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## Helping EAL academics navigate asymmetrical power relations in co-authorship: Research-based materials for ERPP workshops

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### Abstract

*This paper presents, discusses, and evaluates research-based materials for English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) teaching, based on a study conducted with exiled academics supported by CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics) and their UK-based co-authors who provided textual interventions on their texts. Using data from interviews with exiled academics and their UK-based co-authors/mentors as well as their article drafts and textual interventions, we present teaching materials for ERPP workshops aimed at raising the participants' awareness of issues that may arise in co-authorship involving asymmetrical power relations, such as those between exiled academics and their UK-based co-authors/mentors. The materials take the shape of data-based scenarios which ask workshop attendees to consider experiential co-authorship narratives involving (i) the issue of 'parochialism', i.e., failure to indicate the relevance of one's research to a larger audience, (ii) issues with the type and amount of feedback regarding writer development and text production, (iii) blurred lines of co-authorship roles, and (iv) authority issues in interdisciplinary collaborative writing. Each scenario is followed by a research-informed discussion. We argue that scenario-based awareness-raising activities can sensitize all parties in asymmetrical co-authorship pairs/groups to common challenges that arise in such collaborations, help them navigate collaborative writing successfully, and encourage them to reflect on their own co-authorship practices. We conclude by discussing the merits of the scenario-based approach to developing materials for ERPP teaching.*

KEYWORDS: EXILED ACADEMICS, CO-AUTHORSHIP PRACTICES, EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE) ACADEMIC LITERACIES DEVELOPMENT, ENGLISH FOR RESEARCH PUBLICATION PURPOSES (ERPP), TEACHING MATERIALS

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## Introduction

Collaborative writing for research publication purposes in English is increasing in academia (Bozeman et al., 2013; Çakır et al., 2019; Kuld & O'Hagan, 2018; Kwiek, 2020). This collaborative work involves asymmetrical power relations when writers with different levels of expertise, access to resources, and with different types of knowledge are working collaboratively (Miller, 1992), as in the case of PhD students and their supervisors (Darvin & Norton, 2019) or Centre- and Periphery-based academics (Heron et al., 2020). The Centre/Periphery distinction, originating from Wallerstein's (1991) world-systems theory, has been applied to academic writing for publication with reference to knowledge production, highlighting the privileged status of Centre-based academics (e.g., Canagarajah, 2002; Lillis & Curry, 2010; see also Bennett's 2014 volume for the notion of *semiperiphery* in academic writing). Asymmetrical power relations are particularly likely to be clearly manifested when co-authors include exiled academics, who in most cases hold less power given their loss of linguistic, cultural, and social capital after being forced to leave their home country (Heron et al., 2020).

Co-authorship, whether involving obvious power imbalances or not, presents writers with both benefits and challenges. The benefits include sharing resources and expertise, having multiple perspectives on the research problem, and the learning process of all involved regardless of their level of expertise (Darvin & Norton, 2019) and the challenges include disagreements between co-authors on the various aspects of the text, the type of revisions to be conducted, and the personality conflicts that may emerge during the process which, in extreme cases, may result in failure to publish (Primack et al., 2014). When asymmetrical power relations are involved, additional challenges might arise such as the more powerful authors adding guest authors without consulting the other authors (Primack et al., 2014).

Although co-authorship has been recognised as one of the most effective ways to help exiled academics continue with their research (Heron et al., 2020), research-based recommendations for pedagogical practice focusing on the EAL (English as an Additional Language) academics' literacies development via co-authorship are scarce. This is surprising given both the practical need in this respect and the need to understand more fully the benefits and challenges in collaborative writing involving asymmetrical power relations. Addressing this pedagogical need, this paper presents and discusses materials for writing workshops developed to help EAL academics navigate the intricacies of collaborative writing situations by drawing on a study we have conducted with exiled Syrian academics, focusing on their

EAL academic literacies development and academic re-orientation in their new academic communities. While our specific focus is on exiled academics, the materials we present are applicable and easily adaptable for workshops for writers participating in various types of collaborations marked by asymmetrical power relationships, such as early career researchers and senior academics. In the next section, we give an overview of the study the materials are based on. Then we discuss materials for teaching writing, followed by presentation, discussion, and evaluation of our materials for raising writers' awareness of issues in co-authorship. We conclude with a brief discussion and pedagogical recommendations.

### The Data on Which This Paper is Based

The materials presented in this article draw on the results of a thirty-month study which examined how four Syrian academics, who were considered established while in Syria, developed their EAL academic literacies for publishing in exile, two in Turkey and two in the UK (Khuder, 2021). These academics were supported by CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics), an organization that assists at-risk academics continue their academic careers in a safe environment (<https://www.cara.ngo/>). The study used ethnography, adopting the approach outlined by Lillis (2008), who discusses ethnography on three simultaneously operating levels: ethnography as a method, methodology, and deep theorizing. Ethnography as a *method* uses mainly talk-around-text interviews, which Lillis (2008) argues does not benefit from the full potential of ethnography as it limits data collection to interviews only. Ethnography as a *methodology* includes an involvement with the research context for a period of time using various methods, such as writing logs and observations. Ethnography as *deep theorizing* 'challenges the ways in which text and context in writing research are often conceptualized as separate phenomena and signals the need to develop analytic tools that narrow the gap between them' (Lillis, 2008, p. 355). This rarely used approach bridges the gap between text and context and was particularly relevant to the study because it looks into sociocultural, political, and historical contexts, which have a crucial role in text production. We therefore used ethnography as a method by conducting talk-around-text interviews; ethnography as methodology by using multiple methods (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, writing logs, network plots, and text histories); and ethnography as deep theorizing, by developing a model of authorial voice development based on conceptual and textual analyses. We gathered data from various other sources: various websites (such as universities' websites and funding bodies); correspondence with the CARA team; email correspondence between us and the participants and the participants and

journals' editors and reviewers; and informal talks with EAP tutors and the participants' co-authors.

Our findings showed the wide variation in the journeys that the participant-academics underwent in exile while publishing in EAL, partly because of the different types of support academics received from their co-authors in exile and the different types and roles of co-authorship involved. While some centre-based co-authors exceeded the expectations of their Syrian co-authors by giving them ample feedback focusing on disciplinary, text-production, and publishing issues (Khuder & Petrić, 2022), other co-authors showed less commitment and less willingness to give feedback. It should be noted here that Syrian academics themselves also differed in their investment (Duff, 2010) in collaboration, which also affected their success.

We believe these findings can be effectively utilised for the creation of data-based pedagogical materials for writing workshops. Our motivation for developing such materials was two-fold: first, we wanted to address issues raised by the increasing number of academics in areas of turmoil who flee their countries. For example, since the Syrian Crisis broke out in 2011, more than 2000 academics have fled the country (King, 2016; Sheikh, 2016), with less than 10% of those in exile continuing their academic work (Sheikh, 2016). The number of organizations supporting exiled academics is also increasing and includes organizations such as Scholars At-Risk (SAR) and the Institute of International Education (IIE) Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis. The second driving force behind this project was the scarcity of research, especially pedagogically oriented research, on co-authorship.

Our specific interest in working with exiled individuals comes from our own life experiences: the first author is a Syrian doctoral student in the UK and shares the L1 and background knowledge with the participants, and the second author experienced involuntary displacement. Moreover, our experiences in working with CARA and similar organisations raised our interest in this project: the first author was a CARA fellow and volunteer in the CARA Syria Program (<http://bit.ly/CaraSP>); the second author was the supervisor and co-author of a CARA fellow and a teacher on the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) language and orientation programmes for displaced persons (for further information on our positions see Khuder & Petrić, 2021). As a result of our positions and our research with CARA scholars, we are in an informed position to share our results with those interested in co-authorship where power relations are involved.

## Materials for Teaching Academic Writing

Teaching materials, defined as ‘anything that can be used to facilitate the learning of a language’ (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 143), include a broad range of written, audio, visual, digital, and multimodal texts, from teacher-designed worksheets to global commercial textbooks. The term covers texts as well as tasks (Harwood, 2010) since tasks engage students in processing and learning from the materials (Stoller, 2016). In EAP and ERPP contexts, materials are typically developed in-house and/or by practitioners delivering the instruction, to address specific students’ needs (Stoller, 2016; see also Feak & Swales, 2010 for an excellent account of materials development for a writing for publication course for postdoctoral fellows in perinatology). Materials for teaching EAL writing may serve a range of roles, such as to provide linguistic input, examples of genres for rhetorical analysis, and as stimulus for discussion (Hyland, 2006). Awareness raising activities, which this paper focuses on, typically use a stimulus (e.g., a text, a video) as a springboard for discussion (Hyland, 2006). ‘Scenarios’ or vignettes are a particularly suitable type of stimulus for raising writers’ awareness of social practices surrounding text production since they provide experiential narratives of situations, events and understandings that participants can easily relate and respond to. Although teacher-created scenarios have long been used in EAP teaching (see, e.g., Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), there are few publications presenting and discussing research-based teaching materials in the scenario format which utilise authentic empirical data. Harwood & Petrić (2019) designed scenarios based on their ethnographically-oriented research on dissertation supervision (Harwood & Petrić, 2017) to foster discussion and raise students’ and supervisors’ awareness of challenging issues in dissertation supervision they may encounter, such as mismatch of supervisor and supervisee expectations and supervisees’ difficulties interpreting supervisors’ feedback, to help both parties navigate supervision more effectively. Drawing on their ethnographic study with multilingual academics writing for international publication, Curry and Lillis (2010) provide a model for drawing on empirical data to design pedagogical activities that encourage participants to explore social practices and social networks in writing for publication and to reflect on their own practice. Specifically, they present research-based synopses focusing on writing a conference proposal and writing a journal article with collaborators from local and international networks. They provide sets of questions to aid scholars aiming to reflect on their practices, followed by suggestions for enhancement of these practices.

Following this body of work, this paper aims to provide teaching ideas and pedagogical recommendations for ERPP tutors and co-authors working

with organisations such as CARA and others supporting exiled academics to continue their academic work and publish in international journals. Specifically, we propose a series of pedagogic materials and activities drawing on authentic data from our research, which can be used in workshops and online seminars with exiled academics and co-authors of exiled academics in order to raise awareness of pertinent issues in co-authorship and generate discussion of possible approaches leading to successful outcomes. More broadly, however, we believe that the issues our research project has revealed are pertinent to any writing collaborations involving asymmetrical power relations, such as collaborations between established and early career academics or supervisors and supervisees. We therefore believe that the activities suggested below can help raise EAL academic writers' awareness of issues in co-authorship that may cause misunderstandings or create obstacles to successful outcomes and equip them with ideas for addressing such issues constructively.

In a recent review of literature on ERPP pedagogy, Li and Flowerdew (2020) note that the field is underdeveloped and largely focused on discursive issues (i.e., language work), while non-discursive issues, such as how to deal with gate-keepers and literacy brokers (including co-authors) have received much less attention. To redress this imbalance, below we provide a set of scenarios illustrating key co-authorship issues that emerged during this research, which we believe are important to address in ERPP workshops. Each scenario is accompanied by specific questions and suggested issues for discussion with workshop participants.

### Issues in Co-authorship

Co-authorship involves two or more authors producing a single text for publication. Storch (2018) makes a distinction, with reference to student collaborative writing, between collaborative writing in its narrow sense, where all stages of writing are shared by all co-authors, and cooperative writing, where tasks are distributed among co-authors. In scholarly writing for publication, distribution of tasks is a common practice as division of academic labour allows for more efficient use of co-authors' different areas of expertise and skillsets, which is particularly relevant in interdisciplinary work (Khuder, 2021). Co-authors' contributions to a joint publication vary, with multiple factors playing a role, such as the type of research process, power dynamics, field characteristics, work culture, and the self-imposed norms of teams (Bozeman & Youtie, 2016). When it comes to the actual text production, writers might play various roles, such as writing the first draft, writing parts of the text, or critically revising texts (Tarkang et al., 2017). The Contributor Role Taxonomy (CRediT), used by growing

numbers of international journals, defines 14 contributor roles co-authors may perform in research publications, such as Conceptualisation, Formal analysis and Methodology (see <https://casrai.org/credit/>). Text production, which is the main focus of this paper, occupies two roles in this taxonomy: Writing the original draft and Review and editing. It should be noted here that in all the cases we discuss in the scenarios below the non-Syrian co-authors' text production contributions consisted of critically reviewing and editing the texts that were originally drafted by the Syrian exiled academics. Both parties performed additional contributor roles, which are not discussed here.

In the following we present four scenarios, from the ethnographic research described above, which emerged as the most prevalent issues from within the data collected. These scenarios discuss some of the main issues in co-authoring papers for international publication: the issue of 'parochialism', issues with the type and amount of feedback, blurred lines of co-authorship roles, and negotiating authority in interdisciplinary research. These issues reflect different aspects of power-relations in collaborative writing for publication that workshop participants may encounter when co-authoring papers. The research-based scenarios and the questions we developed aim to draw participants' attention to these aspects of power relations and engage them in discussion and reflection about them. We intentionally selected scenarios that can be interpreted from multiple perspectives to foster rich discussion and exchange of views. The following table summarizes the key aspects addressed.

**Table 1:** Discussion topics and aspects of power relations addressed in the four scenario-based materials for ERPP workshops

<b>Topic for discussion</b>	<b>Aspects of power relations involved in collaborative writing</b>
Negotiating publishing conventions: 'parochialism'	Centre-Periphery collaboration
Negotiating feedback: Focus on text development	Different levels of expertise and sharing expertise in ways conducive of writer development
Negotiating authorship lines: who can be a co-author?	Different types of contribution to text production and their perceived value
Negotiating authority in interdisciplinary research	Different levels of disciplinary representation in the team

### **Negotiating Publishing Conventions: 'Parochialism'**

'Parochialism', defined as failure to show relevance of research to the international academic community (Belcher, 2007; Flowerdew, 2001), has



been identified as one of the major publishing obstacles that EAL academics face while attempting to publish in international journals. Lillis and Curry (2010) observed how EAL academics could be indexed as parochial by journal editors and reviewers via the act of citing other EAL academics or non-English research publications. Numerous researchers (e.g., Belcher et al., 2016; Flowerdew, 2001) have pointed out that EAL academics are more at risk of being labelled as parochial than centre-based academics and suggestions have been made to overcome this problem by explicit teaching of different rhetorical strategies for framing their research. Thus, in periphery-centre collaboration, this issue may arise. The following scenario, based on the case of Ahmad (all names are pseudonyms), a Syrian academic who received feedback on avoiding parochialism from his centre-based co-author, is aimed at raising the awareness of workshop participants of this issue and helping them navigate it.

**Scenario 1: Meeting audience expectations/ 'parochialism'**

**Ahmad: a Syrian academic**

**Julia: his UK-based co-author**

Ahmad and Julia wrote more than ten articles together. Typically, Ahmad would write the first draft of the articles and Julia would comment on the drafts. When commenting on the first draft of their second article, which focused on a type of plant, Julia asked Ahmad to change the location of the research reported in the article draft. 'Write Middle Eastern instead,' Julia wrote in her comment on the word 'Syrian' in the draft.

In response, Ahmad deleted the comment and left the word 'Syrian' unchanged. In the later draft, Julia asked why anyone would be interested to read about a plant in Syria. Ahmad, who had experience in publishing in Syria where the mention of the locality 'Syria' was compulsory, did not respond to that comment but rather deleted it and felt offended by it:

I wondered here why she would not let me include 'Syrian' and did not like how she questioned the fact that people would not be interested in reading about Syria. Syria is a well-known country with an important cultural heritage and if the reader does not know Syria then maybe there is a problem with their education and not a problem with the article.

Ahmad requested a meeting with Julia to talk to her about this issue after exchanging three drafts where she seemed to insist on replacing 'Syrian' with 'Middle Eastern'. When he talked to Julia about his feelings about her comment, she explained how writing 'Middle Eastern' would make their research more appealing to the wider audience and how that 'could make their article publishable' (Ahmad). This clarified to Ahmad the rationale behind Julia's comment, i.e., that it was not derogatory about Syria but motivated by audience considerations when aiming to publish in an international journal.

### Questions for discussion

- *What is the cause of the problem described in this scenario?*
- *How could Julia have responded differently?*
- *What do you think of Julia's rationale for using 'Middle Eastern' instead of 'Syrian' here?*
- *How else could they have shown the relevance of their research?*
- *Do you think this issue is likely to emerge in some disciplines only?*
- *Should issues related to making your research relevant to the international academic audience be discussed prior to the start of collaboration?*
- *What should be taken into account when negotiating these issues as part of collaborative work? How can/should co-authors approach them?*
- *Have you experienced similar challenges when writing for publication with other authors? How did you deal with them?*
- *If you were in Ahmad's position, how would you respond?*
- *If you were in Julia's position, how would you respond?*

As can be seen in the scenario above, two issues arise: parochialism, with the lack of explicit explanation on Julia's part, and Ahmad's response to the feedback, of simply deleting the comment he did not understand instead of negotiating it. Julia here took a pragmatic approach: to help position the research towards an international rather than a local research community, she suggested the scope of reference to be broadened from a *Syrian* to a *Middle Eastern* type of plant investigated in the study, thus making the research problem relevant to a wider journal readership. However, her directive feedback without an explanation or consideration of how Ahmad might interpret it caused Ahmad negative feelings and led him to repeatedly reject the suggested change. The issue was eventually resolved through dialogue. After Julia explained the rationale behind her suggestion, both authors agreed on the strategy as a means to make their research more accessible to journal gate-keepers. As stated earlier, framing their research in ways acceptable to international journals is a common challenge for EAL academics. Flowerdew (2001) found parochialism to be one of the main reasons for journal editors' rejection of articles. Editors in this study pointed out that 'obscure themes' and 'too much topic localization' (p. 134) are the main reasons for rejection. Flowerdew questions the concept of 'topic localization' especially in EAL teaching and the extent to which it is important to comply with the requirement for topic globalism defined from the centre. For example, Lillis and Curry's (2010) participant, a Spanish psychologist specialising in speech and hearing disorders of Spanish speakers, argued that international journals are likely to be interested in her 'marked locality' (p. 147) due to the large Spanish-speaking population in the US. Due to the contested nature of this issue, the scenario above is likely to raise various and possibly contrasting responses,

as was indeed the case in our presentations of this material at conferences and seminars. Therefore, the questions for discussion we suggest start from eliciting participants' understandings, interpretations, and reactions to the account presented, followed by questions about the issue of 'parochialism' itself, including the ways to address it and/or challenge it. The final questions are aimed at inviting participants to share their personal experiences of encountering this issue when co-authoring papers for international publication and how they dealt with it.

### **Negotiating Feedback: Focus on Text Development**

Co-authorship involving asymmetrical power relationships is not only joint text production but can also be a process of socializing academics into academia, specifically those writing their first articles for international journals (Mena et al., 2013). Thus, writing for publication is not only a process of knowledge construction and dissemination but it can also be a process of personal academic growth, specifically when exiled academics are involved. However, the academic development of the exiled academic may slip into the background when co-authors prioritise speeding up the publishing process. The following scenario, based on the case Rami, an exiled academic collaborating with his UK-based co-author, Evan, addresses the issue of different expectations of the purposes of feedback.

#### **Scenario 2: Text development rather than writer development**

**Rami: a Syrian academic**

**Evan: his UK-based co-author**

Rami, who published two English-medium articles in local journals in Syria, moved to the UK to embark on a post-doctorate position where he joined three other researchers in their project. Rami wrote the first draft of the first article to be published out of the joint research project. Evan commented on the first draft asking Rami to make changes. Rami responded to the feedback in ways that Evan did not seem to consider appropriate and he made the changes himself, as the following example shows:

Evan commented at the beginning of the results section:

1–2 lines explaining what you did and justifying your approach.

Rami added:

We grew yeast cells to study iron accumulation and concentration.

Evan deleted that and wrote the following which appeared in the published text:

Yeast cells were grown at different xx of iron in xx in order to study the effect of iron concentration in growth medium on the yield of cells, iron accumulation in cells and one of mail baking properties of the produced cells (leavening ability).

Rami responded to the feedback in ways that Evan did not seem to consider appropriate and he made the changes himself. Rami reported a sense of confusion concerning the feedback provided to him:

I was not sure about the reasons for the changes he [Evan] made. He made all the changes and did not explain a thing. I know this is a faster way to publish but this does not make me write a better first draft in the future. It seems [Evan] did not care about me as an academic but cared more about the text being published and this is rather disappointing for someone at my stage. He could have asked me to make some changes and see how this works, instead he went for what is faster.

### Questions for discussion

- *What is the cause of the problem described in this scenario?*
- *How could Evan have approached Rami differently?*
- *How could Rami have approached Evan differently?*
- *How could Evan be made aware of the importance of Rami's development as a writer and ways to help him develop?*
- *How should co-authors approach different expectations of the type and amount of feedback to collaborate effectively?*
- *To what extent should collaborative writing focus on teaching/learning?*
- *Have you experienced the issue described in this scenario?*
- *If you were in Rami's position, how would you respond?*
- *If you were in Evan's position, how would you respond?*

This scenario shows that one round of feedback is not likely to be sufficient for academic socialisation and academic literacies development. The tension created by power relations illustrated in this scenario could be related to the UK-based academics' willingness to share their expertise in a way that matches the exiled academics' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1987). Taking ZPD into consideration is essential in socializing writers into their new academic communities (Storch, 2018). Related to this discussion is our concept of the Level of Textual Interventions (LoTI) (Khuder & Petrić, 2020), i.e., the extent to which the co-author intervenes in the text when commenting on it. We distinguish between five levels, from minimal textual intervention (LoTI5), providing an indirect request to make changes (LoTI4), providing evaluation and clear suggestions (LoTI3), deciding to rewrite a section (LoTI2), to overwriting the text (LoTI1). In the scenario above, Evan changed his intervention from LoTI3, where he provided an instruction ('explain what you did and justify your approach'), to direct rewriting of Rami's text (LoTI1). Evan changed the level to make the text production process faster. While Evan may have felt that he was modelling appropriate discourse for Rami, the fact that he abandoned their dialogue made Rami feel inadequate ('he did not care about me as an academic').

We found similarity between the participant's story in this scenario and another participant, Khaled, who had an Arabic speaking mentor, Mohannad, for his post-doctorate. Mohannad asked Khaled to write a draft in Arabic and then translated the text into English without providing feedback to Khaled but rather making direct textual changes to the text. While Evan in the scenario above does not disregard Rami's writing development needs to such an extent, the scenario shows how provision of feedback at levels incompatible with the co-author's ability to benefit from it and scarcity of feedback could be problematic for writer development and cause tensions in the collaborative relationship. Other issues with feedback include instances of the co-author making repeated comments on the same area, which can be demotivating for the writer with less authority. A preferable approach may be to supplement the comment at first instance with an explanation of the rationale and/or a model and an instruction for amendment of the remaining instances.

As in the previous scenario, our suggested questions for discussion begin with eliciting participants responses to the 'story' and their interpretation of the problem described. Issues relating to differing expectations of the role, amount and type of feedback are then addressed as well as ways of ensuring misunderstandings are avoided. In the final step, participants share their experiences and reflect on their practice of giving and receiving feedback.

### **Negotiating Authorship Lines: Who Can Be a Co-author?**

Blurred lines of co-authorship, i.e., unclear expectations of the division of responsibilities amongst co-authors, is a problem that can affect academics involved in collaborative writing in general (Primack et al., 2014; see also progress reports from the ongoing *Standard Operating Procedures for Research Integrity* project at <https://sops4ri.eu/>). It is likely to be even more pronounced in the case of EAL exiled academics who possess limited resources and networks due to the loss of their different types of capital (Parkinson et al., 2018). For example, EAL exiled academics might need assistance in language editing. If their co-authors are not ready to provide this type of intervention, they would need to pursue it elsewhere, which might either jeopardize the work quality or affect the relationship among the co-authors. The scenario below addresses this issue through the case of Hani, a Syrian exiled academic, and his EAP tutor, James, who asked to be listed as a co-author.

**Scenario 3: Who should be listed as an author?****Hani: a Syrian academic****Alan: his UK-based co-author****James: a UK-based EAP tutor**

Hani, a Syrian exiled academic in the field of engineering, drafted an article with Alan, his UK-based co-author. This was their first collaboration. Alan did not have the time to conduct language editing, fixing only a few language issues and writing: 'I edited a few language issues; you need to do the rest.'

Hani was assigned an EAP tutor, James, at his host institution in the UK, to revise this paper. James spent little time on the paper and returned it to Hani with an email saying: 'this needs more work. I can only help if I am included as a co-author'. Hani commented on this:

He cannot be a co-author. A co-author needs to be involved in the analysis or at least be able to understand it and comment on it in a way that does not mean commenting on the language used but on the information in the paper and that is something I am sure he cannot do.

This paper included four authors, Hani, Alan, and two 'gift authors', who, as Hani explained, did not contribute to the work at all. These two 'gift authors' were Hani's post-doctoral advisor and his program director, who asked to be included in the paper, although they did not contribute to it at any point of the research. The advisor told Hani he was expected to co-author with his advisor and other members of the department during his post doc and 'this was one way to go around this'. Alan was not based at the same university. None of the academics had the time to co-author the paper with Hani.

This left the article without a language editor, resulting in Hani having less confidence in the article's quality and therefore deciding to submit it to a less prestigious journal, as he reported in the following:

We could not submit the article where we wanted to because here I know I needed a language editor because my UK co-authors were not available for language check as they did not have time for this. James wanted to be a co-author because he thinks he has the 'language power' he is entitled to it but I said no and now the article is published in a less prestigious journal.

**Questions for discussion**

- *What are the issues that seem problematic to you in this scenario?*
- *What is the cause of the problem(s) described in this scenario?*
- *In your opinion, was James right to ask to be named as a co-author? Why (not)?*
- *What do you think of Hani's rationale for not including James as a co-author here?*
- *What do you think of his rationale for including his advisor and programme director as co-authors?*
- *Do you think this issue is more likely to emerge when EAL writers are involved in co-authorship?*
- *Should issues related to co-authorship roles and expectations be discussed prior to the start of the collaboration?*

- *What should be taken into account when negotiating these issues as part of collaborative work? How can/should co-authors approach them?*
- *Have you experienced similar challenges when writing for publication with other authors and language/writing tutors? How did you deal with them?*
- *If you were in Hani's position, how would you respond?*
- *If you were in James' position, how would you respond?*
- *If you were in Alan's position, would you do anything differently?*

Three issues can be identified in the above scenario: ambiguous co-authorship roles and responsibilities, as illustrated by Hani's surprise that Alan did not intend to conduct language editing; guest authorship, by including authors who were not involved in the research process itself; and mismatch of expectations about what co-authorship involves, reflected in the language editor asking to be included as a co-author. Generally speaking, these issues are related to the lack of agreed understanding of co-authorship amongst the three actors involved in this scenario. This situation is not unique; how co-authorship lines are drawn is an occluded area in research writing. Additionally, even when a journal provides co-authorship guidelines or uses the CRediT system to define contributors' roles, a great number of researchers do not adhere to them (Bhopal et al., 1997; Hren et al., 2007). In their investigation of the role of the lead author, Logan, Bean, & Myers (2017) found the lead author often developed the conceptual framework and was involved in the data collection and analysis. They also report on cases where the lead author acted as a language editor and was more senior in position (e.g., primary investigator, funder, source of resources for research). Thus, co-authorship is typically negotiated but in collaborations marked by asymmetrical power relations it can be imposed on the less powerful co-author (Lariviere et al., 2021). Graduate students and post doctoral researchers are more likely to include guest authors, who might be their program directors, in their submissions (Logan et al., 2017). This reflects the complexity of defining authors' roles and raises ethical issues of who can/should be listed as an author and in which order. The issue of assigning authors' roles and determining the sequence of authors' names on the publication is related to differences in disciplinary cultures as well (Parish et al., 2018) and the scenario above is likely to raise different discussions depending on the disciplinary backgrounds of workshop participants.

An issue of particular relevance to EAL academics is the role of language editors. According to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) website, a potential guest author includes 'Name on author list known to be language editing services from unrelated research area' ([https://publicationethics.org/files/Recognise\\_Potential\\_Authorship\\_Problems.pdf](https://publicationethics.org/files/Recognise_Potential_Authorship_Problems.pdf)), and the the CRediT system does not include language editing among

the contributor roles meriting the co-author status. This was the case in the scenario above, with James, a language professional, assisting with editing an article in engineering. As these examples show, co-authorship, which should be about giving credit to all contributors to research, is not always a straightforward issue. Therefore, the questions we suggest for workshop participants range from asking them to reflect on what being a co-author implies to whether they believe co-authorship guidelines can be helpful, and if so, what they should include, followed by questions about ghost authorship and its implications. Participants are also asked to reflect on their experiences and whether they have encountered this issue before and how they dealt with it. This can lead to a discussion of the co-authoring practices common in the participants' disciplines; some less common practices can also be introduced for discussion, such as the use of a combined *nom de plume* of 'Annalisa Edesford' by Lisa S. Ede and Andrea A. Lunsford in their book *Singular Texts/Plural Authors* (1990) to indicate that their collaborative writing cannot be divided.<sup>1</sup>

## Negotiating Authority in Interdisciplinary Research

Interdisciplinary research, which involves crossing one's disciplinary boundaries, can be filled with feelings of alienation and frustration (Lingard et al., 2007). Interdisciplinary team members might feel pressure when their disciplinary knowledge is challenged by outsiders and/or when they are asked to use and reflect on a method outside their disciplinary boundaries (Lingard et al., 2007). This can impact their feelings of authority/power inside their team. The scenario below addresses this issue by drawing on the case of Salem, a Turkey-based academic and his two co-authors Hala, a Syrian Turkey-based academic and Terry, a UK-based academic. Although this interdisciplinary team was successful in publishing in an international journal, one of the team members had a negative experience during writing this research due to his feeling of being in 'double-exile'.

### Scenario 4: Negotiating authority in interdisciplinary research

**Salem: a Syrian life scientist**  
**Hala: a Syrian social scientist**  
**Terry: a UK-based social scientist**

Salem, a Syrian academic in life sciences, collaborated with two academics from social sciences on a research topic related to teaching survival techniques during war. Although the resulting publication reported on 'this interdisciplinary research', Salem did not perceive this research as interdisciplinary. Moreover, he was dissatisfied with the way in which the work drew on the two disciplines and felt alienated from his research area:



I feel I did not use my area of expertise and, although I am satisfied with the outcome, I did not enjoy the process. It was filled with misunderstanding and having to discuss the basics in my discipline. This is exciting to some extent, but I wish I was able to contribute to my discipline. I think it benefited their [Hala and Terry's] discipline more than mine ... we don't really talk about these issues though.

When asked about the reason for not discussing this issue with his co-authors, Salem reported that being the only academic from his discipline in the team impacted on his say in decisions about the paper:

It is only me from [life science], so it makes more sense that we publish the article in [social science] journal. I don't know. Maybe this is the reason.

### Questions for discussion

- *What are the issues that seem problematic to you in this scenario?*
- *What is the cause of the problem(s) described in this scenario?*
- *What do you think of Salem's resentment towards interdisciplinary research?*
- *What can help academics working in interdisciplinary teams collaborate effectively?*
- *Do you think this issue can also emerge in research within single discipline?*
- *Should issues related to feelings about the research process be discussed explicitly? If so, how and when?*
- *Have you been involved in interdisciplinary research? If so, have you experienced these issues? How did you deal with them?*
- *If you were in Salem's position, how would you deal with this situation?*
- *If you were in Hala or Terry's position, would you do anything differently?*

Two issues can be identified in the above scenario: Salem's negative feelings towards the research process and the lack of communication amongst the co-authors. These two issues are highly connected by a two-way causal relationship: the lack of communication can create negative feelings, and these negative feelings can obstruct communication. Experiencing negative feelings while conducting interdisciplinary research is not uncommon (Lingard et al., 2007). Barry et al. (1999) found that it is common for interdisciplinary team members to diverge in their research views, which might result in negative emotions. Barry et al. (1999) suggest team reflexivity as a method to reveal the team members' experiences. Lingard et al. (2007) report on how they used this method where team members reflected each on the strengths and weaknesses that their disciplines have to offer to the project. The researchers also reported how being asked about implicit knowledge in their discipline helped them reflect on, at times, the validity of the information. In other words, here differences were seen as a collective resource, rather than a hazard (Murray & Cunningham, 2011). Thus, individual and then shared reflexivity can result in positive feelings and

increased awareness of the research process, which might have helped Salem avoid the feelings of dissatisfaction and disappointment.

It is important for team members to acknowledge their own and their team members' disciplinary strengths (Edwards, 2010). Although these reflections can at times challenge one's sense of power and authority in one's discipline, when conducted during the different research and writing stages, they can result in asserting one's own sense of disciplinary authority (Lingard et al., 2007) while also accepting its limits and acknowledging the disciplinary authority of one's co-authors. Hence, the questions we suggest for workshop participants aim to raise their awareness of the importance of discussing issues related to writers' sense of authority in interdisciplinary collaborative writing and to discuss these issues during the different stages of research. Our questions also aim to ask workshop participants to reflect on their own experiences and whether they can relate to the actors in the scenario by either being involved in interdisciplinary or single-discipline research.

## Conclusion

The four co-authorship scenarios presented here, based on data from our study with exiled academics and their UK-based co-authors, illustrate some of the key issues that arise in collaborative writing for publication involving asymmetrical power relations, i.e., 'parochialism', text development vs. writer development, blurred lines of co-authorship, and issues in interdisciplinary collaborations. We highlighted how the mentoring aspect of collaboration is crucial and its neglect (as a result of prioritising the publishing goals or lack of understanding of the nature of academic literacies development) could lead to negative feelings and misunderstandings, negatively impacting development.

We do acknowledge that the challenges mentioned in these scenarios are not specific to EAL exiled academics or to EAL academics in general. We believe that these scenarios are relevant to a wide range of contexts where asymmetrical power relations are involved. For example, they could be applicable to EL1 (English as a first language) novice writers' writing with more established researchers, where, for example, text development and making the publication process more effective is prioritised over their writer development. The materials can therefore be used in a variety of contexts, with the discussion questions adapted to match the particular needs of workshop participants. Additionally, workshop leaders may encourage participants to share experiences that can be used, with their permission, for the development of scenarios more directly relevant to the instructional contexts in future workshops.

To conclude, the scenario-based materials such as the ones we presented effectively draw the participants' attention to these issues, using real-life episodes. These scenarios provide a vivid presentation of authentic collaboration episodes that provide vicarious experience to the participants. Additionally, they provide an effective tool for raising the participants' awareness of the social practices surrounding co-authorship in asymmetrical power relations. They may be used to discuss the often hidden negative emotions and misunderstandings in a safe environment and share ideas for ways in which they can be productively addressed in collaborations. We believe participants in ERPP workshops would benefit from materials and activities raising their awareness of such issues and from being encouraged to suggest ideas for additional scenarios to be discussed with tutors and peers.

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## Notes

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