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Academic writing and publishing

A focus on Spanish English-linguistics scholars' self-reported attitudes, practices and perceptions as regards academic life and the creation and publication of their research articles

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Among the challenges facing scholars at university today, producing quantity and quality publications with the highest possible impact is probably perceived by most of them as the greatest. This pressure places scholars before the well-known "publish or perish" dilemma, which each academic may perceive, confront and approach differently. This study aims to disclose and depict the reality behind the hand that writes, in particular, the attitudes, practices and perceptions of Spanish English-linguistics scholars in Spanish public universities regarding academic life and the creation and publication of their research articles. Accordingly, the human, perceptual and psycho-affective dimensions have proved essential in this study. The paper provides an overall view of the situation by summarising the quantitative findings of an extensive Questionnaire, as well as the qualitative outcomes obtained from a subsequent e-interview to scholars occupying different positions at Spanish public university, and provides an evidence-based foundation to foster more "author-friendly" practices.

Keywords: research article (RA), writing, publishing, English as second or foreign language, English for research and publication purposes (ERPP), English as an additional language (EAL)

1. Introduction

The fact that scholars are experiencing increasing pressure to write, publish and measure the quality and quantity of their research results is an indisputable reality nowadays. "Access to research funding, academic status, promotion and employment security are dependent on providing evidence of research productivity"

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(Burgess, 2017, p. 13) and this is translated into scholars' struggle in the academic arena to be productive writers and lucky "publicators", hopefully in top-ranked journals which will provide the biggest impact and the greatest number of citations to their papers. In addition, despite being a controversial aspect for some, publication in English is normally prioritised to ensure international exposure and readership.

What Flowerdew (1999) calls "research output" is usually calculated in terms of number and quality of publications, the latter often being determined by whether they are included in important citation indexes or not. This "research output" may be presented to the academic community through a series of genres, the most paradigmatic of which is probably the research article (RA). Academic genres have been widely studied and approached from different perspectives. However, not much attention has traditionally been paid to the writing process involved in the creation of RAs, which can help understand the publication practices of second language (L2) scholars in particular disciplinary fields while also unveiling their main writing difficulties (Mur-Dueñas, 2012).The psycho-affective and social dimensions involved in academic writing and publishing – with scholars' perceptions, attitudes and fears under analysis – is also something which, if better reflected upon and integrated in the equation, would probably lead to more "academic-friendly" practices, fairer evaluation systems and more satisfied professionals.

Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to try to provide a global, comprehensive and reliable picture, based on empirical data obtained from first-hand experiences, of how English-linguistics researchers working in Spanish public universities undertake, manage and perceive the processes of writing and publishing their RAs. This main objective can be further subdivided into two more specific goals:

- To provide a data-based general characterisation of Spanish English-linguistics scholars grounded in socio-demographic and self-perceived affective and attitudinal aspects regarding their jobs and work, that is, getting to know the "human side" of the situation.
- To depict and better understand, on the basis of data-driven evidence, the practices and views of Spanish scholars in public universities as regards the processes of writing and publishing their RAs.

The situation depicted throughout the study is that of Spain (and Spanish scholars), where English is a foreign or second language and where it is not the main medium of instruction in the educational system. However, the scholars participating in the study are English-language linguists (non-native but highly proficient users of the language), which makes this case particularly interesting especially when dealing with language-related aspects.

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2. Theoretical framework

Research, especially in its writing and publication stages, is probably one of the most demanding and stressful aspects of academic life. The academy nowadays exerts an undeniable pressure to publish scientific RA in high-impact, top-ranked journals under increasingly harsh evaluation systems. This pressure is managed differently depending on each scholar's personality and circumstances but in "countries where English is seen as an additional language, the pressures on scholars can be even greater" (Anthony, 2017, p. 255). This is because they do not only need to reach the high standards of international journals in terms of relevance, novelty and content, they also need to adopt the language requirements imposed by these journals while managing the reviewers' comments and suggestions (Paltridge, 2015). In the following paragraphs, a theoretical overview on these and other relevant aspects involved in scholarly writing and publishing – with a focus on Spanish English-linguistics scholars – is provided to frame this study.

2.1 Scholarly writing and publishing in English: General considerations

The academic world is very much dependent on writing and if there is a written genre that epitomises what the academic community demands from scholars' written work, it is probably the RA. The long-established but still prevailing and even increasing relevance of the RA (and consequently of the scientific journal) as an academic genre is easily supported or evidenced by figures in numerous studies. There are more than 28,000 peer-reviewed journals available and, with 1.8 to 1.9 million new articles published each year, there are an estimated 2.5 billion full-text downloads every year (Ware & Mabe, 2012). In addition, according to Lillis and Curry (2010), publication takes place all over the world involving an estimated 5.5 million scholars, 2,000 publishers and 17,500 higher education institutions.

The RA is a highly conventionalised genre used by and within a perfectly established, rather strict, community of practice. Moreover, in Hyland's words (2016, p. 61) "the register of academic writing is a specific domain of expertise comprising a sub-set of lexico-grammatical features and rhetorical conventions, which have evolved to perform certain valued functions for those who use them"; that is, it is critical that scholars who aim at publishing are "academically proficient", not only in the results or findings presented, but also in the way of presenting them, creating particular meanings and research products that are easily recognised and understood by insiders.

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As regards the language of publication, English plays a central, predominant role and it is considered by prestigious institutions to be the global 'language of science' and by most participants in text production – including scholars, reviewers, translators and editors – as the default language of science and academic research and dissemination (Lillys & Curry, 2010). In fact, there are numerous relevant studies supporting the dominant role of English as the international language of academic publication worldwide (Swales, 2004; Ferguson, 2007; Hyland, 2016; among others). As Ferguson (2007) states, this dominant role is hardly disputed empirically. In fact, it is beyond question that research publications in English attract a wider readership than do publications in other languages, creating cross-cultural understanding and resulting in the so-much-aimed-at possibility of these publications garnering citations (Ramos-Torre & Callejo-Gallego, 2013). However, as Ferguson contends, more contested than the dominant role of English are the effects of this dominance, which are basically two: (i) the detrimental impact this status of English may have on other languages, which may be relegated to a lesser role, and (ii) the communicative inequality between native and non-native academics resulting from the dominance of English and giving rise to a presumed disadvantage when it comes to trying to place one's work in high prestige international journals. In reference to the first effect, academics such as Mauranen (1993) have pointed out the linguistic impoverishment that is created when a language is no longer the vehicle of a sophisticated genre such as the RA. Regarding the second effect, despite the often challenged consideration that non-first-language users of English have to face an anglophone bias when trying to publish their work (Swales, 2004; Hyland, 2016), few would suggest that the status of English as the current *lingua franca* of international academic communication does not represent for users of other languages and of English as an additional language [EAL] a greater challenge than that faced by those having it as their L1. This implies more time and economic resources to produce publications (Ammon, 2001), normally arising from journal editors' and peer-reviewers' recommendations to EAL authors to resort to specialised first-language users of English to revise their papers (Lillis & Curry, 2015). In fact, authors such as Flowerdew (2008) even claim that EAL writers are "stigmatised" by journal editors and reviewers – the "normals" (p.79) – while others such as Hyland (2016) argue that over-simplifying publication problems as a crude native vs. non-native polarisation only serves to demoralise EAL writers and to create prejudice, ignoring the very real problems experienced by both EAL and L1 writers.

If specific figures are to be provided, more than 95% of indexed natural science journals and 90% of social science journals use all or some English (Lillis & Curry, 2010), and it is a fact that English-medium publications are normally given higher status than scientific publications in other languages. Although scholars

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continue to produce texts in local national languages (Curry & Lillis, 2004), the pressure of generating knowledge in English – even in contexts in which 'big' languages such as Spanish are used – constitutes a significant dimension in scholars' lives and, frequently, an added ordeal for those who are not multilingual. All things considered, the spread of English in the academic community has given rise to many studies on English for Research Publication Purposes (ERRP) and publishing research in EAL, despite the fact that for authors such as Kuteeva and Mauranen (2014), although ERRP has become a recognised branch of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), it remains a surprisingly under-explored topic.

Apart from the difficulties implicit in carrying out research and writing and publishing scientific papers, choosing the right journal to publish written research is another hurdle to be surpassed in the long process of RA production and publication. Scholars struggle to have their work accepted in high profile journals indexed in the Web of Knowledge SCI databases. Most journals that do not publish in English are excluded from these databases, and thus English-language journals tend to enjoy higher impact factors, which in turn contribute to the already-mentioned ongoing privileging of English and to the strong criticism that these indexes are heavily biased towards English-medium journals published in Anglophone contexts (Crespi & Geuna, 2008).

2.2 People under pressure: The psycho-social dimension of scientific writing and publishing and the "publish or perish" dilemma of Spanish researchers

People not belonging to the academic community tend to think of the teaching profession at tertiary level as a low-stress occupation. However, this is not the reality most researchers experience or perceive nowadays. Funding and financing problems in tertiary education are the origin of many problems and stress-related maladies among university researchers, causing an increasing number of untenured academic positions, excessive workloads and a dangerous 'publish or perish' dynamics which may have undesirable consequences if not managed properly.

Empirical evidence such as León and Avargues' (2007) study proved, already a decade ago, that work-related stress and burnout syndrome are frequent health problems for university faculty, and that the consequences of this have been dire. Abouserie's (2006) findings report that academic staff rate work as the most significant cause of stress in their lives (74%) and conducting research as the main cause of stress at work (40.3%). The situation in the current decade has not contributed to make scholars' lives easier either; on the contrary, as stated by McCormick and Barnett (2011), teaching staff and other employees currently experience more job

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constraints, which may expose them to stress and burnout. In Lokanadha Reddy and Poornima's (2012) study, it is concluded that the majority of university lecturers (74%) are experiencing moderate and high levels of occupational stress, and 86% of them have professional burnout. As already indicated, analysing up to what extent the writing and publishing of RAs – after conducting research – constitute a (job) stressor for scholars and how these processes are managed and perceived by them is a fundamental objective in this study.

In the particular case of Spanish scholars – the focus of our study – the 'publish or perish' dilemma seems to have been incorporated into their professional reality. As Moreno (2010) puts it, for Spanish scholars English RAs are the key to their academic promotion and to institutional rewards, as well as to their employment security. In recent years, the Spanish higher education system has undergone rapid and, in general, not very positive changes. These changes at university mostly have been triggered by a major factor, the economic crisis that started back in 2008, and have adversely affected researchers' views and perceptions on the institution by considerably increasing the stressors and strains involved in their professional development. Directly involved in this situation are the two national agencies associated with research productivity assessment in Spain: the *Agencia Nacional de la Calidad y la Acreditación* [the National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency, or ANECA], and the *Comisión Nacional Evaluadora de la Actividad Investigadora* [the National Commission for the Evaluation of Research Activity or CNEAI], whose functions are summarised, according to Burgess's view (2017), in Figure 1:

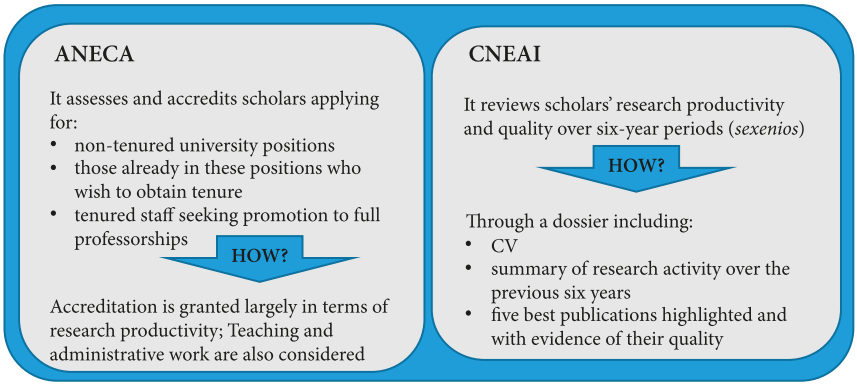

Figure 1. Aneca and CNEAI tasks and review criteria

In the case of *sexenios*, if productivity and quality comply with the harsh standards established by the CNEAI, applicants obtain a *sexenio*, which may be translated into a relatively modest salary increment and increased prestige. However,

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if *sexenios* are not regularly obtained by scholars, they may fear being regarded as inactive or unproductive members of the academy and, in some Spanish universities, they are "punished" with an increase in the number of their teaching credits which, ironically, leaves them with even less time for research, and thus to produce quality scientific papers and obtain a *sexenio*. Spanish scholars, and most scholars around the world, are no doubt people under pressure to produce and publish quality RAs (with academic life too often invading personal life), and it is the academy itself that should humanise these practices.

3. Method

A survey-based, data-driven methodology was initially used for this research. One of the main concerns of the study was to obtain representative results and this depended very much on the careful selection of a sufficient and representative sample of individuals from a sufficient and representative number of universities. Hence, a preliminary exploration was conducted with the aim of establishing numbers and selection criteria that could guarantee representativeness.

Accordingly, firstly, the Spanish territory was divided into 4 quadrants (North-West (NW), North-East (NE), South-West (SW) and South-East (SE)), as shown in Figure 2, each section showing the universities – both public and private – included within it.

An in-depth online search revealed that of the 50 Spanish public universities listed, 34 offered degrees of the English Studies/Philology, Modern Philology (English), Modern Languages (English) kind. The Spanish English-linguistics scholars of such universities who met the additional criteria summarised in Figure 3 have been the target population of this study.

For the preliminary calculation of the number of participants necessary to yield representative results, first calculations were performed to determine the total population of Spanish English-linguistics scholars meeting these criteria. To do so, 2 universities from each quadrant (8 out of 34) were initially chosen and the staff from their Linguistics departments were counted and classified according to their positions, as shown in Table 1.

The criteria for selecting the 8 universities to be considered for this preliminary calculation are summarised in Figure 4.

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Figure 2. Geographical distribution (in quadrants) of Spanish universities

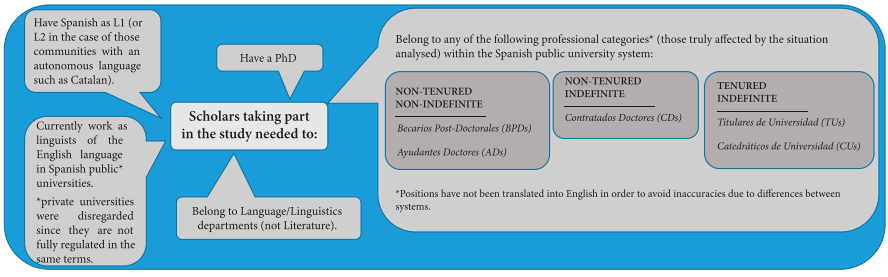

Figure 3. Criteria for the selection of the target population (scholars) in this study

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Table 1. Number of scholars per university (U1-U8) and quadrant (N-W, …) according to professional category

	N-W		N-E		S-W		S-E			
	U1	U2	U3	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	Totals	%
BPDs	2	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	**15**	**6.75%**
ADs	3	3	5	2	2	3	4	2	**24**	**10.81%**
CDs	5	9	4	5	2	9	3	3	**40**	**18%**
TUs	18	18	14	10	18	14	10	14	**116**	**52.25%**
CUs	4	5	3	2	2	1	2	8	**27**	**12.16%**
Totals	**32**	**36**	**29**	**22**	**26**	**29**	**20**	**28**	**222**	**99.96%**

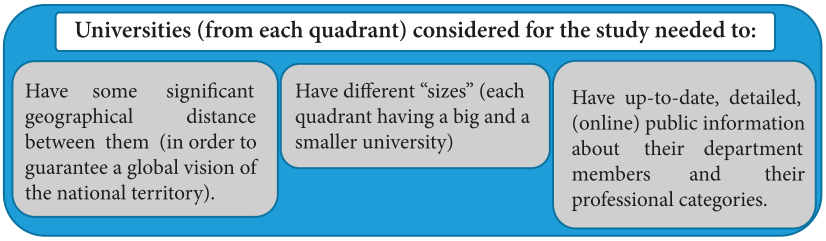

Figure 4. Criteria for the selection of universities

The average number of Spanish PhD-holding English-language linguists per Spanish public university was calculated by dividing the 222 linguists that, according to Table 1, met the criteria, by the 8 universities chosen. The mean number of scholars per university is therefore 27.75 (222/8), which has been rounded off to 28, because it refers to human beings. Multiplying this number by the total number of Spanish public universities meeting the criteria yields a total target population of 952 linguists (28 linguists × 34 public universities) who are eligible to participate in the study. The author is aware that the number of Spanish English-linguistics scholars in Spain is substantially higher if we consider pre-doctoral positions, *profesores asociados*, native-English linguists working in Spain, linguists working in private universities or scholars from polytechnic universities, in which there is no Degree in English Studies but there might be English departments. However, given the nature of the study, the number obtained can be considered a good approximate calculation.

In the first main stage of the study, a Questionnaire was sent out to 160 prospective participants (accounting for 16.8% of our total estimated population of 952 scholars, which constitutes a statistically sound proportion). These potential respondents were chosen as a stratified sample of all categories of academic

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staff from 26 different Spanish universities and were given two weeks to voluntarily fill in the Questionnaire. Since a maximum sampling error lower than 10% was intended, it was calculated that with 26 universities, the maximum sampling error is 9.46%, which is a figure that supports representativeness. As Figure 6 shows, the number of universities selected from each quadrant is not the same because not all the quadrants have the same number of universities. Since strata need to be representative of the sample, according to statistical considerations, the quadrant-based distribution of the universities selected to participate in the study is that shown in Figure 5:

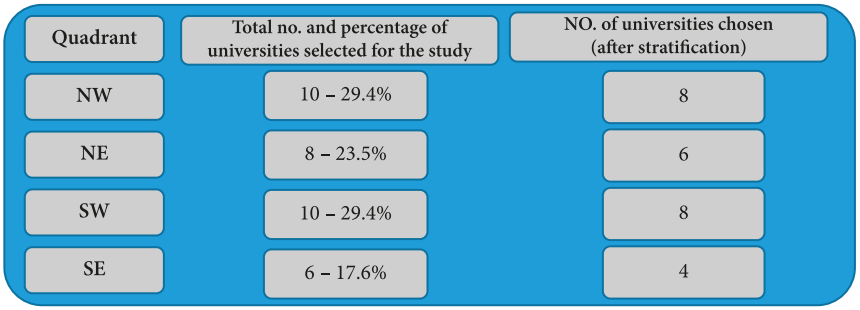

Figure 5. Quadrant-based distribution of the 26 universities selected to participate in the study

From the 160 surveys sent to prospective respondents, and in order to send them proportionally respecting the percentages of each professional category calculated in Table 1, the survey was sent to the numbers of BPDs, ADs, CDs, TUs and CUs shown in Figure 6:

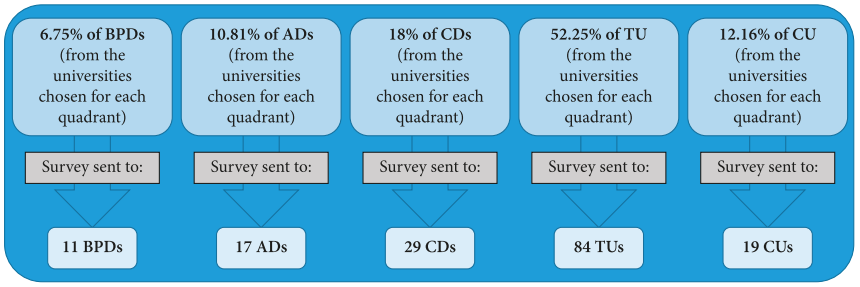

Figure 6. Number of BPDs, ADs, CDs, TUs and CUs to which the Questionnaire was sent according to the percentages of professional categories established in Table 1

Of the 160 surveys sent out, 101 were answered by scholars of different ages and occupying different positions, thus representing different levels in the acade-

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mic pyramid. With a confidence interval of 95%, 101 cases out of a total population of 952 implies a maximum sampling error of 9.22%, which is a figure that, again, allows for statistical representativeness. The total number of surveys answered according to position is that shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Total number of surveys answered (out of 101) according to position

Professional rank	BPDs	ADs	CDs	TUs	CUs
No. of participants	9	16	21	48	7

The methodology followed in the first stage – aimed more at obtaining quantitative data – was based on a 142-item Questionnaire (see the online Appendix at http://www.publishorperish.es/ in order to see the complete battery of questions (Q-items)) distributed via Google that was answered and processed anonymously. Every prospective participant received an e-mail explaining the topic and purpose of the survey, kindly asking for his/her collaboration and providing the instructions and a link to the Questionnaire. The Questionnaire was revised by four experts in the fields of linguistics and psychology before its administration in order to determine whether it would be able to generate high-quality reliable data and to try to guarantee the relevance of the results obtained through it. This final Questionnaire in this first stage consisted of three main subsections or subtopics (see Appendix 2) on what I consider to be the three main aspects underlying academic life and, more specifically, the writing and publication of academic RAs: general characterisation, writing an academic paper, and publishing an academic paper. These in turn each contained 10 dimensions (with their associated question-item ranges) that can be further subdivided into 41 specific indicators of analysis (demographic features, professional profile, etc.). The organisation (topic and subtopics), dimensions and indicators of these aspects can be consulted in the online Appendix (Appendix 1).

The items in the Questionnaire included, in accordance with Dörney's (2003) classification, factual (or classification) questions, behavioural questions and attitudinal questions, in order to provide a comprehensive approach and a faithful portrayal of the situation under analysis. By including these three kinds of questions, abundant data were obtained on who the respondents were and their characterisation (factual items), on what respondents do nowadays or have done in the past (behavioural items) and on what they think (attitudinal items), this latter involving facts, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests and values, all of which are key aspects in research of this nature. Given the high total number of items included, formulating as many items as possible as tick-option items was a foregoing premise.

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In the second main stage of the study, and two weeks after administering the first Questionnaire and analysis of the results, an e-interview was sent (also via Google) to the same 101 participants asking for their final collaboration. After being allowed another two weeks to respond (and following some insistence), 65 participants answered the 12-item e-interview (see I-items in Figures 10 and 11 in the Results section). In this second stage, the e-interview that was sent was aimed at obtaining the more qualitative component of the study, thereby making it possible to extend those aspects which demanded a more in-depth analysis according to the results obtained in the first stage. The e-interview was also answered and processed anonymously and was the method chosen for several reasons, such as those pointed out by Edwards and Holland (2013): there are no constraints on location, which is very convenient if geographically-distant respondents are involved, as in this case; the exchanges can be asynchronous, thus avoiding any great alterations to participants' routines; it is a flexible technique, with a written format (there is no need for transcription); it results in savings in terms of resources and time (several interviews can be running simultaneously); it also offers time for reflection. Obviously, this technique also presents certain shortcomings such as its being a less spontaneous account than that produced in other interview methods, but this is largely offset by its many advantages, which are particularly convenient given the nature of this study.

4. Results

Along this section, the most relevant quantitative results for the general characterisation of the situation under analysis have been organised into the three main subtopics (see the online Appendix) that the Questionnaire was organised into, as shown in Figures 7 to 9. These figures summarise a series of selected quantitative results, whereas the entire set of quantitative results obtained has been included in the online Appendix created due to printed space limitations. The considerable length of the Questionnaire itself and the great amount of data to report made it necessary to adopt a solution of this kind in order to facilitate immediate consultation and enhance readers' understanding of key resulting data without ignoring the rest of relevant information obtained.

From the results shown in Figure 7 it is particularly noticeable the fact that 96% of participants consider there is an over-production of scientific papers which leads to publishing low-quality or limited-interest papers (Q31). This is closely linked to the fact that 98% of respondents consider that society in general does not find investigation in linguistics relevant (Q34). Also among the most overwhelming results obtained, 91.1% of participants consider that there is a pres-

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sure to "publish or perish" nowadays in Spain, in the same way that 92.1% of the participants feel that the "pressure" to publish can negatively affect their physical and mental health.

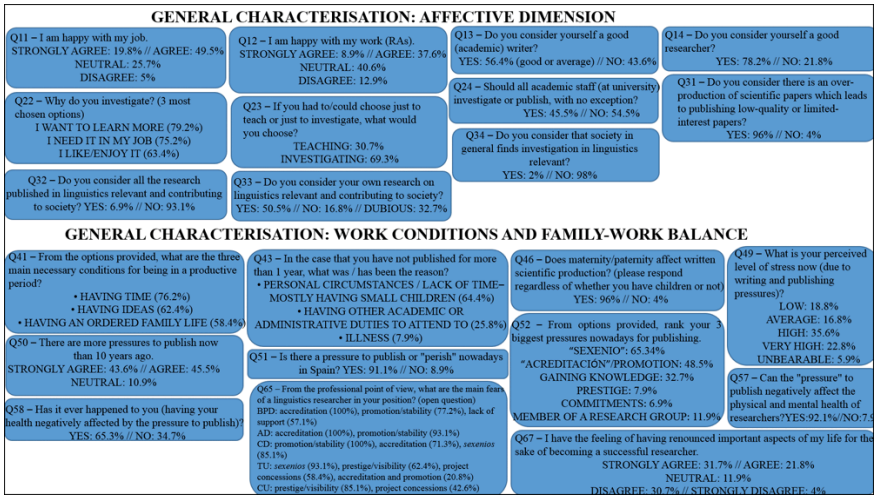

Figure 7. Most relevant quantitative results regarding the subtopic "General characterisation" (in its "affective", "work conditions" and "family-work balance" dimensions)

It is significant (see Figure 8) to notice how most scholars (88.1% in total) acknowledge the need to teach academic English to undergraduate students (possible prospective academics) at universities, the same as their preference for single authorship (61.4%). Providing a coherent structure for ideas (40.6%) and discussing the results (35.6%) are regarded as the most problematic aspects when writing a paper.

Finally, as shown in Figure 9, the double-blind revision process is seen with mistrust by 80.2% of respondents. Among the aspects most often mentioned as improvable by the evaluators involved in such process we find the need to discuss data more in depth (70.2%) and the need to more clearly state the importance, relevance and potential contribution of the paper (68.3%).

For the sake of systematicity, qualitative results have also been presented in figure format (see Figures 10 and 11) under the corresponding e-interview question-item (I-items from 1 to 12) by summarising and enumerating key recurrent ideas, that is, similar perceptions and opinions appearing more than twice among the responses and thus reflecting participants' perceptions.

Finally, Figure 12 provides the overall picture of the situation under analysis in accordance with the quantitative and qualitative results obtained. This final pic-

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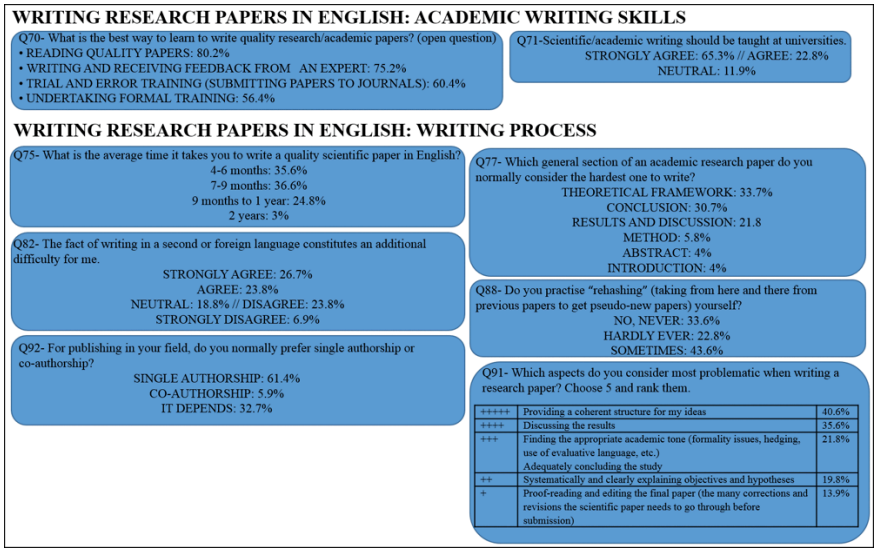

Figure 8. Most relevant quantitative results regarding the subtopic "Writing research papers in English" (in its "academic writing skills" and "writing process" dimensions)

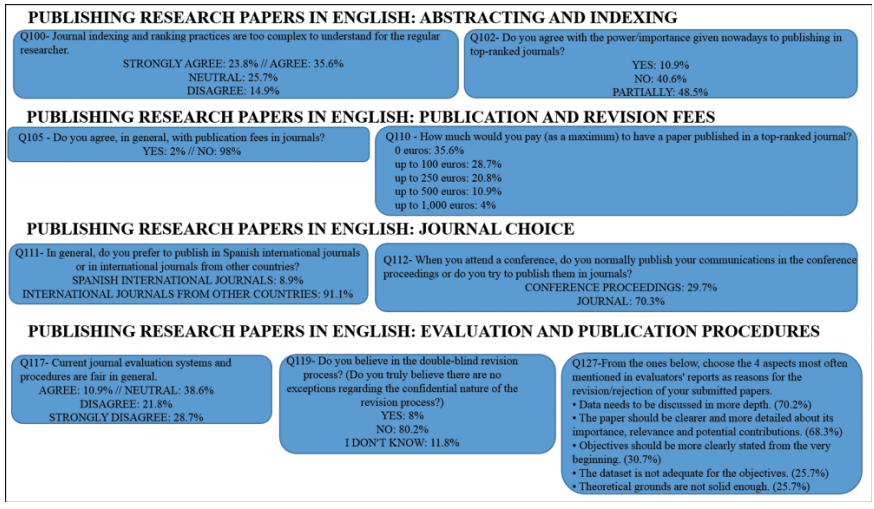

Figure 9. Most relevant quantitative results regarding the subtopic "Publishing research papers in English" (in its "abstracting and indexing", "publication and revision fees", "journal choice" and "evaluation and publication" dimensions)

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Figure 10. Qualitative results (e-interview) corresponding to I-items 1 to 7

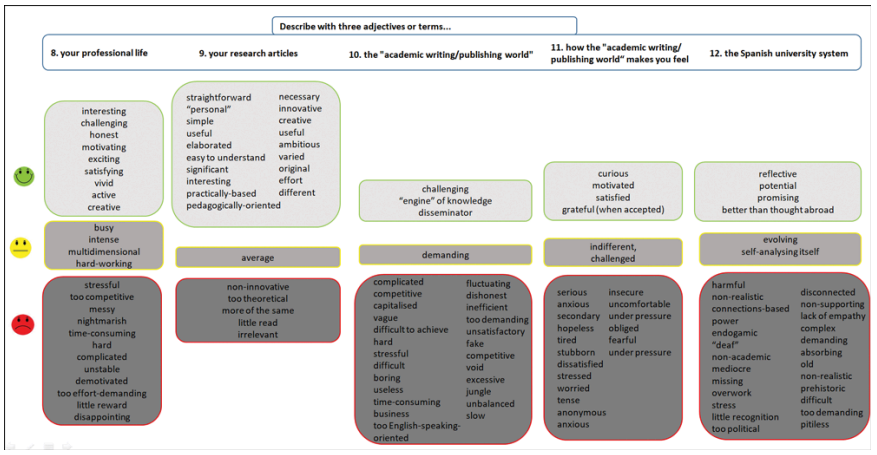

Figure 11. Qualitative results (e-interview) corresponding to I-items 8 to 12

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ture is illustrative of what the majority of the scholars participating in the study consider, but does not represent in any case the opinion of every single respondent involved; it merely summarises the aspects considered more relevant and worth discussing (in the next section) of those analysed in this work.

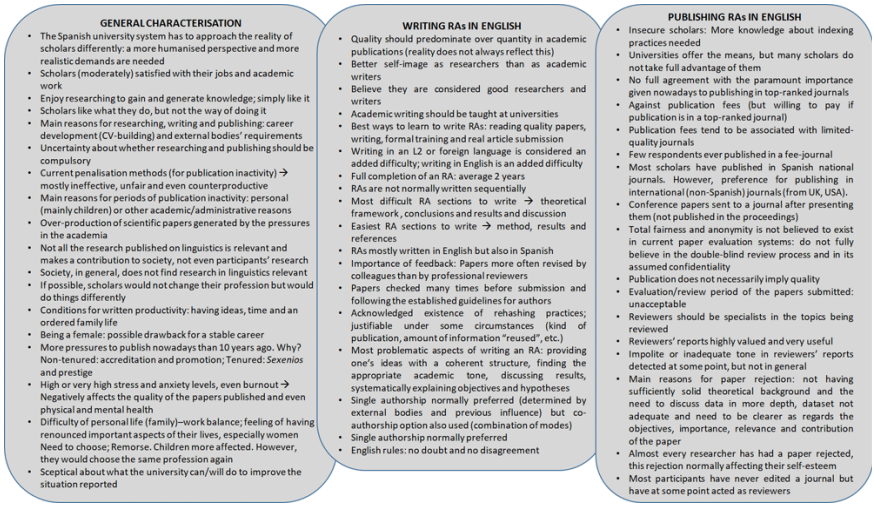

Figure 12. Final picture depicting Spanish linguistics scholars' attitudes, practices and perceptions as regards academic life and the writing and publication of their academic RAs

4. Discussion

Despite the use of the general term "scholars" or "academics" (and also "researcher" or "author"), for practical reasons, the generalisations throughout this section refer in every case only to the target population under study. The discussion generated here is the result of critically analysing in an integral way (not every single but) the most significant quantitative and qualitative outcomes obtained. Accordingly, in this section, 96 out of the 142 Q-items of the Questionnaire and 5 out of the 12 I-items of the e-interview – those considered more significant and illustrative of the situation depicted – have been directly addressed, interrelated and discussed in depth. For practical reasons, Figures 13 to 15 gather these Q-items this discussion section has focused on. The complete list of Q and I-items can be checked in the online Appendix and the Results section respectively. The full report of quantitative results obtained can also be consulted in the online Appendix.

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GENERAL CHARACTERISATION: AFFECTIVE DIMENSION:
Q11-I am happy with my job. / Q12-I am happy with my work (RAs). / Q13-Do you consider yourself a good (academic) writer? / Q14-Do you consider yourself a good researcher? / Q15-Do you believe you are considered a good researcher in your field? (This does not necessarily imply a widely known researcher) / Q18-Do you enjoy investigating for publication purposes? / Q19-Do you enjoy investigating for the sake of gaining knowledge. / Q21-At this point of your career, do you normally prioritise quality ir quantity (of papers published) when you publish? / Q22-Why do you investigate? / Q23-If you had to/could choose just to teach ir just to investigate, what would you choose? / Q24-Should all academic staff (at university) investigate ir publish, with no exception? / Q25-Investigating and publishing should be absolutely compulsory at university. / Q26-Lecturers who have not investigated/published for more than 2 years should be penalised. / Q27-Are current penalisation methods (basically increasing the number of teaching credits/hours) effective? / Q28- Are current penalisation methods (basically increasing the number of teaching credits/hours) fair? / Q29-Lecturers who have not researched/published for more than 10 years should be fired. / Q31-Do you consider there is an over-production of scientific papers which leads to publishing low-quality ir limited-interest papers? / Q32-Do yo consider all the research published in linguistics relevant and contributing to society? / Q33-Do you consider your own research on linguistics relevant and contributing to society? / Q34-Do you consider that society in general finds investigation in linguistics relevant? / Q35- Have you ever had the feeling that what you investigate has no real value ir interest?
GENERAL CHARACTERISATION: WORK CONDITIONS AND FAMILY-WORK BALANCE:
Q41-From the options provided, what are the three main necessary conditions for being in a productive period? / Q43-In the case that you have not published for more than 1 year, what was/has been the reason? / Q46-Does maternity/paternity affect written scientific production? (please respond regardless of Werther you have chillaren ir not). / Q47-Do maternity/paternity affect written scientific production equillo? (please respond regarles of Werther you have chillaren ir not). / Q48-In general, may being a female be considered a drawback in a researcher's career? / Q49-What is your perceived level of stress now (due to writing and publishing pressures)? / Q50-There are more pressures to publish now than 10 years ago. / Q52-From options provided, rank your 3 biggest pressures nowadays for publishing. / Q53-Can the "pressure" to publish negatively affect the quality of the papers produced by a researcher? / Q54-Has the quality of any of your papers been affected by this pressure? / Q57- Can the "pressure" to publish negatively affect the physical and mental health of researchers? / Q58-Has it ever happened to you (having your health negatively affected by the pressure to publish)? / Q60-Have you ever experienced stress as an academic writer/researcher? / Q61- Have you ever experienced burnout as an academic writer/researcher? / Q62-Have you ever felt bullied as an academic writer/researcher? / Q63-Have you ever had to take sick-leave as a result of the stress generated by the need to publish? / Q64-Do you ever feel frustrated in your work? / Q65-From the professional point of view, what are the main fears of a linguistics researcher in your position? 7 Q66-It has been possible for me to find a balance between my work as a researcher and my family life. / Q67-I have the feeling of having renounced important aspects of my life for the sake of becoming a successful researcher. / Q68-If I could start my life afresh, I would choose the same profession I have right now. / Q69-If I could start my life afresh, I would do things in the same way as regards family-work balance.

Figure 13. Q-items directly addressed along the discussion section belonging to the "General characterisation" subtopic

WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS IN ENGLISH: ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS:
Q70-What is the best way to learn to write quality research/academic papers? / Q71-Scientific/academic writing should be taught at universities.
WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS IN ENGLISH: WRITING PROCESS:
Q75-What is the average time it takes you to write a quality scientific paper in English? / Q76-Do you normally write sequentially? (title and abstract first, then introduction, etc.) / Q77-Which general section of an academic research paper do you normally consider the hardest one to write? / Q78- Which general section of an academic research paper do you normally consider the easiest one to write? / Q82-The fact of writing in a second ir foreign language constitutes an additional difficulty for me. / Q83-Do you normally have your papers (in English) reviewed/edited by a native professional reviewer? / Q84-Do you normally have your papers (in English) reviewed/edited by a colleague? / Q86-How many times do you normally check a paper before final submission? / Q87-Do you know any researcher who practises "rehashing" (taking from here and there from previous papers to get pseudo-new papers). / Q88- Do you practice "rehashing" yourself? / Q90-What limit, in terms of length, do you consider the ideal one for a journal paper? / Q91-Which aspects do you consider most problematic when writing a research paper? Choose 5 and rank them. / Q92-For publishing in your field, do you normally prefer single authorship ir co-authorship. / Q93-In the linguistics field, co-authoring and single authorship should be valued equillo. / Q94-Does co-authorship normally reflect a balanced and agreed workload distribution? / Q95 Have you ever written a paper yourself but then "shared authorship" with somebody else? / Q96-Have you ever "shared authorship" with somebody even though your contribution to the paper was scarce? / Q97-Renowned authors should always appear first in co-authored research papers, no matter their real contribution to them. / Q98-How many co-authored papers (approx.) do you have?

Figure 14. Q-items directly addressed along the discussion section belonging to the "Writing research papers in English" subtopic

On the whole, the general situation portrayed is that of a community of practice (the academy) with both its positive and negative sides, in which more humanised practices and more realistic demands are needed. As results show, it is very difficult for many scholars to reach a balance between personal life and work (Q66, I2), mainly because most of them feel they do not have the conditions that truly allow for it (I3). In fact, family-work balance seems an unresolved matter among the staff of Spanish public universities, who in many cases carry with them the feeling of having renounced important aspects of their own lives (Q67). Gender roles also play a significant part in this game: women seem more discontented than men in this respect, probably because of the greater pressures traditionally placed upon them as regards the upbringing of children and family duties. Results reveal that, either consciously or unconsciously, many researchers (mainly

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PUBLISHING RESEARCH PAPERS IN ENGLISH: ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING:
Q99-I know all I need to know about journal indexing and ranking practices. / Q100-Journal indexing and ranking practices are too complex to understand for the regular researcher. / Q102-Do you agree with the power/importance given nowadays to publishing in top-ranked journals? / Q103-Do you have the means (courses, counselling, etc.) at university to learn more about indexing?
PUBLISHING RESEARCH PAPERS IN ENGLISH: PUBLICATION AND REVISION FEES:
Q105-Do you agree, in general, with publication fees in journals? / Q106-Do you agree with having to pay a fee for having your paper reviewed/evaluated in a journal? / Q108-Normally, it is easier to publish in a journal with a fee. / Q109-"highest-ranked and reputed journals do not normally ask for fee. / Q 110-How much would you pay (as a máximum) to have a paper published in a top-ranked journal?
PUBLISHING RESEARCH PAPERS IN ENGLISH: JOURNAL CHOICE:
Q111-In general, do you prefer to publish in Spanish international journals or in international journals from other countries? / Q112-When you attend a conference, do you normally publish your communications in the conference proceedings or do you try to publish them in journals? / Q113-How many papers (approx.) have you published in Spanish international journals? / Q114-Approximately, how many papers have you published in Spanish national journals? / Q115-How many papers (approx.) have you published in international journals (not from Spain)? / Q116-What are generally your three preferred countries for publishing?
PUBLISHING RESEARCH PAPERS IN ENGLISH: EVALUATION (ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION) AND PUBLICATION PROCEDURES:
Q117-Current journal evaluation systems and procedures are fair in general. / Q118-Does favoritism exist in paper evaluation and subsequent acceptance? / Q119-Do you believe in the double-blind revision process? (Do you truly believe there are no exceptions regarding the confidential nature of the revision process?) / Q121-What is the longest period you have had to wait till a journal gave you a response on whether a paper was accepted or not for publication? / Q122-Do you consider the aforementioned period of time aceptable. / Q123-What is the longest period you have waited in order to see your paper published? / Q124-Do you consider the aforementioned period of time aceptable? / Q125-I normally agree with the evaluators'/reviewers' comments. Q126-Have you ever detected an impolite or inadequate tone in the comments/suggestions provided by evaluators? / Q127-From the ones below, choose the 4 aspects most often mentioned in evaluators' reports as reasong for the revision/rejection of your submitted papers. / Q128-I write detailed responses to every point raised by the evaluators in their reports. / Q130-In the case of having a paper rejected, I normally use evaluators' comments to re-do it and submit it to another journal. / Q131-Have you ever had a paper rejected more than 3 times (by 3 different journals)? / Q137-Does the presumed quality of your paper detemine the journal you submit it to (limited-quality papers are submitted tolower-ranked journals)?
PUBLISHING RESEARCH PAPERS IN ENGLISH: KNOWLEDGE AND INVOLVEMENT IN JOURNALS INTERNAL WORKING:
Q139-Have you ever edited/directed a journal? / Q140-How many times have you acted as a reviewer or evaluator for a journal? /Q141-Do you belong to the editorial board of any journal? / Q142-Do you belong to the scientific committee of any journal?

Figure 15. Q-items directly addressed along the discussion section belonging to the "Publishing research papers in English" subtopic

women) still feel the need – and the subsequent remorse – of having (had) to renounce important aspects either of their family life or their professional career, thus being impelled to choose (Q66, Q67). In fact, in the study, most women and a significant percentage of men (62.3%) have the perception that the fact of being female can be considered a drawback in a researcher's career (Q48). Despite this, gender-linked pressures are perceived differently, in general, by males and females: many men believe maternity affects one's professional development in the same way as paternity does. However, for every woman, maternity imposes an extra pressure on them: making the decision to have a child leads and even "obliges" most female scholars to reduce their productivity figures drastically, at least during the first years of their offspring, this having a dangerously detrimental effect on their merits (Q46, Q47). Maternity is thus associated to the impelling need to choose and the remorse of having chosen, and even though conciliatory and compensating policies[1] do exist in Spain and in some way offset the negative effects of maternity on scientific production, they work much better on paper than in reality and are clearly insufficient.

Overall, results show that most scholars – 69.3%; 46.5% and 56.4% respectively – feel happy with their jobs (Q11) as well as with their academic work (Q12) and consider themselves, in general, good researchers (Q14). However,

1. https://iclg.com/practice-areas/employment-and-labour-laws-and-regulations/spain

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their views offer a different reality when looking deeper into different aspects and when inquiries are addressed to more specific issues.

On the whole, underneath the first layer of prestige and knowledge advancement associated to higher education, there is another layer, the weakest one, which calls for a more humanised perspective and more realistic demands on the part of universities towards their professionals. Most researchers enjoy researching for the sake of gaining and generating knowledge (Q19) or simply because they like it (Q22), which is probably the most "motivating motivation" of all. They also like gaining knowledge and linking or applying it to the classroom context (Q22). However, when researching, writing and publishing RAs, the demands of CV-building and institutional or "external bodies" are amongst scholars' leading motivations (Q52, I-1); a significant percentage of scholars do not enjoy writing for publication purposes and/or under the pressure of knowing their career depends on that (Q18). This provides serious food for thought. Scholars seem to like what they do but not so much the way they (have to) do it, so that improving practices and conditions and establishing realistic demands and goals – maybe departing from empirical studies such as this one – seems an unresolved matter in Spanish public universities.

In a "tricephalous" (research-teaching-administrative work) career such as that of most scholars, in which more often than not three very demanding lines of work intertwine, "disconnecting" from work or having a personal life unaffected by one's profession is nearly impossible. In fact, one of the key problems for scholars is the number of duties or tasks that they have to undertake on a regular basis and the great dedication most of them imply. Figure 16 summarises, in broad terms, the research, teaching and administrative tasks Spanish scholars are normally involved in.

If converted into a checklist, most scholars reading this paper would probably tick more than 90% of the items in Figure 16 and, in fact, promotion in their careers is very much dependent on them being able to tick as many items as possible. The issue in this respect is that, in addition to their number, most of these tasks are intellectually demanding and highly time-consuming; results show, for instance, that reaching the full-completion stage of publishing a paper very often implies a two-year period (Q75). Sharing authorship could be a way of alleviating this by creating synergies, enhancing collaborative work, facilitating feedback provision, anticipating some of the reviewers' criticism prior to paper submission, sharing writing duties and, therefore, reducing to some extent the burden of single authorship. In addition, "for individuals with essentially no publishing experience, working with an experienced co-author can help to render the sometimes daunting process more manageable" (José & Berti, 2017, p. 92). However, in fields such as linguistics (in Spain), co-authorship is not, in general, a highly

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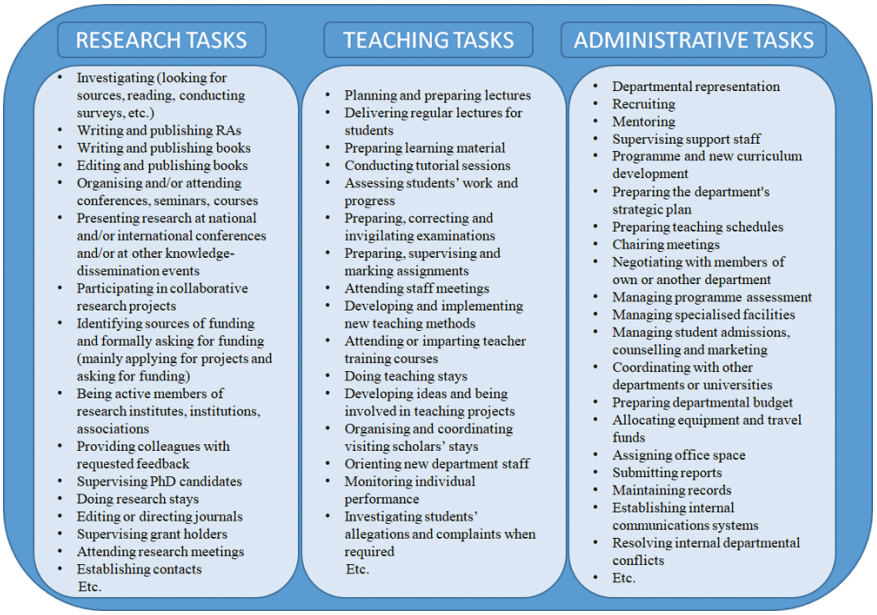

Figure 16. Research, teaching and administrative tasks that Spanish scholars are normally involved in

positively valued aspect (Q93, Q98), probably because of the criteria of evaluation bodies in this respect, which makes most authors in the field prefer single authorship (Q92). Apart from this, personal circumstances and previous experiences regarding balanced (or not) workload distribution, balanced (or not) recognition of merits and personal intercourse between authors may be decisive factors in determining a preference for single or shared authorship (Q94, Q95, Q96 and Q97). Nonetheless, results show that authors tend to use a combination of modes (single and shared authorship) throughout their careers (Q98), with non-tenured and non-indefinite positions leaning more towards co-authorship, probably as a way of acquiring and securing academic writing skills and obtaining immediate valuable feedback.

Despite the aforementioned drawbacks that multi-(demanding) tasking may imply for scholars, working hard to reach excellence and generate quality work is, obviously, not reprehensible *per se* and should always be a must at university. Co-authoring could help to alleviate scholars' workload but, in any case, an additional feasible reduction or optimisation of tasks seems necessary by, for instance, fostering specialisation. In this author's view, and as results from items Q23 to Q25 might seem to suggest, this trend towards specialisation is already well established, for instance, in Health Sciences, and specialisation already exists in Span-

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ish universities as regards fields of knowledge or research, so why not apply it to scholars' tasks and duties as well? The semi-specialisation suggested here would allow people who are more interested in teaching to basically teach (with a considerable reduction in their research or publication duties) and those more interested in researching to basically research (with a considerable reduction in their teaching duties), thus allowing them to build up their curriculum according to their interests and goals, not to mention the benefits at the personal level due to the partial reduction of their workload. These kinds of measures are a reality in countries such as USA. According to José and Berti (2017, p.88), from Indiana University, "some institutions or departments expect higher levels of research output, usually in exchange for lighter teaching loads, while others expect lower levels, usually in exchange for heavier teaching loads". It is true that in Spain, for instance, *sexenios* do normally imply a slight reduction in the teaching-credits load, but it is not really significant until scholars obtain the third one. When asked about the hypothetical possibility of choosing between "just" teaching or just researching (Q23), most of the scholars chose to research but a significant percentage also preferred to teach. The question was posed as a black or white (just teaching or just researching) issue but results (Q23, Q24 and Q25) show that the semi-specialisation proposed ("semi" because some research or some teaching would be necessary in any case for scholars) could be well accepted and eventually work, since there are people openly more inclined towards one aspect of academic life than the other. Articulating this huge change in Spanish universities would undoubtedly be a slow and intricate process needing deep reflection and realistic planning. Nevertheless, it could help scholars feel less stressed and produce more focused and meaningful research, while at the same time enabling them to devote most of their efforts to developing that part of their careers they are more interested in.

Closely linked to the benefits of semi-specialisation and to the fact that, for most scholars, quality should have priority over quantity in academic publications (Q21) is the general perception that there is an over-production of scientific papers in general and of linguistics papers in particular (Q31), fostered by the system itself. Indeed, one of the most worrying trends depicted by the results obtained is that nearly half the interviewees either do not consider or feel dubious about whether to consider their research relevant and contributing to society (Q33). In fact, an overwhelming majority of them do not consider all the research in linguistics relevant and contributing to society (Q32). If every single scholar is impelled to produce as much as possible, over-production (very often of limited-quality papers) is a more than probable consequence. Then, is there really a chance of real "consumption" of all the written work generated? Is every RA published really worthwhile? Almost every respondent (94.1%) has felt, at least at

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some point in his/her life, that their research had no interest or real value (Q35) and nearly all of them feel that society in general does not find research in linguistics (in general) relevant and contributing (Q34). Over-production seems to be subtracting (instead of adding) value from what linguistics scholars do and semi-specialisation could contribute to RA de-saturation by decreasing the pressure to publish on those scholars who are teaching specialists.

In the same way, in most scholars' views, quality publishing should be encouraged, maybe by rewarding those scholars who publish more and better, but short- or middle-term failure to publish should not be regarded as something that systematically deserves punishment (Q26 and Q29). The range of circumstances normally originating this fact include, mainly, lack of time due to personal circumstances (mostly children), having other academic or administrative duties to attend to or illness (Q43). Neither is it unusual to find that writing and publishing are amongst the aspects most often procrastinated at university, since they do not normally entail the immediacy, punctuality or regularity demanded by lecturing or by most administrative duties, this being an added peril for the overwhelmed researcher who never finds the right moment to produce his/her own research output. In addition, no clear views can be observed as regards the obligation to research at university, which seems to support the view that semi-specialisation would be well accepted by most scholars (Q24 and Q25). Current penalisation methods for not reaching the research requirements set by universities are considered unfair and ineffective by most respondents (Q27 and Q28). For instance, if scholars are penalised for not having published due to a lack of time but their penalisation implies more teaching (credits), that is, even less time to research and write, the penalisation becomes an additional problem instead of a solution.

The feeling of tiredness perceived in many scholars after spending years struggling to obtain promotion or the recognition of their research merits is a drawback for Spanish universities, which have their human staff as their most important asset but frustration and exhaustion as their most dangerous enemy. As results show, the human and psycho-affective dimensions play a key role in the process of producing and publishing research despite being amply disregarded when policies, demands and evaluation systems are designed. Indeed, time, ideas and a balanced and organised family or personal life are the three main necessary conditions adduced by scholars to enhance their academic written production (Q41). According to general outcomes, ideas and eagerness to publish do exist and are strongly linked to the need to publish (I1); what seems more discouraging is the scarcity of "time" to develop ideas and to find the desired family-work balance when, as academics acknowledge, both aspects are highly demanding and time-consuming. This author has heard only too often "I would rather get paid with time than with money", but this is really a chimera at a time and in a job

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in which deadlines, terms, conditions, schedules and appointments rule scholars' work and, by extension, their lives.

High or very high reported levels of anxiety or stress are acknowledged by most participants (Q49), which coincides in part with research reporting an alarming increase in the occupational stress experienced by university staff (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua & Stough, 2010). This is undoubtedly closely related to the generally agreed fact that today there are even more pressures to publish than 10 years ago (Q50). It seems contradictory, however, that this pressure to quality-publish seems to be undermining, at the same time, the public image of linguistics research due to the aforementioned perceived over-production of papers reported by the great majority of respondents (Q31). Most of them believe that the quality of their papers is badly affected by the pressure to publish (Q53 and Q54), in the same way that this pressure and the overall pressures of academic life have negative effects on their health (Q57, Q58 and Q63). In Blix and Mitchell's (2004) study, 84% of their respondents considered that their productivity and performance had been negatively affected by work stress and pressures and 48% of the respondents also reported psychological problems resulting from work-related stress. Every single scholar participating in this study has acknowledged having experienced stress as academics (Q60), and more than two thirds of them have even experienced burnout (Q61). Stress, anxiety, burnout, frustration (Q64) and physical effects (backache, neck pains, headaches or tired eyesight, among others) are common among university professionals. Even bullying (Q62) is a reality in the academic community with 33.3% of respondents having experienced it.

Results therefore reveal that the human aspect is neglected in the current Spanish university system, particularly in its productivity-measurement dimension – ultimately linked to writing and publishing – with increasingly high demands which do not guarantee, however, the prestige of the field, the self-perceived quality of academic written production or scholars' well-being. Nobody would dare question the importance of quality publication at university level, yet it is a fact that, for instance, evaluation criteria in order to obtain the ANECA accreditation to TU in Philology and Linguistics (category A) have been gradually made much tougher over the last decade. Sheltered under the umbrella of the need to increase quality – which cannot be questioned either – the root of such harshening is very likely to be found – among other aspects that may have taken part as well – in the economic crisis suffered by the country from 2008 to 2014, which is still noticeable in many universities. According to an article published by the Spanish newspaper El Mundo and authored by Sanmartín (2016), the Edu-

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cation section of CSIF[2] estimates that in Spain, with today's requirements, more than 80% of current tenured researchers would fail at the basic levels (Bs) of TU and CU if evaluated again. No scholar seems to be against being "evaluated" by agencies such as ANECA or CNEAI, but raising the requirements – especially as regards publication output – in such a disproportionate way can push young researchers to focus exclusively on obtaining their points for the sake of their own promotion interests, leaving aside the essence of university research: knowledge generation and transmission for the sake of *universitas* (Latin form for referring to 'the whole'), not just the scholar's. Having such harsh current evaluation criteria in the very competitive academic community may also lead in a near future to an unhealthy comparative grievance between the new generations of researchers that have finally met the requirements and the scholars who already hold the position, since there will be TUs and CUs with substantially fewer publications than aspiring ones. In any case, in this author's views, the goal of university should not be having "point-generators" but to train expert and committed professionals aware of their key role as knowledge producers and transmitters. However, the current merchantilisation of university and its evaluation systems are irremediably leading academics to somehow prioritise these "point-centred" attitudes, which may result in feelings of frustration, incompetence, renunciation and remorse if expectations are not accomplished. In fact, as results show, accreditation and promotion aspects seem to be the main profession-related fears among non-tenured and non-indefinite positions, whereas *sexenios* and gaining prestige occupy top positions among scholars holding indefinite (either tenured or not) positions (I1, Q65).

All too often, changes and alleged improvements – such as harshening external bodies or journal evaluation procedures – are introduced at tertiary level disregarding the fact that the university model implemented in Spain is clearly continental and does not allow for tentative combinations of models from other overseas countries. In addition, the shift towards quality in detriment of quantity is not a real one since higher quality papers are demanded, but also a greater number of them. Encouragingly, however, most scholars are still motivated people and would not change their profession if they could start afresh (Q68), although most of them would not do things in the same way as regards family-life balance if given the chance to start again (Q69). It is also encouraging that most respondents seem (at least) moderately satisfied with their jobs at university (Q11). This satisfaction is greater among untenured (mostly BPD and AD) positions, probably because they have not yet experienced the exhaustion produced by long years in the academic community. This satisfaction seems inversely proportional to age

2. Central Sindical Independiente y de Funcionarios // Spanish Central Independent and Public Employees' Trade Union.

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or to the years of experience at university. In fact, an aspect worth discussing and derived from this study is that young scholars in non-indefinite positions seem more enthusiastic and participative than more senior ones holding more secure positions. Proportionally, the majority of those who answered the survey were younger academics not holding indefinite (either tenured or not) positions. Maybe because young scholars themselves still have a sensation of dependence or incompletion in their careers, they can understand the importance of collaboration (in surveys, projects, etc.) and the need for help from a third party better than some elder colleagues who have somehow lost it.

When assessing their work (academic written production) (Q12, Q13 and I4), scholars seem more indecisive, probably due to the insecurity generated by having to go through a hard review process every time their work is considered for publication, the negative evaluations they might have received throughout their careers, or the limited impact of their publications so far. Most researchers believe, however, that they are considered good researchers (Q15) by the rest of the community of scholars, something which can be enhanced or determined by their feeling of, for instance, having a solid network of contacts or belonging to a well-established research group. A strong feeling of belonging to a community on the part of scholars seems to help them increase their positive perception of themselves, as do, obviously, good reviews, the impact of their work, and having a secure position at university.

In accordance with Moreno et al.'s (2012) idea that it would be highly productive for Spanish researchers, in general, to attend EAP training sessions (even more than EGP courses) and that there are calls for specialised training in ERPP in all scientific areas, results show that the great majority of the participants consider that academic writing should be taught in universities (Q71). This would probably increase linguists' positive self-perception as academic writers (which does not seem to be as developed as their self-image as researchers), thereby allowing them to feel more comfortable and confident when writing their papers in English. Nonetheless, together with formal training, traditional (even intuitive, I would say) methods – basically reading and writing already-published quality papers and receiving peer or expert feedback – are indispensable and the best example that learning by doing is an unavoidable part of any learning process (Q70, I5). In addition, despite their condition as linguists of the English language, more than half of the respondents agree with the fact that writing in a foreign language constitutes an additional difficulty for them (Q82). English is no doubt the language of scientific production (I7) but the problem seems to arise here when non-native English scholars feel undervalued or handicapped for not being "allowed" to write in their mother tongue. This view is also partially coincident

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with other studies, such as that of Pérez-Llantada, Plo and Ferguson[3] (2010), who found out through interviews that Spanish scholars (in this case in social and physical sciences) felt at a disadvantage due to language, but had resigned themselves to the situation, assuming they had to use any necessary means to disseminate their work. The difficulties experienced by respondents because of the fact of having to write in a language which is not their L1 are mostly solved by resorting to other colleagues' views (Q84) or, in some cases, to professional reviewers (Q83), so that feedback is regarded as paramount and highly useful. As I see it, establishing some kind of feedback network by and for scholars in which they act as providers of feedback on other colleague's work, thus creating a collaborative network of knowledge-sharing and improvement, could be a productive idea. The idea, although indeed very complex to implement successfully due mainly to authorship considerations, could, if set up correctly, help improve the quality of papers, decongest journals and reviewers to a certain extent, add to the overall quality of scientific contributions, allow for new contacts, relate people with similar interests, create the above-mentioned synergies and somehow alleviate scholars' pressures and insecurities. Unfortunately, ideas such as this one are completely out of place in Spanish universities today, in which no more demanding tasks can be incorporated into scholars' already-existing duties unless others are not redefined first.

As regards actual writing, it can be concluded that drafting an academic paper is a time-consuming process not normally accomplished in a sequential manner (Q76), probably because sections are complementary and tend to overlap and fuse in a natural way. This implies a great effort on the part of scholars to meaningfully organise content and undertake the many checks and reviews (Q86) papers need to go through to guarantee quality. This process even makes it necessary and advisable not to follow a strict order leading to watertight sections but to "struggle" to find the most pertinent and natural arrangement for the information to be included in an RA.

Likewise, scholars do not consider every section equally demanding or hard to write (Q77, Q78), the theoretical framework being at the forefront of this ranking (probably because of the difficulty of selecting, expressing and relating concepts from adequate sources), followed by the conclusion and the results and discussion sections. This is in line with studies such as that by Moreno et al. (2012), which proved that sections of a more abstract nature, such as the introduction and discussion, are generally considered more problematic than other more formulaic sections such as method and results. Sections implying reflecting,

3. Research based on a survey answered by 300 staff members and 10 senior academics in social and physical sciences through detailed interviews.

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relating concepts, extrapolating knowledge and even hypothesising are thus more problematic in general than those that "only" involve a meaningful ordering of objective knowledge or information. Among the aspects that are considered most problematic by researchers when writing an academic paper (Q91), providing a coherent structure for ideas occupies the first position, followed by discussing the results and finding the appropriate academic tone (probably due to participants' non-native English condition). Explaining objectives and hypotheses systematically and clearly is another issue signalled by participants reinforcing the abovementioned idea that those sections (or aspects, in this case) of a more abstract nature are generally considered by the researcher as more challenging to create. Many of the aspects indicated also coincide with those identified by Flowerdew (1999) as key areas where non-native writers are particularly prone to experience difficulty when writing for publication, namely, textual organisation, structuring of argument and citing the published literature, among others.

Despite the innovative character demanded as regards RA content, the academic paper is a genre that has evolved very little over time; its physical support may have changed thanks to the many possibilities of the digital media but it is still tightly bound to conventions that at times may coerce the writers' freedom to do things differently for the convenience of their works. Paper length is a clear example, making this author wonder (while writing this) why paper extension is normally limited so much in online journals if length is, in principle, not a major problem in the medium but may be a major problem for authors. Results in this study indicate, however, that very few scholars would place no limit at all on the extension of RAs (Q90), probably because they are aware of the many implications and complications this would have both for editors and reviewers as well as for readers, who demand quality information in the condensed but informative format favoured by the RA.

As regards "rehashing", the vast majority of respondents know someone who practises it (Q87), but most of them hardly ever practise it themselves or do so only occasionally (Q88). For most of them, it could be seen as an occasionally acceptable practice depending on the situation, kind of publication, and amount of information "reused". The issue here would be to analyse whether or up to what point the pressure to publish established by the system is somehow forcing scholars to "reuse". In this author's views, if more work is increasingly demanded but scholars are not offered better conditions in exchange, the system itself seems to be perpetuating and even fostering rehashing practices which, once again, contribute to over-publication and may even undermine the global image of publications in the field.

From the results obtained it seems that most scholars feel somehow insecure as regards journal indexing and ranking practices (Q99 and Q100), especially

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because of the perceived difficulty implicit in such systems. Top-indexed journals are aimed at enhancing the dissemination of (only) quality papers but at the same time may contribute to the emergence and proliferation of predator or limited-quality journals that find their niche in those scholars' papers rejected in other higher-quality publications or simply in the need of easy and immediate publication, something that top-ranked journals cannot offer but that researchers sometimes need. Once more, this situation seems to contribute to the over-production of papers of diverse (but not necessarily bad) quality. However, and although the fight for quality publications seems an indisputable necessity, very few respondents fully agree with the paramount importance given nowadays to publishing in top-ranked journals (Q102), probably because external evaluation is not always perceived as fully accurate or fair (Q117, Q118 and Q119), because the database and index systems are too obscure (Q100) or simply because of the hostility generated by publication-dependence or previous rejections. Nonetheless, most universities have the courses, personal counselling or resources available to make these aspects clearer (Q103) and if researchers paid more interest to becoming familiar with them, maybe better strategies as regards where and when to publish could be developed (I5).

The participants in the study nevertheless show an overwhelming rejection towards publication or review fees in journals (Q105 and Q106). Nearly two thirds of them, however, would be willing to pay important amounts of money to have their papers published in top-ranked journals (Q110). Of the participants, scholars in non-indefinite positions seem to be the ones who are most willing to pay for this, unquestionably due to their still non-secured position. The view that high-rank and reputed journals do not normally ask for fees appears to be frequent among most scholars (Q108 and Q109) and from our results it can be concluded that the problem does not seem to rely on the morality or not of asking for fees but on the real relevance and benefit that can be obtained from paying. Participants do not seem to show a real rejection towards publication fees *per se* but towards paying fees for publication in journals that may make the fee not worthwhile.

Even though most of the scholars surveyed have published in Spanish national journals (Q114), the feature "international" (and in English) is highly valued and privileged (Q111, Q113, Q114 and Q115) and the leading role of English as the language of science (I7) is beyond all doubt for all the respondents. Spanish scholars in general seem to prefer to publish in international journals from other countries rather than publishing in Spanish international journals (Q111 and Q116). Evaluation agencies contribute to this view, which may foster the detrimental and erroneous idea that what is published in Spain by Spanish scholars does not deserve to be considered equally international. Evaluation agencies may also be contributing to the increasingly undermined impact and popularity of conference proceedings (Q112), which, as results show, seem nowadays to be

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regarded as low-profile and low-academic-benefit publications, barely worth the effort required to produce them. The Spanish university system in general has also very much determined such a condition by empowering the research article published in journals as "the" research genre.

Results show that the majority of views disagree on the assumed and presumed universal fairness of the procedures used for the evaluation and publication of RAs (Q117, Q118 and Q119). Very few of the respondents are sure that the process is truly and always blind and aseptic, showing no favouritism at all. The fact that most of the scholars participating have or have had some sort of experience and involvement in the internal workings of journals (Q139, Q140, Q141 and Q142) – mainly as reviewers or members of editorial boards – makes this perception (either based on their own experience or not) particularly worrying. In addition, most scholars also believe that, at times, RAs published in prestige journals do not show the expected and necessary quality (Q31, Q32). Top-ranked journals thus need to be very scrupulous and compliant on these aspects and current submission platforms and procedures and the indexing policies and requirements themselves seem to be enhancing such compliance very positively. Nevertheless, even though the suspicion seems to exist, almost no suggestions are provided (Q120) on how to improve the situation, this indicating that a possible problem is somehow suspected but the solution is difficult to envisage. Among the most insightful suggestions provided regarding ways to improve current journal evaluation systems, one that is especially worth mentioning is the fact of resorting to reviewers who are real specialists on the topics being reviewed. Likewise, scholars ask for revision deadlines that are met in every case. However, the long periods of time that authors have to wait in order to get their papers reviewed or evaluated (Q121, Q122, Q123 and Q124) is probably due to various causes already too rooted in the system itself, such as evaluators' lack of time or even knowledge on certain specific topics. Another could be the fact that journals have a limited number of issues per year and a limited number of papers per issue, which makes saturation and long publication periods an undesirable reality, and patience a necessary trait for any scholar.

Reviewers' reports tend to be polite and adequate in tone (although not always) (Q126) and are an asset that is valued very highly by most scholars (Q130). In general, scholars also tend to agree with most of the reviewers' comments (Q125) and every issue raised is normally responded to when changes need to be made to RAs before publication (Q128). Evaluation reports are in fact a highly useful resource from which to obtain meaningful data and to improve one's academic writing (especially in the case of novice researchers). However, the evaluator report is a genre that has not been studied in sufficient depth to date and which deserves more attention by, for instance, being incorporated in formal academic

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language training. Given the importance of reviewers' reports in the publication process, it is particularly interesting to note those areas that are most frequently mentioned to determine RAs acceptance or rejection (Q127). As studies such as those of Coniam (2012) or Gentil and Tardy (2015) seem to corroborate, in applied linguistics at least, the quality of the language is rarely a decisive factor in paper rejection. In fact, in line with the results obtained in our study, looking at his own work as a reviewer over eight years, Coniam (2012) concludes that his negative comments most often concern the acceptability of claims (in 80% of the reviews he analysed) – related to our detected need for more solid theoretical grounds or to our need for data to be discussed in greater depth; the methodology (in 65%); the sufficiency of data (in 60%) – also related to our need for data to be discussed in more depth or the fact that the dataset is not adequate for the objectives; and the clarity of research questions (58%) – related to our need for objectives that are stated more clearly and for more detail about the importance, relevance and potential contributions of the paper. In fact, most scholars normally also use evaluators' comments when rejected in order to improve their papers and submit them to another journal (Q130), in a kind of peer review process whose feedback contributes to raise awareness on writers' need to improve. Nonetheless, recurrent rejections of a paper are not frequent (Q131), probably because of this productive process of improving one's article according to the feedback received before submitting it again. It seems clear from results that, in general, the presumed quality of their papers determines the journals that authors (realistically) submit their papers to (Q137), basically because no-one enjoys being rejected and a negative evaluation by a journal significantly affects (somehow) most respondents' self-esteem. However, rejection is part of almost any scholar's life and it is necessary to maintain quality standards and to avoid the saturation of the academic market and the decrease in quality standards of papers.

As can be observed, this research providing an overall view of the situation under analysis has opened up many possible lines for further research. It has also evidenced the need to go deeper into many of the aspects dealt with here, such as possible gender-, age- or position-based differences in perception or the Spanish public university system, which the author intends to investigate shortly.

5. Conclusion

Academic writing and publishing nowadays dominate the professional lives of academics worldwide. Publications play a key role in the academy, since they constitute the basis for career development, funding, reputation-building, productivity measurement and knowledge expansion, but the pressures associated with

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publishing go beyond the scholars' professional dimension and affect the most personal sphere.

Spanish English-linguistics scholars seem to like and believe in what they do, and this is a privilege; it seems to be the "form" and not the "essence" that they feel discontent with. The "form", understood as the system ruling the functioning and measuring of their jobs and work and thus their career development, as suggested by results, may need a change as regards the way academic life in general and the writing and publication procedures in particular are managed and approached. The aim of such a change would be to offer a more humanised academic community and sensible procedures to rate scholars professionally.

All things considered, the creation and dissemination of RAs by authors is undoubtedly a multidimensional undertaking and involves the balanced combination of various factors and aspects. "Writing is a way of knowing, and those who write understand it is a difficult and messy business" (Hyland, 2016, p. 66), so that knowing the real practices, perceptions, expectations and even fears behind the hand that writes is fundamental to understand the whole process, humanise it and improve it by fostering better practices. This study has not intended to question in any moment or way the paramount importance and need to publish at university, which is beyond any doubt, as is the need to offer quality lecturing. Despite all its shadowy areas, which I have tried to unveil here, this profession of ours is highly rewarding and doubtlessly worthwhile, and it is probably one of the most human professions of all. It is human in its content and essence; it is human in its agents and receiver; let us just make it more human also in its form and approach.

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Appendix 1 (online)

Quantitative results obtained in the study for the 142 Q-items posed in the questionnaire (to be found at: http://www.publishorperish.es/)

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Appendix 2

Topic, subtopics, dimensions (and item intervals) and indicators of the questionnaire.

Topic	Subtopics	Dimensions (items)	Indicators
Academic writing and publishing	**General characterisation**	Socio-demographic (1–10)	1. Demographic features 2. Professional profile
		Affective (11–35)	3. Perception 4. Satisfaction 5. Motivation 6. Relevance/ contribution
		Work conditions and family-work balance (36–69)	7. Support 8. Productivity 9. Pressure/stress 10. Personal-professional life balance
	Writing research papers in English	Academic writing skills (70–74)	11. Where/how to learn 12. Self-perception
		Writing process (75–98)	13. Time and sequencing 14. Sections 15. Language 16. Revision 17. Rehash 18. Length 19. Difficulties 20. Authorship
	Publishing research papers in English	Abstracting and indexing (99–104)	21. Knowledge 22. Relevance/ importance
		Publication and revision fees (105–110)	23. Opinion 24. Personal experience 25. Level of exigency/ reputation
		Journal election (111–116)	26. National or international 27. Proceedings or journal 28. Length 29. Publication countries
		Evaluation (acceptance and rejection) and publication procedures (117–138)	30. Fairness/favouritism 31. Suggested improvements 32. Evaluation period 33. Publication period

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Topic	Subtopics	Dimensions (items)	Indicators
			34. Reviewers' comments 35. Rejections and publication 36. Election of journal 37. Affective dimension of rejection
		Journals' internal working knowledge and implication (139–142)	38. Journal edition / direction 39. Reviewer / evaluator 40. Editorial board 41. Scientific committee

Escribir y publicar en el ámbito académico: Un enfoque en las actitudes, prácticas y percepciones autoevaluadas de los académicos españoles de lingüística inglesa en relación con la vida académica y la creación y publicación de sus artículos de investigación

Resumen

Entre los desafíos a los que se enfrentan los académicos en la universidad actual, la cantidad y calidad de publicaciones producidas y el hecho de que éstas obtengan el mayor impacto posible es probablemente percibido por la mayoría de ellos como el más acuciante. Esta presión coloca a los académicos ante el conocido dilema de "publicar o perecer", que cada uno puede percibir, enfrentar y abordar de manera diferente. Este estudio tiene como objetivo revelar y mostrar la realidad detrás de la mano que escribe, en particular, las actitudes, prácticas y percepciones de los académicos españoles de lingüística inglesa en las universidades públicas españolas con respecto a la vida académica y a la creación y publicación de sus artículos de investigación. En consecuencia, las dimensiones humana, perceptiva y psicoafectiva han demostrado ser esenciales en este estudio. El artículo proporciona una visión general de la situación al desgranar los resultados cuantitativos obtenidos mediante un extenso cuestionario, así como los resultados cualitativos originados en una entrevista electrónica posterior a académicos que ocupan diferentes puestos en la universidad pública española, y sienta las bases para fomentar prácticas más "amigables con el autor" basadas en las evidencias obtenidas.

Palabras clave:: artículo de investigación, escritura/redacción, publicación, Inglés como segunda lengua o lengua extranjera, Inglés para la investigación y la publicación (del inglés ERPP), Inglés como lengua adicional (del inglés EAL)

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