by large amount of reading, but our students are busy studying their disciplines, even if I recommend them English books to read, they do not have time... My conundrum is that my students are so busy, I noticed that their timetable is packed... they won't spend time on English after class, when there are only 4-6-hour English lessons per week... they lack the drive and motivation to do extracurricular reading, nor do they have enough time. (Rui interview 2)

Rui also criticised the Shanghai EAP reform as over reliant on teaching skills: "this reform is... prone to nurture students' skills". Rui expressed anxiety that such a skill-based tendency is contrary to the humanistic nature of education:

He (the policy maker) was positive that the EAP reform was practical... He never mentioned how the humanity of students could be improved by learning such a course... he particularly published an essay claiming if university English courses only pay attention to humanity they are failing... I personally prefer a combination of both (skill and humanity). (Rui interview 3)

As a participant teacher involved in the EAP reform, Rui complained the reform was so sudden that teachers were uncertain about what and how to teach in EAP: "He (the policy maker) is also aware that the teachers are not ready, so he organised many EAP teacher training activities, like the teaching demonstration last year... however, what is your (policy maker) purpose?" Hearing that I pondered this for a few seconds, realising that the training Rui mentioned did not make her EAP teaching concept clear, and in order to test my hypothesis, I asked: "you did not learn a specific method from him, did you?" "Yes", she said: "we learned from each other (by demonstrating teaching), but what would be the next step we should take?" (Rui interview 3).

#### ***4.6.6 Using the Classics to Enlighten Students' Thinking***

Socratic questioning is one of the methods Rui often uses to develop her student's critical thinking. In the first interview, Rui told me how she implemented this method: in a class, she asks students to study a passage about lifelong learning; as a warm-up, she keeps asking questions to challenge her students' opinions until the students are convinced (the author's reflection of Rui's first interview). Apart from Socrates' questions, Rui intends to choose philosophers' work, such as Russell's, for the following reasons: "1. He (Russell) is a literate, his words are trustworthy, easy-to-follow and with beauty; 2. He is also a mathematician with strong logic, which could help teaching students to think critically; 3. He is also a philosopher, who can develop thinking and discussions over a sentence or an issue" (Rui interview 3).

### ***4.6.7 Using Emotion to Teach***

Rui's colleagues commented that she is a teacher who uses emotion to teach. It is a very high complement, Rui thought such a comment is applicable to her, because she normally spends time giving individual feedback to every student: "after I assign them topics to prepare as homework, I tell them how to write in general, and when they've finished writing, I would ask them to visit my office and give them one-to-one feedback" (Rui interview 3). Rui reflected that such tutoring encouraged students to develop a deeper understanding of the questions, and more importantly, according to Rui, this method "could build an intimate teacher-student relationship, with such an emotional connection, that even the classroom activities are boring, they will still cooperate" (Rui interview 3).

### ***4.6.8 The Influence of Rui's Background on Her EAP Teaching***

Rui's background has a strong impact on her EAP teaching, the most obvious factor is her reading practices, which have helped her to formulate many of her teaching concepts, just as when she made the comment: "I still keep the habit of reading, I particularly like reading thought provoking articles... I remember a professor once said that English major students were prone to be short of thinking, so I can deal with such a lack" (Rui interview 3).

## **4.7 Summary**

This chapter found that each teacher experience investigated led to a different journey of pedagogic transition. Fielding was interested in English, and later in international higher education, became a believer in learning by doing. After years of EGP teaching, he accumulated a wealth of observational data about his students and abundant teaching experiences. When working as an EAP course coordinator, he adopted a project-based EAP pedagogy. Lisa, when majoring in philosophy, and later in applied linguistics, found herself unable to publish in international academic journals while studying in the UK; however, after learning the genre and register she made progress. Based on this experience, she returned to teach EAP and during the process, she found her EAP course lacked humanity. Bluewitch was dedicated to improving teaching efficiency, and she sought different methods to do so but all ended up in vain. After she studied at a US university and experienced conflicts with her colleagues, she found the lack of a scholarly identity made her students demotivated and her colleagues irresponsible. Therefore, she designed an EAP course, aiming to establish her students' scholarly identities, based on literacy concepts learned in the US. However,

her EAP course and associated team members were oppressed by her university, and after years of fighting, she created a course online and used many social resources to support it. Rui was very interested in reading literature and philosophy, and used classic texts to enlighten students' critical thinking and tried to establish good relationships with her students. By familiarizing myself with these four teachers, I had an absolutely new vision of CETs and their pedagogical transition to EAP. The original description of CETs in the literature review and CETs' reluctant ability to teaching EAP I used to hold was to a large extent modified. The next chapter aims to report and analyse the modified interpretation of the CETs transiting to EAP teaching, and the discussion would revolve around three themes by answering three research questions.

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# Chapter 5

## Discussion



### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to answer three research questions to provide an anthropological interpretation of the CETs transiting to teach EAP: RQ1. How do teachers in a pedagogical transition from EGP formulate their epistemology of EAP? RQ2. How does the transition from EGP to EAP influence teachers? RQ3. How do teachers perceive the challenges and opportunities posed by the Shanghai EAP reform? Clues are collected from systematic data comparison within each case study and cross-cases comparison, and integrated with the related literature to formulate holistic answers to the questions, under relevant subheadings. However, it should be noted that all the discussions are based on the existing four cases, and the conclusions made in this chapter may not be generalised to other teachers or contexts.

### 5.2 How Do the Teachers in a Pedagogical Transition from EGP Formulate Their Epistemology of EAP?

As stated in previous chapters, the majority of the empirical studies relating to EAP teachers in pedagogical transitions from EGP/EFL to EAP have been conducted in the UK. Moreover, the published materials or guidelines for EAP teachers in different settings vary in terms of how prescriptive they are (Ding & Campion, 2016). In addition, there is a lack of empirical data collected from students and teachers of EAP in China (Cheng, 2016); similarly, there is a limited body of published work seeking to understand EAP teachers in pedagogical transition (Ding & Campion, 2016). In order to understand the teachers, and most importantly to assist them to adapt quickly to the new EAP pedagogy, knowing their EAP epistemology is essential.

### ***5.2.1 Knowledge of EAP Is from the Teachers' Eclectic Theories and Experiences***

From the collected data, I observed that the creation of the teachers' EAP knowledge was not just acquired from referring to published theories or books, and nor did it originate from participants engaged in EAP teacher training sessions; for example, "there was not a guideline or document telling us how we should teach EAP" (Fielding). However, the investigated teachers' knowledge of EAP did produce somewhat eclectic products from their respective evaluation of the status quo, their own experience of academic research, educational philosophy and their worldview.

In terms of evaluation of students' status quo, research participant Fielding commented on the dissatisfaction directed towards the current education system for its influence on students:

I want them to become proactive participants rather than what they are in their foundation education years, to accept whatever the authority offers... from the hangover of foundational education in China, Chinese students are used to a state of being passive learners, or consider themselves as receivers, accustomed to being treated as containers (of knowledge) by others (Fielding interview 2).

Differing from Fielding, Rui stated, "I remember a professor who once said that English major students were prone to be short of thinking, so I can deal with such a lack" (Rui interview 3). Another example is Bluewitch, who discovered that "the biggest challenge our teaching is facing is students learning to pass examinations, without examinations they would not learn... they would not learn English until before the exams..." (Bluewitch interview 3), though other issues were also raised by the study participants.

Understanding the characteristics of their students, the teachers interviewed were able to provide a more contextualised EAP pedagogy to cater to their students' needs. As narrated in the previous chapter, Fielding designed a project-based learning EAP pedagogy to socialise his students and encourage them to become proactive learners. Meanwhile, Rui adopted Russell's articles and Socratic questioning to enlighten her students about how to think in her EAP lessons, and Bluewitch attempted to construct a researcher's identity for her EAP students, in order to improve their motivation.

In terms of the academic experience investigated by the teachers when formulating their eclectic EAP knowledge, the majority agreed that they had acquired ideas about EAP from research-related experiences. For example, Fielding reported that when he was told he would be teaching EAP he "started to think about what academic purposes are and to refer to our (his) own learning experience (in postgraduate levels)" (Fielding interview 2). Lisa's case was even more quintessential; when studying in Birmingham as a visiting scholar, her essay was refused by academic journal editors many times, and later she overcame this problem by imitating others and "learning the patterns used in published work"; or in her own words, EAP means "pretend(ing) to be academic" (Lisa interview 1). Her work was ultimately accepted; therefore, from her perspective, research and publication experience symbolically qualify her as an EAP teacher: "I feel many teachers nowadays, including some of my

colleagues in our department, may not have a deep understanding of those academic patterns, unless they have some publication experience” (Lisa interview 1). Based on their own academic experience, Fielding and Lisa co-designed an experiential learning environment for their EAP students to conduct research and write essays, which assisted them when formulating EAP pedagogies for use in their universities. Differing from them, the academic experience of Bluewitch, a full professor, led her to realise the meaning and challenges of being a scholar as she was herself fighting for her academic autonomy; thus, she includes scholarly virtue as a lesson to be learned by all her EAP students.

The EAP knowledge of the investigated teachers was also related to the teachers’ educational philosophy. For instance, Rui as an awardee of the Shanghai EAP teacher award deeply believed that her EAP teaching was education, in which education means “one soul waking up another”, thus she exhibited the characteristics of emotional teaching when engaging with her learners, as discussed in the previous chapter. Fielding, as a believer in Dewey’s learning by doing, led an experiential feature project based on EAP pedagogy. Lisa’s disapproval of the utilitarianism of higher education helped her prescribe the utilitarian tendency of the Shanghai EAP reform and pedagogy, and to add more human content into her teaching and she pointed out that:

[T]his (EAP is a tool to hone academic research, which is potentially beneficial to humanity) is what people failed to understand in EAP, and it is what the policymaker (of Shanghai EAP reform) failed to do... he (the policymaker) merely focused on how to improve students’ academic essay writing, but if we dig into the concept deeper... there is a lot to do (Lisa interview 2).

Bluewitch believes that “university is academic” and many scholars she met in Chinese universities lack a scholarly spirit; and therefore, forming students’ scholarly identity became a key goal of her EAP pedagogy.

Furthermore, teachers’ eclectic EAP knowledge was also formulated by their view of the world, (international education, academics and/or job hunting). For example, Fielding has experience teaching the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), a university entry requirement to study in most Commonwealth countries and North American countries, so he has more experience of teaching students academic English in EAP. Furthermore, Fielding did his Master’s dissertation in the field of higher education in Australia, and read abundant literature regarding international higher education and foreign society, so he is clear of what his EAP students might encounter in their future work or academic studies. As he himself said: “the core of EAP, as I understand, is students being able to use English to understand the world, and to think critically with an international horizon via the lingua franca, which could later equip them to be on the cutting edge in their future work” (Fielding online interview, June 2016).

In her case, Lisa’s EAP concept was also influenced by her experience of international research and attempts at publication, which gave her the basic idea of discursive differences in academic and informal English. While for Bluewitch, after visiting the university in the US, she witnessed how US undergraduate students studied and

were taught in an academic university environment. Bluewitch later spoke about her observations with her Chinese counterparts, leading her to formulate her ideas about university education and the goal of EAP: “The reason we offer EAP reform is to give you a tool to master resources from world renowned institutes; EAP is the bridge for equipping you with international horizon; you should not aim only at passing CET-4 and 6”. Her studies in the US also let her study literacy theories from her supervisor, which later contributed to her definition of EAP: “I was wondering: what is literacy? I was searching for meaning and observing his lessons, then I thought literacy might be something based in language but with a meaning above language” (Bluewitch interview 2).

Influenced by the above factors, the participants, respectively, produced an eclectic range of EAP concepts and pedagogies fitting their own contexts and perceptions, as detailed in the chart (Table 5.1).

“Eclectic” derives from the word eclecticism, meaning choosing the most appropriate “theories, styles, and ideas in order to gain a thorough insight about the subject and draws upon different theories in different cases” (Alizadeh & Hashim, 2016, p. 12). Although an eclectic approach in English language teaching has been encouraged to meet the ever-changing needs of the classroom context (Bax, 2003), teachers using eclectic knowledge to conceptualise and to teach EAP, as was found in the current research, has not been mentioned by EAP researchers previously; thus, the findings reported here are groundbreaking in this sense.

The above concepts were gradually compiled after extended contact with the participants. Differing from previous studies, such as Alexandar (2012, 2013) and Campion (2012a, 2012b), which explored teachers’ perceptions of EAP through snapshot forms of data collection, like spreading questionnaires and interviews, the current research adopted a prolonged contextualised ethnographic approach, offering additional opportunities for the author to interact with the characters and to enter the field, building up trust and friendships with the teachers, and engaging with them in everyday life. Thus, the answers obtained are deeper and arguably more valid than interviews with an unfamiliar group teacher would have been.

Furthermore, many jargons and terminologies were mentioned by the investigated teachers when explaining their definitions of EAP, and so, without such an anthropological approach, as an armchair researcher and at the same time an outsider, it would not have been possible to develop a full understanding of them. For example, Bluewitch claimed “Trustworthy, knowledge-seeking, truth-pursuing, willingness to share” was the core spirit of her EAP, which seems irrelevant to a common understanding of EAP at first glance. However, after more than a year observing and interacting with her, to understand her struggle for academic autonomy within her department, her pursuit of a scholarly spirit in her EAP learners made perfect sense.

On the other hand, the teachers in the current study might not have developed concepts of EAP, despite putting associated ideas into practice; as they might have gradually generalised their personal perceptions during the researcher’s interactions with them, as a typical feature of interpretivism is the potential for the researcher to influence the research participants and research findings (Creswell, 2013). The results, therefore, differ from those reported by Alexandar (2012, 2013), Campion

**Table 5.1** The investigated teachers' definitions of EAP and related pedagogy (Adapted from the four case studies in the previous chapter)

EAP concept	Complement to the concept	Further complement to the concept	EAP pedagogy
<p>Fielding</p> <p>I think EAP is a teaching pedagogy, a curriculum, focusing on using English in a particular discourse, a context. Because it is English for academic purposes, it is used more frequently in academia and higher education (Fielding interview 1)</p>	<p>EAP is based on English teaching, aiming to transfer students' awareness and identity (as a researcher), helping them to act as a member of the academic community to solve problems in reality; however, as we are faced with Chinese EFL learners, we cannot ignore nurturing their English language skills and literacy while teaching critical thinking and research methods (Fielding interview 2)</p>	<p>The core of EAP, as I understand, is students being able to use English to understand the world, and to think critically with an international horizon via the lingua franca, which could later equip them to be on the cutting edge in their future work (Fielding online interview, June 2016)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning by doing (Project-based learning)</li> <li>2. Using IELTS as EAP materials</li> <li>3. Supporting learner autonomy as a reflection on Chinese students and their education contexts</li> <li>4. Teaching EAP concepts holistically</li> </ol>
<p>Lisa</p> <p>I think (EAP) is a kind of logic, which has two levels of thinking, the lower level is critical thinking, and then the higher level, logical thinking, is what researchers use for doing research... (the latter) is very important if students would like to deduce logically, for example how to have and resolve an (research) aim, how to experiment with the aim, and how to analyse it (Lisa interview 1)</p>	<p>Lisa learned from her own international journal publication experience, that EAP is also teaching students to disguise their daily informal use of English, putting on "the patterns used in published work", in other words, "pretending to be academic" (Lisa interview 1)</p>	<p>In the further interview after class, when I shared with Lisa what I had learned from her lesson, she pointed out her advanced perspective on EAP, which she had failed to mention to me before: "this (EAP) is a tool to hone academic research, which is potentially beneficial to humanity); this is what people fail to understand about EAP (Lisa interview 2)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Giving prescriptive discursive samples</li> <li>2. Register analysis</li> <li>3. Insert humanity into EAP teaching</li> <li>4. Empowering students and making their voice heard</li> <li>5. Project-based learning</li> </ol>

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

	EAP concept	Complement to the concept	Further complement to the concept	EAP pedagogy
Bluewitch	EAP is an educational concept, consisting of language learning, thinking skills training and students' learning behaviour management...for the newly recruited undergraduate students, (EAP) should aim at correcting their previous learning behaviours to avoid classroom crisis (Bluewitch's post in WeChat)	A few days later, I noticed Bluewitch announced her EAP core spirit as that shown in the following screenshot: "Trustworthy, knowledge-seeking, truth-pursuing, willing to share!" (Bluewitch post in WeChat)	I just feel establishing a scholarly identity among students is the everlasting mission of EAP teaching; if they (students) consider themselves as scholars and are proud of such an identity, my EAP teaching is successful. Because the more students learn language or words, the quicker they forget; but an established identity is permanent, they may be motivated to learn later on (Bluewitch interview 3)	1. Established an EAP student association and let the organise activities 2. She flexibly uses WeChat as an approach for spreading EAP knowledge 3. Inviting scholars (the author included) to communicate with students on the importance of EAP and students' study in the university 4. Letting students participate in an academic translation project related to their discipline
Rui	When teaching EAP, I believe the most important issue is to teach a kind of thinking; another aspect is to "simultaneously engage in academic expression; this has to be equally stressed" (Rui interview 3)			1. Using classics to enlighten students' thinking 2. Using emotion to teach

(2012a, 2012b), and Martin (2014), who all ignored the potential influence of identity on the research participants' feedback, as stated in their research rationales.

Furthermore, unlike the current research, previous studies (Alexandar, 2012, 2013; Campion, 2012a, 2012b; Martin, 2014) were all decontextualized, and none of the researchers entered the classrooms for an extended period of time to witness the teachers' EAP real practice. Such a thorough study of the teachers' EAP epistemology is beneficial for teacher trainers and policymakers to understand the teachers in such EGP–EAP transition. As mentioned by Liu and Xu (2011), it is essential to support teachers in pedagogical transitions. Furthermore, understanding is equally important for the investigated teachers themselves, as Alexandar (2012, 2013) pointed out; teachers knowing their own presuppositions is the first step to embracing a pedagogical change towards EAP.

### ***5.2.2 The Overlap Between the Teachers' EAP Knowledge and Current Theories***

The EAP definitions produced by the respective investigated teachers, although inferred from their own experience and ideology, somewhat overlap with the EAP strands summarized in the literature review.

In terms of EAP as academic literacy, two of the four teachers confirmed the role EAP plays in preparing students for their future academic studies and research. For example, Fielding claimed, "it is English for academic purposes, it is used more frequently in academia and higher education" (Fielding interview 1); while Lisa argued, "I think (EAP) ...is what researchers use for doing research..." (Lisa interview 1) She also demonstrated other aspects of EAP similar to those described by Li and Wang as (2016) academic literacy: EAP is also teaching students to disguise their daily register in English, adopting "the patterns used in published work".

In terms of EAP as a form of disciplinary cultural literacy, Fielding and Bluewitch both note some coverage in this category of EAP: "EAP is based on English teaching, aiming to transfer students' awareness and identity (as a researcher), helping them to act as a member of academics to solve problems in reality" (Fielding interview 2); "I just feel that establishing a scholarly identity among students is the everlasting mission of EAP teaching; if they (students) consider themselves as scholars and are proud of such an identity, my EAP teaching is successful." (Bluewitch interview 3). This is similar to Li and Wang's (2016, p. 15) summary: "EAP is teaching students some common knowledge, meaning of rituals, and epistemology confirmed by/in a discursive culture, in order to help them learn and socialise into the discipline". Fielding's definition and PBL pedagogy of EAP involve students doing and writing up research in their related disciplines; similarly, under Bluewitch's campaign to nurture students' scholarly identity, some of her students frequently participate in disciplinary work related to English translation projects and research demonstration

at conferences. Both teachers' behaviours involved socialising students as members of their respective disciplines.

In terms of EAP as critical literacy, Li and Wang (2016, p. 15) explained: "EAP aims at giving students a broader concept about the discipline and academic world, so that they may have a clearer understanding of what they are learning without "blind" following, which in return could facilitate their learning." Lisa's EAP pedagogy included some components of criticality, enlightening students to think about the function research plays in contributing to the human world (see Lisa's case); one that potentially raises students' awareness, encouraging them to be more engaged and motivated to learn EAP. Lisa also commented that such criticality "is what people failed to understand in EAP" (Lisa interview 2) For EAP as digital literacy, Bluewitch even put it as an objective (see Bluewitch's case)."

Three out of four of the aforementioned teachers' EAP knowledge overlaps with Li and Wang's (2016) summary of the field to a different extent, and such results partially contradict Gao and Bartlett's (2014) assertion that teachers were nebulous about the meaning of EAP during the sudden EAP pedagogical transition in China. The reason for stating "partially against," is that Rui's answers and behaviours did not overlap with the four contemporary EAP strands, and Rui seemed to misunderstand EAP as simply teaching critical thinking and formal English discourse, as identified among the examples given by Gao and Bartlett (2014). Compared with the remaining three teachers, mentioned in the last chapter, Rui did not have the experience of conducting empirical research, nor did she have experience in researching and studying, so the result obtained is not consistent with what Martin (2014) reported that academic knowledge is necessary for EAP teachers. This mismatch might be because Martin's research participants were accessing higher education in UK universities, which have a more established and supportive academic atmosphere than where Rui studied.

On the other hand, though Fielding, Lisa and Bluewitch, respectively, referred to the different extent of coverage of the four strands of EAP as claimed in previous paragraphs, their understandings did not proceed from systematic training, nor did they realise the existence and significance of the remaining aspects of EAP as beyond their perceptions. Therefore, Gao and Bartlett's (2014) opinions are partially supported in the current study. Perhaps, teachers in the current research confirmed the public as pioneers in their contexts, which might not represent EAP teachers in transition overall, although representativeness is not a requirement of phenomenological ethnography.

### ***5.2.3 Teachers' Perception of Difference Between EGP and EAP***

Similar to Martin's (2014) discovery of teachers' perceived differences between EGP/EFL and EAP (differences in disciplinary linguistics), Fielding, in the current study also admitted: "The distinction in their literal meaning, is what I think, the most

direct distinction... EAP stresses some different linguistic features, perhaps from the perspective of systematic functional linguistics... yes, discursively different.” Furthermore, another reply from the participants also reflects Martin’s (2014) view of the distinction between EGP, EFL and EAP as relating to the linguist’s ability to analyse different texts and different patterns of language. For example, after teaching EGP for many years, and after receiving several refusals from international journal editors, Lisa found that EAP also means teaching students to disguise their everyday English, by using “the patterns used in published work”.

After several rounds of interviews, Martin (2014) also found that EAP teachers, after transiting from EGP, tended to have increased professionalism and a clearer grasp of students’ development routine, which is also echoed by Bluewitch in the current study. She describes the difference between EGP and EAP as a shift from pedagogy to education; furthermore, Bluewitch claimed her goal is to nurture students’ scholarly identity. Teachers in the current study also established common ground, noting that EGP teaches more English vocabulary and grammar unrelated to any disciplines, e.g. “when I design an EGP course, I stress the linguistic training” (Fielding interview 1), “in the first year of my teaching (EGP), I spent much time teaching language, sometimes a little about culture, but I could never teach beyond them” (Rui interview 2). These results are identical to other differences between teaching EGP and EAP mentioned by Martin (2014) that the teachers transferred from teaching grammar to productive academic skills.

However, the results from the current study contradict Martin’s (2014) opinion that EAP is an extension of EGP. For some of the teachers included in the current research, EAP is not superior to EGP. Although Fielding claimed EAP and EGP are used for different purposes, EGP offers a more humanitarian style of education than EAP, while EAP is utilitarian: “I used to read English novels with students (in EGP), now I don’t think I can... education is missing (in EAP) ... disregarding humanity in subjects relate to university education is horrible” (Lisa interview 1).

### **5.3 How Does the Transition from Teaching EGP to EAP Influence the Teachers’ Career as College English Teachers?**

#### ***5.3.1 The Transition from EGP to EAP Fulfils the Teachers’ Education Ideals***

According to Liu and Xu (2011), competing pedagogies might produce challenges for teachers in transition. Indeed, Alexandar (2012, 2013) reported that pairs of CLT-EAP competing pedagogy made teachers at Herriot-Watt University very uneasy. However, this situation did not affect the teachers involved in the current study. They transit to EAP from EGP as part of the natural process of fulfilling their education ideals, and the reasons for this are given below.

Firstly, the investigated teachers' EAP epistemology was eclectic and established on the basis that it was a reflection of their EAP experiences. In other words, their EGP teaching to some extent facilitated EAP pedagogies and concept formation. For instance, Fielding's long years of EGP experience gave him a thorough understanding of Chinese English learners and their educational context, which contributed to his needs analysis of students in relation to EAP pedagogy design, and most importantly, motivated him to use EAP to change the views of Chinese students:

How come Chinese students do not need to investigate a real problem? They need it... in such a globalizing world... (if without it) how can they (students) cooperate with researchers from abroad? ... (if without it) they (our students) would be disadvantaged, for they could only write report (for others) ... but the idea is other's, they will never enter the core... to me, a very important part of higher education is socialising (students), I want them to become proactive participants rather than what they were in foundation education (in China) to accept whatever the authority offers (Fielding interview 2).

Similarly, Bluewitch's EGP experiences made her notice students' motivation as the utmost challenge to her teaching effects, claiming:

My purpose has always been to improve teaching... At that moment I realised that it is not the vocabulary or my teaching methods that matter; no matter what kinds of teaching method I choose, it will not improve their learning as long as they resist it, because they do not want it (Bluewitch interview 3).

Reflecting on this issue, Bluewitch later integrated what she had learned from the US and designed an EAP course to help build students' scholarly identity. Thus, for these two teachers, transiting from EGP to EAP is actually an uplifting aspect of their teaching, just as Martin (2014) found, after transiting from EGP, EAP teachers obtained a heightened professionalism.

Secondly, teachers' education ideology and research background is consistent with their perceived EAP knowledge. Lisa also did not undergo a significant challenge when she was asked to teach EAP. This might have been because she had to extend her view of international education, having learned EAP while preparing to publish when she was studying in the UK. This meant she reflected on many of her ideas before she returned to China and began teaching PBL-based EAP, through which she shares her ideas about learning academic English when conducting research projects. As was the case with Rui, her understanding of EAP contains teaching critical thinking, for which she has a profound foundation of philosophy and literature, which contributes to her EAP teaching. Generally speaking, drawing on their EGP teaching, education and academic research background, all four teachers transited to EAP to enable them to demonstrate and apply their educational ideas and ideals in practice. When the investigated teachers transited to EAP, some of them felt they were overloaded with work; as stated in Lisa's case, if she canceled students' intergroup cooperation, her workload would be extravagant. Similarly, before I interviewed Rui, I had already heard that she was always very tired of preparing new EAP lessons. Shanghai EAP Teachers' overwork and fatigue was mentioned by Wang and Wang (2015). Compared with the finding that EAP teachers draw more on their academic qualifications rather than their TEFL qualifications (Martin, 2014), the current study

raised this view as of equal importance to teachers' non-EAP teaching experience and academic background, when discussing their transition from EGP to EAP.

### ***5.3.2 EGP–EAP Transition as Teachers' Self-growth***

In the current study, the things learned about teachers' transition from EGP to EAP reflected a feature that previous studies have failed to discover. It is not appropriate to use the simple expression, "smooth" or "insecure" as previous authors did to describe the investigated teachers' EGP-EAP pedagogical transition. Because, in this research, every teacher experienced an entirely different transitional journey, such that most of their transitions occurred even before the EAP reform. In other words, the investigated teachers either had already realised the necessity of teaching EAP to Chinese students or had begun to apply EAP knowledge even before the Shanghai EAP reform commenced.

For example, Fielding detected the differences between higher education in China and that in abroad when working towards his master's degree, and he also experienced teaching the international academic English test (IELTS). Thus, long before he started teaching EAP, he had acquired overall knowledge of what a student might need to learn in advance if he/she were to pursue higher education abroad.

Similarly, Lisa was trained to be a researcher when studying in the UK before returning to teach EAP in Shanghai. Bluewitch realised the weaknesses in Chinese scholars' English academic writing when studying at the East China Normal University as a visiting scholar. By that time, she debuted her first international publication, although her authorship credit had been appropriated by her supervisor, raising her suspicions about the academic integrity of Chinese scholars. Bluewitch's war for academic autonomy within her own department made her feel disappointed again in the actions of scholars in her context. Moreover, after she had experienced the academic atmosphere at universities in the US, she came to believe that Chinese university students should be trained as academics; an inspiration that was echoed after she found out about the EAP reform in Shanghai. Generally speaking, the transition from EGP to EAP did not happen after the Shanghai EAP reform had commenced. There were examples of personal growth before the reform, and the EAP reform was just a chance for them to apply changes.

However, Rui had never experienced academic research and publication or studying abroad, and despite being a Master's degree holder in applied linguistics, she remains confused about the aims and significance of EAP. Therefore, at least in the context of the current study, teachers' academic qualification might not be deemed to be as important as their experiences of academic discourse, just as Martin (2014) observed academic process plays a large part in EAP teaching.

### 5.3.3 *EAP Helped Teachers Boycott Career Crisis*

As mentioned in the literature review, there are two kinds of English language teachers in Chinese universities: one group teaching and researching English literature, linguistics or translation, and the other teaching general English to students from non-English majors or college English teachers (CET) (Liu, 2011; Cheng, 2016). The EAP teachers discussed in this research belong to the latter group. CET has entered a period of crisis brought about by the era of booming internet education and abundant resources for learning English. Authors like Borg and Liu (2013) have criticised English teachers for weaknesses in terms of their teaching. Indeed, even Cheng (2016, p. 216) blamed teachers for their “low professional status and their perceived lack of preparedness as English teachers in general, and as EAP teachers in particular”. Another aspect of the career crisis was that described by Liu (2011) as being marginalised: being remote from academic research and unrelated to academic disciplines, being voiceless in changing situations, feeling insecure, fearing innovation and changes to one’s teaching. In short, CETs were treated more as tools than as scholars (Liu, 2011).

As a CET, Bluewitch experienced marginalisation. From her description, she was deprived of the right to choose teaching materials, renaming courses, and was ordered not to teach beyond a certain EGP syllabus, which is what Liu’s (2011) CETs describe as being voiceless in the micro-politics of universities and being treated unlike a scholar. Thus, Bluewitch used EAP to boycott such an unfair treatment, to obtain scholarly autonomy, as stated in the previous chapter. It is therefore understandable that she particularly stressed the nurturing of scholarly identity as a component of EAP. In addition, she proactively organised student research conferences and disciplinary translation projects to, in her words, effect the transformation from pedagogy to education.

Fielding and Lisa both have some features in common with Bluewitch; they use PBL EAP to link students’ disciplinary knowledge, research methods and academic English. Through such an approach, the course becomes important to the students, and the teachers directly participate in students’ learning and future development: “the core of EAP, as I understand, is students being able to use English to understand the world, and to think critically with an international horizon via the lingua franca, which could later equip them to be on the cutting edge in their future work” (Fielding online interview June 2016). These findings, to some extent align with the view that after teaching EAP, teachers have a “heightened sense of responsibility for the progress that students should be making... (and) a heightened sense of professionalism and of having a clear role in students’ development” (Martin, 2014, pp. 309–311).

Using EAP as an opportunity, teachers attempted to overturn this crisis. A career crisis is precisely similar to what their international counterparts are experiencing, like what Hadley (2015) claimed EAP teachers became technicians. However, from the perspective of the current study, the author did not find these EAP teachers, to be members teaching non-English major students English, as they are neither weak in terms of their teaching nor in their research (Borg & Liu, 2013; Cheng, 2016). On the contrary, they have impressive potential. These teachers are neither unclear nor conservative in their career objectives, as pointed out by Liu (2011). The current study demonstrates that these EAP teachers are resilient and open to teaching, regardless of Cheng's (2016) quoted blame for their low professionalism. The variance in the results might also arise because previous studies were not as prolonged and contextualised as the current research, and were not rendered anthropologically.

#### ***5.3.4 EAP Stimulates Teachers to Become Researchers with Visions of Home and Abroad***

Based on the case studies presented, successful EAP teachers are not only researchers with the knowledge to conduct and write up research in English, but must also be familiar with higher education internationally. Lisa's reflection on her international publication experiences when she was in the UK demonstrates the necessity that EAP teachers have an international vision: "I feel many teachers nowadays, including some of my colleagues in our department, may not have a deep understanding of those academic patterns, unless they have some publication experience" (Lisa interview 1).

Simultaneously, those engaged in teaching EAP should be familiar with Chinese English learners in different contexts and with Chinese education, just as Fielding, Lisa and Bluewitch noted when tailoring their EAP pedagogies for their students. Compared with Rui, who did not have much knowledge of higher education abroad, Fielding, Lisa and Bluewitch's EAP pedagogies were more practical for students to seek for furthering their studies abroad. Such features of EAP teachers were unique to the current study, due to the possible reason that the Chinese education system differs from its Western counterparts and Chinese English learners have unique characteristics. Knowing the significance of EAP teachers' visions of home and abroad, the university, Fielding and Lisa are based in, regularly sends EAP teachers abroad for relevant training. Similarly, the Shanghai EAP reform committee sometimes invites international scholars to give seminars to EAP teachers across Shanghai. EAP in this sense equips these CET teachers with visions of both home and abroad.

## **5.4 How Do the Teachers Perceive the Challenges and Opportunities Posed by the Shanghai EAP Reform?**

### **5.4.1 “Teachers Are not Ready”**

As mentioned in previous sections, the current EAP teachers in Shanghai are CETs teaching general English. While the investigated teachers have fulfilled some achievements in EAP teaching, as aforementioned, Fielding and his colleagues were not clear of EAP until they deduced their eclectic experiences. Before teachers came to understand EAP, they had been asked to teach it by the education bureau. Even though the EAP reform committee had organised some training, Rui found it lacking in usefulness: “He (the policy maker) is also aware that the teachers are not ready, so he organised many EAP teacher training activities, like the teaching demonstration last year... however, what is your (policy maker) purpose?” (Rui interview 2) Rui was asked to demonstrate for the teachers’ cohort and was even awarded as an example of best practice, but she herself was not clear of the value of attending such training: “we learned from each other (by demonstrating teaching), but what would be the next step we should take?” (Rui interview 2) This perceived lack of training encourages teachers to formulate their own eclectic versions of EAP epistemology.

Furthermore, EAP teachers’ disciplinary knowledge is not consistent with that of their students’. In Lisa’s words, they are confined by the challenges of disciplinary knowledge. The author witnessed these challenges first hand when tutoring Lisa’s students (for details see Lisa’s case). The gap between EAP programs and students’ disciplinary needs was also reported by Champion (2012a, 2012b). Many authors, including Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), Dudley-Evans (2001), Hyland (2006), and Gao and Bartlett (2014) have hypothesised that team teaching between disciplinary teachers and EAP teachers could be a method to overcome the attendant challenges; however, none provided a team teaching pedagogy and their hypothesis was formulated in relation to contexts other than the universities in Shanghai.

### **5.4.2 Challenges Arising from Limited Resources**

On the topic of problems associated with limited resources, and when referring to giving presentations, Lisa identified the issues she faced: challenges resulting from limited research time, challenges related to social resources and challenges associated with the extent of universities’ internationalisation. These issues were listed not only as obstacles for Lisa herself, but for other teachers as well. In terms of the limited timeframe, Lisa mainly intended she would have limited class hours to guide each group to complete their research projects, when she teaches from textbooks, so she was required to sacrifice her spare time to guide her students’ research (for detail see

Lisa's case). From another perspective, Rui pointed out regulated EAP classroom hours were too few for her students to learn:

If you want the students to have a somewhat in-depth thinking capability, which could be attained only by large amount of reading, but our students are busy studying their disciplines, even if I recommend them English books to read, they do not have time... My conundrum is that my students are so busy, I noticed that their timetable is packed... they won't spend time on English after class, when there are only 4-6 h English lessons per week... they lack the drive and motivation to do extracurricular reading, nor do they have enough time (Rui interview 3).

Lisa and Rui's feedback demonstrated that when they started teaching brand new English courses at universities, the classroom hours earmarked by the registrars to manage the new EAP course were inadequate. A possible reason for this is that the university was using a same credit calculation system and teaching hours for CET and the new EAP course.

In terms of challenges by social resources, Lisa gave the example of her students encountering unforthcoming situations when attempting to engage in their potential research fields. The students sought a governmental department head for interview, but potential interviewees evaded them and refused to offer constructive feedback. Thus, the students could not achieve valid results, and this led them to feel fatigued by searching for cooperative participants, as they had spent a large amount of time in the community. Thus, they needed to change their research topic. Lisa also offered other examples, as some students were unable to identify a pool of contacts among graduates when planning to investigate the graduate students' work situation. For example, some students were unable to find cooperative companies with which to perform a case analysis. Lisa did help students to design research methods, or refine their academic English; however, the university was unable to provide adequate resources to enable students to handle their studies. Therefore, on many occasions, social resources were limited to the implementation of EAP. As Lisa stated in her PowerPoint slides in her presentation to other EAP teachers in Shanghai: "If the university does not link educational settings to society at large, how can we as language teachers guide students to do academic social research?" The school-community partnership is thought to be informative and educational for students participating in out-of-school learning (Richmond, 2017). It is also believed to be useful for students learning literacy (Goodman, 2003), and EAP as it comprises multiple literacies, which was stated previously in the literature review, particularly when EAP is delivered in the form of PBL pedagogy. This could be facilitated most effectively if out-of-school settings were provided by the university. A notable aspect of the lack of university-community/enterprise partnership arises from my own observation as a participant in Lisa's class. After I tutored and commented on many students' research results, I felt saddened that their research had no aim beyond completing the course; and that there was no opportunity for their constructive findings to be fed back to the research participants.

Bluwitch's struggle with her department demonstrates how hierarchical bureaucracy in the university setting impinges on scholars' academic freedom to implement new EAP reforms. Indeed, course titles, teaching contents and textbook activities

cannot be decided by Bluewitch the professor, but only after departmental managerial officials agree. Bluewitch might not be the only scholar facing this challenge, other EAP teachers could be in similar situations. The reason for such bureaucracy, according to Douglass (2012), is the highly centralised education system derived from the Soviet model. He claimed the greatest barriers to China developing world-class universities and building a more effective academic environment are “first, the bureaucracy and a continued devotion to hierarchy and ceremonial positions, and second, the lack of academic autonomy, which is vital for institutional management and for individual freedom of faculty and students” (Douglass, 2012, p. 646). Even the government stipulated China 2020 blueprint, aimed at producing world-renowned universities, requires China’s education ministry to give only minimal autonomy to universities (Douglass, 2012).

### 5.4.3 *Potential Gaps for Chinese Students to Study EAP*

Rui’s quotations concerning the policymaker revealed her suspicions about the suitability of large scale EAP reform to benefit the majority of non-English major students:

I know that this reform was to improve students’ ability to carry out academic research... just like the example he (the policy maker) often raised of a student named Liu Lu... Liu Lu was good at mathematics even world class, but just due to her weakness in academic English, she could not spread her ideas around the world... what would be the proportion of Liu Lu-like students in the whole population? He should have made the position clearer (Rui interview 2).

In other words, EAP as conceived of in the reform fits the needs of elite students like Liu Lu, yet the policymaker’s intention was to push students from different backgrounds to learn EAP. Rui’s concern also reflected in the views of the other participants. For example, Bluewitch, long before the EAP reform had noticed the passive attitude of most non-English major students with regard to studying English and using English to writing essays. Similarly, at Fielding and Lisa’s university, they used to split newly recruited students into A, B and C English ability groups via exams, and only students from A are permitted to study EAP, although such a division is not recommended by the EAP policy (Cai, 2013). Nevertheless, even when the students are selected in this way, as Fielding and Lisa reported, not all students possess adequate capability or interest.

The teachers’ concerns are reasonable however. Student families’ economic background, English proficiency, career goals and even their cultural backgrounds, to some extent influence the individual’s motivation to learn EAP, which are ignored by the policymakers. Awareness of education and foreign language learning can, therefore, be greatly influenced by the economic development zone in which individuals live (Kennedy, 2001). Most of the population in China who are still living beneath the poverty line (Gao, 2014), aim at escaping poverty by gaining degrees in a university and a well-paid job. Moreover, many non-English major students learn

English simply to pass compulsory exams (e.g. CET-4 and CET-6), which are set by a number of universities as a minimal requirement for achieving their degrees. There is also a variation in pre-tertiary English teaching across China's different provinces. Some (such as Henan and Shaanxi) do not include listening in their National College Entrance Examinations, while Shandong has a listening examination. This, therefore, has implications for the teaching of English, as many students do not begin to learn English until the middle school, while others start in the kindergarten. These factors influence students' motivation and readiness to study EAP. However, when the policymaker justifies the accessibility of EAP LP in Shanghai, he claims that high-school graduates in Shanghai should already possess sufficient proficiency in English language to learn EAP (Cai, 2012). When emphasising this, he ignores the fact that Shanghai university students might originate from different parts of China and whether they all possess the motivation to learn EAP needs to be carefully considered.

In comparison with the size of China's population, the ratio of those pursuing further education abroad is relatively small: in 2013 it comprised 413,900 students (01/07/2015, URL: [www.career.eol.cn](http://www.career.eol.cn)), including those seeking training and pre-tertiary level education. The proportion of students gaining a Master's degree and a Doctorate in China is not large; 1,760,000 took a national postgraduate exam in 2013, but the actual number enrolled was 579,000 (01/07/2015, URL: [www.sina.com](http://www.sina.com)). Both the figures for those studying abroad and those intending to pursue their Master's degree is small compared to the total number of university graduates, which is above 7,000,000 (01/07/2015, URL: [www.career.eol.cn](http://www.career.eol.cn)). Although this rough statistical comparison appears not to be rigorous, and is unable to inform generalisations in every case, it reveals some aspects of the phenomenon. This, therefore, leads to questions over how many students will ultimately need EAP, when the EAP policymaker intends to have all non-English major students learn EAP at universities in Shanghai.

According to Cai (2012, 2013), students are expected to start learning EAP from the start of their studies. Many students are unclear about their majors, and lack any planning of their future careers when just being enrolled into university. It is unrealistic to expect such students to have a strong motivation for learning EAP for the purposes of undertaking research in their field at that moment. It is generally a long and difficult process before they begin to accept a new field (Gregoire, 2003).

Even if students are willing to study EAP, there are underpinning cultural differences that might pose challenges for them, and thus they need intellectual scaffolding and awareness-raising. A number of lecturers have complained that many of their Chinese students do not produce clear arguments (Liu & Stapleton, 2014). This is because avoiding conflict is an important component of traditional Chinese culture. Those in Ancient China shared many collective characteristics with other agricultural communities (Nisbett, 2003; Osterloh, 1996), leading them to seek unity and harmony, and as members of traditional agricultural communities they need to rely upon (and cooperate with) each other for farming, hunting, fishing and harvesting (Nisbett, 2003). Typically, Chinese people resolve conflict through a process of dialecticism, rather than by facing contradiction (Nisbett, 2003).

Nisbett (2003, p. 18) also raises the point that: “The Chinese are disinclined to use precisely defined terms or categories in any arena, but instead use expressive metaphoric language”. In English academic writing, terminology can be indicative of the writer’s authority (Ivanic, 1998) and an indicator of disciplinary identity. Thus, students in a Western context are frequently encouraged to refer to the most recent source; however, the Chinese rely on classical and time-honoured quotations (Maley, 1996). Chinese perceptions of teaching English literature also differ: Maley (1996) states that the aim of Western educationalists is to nurture students’ literacy and critical thinking for the future. However, Chinese teachers often emphasise the role of the author, the time of writing and the literary merit attributed to the work. This difference is essential in a reading class. When reading academic books (or other materials) Chinese students tend to regard published works as ‘holy’ and ‘impeccable’, preferring to rote learn, or remember, as much of these key texts as they are able. Their Western counterparts, on the other hand, are taught to be suspicious of some authors’ opinions and might readily build on them or challenge them (Maley, 1996). Chinese students tend to think of reading as word-by-word intensive reading, while in the West, students are expected to extract the parts of a text they feel are useful, critical, or interesting for their own academic purposes (Maley, 1996) (i.e. they may decide to read an abstract, literature review, a methodology or a discussion to further their own research).

Overcoming some of these cultural differences is integrated into the teaching objectives of the Shanghai EAP reform policy, to avoid misunderstandings among students as they pursue careers in academia. On this subject, Gardener (1992, p. 81) quotes from one of his Anglophone mature students in the process of learning to produce English in an academic format for higher education: “we do change our speech...there is strain attached to it, though, and the strain is caused by feeling pretentious and false”. Similarly, Ivanic and Roach (1990) employed a number of metaphors to describe the struggles mature students encounter concerning identity when approaching students’ academic writing. These are contrasted with running a marathon while being 10 stone overweight; being a string puppet; being an alien from another planet; and being a junk food addict at a vegetarian conference. Even English native speakers encounter challenges when learning to use EAP. Thus, when confronted by a new field, learners might experience unease, feel strange, unsafe or even lose confidence, or other symptoms associated with identity crises (Ivanic, 1998, p. 12), resulting from a “mismatch between the social contexts which have constructed their identities in the past and the new social contexts into which they are entering.”

However, becoming accustomed to new values is a long and arduous process (Ohlsson, 2009). Therefore, if a course can accommodate new values and identity and raise students’ awareness of the potential differences in Chinese learning styles and EAP, the learning effect would be enhanced. As Bluewitch has been working to bridge the gap between university courses in China and the university courses internationally, she created a WeChat official account regularly sending students materials, including the series: “World outside China”, “the educational philosophy of EAP”, “Listening to TED presentations and practicing thinking”, “previous students—new

students communication forum”, and most importantly, an “EAP multiple literacy pilot learning summer workshop” designed for high school graduates to take before the EAP course.

#### ***5.4.4 Problems with the Shanghai EAP Reform Policy from Teachers’ Perspectives***

##### **5.4.4.1 Phenomenon One: Seeing the Shanghai EAP Policy from Fielding’s Perspective**

Fielding informed me that while he and his colleagues supported the reform, they disagreed to how EAP has been defined and how it should be taught according to the reform guidelines: “we agree with him (the policy maker) that EAP should be taught in universities, but I disagree with his (the policy maker) ideology and approach.” Fielding blamed the EAP policymaker for trying to confine EAP to academic skills and academic language learning: “His (the policy maker) suggested EAP pedagogy is skill based... perhaps it is under the framework of SFL, due to his (the policy-maker) background as a linguist, and he is more likely to teach EAP from a linguistic perspective”. By negating the policymaker’s EAP pedagogy, Fielding justified how his PBL approach to EAP teaching made sense in his context:

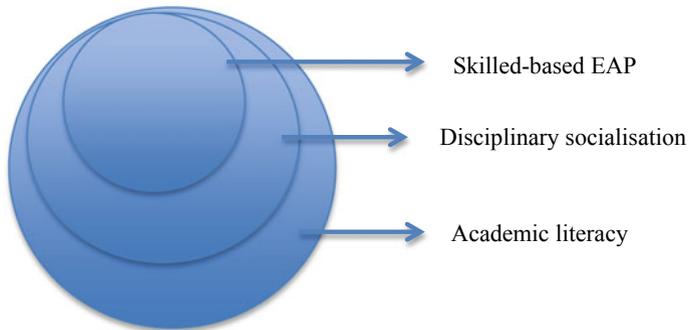
[A]s a linguist he is more likely to teach EAP from a linguistic perspective... but success for a person arises from the combination of all their different abilities, even though students can produce abundant vocabulary in an accurate register, they are not able to have their own ideas, and are unable to communicate, unable to do research, and unable to propose their own arguments in a group discussion... thus, they (students) will ultimately turn into craftsmen rather than masters (of academia) (Fielding interview 2).

Mentioning the passivity of Chinese students in learning, in contrast with the Shanghai EAP policymaker’s approach, neglecting those students engaged in academic research, he also seemed a little excited:

To me, a very important part of higher education is socialising (students), I want them to become proactive participants rather than what they were in foundation education (in China) to accept whatever the authority offers; particularly, in such a booming internet world, in such circumstances, how many teachers can claim they are authorities, when students can google everything out... (Fielding interview 2).

Fielding’s disagreement with the Shanghai EAP policymaker’s EAP ideological approach, is a key argument taking place in the EAP field; i.e. whether EAP should teach students skills or socialise them so that they can participate in disciplinary activities. Just as the ring graph below shows, disciplinary socialisation is actually an approach to EAP that engulfs the skill-based EAP advocated by the Shanghai EAP policymaker (Lea & Street, 2000; Hyland, 2006) (Fig. 5.1).

An early definition referred to EAP as “teaching English with the specific aim of helping learners to study, conduct research or teach” (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001,



**Fig. 5.1** Hyland's categorisation of EAP (Source Adapted from Hyland, 2006)

p. 8). Seen from this perspective, language ability is regarded as a central concern of EAP. Thus, language programs have been created according to the belief that learning a set of language skills is essential. However, with additional changes in diverse educational contexts, a traditional focus on generic linguistics skills, that is transferrable within disciplines is not possible (Hyland, 2012), because language, largely is decided by disciplinary practices. Therefore, a more closely combined EAP program with disciplinary specificity becomes important.

This stage marks EAP as disciplinary socialisation, in which students begin as novice members of the discourse community supervised by more senior members, echoing Fielding's claim that it is important to socialise students into academic research via PBL EAP. EAP has undergone four different stages, academic literacy, disciplinary cultural literacies, critical literacy and digital literacy, and the skill-based EAP recommended by the policymaker in Shanghai. It is not wrong for EAP policymakers in Shanghai to embrace a certain school of EAP, but from Fielding's perspective, teachers aiming to put the policies into practice are receiving insufficient practical guidance.

The disparities between the Shanghai EAP policymaker's and Fieldings' perspectives inform the nature of the debate about how learning should happen. For example, when Fielding advocated students learning EAP via a contextualised experiential PBL pedagogy, the policymaker (Cai, 2013) recommended a traditional classroom-based teacher-centred knowledge disseminating mode. The humanistic learning theorist Rogers and Freiberg (1969) pointed out that learning through experience, and learners taking control of their learning process is significant for learners; on the contrary, being a passive learner cannot facilitate learning, as this is similar to Fielding's opinions about teaching EAP and their solutions for passive Chinese students. Roger's followers, such as Norton (2010), claimed that an important approach to improving language teachers' English learning is to ensure students have ownership of related discourse, in other words, that they become members of the discourse community, just as Fielding urged his EAP students to become directly involved in social research.

In the context of EAP in China, no matter the reform at Tsinghua University or EAP reform in Shanghai, when seen from the perspectives of Gao and Bartlett (2014), they both embrace a lecture mode or traditional knowledge delivery teaching method, lacking the stress of learners' learning autonomy in participating academic activities.

#### **5.4.4.2 Phenomenon Two: Comparing the Shanghai EAP Policy with Bluewitch's EAP**

Recognising the skill-focused nature of the Shanghai reform policy, Bluewitch also proactively encouraged students to complete research and report on their studies at student-run research conferences. In particular, she arranged EAP students to prepare English–Chinese translations for disciplinary projects; although similar to Fielding's, Bluewitch's EAP emphasis was on allowing students to develop their identities as academics, to spur on their meta-learning. The reason why Bluewitch designed these courses was because of their determination to change students learning so that it would not just be useful for passing exams and so that it would target more at the minimal requirements to achieve a qualification (for details see Bluewitch's case). As discussed in previous sections, the Shanghai EAP policymaker was seeking to distribute an idealised view of knowledge in the context of academic research to newly enrolled college students, many of whom have never thought about pursuing a higher degree abroad. Thus, there is a mismatch between the target student community and the educational aims. Indeed, even though the policymaker is determined to change and elevate the students so that they become self-determined researchers, his expectation that students acquire multiple EAP skills when they have only recently commenced their university studies is unrealistic.

Humanistic psychologist Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs offers a clearer explanation of this situation. As analysed in the previous chapters, the majority of students in Chinese universities must meet the basic requirement of seeking out jobs to feed themselves, rather than engaging in long-term pursuit of academic accolades.

When they are recruited to universities, the majority of students' higher education needs are indistinct, although they can be aligned with the base level of the pyramid, physiological needs; i.e. the security brought by a job. However, learning to conduct research fulfils higher level needs, for example, self-actualisation, at the peak of the hierarchy, consisting of cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualisation and transcendence (Gould, 2012). These are intrinsic motivations, echoing the individual's preparedness to study academic research; underpinning knowledge and meaning, self-actualisation is intended to fulfil personal goals to effect growth (Gould, 2012). While physiological demands might only motivate students to pass their course or learn some superficial skills, on some occasions lead to academic misconduct, such motivation does not encourage students to devote themselves seriously to research.

In order to transcend students' physiological needs by motivating them to pursue higher level needs like self-actualisation is not impossible, as outlined in Rogers et al. s' (1989) complement of humanistic learning theory. He stated that everybody has

a tendency to self-actualise, and that this tendency would direct self-determination; i.e. who they want to become, and how they think they can attain such an identity (Rogers et al., 1989). For example, Bluewitch's approach aims to lead students to realise such transcendence, by recognising the differences between learning styles in secondary school and in universities, the differences between Chinese universities and those in the west, and why students at universities should become scholars, and how they should behave as scholars. Bluewitch's EAP pedagogy reflects what Rogers and Freiberg (1969) assumes to be useful in establishing an environment to facilitate learning for self-actualisation. However, without any psychological scaffolding for students to transcend from the lower level of the needs hierarchy to a higher level, the Shanghai EAP policymaker, working on behalf of the Shanghai Education Bureau, required universities to abandon their original English curriculum for non-English majors for a skills-based EAP curriculum.

Since the 1990s, there have been many educational reforms in the Asia-Pacific region; however, according to Cheng (2005), many of these resulted in failure. According to Cheng (2005), the lack of a comprehensive understanding of the fast pace of change in the global environment led to a reliance on outdated traditional methods, despite attempts to bring a new educational paradigm to fruition. Kennedy (2011) further adds that the changes within society have affected policymakers to varying extents, particularly, language policymakers, who require a thorough understanding of the changes that have taken place and their implications for the delivery of an appropriate language policy.

The 1970s witnessed the first paradigmatic shift, emphasising the effectiveness of education as potentially improved by elevated teaching and learning. The associated changes reflected the belief that external interference and appropriate input could fundamentally alter effectiveness, and educational goals were regarded as "static, clear, and commonly accepted". The next wave of educational paradigm shifts occurred in the mid-1980s, and concerned "school-based management, quality assurance, accountability, and stakeholders' satisfaction; while the third stage resulted from emphasis on globalization, aimed at nurturing future citizens, and value creation" (Cheng, 2005, p. 3). We are currently experiencing the transitioning from the second to the third paradigm shift (Cheng, 2005). This new paradigm is multifaceted in terms of its influence on educational aims, and the learning and teaching environment.

The Shanghai EAP policy (Cai, 2012) is intended for delivery in the form of classroom-based EAP courses, and assumes that students will acquire knowledge from teachers and classroom materials. However, the new paradigm expects multiple sources of input, rather than simple classroom instruction (Cheng, 2005). Fielding and Bluewitch have done this to some extent by offering learning resources to EAP students outside the classroom. In terms of learning, according to Cheng (2005), the traditional aim of education is to focus on nurturing citizens by sharing knowledge and skills, as is intended by the Shanghai EAP policy in reference to students' academic skills. However, where an education policy simply equips people with skills and knowledge, it must also view learning as an opportunity to deliver "economic and social aspects at a certain stage" (Cheng, 2005, p. 28).

Furthermore, in terms of paradigmatic shifts in teaching, the new paradigm implies lifelong learning by arousing curiosity (Cheng, 2005). Lifelong learning and curiosity are subjects not considered in any EAP literature, and so seem irrelevant to academic research. However, it is a person's self-agency and desire to change the society driven in part by curiosity, which eventually helps him/her make ethical decisions, uncover hidden ideologies and nourish research. In practice, Bluewitch's EAP pedagogy aims to establish students' scholarly identity, ensuring their lifelong learning, and to nourishing their meta-learning as independent researchers. Thus, a teacher-centred, skill-bounded standard and site-bounded teaching of EAP in Shanghai would be considered outdated, and not consistent with the aims of the reform policy.

#### 5.4.4.3 The Utilitarianism of the EAP Course: Seeking Humanity

The investigated teachers criticised the EAP course for focusing on teaching the students skills in a utilitarian manner: "He (the policy maker) was positive that the EAP reform was practical... He never mentioned how the humanity of students could be improved by learning such a course" (Rui interview 2); it "is missing out some educational elements; it is so instrumental that it starts to become utilitarian, which is so horrible... deserting humanity... it (EAP) would become just an instrument and it makes students utilitarian" (Lisa interview 1); "influenced by the negative environment, education has become utilitarian and short-sighted, and so it is my responsibility to lead students to think responsibly and uprightly" (Fielding online interview June 2016). The criticism of EAP as lacking in humanity revealed in this research is also commented upon by Wang (2013), who claims the utilitarian features of EAP should be complemented with humanity.

Demonstrating the value of humanity in scholarship, in the last of Lisa's observed classroom sessions she showed her students a video enlightening them as to the purpose of academic research; suggesting the purpose of research is to help people and change the world for the better (for additional details, see Lisa's case). In the final observation of Fielding's class, he also raised thought-provoking questions to his students, for example, asking: "Is it ethical for you to sell cigarettes to those who are not aware of the bad effects of smoking, like young people?" "Is McDonalds ethical when selling children junk food with toys?" "A US company manufactures pesticide, although their products were banned from use in the States. Is it ethical for them to sell the products in India?" By asking his students to reflect on issues of commercial ethics, he was warning his students not to become "exquisite egoist(s)"; he wanted his students to become responsible academics (see Fielding's case). Bluewitch is even clearer when specifying that she wants her students to develop a scholarly spirit: "Trustworthy, knowledge-seeking, truth-pursuing, willingness to share" (Bluewitch's post in WeChat, December 2015).

Being responsible academics, changing society and benefiting humanity, appears to describe the intention behind the teachers' words in the preceding paragraphs when describing the importance of humanity in EAP. Although this might not seem to relate to the current trends descried in reference to EAP literacies, in the context

of China, it could be considered risky to teach students multiple literacies without emphasising the ethical and moral components associated with humanity. Indeed, accusations of a lack of academic ethics have previously been targeted at the academic community in China (Douglass, 2012; Beach, 2013). Historic examples from China of academic misconduct are diverse, ranging from copyright offences, to plagiarism, commissioning ghostwriters, buying other people's products, faking transcripts and faking degrees (Beach, 2013).

The problems above are exacerbated by competition. China has one of the largest populations in the world, and is home to more than 2000 tertiary institutions, with estimates suggesting that by 2020 there will be 195 million graduates surging towards the job market (Bradsher, 2013). Thus, the job market is fiercely competitive, and job seekers with undergraduate degrees; and even postgraduate degrees are not rare. At the end of the twentieth century, China's government enlarged their university enrolment rate by 470% (Jacques, 2009), leading some to doubt the quality of higher education output. These factors contribute to students having utilitarian attitudes towards education and learning (Beach, 2013). This leads to the question: If EAP students, future academics, are well equipped with techniques for doing research and writing papers, but perform research to benefit themselves only, who will speak out for the needs of society? Therefore, Lisa told me she views EAP as a tool to hone academic research, which is potentially beneficial to all humanity.

On a more philosophical basis, the aforementioned utilitarianism, or rational approach to knowledge the Shanghai EAP reform policy pursues is a by-product of the dissemination of neoliberalism throughout higher education. Neoliberalism, sometimes termed social Darwinism, conveys the view of "see(ing) competition as the defining characteristic of human relations. It redefines citizens as consumers, whose democratic choices are best exercised by buying and selling, a process that rewards merits and punishes inefficiency" (Monbiot, 2016, April 15). Higher education is inevitably influenced by neoliberalism (Steger & Roy, 2010), seeking to offer vocational training for students, by equipping them with cookie-cutter knowledge, so they can perform in different posts after graduation. This phenomenon is particularly apparent among low ranking universities, they use students' hopes (that a degree will assist their job hunting) as bait to attract student enrolments (Hadley, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to consider that teaching students practical EAP skills will help students with their job hunting, and that this is perhaps the logic of Shanghai EAP policymaker.

In humanism, knowledge resulting from the human experience multiplies sensitivity, the latter meaning the reflection and realisation of experience (Harari, 2016). Human experience counts as the foundation of learning: "learning is facilitated when the learner participates in the learning process responsibly", "When the learner chooses their goals, discovers learning resources, formulates problems, decides on a course of action, and lives with the consequences of each of these choices, then significant learning occurs" (Rogers, 1967, pp. 157–164, cited in Gould, 2012, p. 83). Thus, humanistic philosopher Rogers (1995) points out that universities pay too much attention to rational knowledge delivered by professors or other disciplinary

experts, often ignoring the significance of students' authentic experience and reflections upon learning. Without such processes, in Rogers et al.' words (1989), the self-actualisation of students' potentiality cannot be guaranteed. An important characteristic of researchers being self-actualised is an active concern for the "welfare of humanity" (Maslow, 1967, cited in Nolen-Hoeksema, Fredrickson, & Loftus, 2009, p. 487). Just as those who use their academic knowledge to produce fake essays and those who use their academic writing skills to get paid and write for students, or those who engage in other academic misconduct are not actualising themselves as true researchers and are not concerned with the welfare of humanity.

However, to date, almost all EAP pedagogy, even that stressing disciplinary socialisation, remains a classroom-based method involving reading and learning from selected materials. Even though the classroom environment and materials are simulating they do not guarantee the same learning effect as authentic contexts (Freedman & Adam, 1996). Furthermore, reading literature and writing up research papers is just one component of the academic research process; researchers need to either experiment, enter the field or conduct interviews to address real-world problems. Isolating students into classrooms would lead to learning without participation in students' experiences; in other words, the curriculum lacks humanity (Rogers, 1967). Echoing with calls from Grasso and Martinelli (2010), King, Miller, and Klawe (2010) report that today's professional education should not only incorporate subject knowledge, but also affordances for wider society; thus, EAP as initial training for future researchers should extend beyond the utilitarian.

## 5.5 Summary

When answering the first research question: How do the teachers in pedagogical transitions from EGP formulate their epistemology of EAP? the current study found the investigated teachers' EAP knowledge was derived from eclectic theories and personal experiences, although to a large extent these overlapped with contemporary theories. However, the investigated teachers' perceptions of differences between EAP and EGP were not totally consistent with the existing research. In terms of how the transition from teaching EGP to EAP influences teachers, the current study found that the pedagogical transition fulfilled teachers' education ideals and promoted their personal growth, as they overcame what might have been a career crisis through the acquisition of EAP teaching methods. In answering to the third research question: How do the teachers perceive the challenges and opportunities of the Shanghai EAP reform? there are problems arising from the unpreparedness of students, the lack of training opportunities for teachers, poor coordination of resources, mismatches in policy and a lack of humanity integrated into pedagogy.

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# Chapter 6

## Implications and Conclusion



### 6.1 Introduction

The first half of this chapter reviews the discussions raised in the previous chapter to provide possible solutions to the revealed problems, taking the feedbacks and practices of the investigated teachers' into consideration. Firstly, implications for EAP theory extension are deduced in reference to the lack of adequate preparation of EAP teachers in Shanghai. After which, drawing on Leung's (2009, 2013) work, reference is made to English language teachers' sponsored and independent professionalism. The implications of the collected data for updating the Shanghai EAP policy are also discussed, after comparing the data from the cases discussed with theories previously developed as components of the educational policy. This provides inferences for how to prepare students to study EAP by developing bridging courses based on situated learning, contrastive rhetoric and identity building. The possibilities for improving EAP pedagogy utilising an academic service learning EAP method, combining not only the participation of students in disciplinary learning but also fuelling their responsibility to humanity, are linked to the coordination of resources to support educators. However, deriving from the author's subjective interpretation of the research participants' behaviours and ideas, the implications might not be suitable for EAP teaching in every context. The second half of this chapter aims to conclude the research by recapping key points of significance raised during the course of the study and highlighting the limitations of the current thesis, while anticipating future related works.

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Part of the literature in this section and in Chap. 2 was once published by the same author in an article titled with "What is EAP?—From Multiple Literacies to a Humanistic Paradigm Shift" in *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 7, 2017. The author has obtained the permission to reuse the article from the publisher on the 14 November 2019 upon the condition of proper citation. Li (2017) can be accessed at <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0707.01>.

## 6.2 Implications for EAP Theory Update

EAP has long been viewed as a rehearsal tool for novice researchers, before their entrance proper into the arena of academic discourse. However, regardless of the fact that its focus is on knowledge (whether academic, disciplinary cultural, critical or digital literacy), the crucial aspects of how to “do” research have been largely untouched; i.e. how to interact with research participants, how to conduct experiments, how to locate flaws within complex phenomena, how to filter arguments from different layers of bias, how to evaluate the opportunities and limitations embodied in one’s own research and how to make ethical decisions.

In other words, contemporary EAP theories fail to include preparation for the realities students will encounter when doing research. Thus, without opportunities to experience the research process directly, the multiple literacies of EAP remain in the domain of classroom knowledge. Even though scholars like Hyland (2006), and Lea and Street (2000) have recommended disciplinary socialisation be taught within EAP, from their description, their aim seems to have been merely to encourage students to interact with the discipline through reading and writing materials. However, academic research contains more than simply writing up research, considerable additional work is necessitating both before and after this step.

From a linguistic perspective, Widdowson (1998) suggests students learn English through experience. English language studied in the classroom, no matter how similar to real-world contexts, it is not as authentic as that acquired naturally, because the classroom environment is not localised. Classroom English teaching emphasises the semantic meaning over the pragmatic meaning of language; however, in localised or authentic contexts, people just “pay only as much attention to the language as it is necessary to make this connection and no more...for it is only when listeners connect language up to contextual conditions of one kind or another that they can do things with it” (Widdowson, 1998, pp. 707–709). Similarly, if students are able to learn EAP while conducting their own academic research, the research contexts and processes could then afford greater support for their writing, rendering it more purposeful.

Widdowson’s (1998) opinions regarding learning English through experience echo ideas put forward by Rogers (1967), the humanistic philosopher. EAP’s aim has always been to prepare students for a future as academics; however, from the perspective of humanistic education, former EAP experts have failed to address the importance of students’ context-related experience (Rogers, 1967). In the context of Shanghai, where many students are demotivated to learn, and when academic misconduct in China is severe, EAP should not only be viewed as a utility but should stress the humanistic goals of academic research and the moral responsibilities of those who become academics.

### 6.3 Implication for Improving EAP Teachers' Professionalism

Current discussions will adopt Leung's (2009, 2013) definition of teachers' professionalism. Leung (2009, 2013) uses sponsored and independent professionalism to describe second language teachers' professional reservations. Sponsored professionalism refers to "institutionally endorsed and publicly heralded definitions of teachers' disciplinary knowledge and practical experience as expressed by regulatory bodies" (Coffey & Leung, 2015, p. 234); this evokes the stakeholder agreements that regulate teachers collectively (Ball, 1990, 1997; Leung, 2013). More specifically, Leung (2009, p. 67) gives an example of sponsored professionalism: "end-of-course standard", "pronouncement made by peak professional or regulatory bodies", "teaching quality inspection menus" and "quasi-judicial decisions related to disputed teacher conduct".

Independent professionalism, according to Coffey and Leung (2015, pp. 234–235), refers to:

[M]ore individually oriented notions of professionalism, in particular, individual teachers' commitment to careful and critical examination of the assumptions and practices embedded in sponsored collective professionalism with reference to discipline-based knowledge, and readiness to take action to effect change where appropriate.

In other words, it is teachers' engagement in critical reflection over their beliefs and actions (Coffey & Leung, 2015). In more detail, Leung (2009, p. 71) explains independent professionalism requires teachers to be "receptive to alternative perspectives on routinized practice, and they will seek to update and modify their knowledge and work in ways that are consistent with their developing views"; thus, "teachers can adapt and extend an inappropriate scheme of work or curriculum framework by devising additional teaching materials and classroom activities" (Leung, 2013, p. 25).

Sponsored professionalism should coexist with independent professionalism, and the latter may not necessarily contradict the former (Leung, 2009). However, independent professionalism denotes the process by which teachers maintain their teaching and professionalism as vigorous, preventing them from mechanically repeating pedagogy, which is particularly important in the context of a lack of functional sponsored professionalism available to guide teachers (Leung, 2009), as in the current context of Shanghai.

In terms of sponsored professionalism, future EAP teacher training in Shanghai should afford trainees a systematic understanding of EAP concepts. Rather than letting teachers probe the meaning of EAP by themselves, providing them with comprehensive guidelines could heighten their awareness of key concepts, from which they could then choose the elements most suit to themselves and their learners. Furthermore, as indicated in the discussion, teachers should be afforded more opportunities to become involved in academic research, becoming researchers themselves, or at least have some knowledge of the processes involved in doing research. Therefore,

modules related to research methods should be integrated with EAP training sessions. If possible, teachers should be encouraged and supported to make academic visits to universities in other countries, in order to enlighten them as to the international vision for academia. In terms of independent professionalism, it is crucial to emphasise teachers' ability to reflect on sponsored EAP knowledge, teaching context and students. Teachers could also improve their awareness of the teaching contexts in which they engage through reflective practice (Wallace, 1991). They could also see their teaching through one another's eyes by participating in microteaching (Liu & Li, 2016). The associated training sessions should also include communication between teachers discussing the opinions of students and aspects that are meaningful to them when teaching. Generally speaking, training for sponsored and independent professionals should assist EAP teachers to formulate their own teaching approaches.

#### **6.4 Implications for Updates to the Shanghai EAP Language Policy**

Firstly, updates to EAP knowledge should be integrated into the Shanghai EAP reform policy, as stipulated by Cai (2013). According to the data collected for this study, almost all the investigated teachers expressed an over-reliance on the policy document. In the document itself, Cai's (2013) definition of EAP borrows from those of Hutchinson and Waters (1987), who claim there are two subsections of EFL: one being EGP, and the other ESP (including EAP and EOP), and Jordan (1997), whose version of EAP combines EGAP and ESAP. Written in 2013, Cai's limited reference to theory prevents a reasoned representation of any holistic EAP discourse.

Meanwhile, from the categorisation of EAP proposed by Hyland (2006), a clear progression, marking the development of EAP theory emerges; ranging from stressing linguistic skills, to skills in a broader sense, to disciplinary socialisation, and academic literacy. Generally, however, Cai's (2013) emphasis is heavily reliant on the superficial layer of linguistic skills. Therefore, we find that in consideration of the contemporary landscape and paradigmatic shifts within EAP, the concept of EAP outlined in the policy should be updated. The conceptualisation of EAP in the literature review includes academic literacy, disciplinary cultural literacy, critical literacy and digital literacy, which can all be integrated within the theoretical framework of the Shanghai EAP policy to guide universities and their staff, to develop tailored curricular conveying a more holistic interpretation of EAP.

Secondly, the ultimate goal expressed in the EAP policy should be changed. As discussed in relation to the third research question, the Shanghai EAP reform, as a language policy, prepares students for a more globalised world, and so fails to keep abreast of educational paradigm shifts (Cheng, 2005). As the new millennium progresses, globalisation has brought both opportunities and challenges, most importantly prompting changes to our lives characterised by the information technology revolution, prompting a move towards a knowledge-driven economy, and stronger

international and national competition (Townsend & Cheng, 2000). Resulting from this transformation is a need for education to develop more quickly at the international, national, and local levels, to erode the boundaries between institutions and countries. The pace of change is rapid and multi-faceted, requiring people, particularly the young, to equip themselves with multiple contextualised intelligences (Cheng, 2005). According to Cheng (2005), the multiple contextualised intelligence is formulated to nurture future leaders and global citizens. In the context of Shanghai's EAP reform, Bluewitch's idea of nurturing scholars through EAP, and Fielding's aim of preventing students becoming "exquisite egoists" both highlight a desire to create graduates with abilities, responsibility, ethics and global visions. Therefore, EAP in this new paradigm should place greater emphasis on educating the researchers of the future, whether future academics or not. Thus, teaching and learning in such an epoch is expected to be markedly different from that in traditional times (Cheng, 2005; Fisher, 2005; Gerver, 2014), necessitating a change to the stated goals of the Shanghai EAP policy.

Thirdly, the pedagogy recommended by Cai (2013) in the Shanghai EAP reform policy requires adaption. According to Cheng (2005, pp. 29–31), traditional learning prefers "absorbing knowledge", "receiving process", "separated learning", "teaching based learning", "achieving standard" and the "practice of previous knowledge". The stipulated teaching methodology and module structure of EAP in Cai (2013), however, follow a traditional norm by delivering language knowledge, skills, and cultural principles in a lecturer dominant classroom, then requires students to sit for examinations. These methods are somewhat appropriate; however, in the context of training scholars who will be studying to meet futuristic education objectives, they are too narrow. Instead, Fisher (2005) advocates developing learners' abilities in creative thinking, critical thinking and problem-solving thinking. Academics also consider these modes of thinking fundamentally important alongside the establishment of a supportive environment (Fisher, 2005). In the current study, the project-based form of learning EAP devised by Fielding and Lisa; and Bluewitch's nurturing of scholarly values are valid examples of how to establish a supportive environment. Therefore, the EAP pedagogy described in the Shanghai EAP reform policy should benefit from the case of the current research, seeking to establish a suitable learning environment in which to nurture future academics.

## 6.5 Implications for Preparing Students for Learning EAP

Enlightened by Bluewitch, a preparatory course for newly recruited college students is necessary, not only to make sense of their future career direction, meaning higher education, but also to establish basic knowledge about academic research. Therefore, a course with three components is hereby introduced. It establishes a need for situated learning, in order to raise the awareness of the subject of the major and to promote interest. There also needs to be a critical explanation of the relative cultural

difference influencing students' literal habits; explicating the disciplinary characteristics, affordances of the research and the transition from student to researcher. These components can be amalgamated into pre-sessional courses for raising students' awareness, as located in the first year of study. This would assist many students in their decisions about whether they wish to continue pursuing EAP studies, or to withdraw and pursue alternative options.

I propose situated learning to negotiate the relationship between EAP and the expectations of various disciplines. Anderson, Reder, and Simon (1996, p. 5) state that situated learning "emphasises the idea that much of what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is learned", i.e. learning should take place in a real (or similar) context. It is also supported as: improving motivation and helping learners who lack a real-world experience (Kneebone, Scott, Darzi, & Horrocks, 2004), being professional (Gulikers, Kester, Kirschner, & Bastiaens, 2008), being suitable for both science (Ünal & Inan, 2010), and social science (Gulikers et al., 2008) and improving the attitudes of students towards a subject (Edwards, Nash, Sacre, Courtney, & Abbey, 2008). In an EAP setting, situated learning can be realised by showing students around the field related to their major, e.g. visits to factories, laboratories. By visiting such places, students' awareness of what is involved in their chosen profession will be raised, which could act to stimulate their motivation and direct their future planning. Furthermore, a similar outcome could be achieved by inviting professionals to give seminars on the affordances of certain techniques or aspects of the major, etc. Many such activities could be negotiated under the auspices of the recently advocated university/enterprise/community partnerships.

EAP students need to be made aware of the cultural differences they will encounter when they commence studying for their courses. However, as the Shanghai EAP policy modules relating to cultural differences and critical thinking are only run for the fourth year students (Cai, 2012, 2013), this leads the researcher to be concerned over whether students are unaware of these differences when they begin their studies. The difficulties that they might encounter because of lacking essential research skills could result in their becoming demotivated and relinquishing their academic ambitions. The researcher, therefore, recommends the creation of a carefully planned module, similar to situated learning, to explicate the differences between Chinese writing style and EAP, what comprises plagiarism, and to outline underpinning cultural possibilities.

One approach to negotiating cultural difference and the demands of the academic context is to employ contrastive rhetoric. This is applicable in many different aspects. According to Bloch (2008), understanding of plagiarism differs across cultures. In China, the epistemology of plagiarism differs from that in the west, because the Chinese have no history of protecting intellectual property (Bloch, 2008). Another example is offered by You (2008), who implies that what Chinese writing teachers regard as good writing might not be treated similarly in the west. Thus, if students have been immersed in a Chinese literacy environment, they need to be given access to a contrastive rhetoric to explain the expectations placed upon them by EAP.

Any new course should explicitly outline the following: academic integrity; the characteristics of different disciplines; the practice and rules scholars are expected

to follow (for example in essay writing); the role of the researcher; the ways in which research is able to produce knowledge; the difference between research and other means of gaining knowledge; the transition from secondary school student to university student to researcher; and access to learning at different stages of one's life.

## 6.6 Implications for How to Optimise the EAP Pedagogy

A number of factors must be considered when optimising the current EAP framework. For example, teachers have expressed anxiety about the omission of humanity from EAP courses, and at the same time, the majority of the investigated teachers advocated letting students learn EAP by participating in genuine disciplinary projects, which is one way in which Rogers' (1967) suggests courses can become more humanistic.

Therefore, an academic service learning method, allowing students to study EAP and use their disciplinary knowledge while serving people in a real context seems appropriate. "Service learning is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through cycles of action and reflection as students work with others in applying their knowledge to solve a community problem and, at the same time, reflect upon their experience to gain a deeper understanding of complex issues for themselves" (Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007, p. 4). According to Wilczenski and Coomey (2007), academic service learning originated from Dewey (1933) who claimed it had the characteristic of connecting "service to academic content and standards; personal and social learning; opportunities for career exploration, helping to determine and meet real community needs; beneficial for both the students and the community; appropriate in any subject area to meet learning goals; suitable for students at all grade levels" (Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007, p. xiii).

One of the key differences between service learning and PBL, is that student learning while serving in real contexts are able to fulfil actual needs expressed by members of the community (Woolfolk, 2008), which will help to build partnerships between universities and communities; an important necessity highlighted in Lisa's case. If an EAP course could support students to conduct research to improve people's welfare, as Maslow hinted (1967), then the missing component of humanity could be rediscovered. However, performing services for the community is complex, requiring the coordination of resources, and suggesting that EAP course should become an optional course. Were EAP optional then this would reduce teachers' complaints about workload (see the cases of Lisa and Rui), and would no longer force demotivated students to learn EAP.

Service learning has become a popular aspect of curricular in institutes of different levels in a variety of countries; including the Education University of Hong Kong and George Washington University in the US. It is employed for various projects, such as determining the urban sustainability of Anacostia Watershed, and establishing inter-personal communication among DC staff in order to better serve children, researching

and offering solutions for gaps in middle schools, consulting the organisational management of programs, school counselling and community-peace building (January 15, 2015, <http://serve.gwu.edu/academic-service-learning>), researching youth gambling addiction, elderly service, and leadership promotion (January 15, 2015, <https://www.ied.edu.hk/sao/?p=191>).

According to Wilczenski and Coomey (2007), service learning functions to improve social and emotional growth, as well as facilitating academic and career development. It is also renowned for promoting students' engagement in learning and the community (Shumer, 1994), students' self-awareness, giving students a joy in learning, a sense of empowerment when changing the world, opportunity to give back to the community, and bringing the motivation to resolve critical issues around the world (Weigert, 1998), "enhance both academic learning and a sense of caring for others" (Woolfolk, 2008, p. 515). To a large extent, the opportunities assumed to be associated with academic service echo a new EAP pedagogy, designed to empower students, returning their relevance and motivation, establishing an environment for academic research, creative thinking and problem-solving, raising the consciousness of one's own identity, and social responsibility.

Most importantly, service learning could facilitate the moral awareness of students when they see and understand genuine struggles, injustices and pain, fuelling them with the motivation to develop good morals, a sense of justice, and social responsibility (Donahue, 1999), potentially reducing the level of academic misconduct in China in the future. From this perspective, it is essential to integrate this component into any new EAP pedagogy to develop researchers as complete human beings.

When applying academic service learning, several points should be observed. These include the aspects of service, learning and reflection on one's own practice. In terms of service, students should aim to deliver assistance that meets the real-life needs of a community; in order to prevent negative influence from the community or false interpretations of what is required, needs should be defined by and negotiated with the target community (Weigert, 1998). With regard to the element of learning, Wilczenski and Coomey (2008) stress the importance of participation in a wider social context, while Weigert (1998) cautions that service should not only be for the purpose of doing service, but should also relate to course objectives. In terms of reflection, Wilczenski and Coomey (2008) think highly of this as a meaning-making process before, within and after service learning, which could encourage students to derive knowledge about services, the community itself, notions of self and injustice, and improved criticality. Troppe (1995) even states that reflection is a key to making learning happen in service. Weigert (1998) suggests reflection could provide a foundation that students could link to course objectives. Teachers should give feedback in terms of learning, rather than on service quality (Troppe, 1995).

Being aware of these important issues, more modes of reflection on academic service learning are recommended. Introspective journal writing could be assigned by teachers to ensure reflection on practice during service learning. Furthermore, students who are confident of their service learning outcomes or the procedures involved in problem-solving, or research design could be encouraged to write up and publish under the supervision of a supervisory team. Reflection could also take the

form of students preparing videos in English recording their service learning and their development of understanding. Departments could also host poster sessions, media broadcasts, or student research conferences at which to share service learning achievements. A prerequisite for these would be for students to write up their research in English with the help of their supervisory team, which would then prevent them from engaging in academic writing derived from fake or irrelevant contexts, ensuring they build a solid foundation in EAP. Therefore, by recommending these new modes of academic service learning reflection, the aim is to give back ownership of education by empowering students. The results of the involved activities could then also serve as a basis for a formative assessment of students. Moreover, if what is learned from reflective processes is implemented well, this might cooperate with other activities to deliver a more efficiently strategized academic environment to bolster students' academic progress. Generally speaking, the entire set of academic service learning requirements can be implemented in a manner that complements the traditional classroom-based curriculum, and could be used concurrently with it. However, for the service learning component of the curriculum to receive proper attention and weighting from teachers and students, it must receive assessment credits and be made compulsory, with classroom hours devoted to implementing it.

## 6.7 Implications for Coordinating Resources

A beneficial approach that could simultaneously resolve the challenges related to the availability of resources, eliminate EAP teachers' weaknesses in the area of disciplinary knowledge and facilitate the service learning EAP method, would be to introduce team teaching involving coordinating the resources available for EAP service learning.

When dealing with the extent of teaching specificity in EAP, many scholars have proposed the seemingly magical solution of fostering cooperation, collaboration, and team teaching between subject departments and language centres (Dudley-Evans, 2001; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hyland, 2006; Gao & Bartlett, 2014). However, the majority of researchers have been unable to propose a scientific and effective method to implement such team teaching. In Gao and Bartlett's research (2014), they discussed the major challenges facing EAP reformers in China (large student population and who/which department should determine the measure of success), and proffered the solution of strengthening the cooperation and collaboration between academic staff and language staff by quoting from interviews, without outlining an applicable systematic approach.

Gao and Bartlett's (2014) reluctance to set out a methodology is understandable. From questions associated with how departments and teachers might cooperate, arises the issue of who takes responsibility for teaching knowledge or language resulting in much debate. Taking a philosophical perspective, any cooperation between EAP

staff and subject staff seems risky. The ontology EAP language teachers hold is functionalism whereas science teachers pursue a realist paradigm; the resulting different ontologies, leads to different methodologies and assumptions about knowledge, which could impede attempts at collaboration. Furthermore, in some contexts, when subject teachers and language teachers co-teach in the EAP classroom, particularly when the subject teachers are not English native speakers or are less confident in their English, they may fear a challenge to their prestige that damages the potential for mutual trust between the two parties (Dudley-Evans, 2001). According to Wilkinson (1985), if the two parties are intertwined, it can be difficult for either to develop a careful pedagogy or rationale, due to their dependence on an alternate course.

From another perspective, if EAP is only taught by language teachers, then they may not be able to offer sufficient subject knowledge to their students, and cannot judge their students' grasp of disciplinary knowledge (Faigley & Hansen, 1985; Hyland, 2006). However, if subject teachers take the position of teaching EAP instead of language teachers, according to Hyland (2006), many would take the acquisition of both the language and EAP for granted.

However, this does not mean there are no successful cases of cooperation between disciplinary departments and language centres to refer to. De Escorcía (1984), Dudley-Evans (2001), and Vukadinovic (1998) all offer contributions in this regard. Dudley-Evans' (2001) team, teaching at the University of Birmingham claims to have achieved satisfactory results. Their strategy succeeded by clearly assigning roles to subject teachers, language teachers and students:

[T]he main role of the language teacher is to prepare the material for the session in cooperation with the subject teacher and to run the session. The subject teacher acts as an advisor entering the discussion to clarify points about the subject and to evaluate the students' contributions...the students have the opportunity to raise questions and to clarify points about the subject with the actual subject teachers. (Dudley-Evans, 2001, p. 227)

This strategy is also consistent with that outlined by Swales (1988). Later, Dudley-Evans (2001, p. 227) goes on to add that in the real classroom:

[T]he role of the language teachers is that of the intermediary seeking to interpret on behalf of the students what the subject teacher meant in his or her lecturer or in an examination question. The language teacher will respond to the questions but also suggest questions that students might put to the subject teacher. The language teacher will also bring in the subject teacher to the discussion to answer questions or clarify issues when this seems necessary.

However, the complexity and length of a lesson must be seriously considered when EAP classes are being delivered in the suggested way. For example, in China, class size is usually larger than it is in the UK, and manipulating interactions between language teachers, subject teachers and students will lengthen class time and make it impossible to complete the objectives. Similarly, for language teachers and subject teachers to team-teach and fully comprehend the intricacies of each other's roles requires considerable training, due to the complexity of the practice involved. The need for such training does not mesh with the expectations from the EAP reform in China. Indeed, as Gao and Bartlett (2014) point out; how to utilise the current resources and human resources to support and optimise EAP reform is the challenge

that must be met in China's higher education sector. Thus, we suggest that the recommended cooperation between departments and EAP providers might not be applicable to China. Indeed, Dudley-Evans (2001) himself admits that the Birmingham team teaching mode is ideal but not readily transferable to other contexts.

Therefore, the team teaching recommended here should aim to fit both the situation in China and the expectations from a new EAP pedagogy. Thus, a three-person supervisory team for each student group is suggested; and group numbers would be expected to differ according to the project or task undertaken. The three supervisors should include a disciplinary research supervisor who can offer students suggestions about how to conduct research employing theories relevant in their chosen discipline, a service learning supervisor responsible for connecting the students with the community to carry out service, and a language supervisor who can advise students on producing, writing up, and proofreading in different genres (e.g. essays, seminar PowerPoints and reports). The cooperation between the three supervisors would take place outside the classroom and their interaction would be simple and straightforward. For example, the service learning supervisor could explain the situation in a certain social learning community and outline the community's needs; the disciplinary supervisors could offer students in-time research and disciplinary guidance when queries arise; and when students complete the practical aspect of their research, they can turn to their language supervisor for academic writing support on how to publish their work in different formats.

The role of each supervisor would be performed relatively independently of the other supervisors, and communication would only be required for clarification or progress updates. This new team teaching would be outside the classroom, leaving traditional classroom practice undisturbed, and so it could be integrated with any other existing curriculum. The disciplinary research supervisor could be appointed from academic staff in the department or experienced research postgraduate students. The service-learning supervisor could be drawn from a target community willing to liaise with postgraduate students or someone with experience in service learning. Finally, the language supervisor would be from the English language or linguistics department, or the university language centre, they might also be a competent postgraduate student with good academic English skills. These measures would greatly reduce the potential for disagreement and the need for additional time for teachers to cooperate, optimising utilisation of current human resources. The approach also reduces interference in classroom teaching and facilitates the delivery of academic services.

## 6.8 Conclusion

### 6.8.1 *Recap and Significance of the Research*

This study has adopted a phenomenological ethnography to probe a community of college English language teachers experiencing the pedagogical transition from EGP to EAP, as set out under the policies of the Shanghai education bureau. By answering the three research questions (RQ1. How do the teachers in pedagogical transitions 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?), the current study extended existing knowledge from EAP teachers in the literature internationally, particularly those in transition from EGP to EAP in China. Transcending all previous studies, the current research offers an anthropological rendering of its research participants, providing a rich, chronological and contextualised picture of teaching, meaning-making, identity construction and the emotions of EAP teachers in pedagogical transition. Therefore, this study produced innovative findings, as discussed below.

When answering RQ1, the current research revealed the investigated teachers' knowledge of EAP comprised eclectic theories and experiences; however, their eclectic knowledge of EAP to some extent overlapped with that described by current EAP theories. Moreover, the Chinese EAP teachers had a distinct understanding of the key differences between EGP and EAP. In terms of RQ2, the transition from EGP to EAP was perceived to fulfil the teachers' educational ideals, helping them to boycott their career crises. Moreover, the teachers' transition from EGP-EAP was a process of self-growth process; EAP stimulated the investigated teachers to become researchers developing visions for research at home and abroad. In terms of RQ3, the teachers identified clearly the potential problems and challenges they encountered when implementing the Shanghai EAP reform policy in relation to a range of factors, including student motivation, teacher training, resources, defined policy and the philosophy underpinning the course.

The advent of an EAP framework in the literature review could function as a map for practitioners when referring to different and sometimes conflicting, EAP theories and strategies. It might also work as a check for EAP teachers wishing to reflect on their curriculum and course, and to observe the progress of their EAP teaching, preparing EAP lessons tailored to the needs and of their students. Comparing EAP to multiple literacies also reduces readers' cognitive processing of the meaning of EAP overall and as discrete elements. Regarding the theoretical contribution, one of the limited pieces of literature reviewed objectively analysed different schools of EAP theories, and the current study synthesises terminologies in EAP and extracts similarities across four general streams of literacy, producing a panoramic picture of the field.

At the end of this study, a set of implications for updating EAP theories arose, with the potential to improve the professionalism of those EAP teachers preparing

their EAP students, optimising EAP pedagogy and refining EAP policy, as well as coordinating resources for EAP reflecting popular educational theories. The creation of these implications is not only useful for the stakeholders of the Shanghai EAP reform but is also constructive for all EAP colleagues to refer to. In terms of theoretical contribution, the current study contributes to EAP theory families, deepens the understanding of EAP teachers, particularly those working in China, and creates a possible pedagogy for EAP teaching. Furthermore, it details key aspects of practice, and could benefit teachers transitioning to teaching EAP, by enabling them to clarify their beliefs. It also offers suggestions for EAP policymakers to reflect upon.

### 6.8.2 *Limitations and Future Works*

A limitation of the current study is the limited time the researcher was immersed in the field, although the ethnographic data attained in both virtual and real-world contexts was abundant and the researcher collected as much data as possible. Had more time been devoted to be spent in the field then the ethnographic data might have been richer. Certainly, contacts could have been made sooner in the course of the research and an anthropological stance could have been exercised from 2014 onwards, so there would be scope to gather more data through a longer field study in the future. The current research could not have been statistically generalised, as it emphasises the stories of the four teachers phenomenologically and ethnographically; the implications were also based on the responses from and thinking over the participant teachers. Ideally, further anthropological studies could usefully concentrate on collecting data from EAP teachers in places other than China, because different findings would be expected from different local contexts and cultures. Surveys or other kinds of quantitative studies could be used to uncover the experiences of the Shanghai EAP teachers as a larger cohort. Furthermore, a systematic EAP pedagogy based on the implications of the current research would also prove beneficial.

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