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Using learner diaries to explore learner relations to knowledge on an English for General Academic Purposes pre-sessional

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Knowledge, in the sense of explicit knowledge about language or about subject content, is becoming increasingly foregrounded in the research and practice of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Although EAP has traditionally been blind to knowledge, focusing instead on language and skills development (Monbec, 2018), EAP courses are well placed to make explicit to students legitimated language practice AND legitimated knowledge practice. This paper reports on a study that used diaries to make knowledge practices more visible with a group of 25 EAP pre-sessional postgraduate learners. Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) was used to develop a translation device to enable the analysis of the learner diaries. The data reveals that foregrounding knowledge helps focus learners on knowledge, making their acquisition of it more visible. This in turn develops learners into more valorised knowers in a UK HE context. The study has implications for future practice in English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) in particular, and EAP more widely.

Key Words: English for Academic Purposes, Knowledge, Legitimation Code Theory, Specialization codes, Learner diaries.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), in particular pre-sessional EAP courses, that is courses that are designed to develop academic language and skills for students who are speakers of English as a second / foreign / additional language[1]. Such courses are normally preparatory in nature (i.e. they are part of a need to develop linguistic proficiency prior to studying academic courses at university) and as such are different to other approaches that develop academic language *alongside* academic study, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), or English as Medium of Instruction (EMI). Literature and practice in the field of EAP has largely been concerned with the learning and teaching of academic language and skills (Monbec, 2018). The learning and teaching of knowledge itself in EAP is almost absent in the literature and somewhat contentious in practice (Cowley-Haselden & Monbec, 2019), and understandably so as EAP practitioners are largely language experts rather than subject specialists of their students' disciplines (Campion, 2016). Developing subject specific knowledge, indeed arguably any specific knowledge, is not considered the domain of EAP. Texts used to develop language and skills in the EAP classroom are often chosen for the linguistic content rather than

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[1] In the UK context, most pre-sessional students have previously studied English as a foreign language.

the subject content, especially so when the students are going on to study mixed disciplines. Even the learning and teaching of Knowledge about Language (KAL) is seen as undesirable by many, claiming that students who are not at university to be linguists have very little interest in learning theory about language use (Cowley-Haselden & Monbec, 2019; Monbec, 2018). This has led to the field being guilty of what Maton (2014) would refer to as 'knowledge blindness'. By not addressing knowledge explicitly in EAP practice, the field has been ignorant of the practices, organising principles and effects of knowledge. Despite Coffin and Donohue's (2014) contention that academic language, behaviour and knowledge develop in unison and cannot/ should not be developed independently, EAP practice often fails to consider the development of knowledge, whether that be subject-specific knowledge or KAL. Knowledge is the currency of higher education and if EAP fails to address knowledge development and the kinds of knowledge practices that are valorised in university contexts, then ultimately we are failing our students.

Thankfully, the last few years have seen knowledge in various forms, becoming increasingly foregrounded in the field of EAP (see Brooke, Monbec & Tilakaratna, 2019; Ingold & O'Sullivan, 2017; Kirk, 2018; Kirk, 2017; Monbec, 2018). One instrumental factor in this development is the use of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) in EAP research. LCT is a conceptual framework situated within the sociology of education and its principle concern is with knowledge as an *object*, enabling "knowledge practices to be seen, their organizing principles to be conceptualized, and their effects to be explored" (Maton, 2014, p. 3). To date, LCT has enabled the investigation of knowledge in the form of KAL within the EAP curriculum (Brooke, Monbec & Tilakaratna, 2019; Monbec, 2018), EAP practitioners' enactment of the EAP curriculum (Kirk, 2018), EAP practitioners' attitudes towards knowledge (Cowley-Haselden & Monbec, 2019), and is used in the teaching of academic writing (Ingold & O'Sullivan, 2017; Kirk, 2017). While the extant literature covers a range of EAP contexts, the focus of this paper is the EGAP[2] pre-sessional course. This paper adds to the existing canon of LCT research in EAP by analysing diaries kept by post-graduate pre-sessional students while they took part in a wider study aimed at developing their academic knowledge, language and behaviour in unison. The diaries detail the participants' relations to knowledge and reveal the effects of this on the learners. The particular questions this paper addresses are: Can learner diaries make knowledge visible to EGAP learners? If so, what does this mean for EGAP pedagogy? The paper argues that developing academic knowledge on an EGAP pre-sessional is central to enabling learners to develop as legitimate knowers in the UK Higher Education context.

2. Diary studies

Dörnyei (2007) observes that diaries have been used as a data collection method for a relatively short period of time (since the 1980s in the field of applied linguistics). Oftentimes, diaries are suggested as a research aid to the researcher, rather than a data collection method in its own right. Richards (2003), for example, mentions diaries throughout his monograph on qualitative research in TESOL, but only as a memory aid and reflective tool for the researcher. Mackey and Gass (2005), like Dörnyei (2007), argue that diaries in second language research can provide a rich and unique insight into the learner's perspective otherwise inaccessible to the researcher. Mackey and Gass (2005) also state that there is a flexibility to diary studies not afforded by other research methods in that participants can complete the diary according to their own schedules and "learners are able to record their impressions or perceptions about learning, unconstrained by predetermined areas of interest" (p. 177).

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[2] In EAP, the term EGAP is used to refer to English for General Academic Purposes – EAP for students who are from a range of disciplines. This is often set against the more valorised ESAP, English for Specific Academic Purposes – EAP for students who are studying the same discipline where EAP materials can then be more tailored towards subject-specificity.

As with all research methods, there are certain caveats to using learner diaries as a research instrument. In particular, keeping a diary requires a significant commitment of time on the participant's behalf (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The analysis of diary data, in particular the extrapolation and validation of patterns, can also be complex due to the unstructured nature of diaries (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In addition, Dörnyei (2007) argues that diary entries can be highly variable in length and depth, and that participants can simply forget to update their entries on a regular basis.

It is difficult to alleviate the problem of requiring participants to commit to making regular entries to their diaries in their own time, but it is possible to provide some structure to guide entries so that patterns in the data can be extrapolated and analysed. In spite of these possible pitfalls, learner diaries offer potentially rich insight into the learners' perspective, and as Dörnyei (2007) is keen to note "the multiple benefits of diary studies would warrant in many cases at least an attempt to implement a diary study" (p. 159).

2.1. Diary use in EAP related research

Despite the benefits, diary studies are not a regular feature of EAP related research. Most commonly, diaries are used to gain an insight into the development of learning strategies (Graham, 2011; Rao & Liu, 2011) and Kuzborska (2015) uses diaries in a UK pre-sessional context to explore students' reading practices. Zhao (2011) employs diaries to explore student experiences of peer assessment and Burkert (2011) focuses on developing learner autonomy. Soltani (2018) uses diaries to investigate academic socialization, but they play a limited role in the data with only one reference to a diary entry and diaries being analysed along with various other methods such as interviews and observations. Yeung and Li (2018) again use diaries alongside other instruments, to investigate student thoughts on using a language centre at a university in Hong Kong. What is evident from the existing research is that diaries are used in EAP contexts, but they are not used to explore learners' relations to knowledge. Interestingly, diary studies do not seem to be used as a research method in the field of LCT either. Most commonly, data in LCT research takes the form of curriculum documents (Kirk, 2018; Monbec, 2018), classroom interaction (Orteíza, 2020), and student work (Georgiou, 2016; Martin, 2016; Shay & Steyn, 2016). This study is unique in its use of diary data in LCT research, but also it is unique in EAP related research in that diaries are used to explore learners' relations to knowledge.

3. LCT and EAP

Legitimation Code Theory is a multi-dimensional framework which has provided a toolkit for the exploration of knowledge within various areas of education (and beyond) as disparate as ballet and physics, jazz and politics. Currently, LCT has three actively employed dimensions; Autonomy, Semantics and Specialization. Each dimension can be employed to uncover "different organising principles underlying practices" (Maton & Chen, 2020, p. 38). Which dimension is employed depends on the research problem. Autonomy enables the integration of knowledge practices to be conceptualised (Maton & Howard, 2018). The dimension of Semantics enables knowledge practices to be conceptualised in terms of their context dependence and complexity, providing a 'semantic profile' of knowledge practice (Maton, 2014). Specialization enables knowledge practices to be explored in terms of "*what* can be legitimately described as knowledge (epistemic relations); and *who* can claim to be a legitimate knower (social relations)" (Maton, 2014, p. 29).

Across disciplines, the dimensions of Semantics and Specialization have been the most utilized in LCT, although Autonomy is becoming increasingly employed. Much of the work employing LCT in EAP has thus far used the dimension of Semantics as this dimension provides a powerful, pragmatic, and more importantly accessible, visual that can be used in the classroom with learners. Recent examples include Kirk's (2017) work unpacking the semantic profile of reflective

writing with postgraduate Anthropology students and Ingold and O'Sullivan's (2017) very practical explanation of using Semantics in the EGAP classroom. Monbec (2018) also uses Semantics to illustrate how KAL can be taught in the EGAP classroom to better equip students to transfer this knowledge to other disciplinary contexts.

Specialization perhaps lacks the directly practical applications to the classroom evident in Semantics, but it is no less powerful in aiding the unearthing of legitimate knowledge practices. Specialization can help teachers and students understand what is seen as legitimate within a given context. "Specialization can be introduced via the simple premise that practices and beliefs are about or oriented towards something and by someone" (Maton, 2014, p. 29). As mentioned earlier, Specialization allows us to uncover what is legitimate knowledge (epistemic relations) and who is a legitimate knower (social relations) in a given context. Varied strengths of epistemic relations and social relations generate specialization codes. Specialization codes are mapped on the specialization plane (see Figure 1) with "infinite capacity for gradation" (Maton, 2014, p. 30).
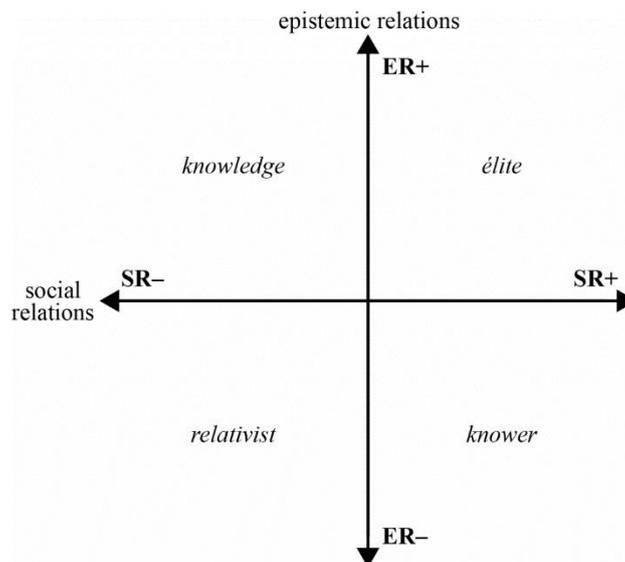
Figure 1. The specialization plane (Maton, 2014, p. 30. Reproduced with permission).

Maton (2014, p. 30) describes the four codes as:

- *knowledge codes* (ER+, SR-), where possession of specialized knowledge of specific objects of study is emphasized as the basis of achievement, and the attributes of actors downplayed;
- *knower codes* (ER-, SR+), where specialized knowledge and objects are less significant and instead the attributes of actors are emphasized as measures of achievement …;
- *élite codes* (ER+, SR+), where legitimacy is based on both possessing specialist knowledge and being the right kind of knower …; and
- *relativist codes* (ER-, SR-), where legitimacy is determined by neither specialist knowledge nor knower attributes – a kind of 'anything goes'.

Maton and Chen (2020, p. 39) highlight that what matters for each code is "'what you know' (knowledge codes), 'the kind of knower you are' (knower codes), both (elite codes), or neither (relativist codes)". The specific codes considered to be the basis for achievement in a given context may not be explicit or without contention and they do not necessarily remain static (Maton & Chen, 2020). This movement between codes can perhaps be more clearly illustrated through an example from the literature. In a study conducted to explore low take up of music qualifications in schools, the music curriculum over the various stages of education could be plotted as knower code in primary education, where emphasis is on learners expressing themselves through music,

moving to knowledge code in early secondary education with an emphasis on demonstrating musical knowledge (Maton, 2014). A final shift occurs in later secondary education (GCSE level) to élite code, where personal expression as well as technicality and accuracy are emphasized (Maton, 2014). The study concluded that these shifts in codes (often tacit to the student) could be one reason for the low uptake in music education. This example illustrates the potential for 'code clash' between pedagogical practice and student dispositions and expectations.

3.1. Code clash

Specialization affords insight into degrees of code clash and code match between practices and dispositions (Martin, Maton, & Doran, 2020). Maton and Chen (2020) have highlighted the code clash Chinese learners with knowledge code backgrounds experience when they encounter the knower code expectations of an Australian university. As Kirk (2018, p. 146) states "Chinese students bring with them [to the west] a cultivated gaze developed through a lifetime of socialisation in a very different education system." The resultant 'code clash' can leave learners with negative feelings of inferiority, insecurity, anxiety, frustration, helplessness, and depression (Maton & Chen, 2020). As in Australian HE, to become legitimate knowers in the UK HE system, students may need to reposition themselves away from their previous educational culture (knowledge code) toward a new one (knower code) in order to succeed. That is not to say that one code is better than another, rather the question is whether learners are aware of the code in which their education is operating and consequently understand what is considered legitimate and enables success. For students to succeed in the UK HE context, there is a need for some personal engagement with the knowledge; the knower needs to be visible. A pre-sessional course, therefore, is an ideal site for aiding learners in the transition from one code to another and thus limiting the potentially detrimental effects of experiencing a code clash.

The dimension of Specialization has been chosen for this study as this research is concerned with social relations (SR), that is in the context of this study, how participants relate to and engage with developing knowledge (knower building) rather than (re)production of the knowledge itself (ER) which, as will be evidenced later, is the grounds of legitimacy most learners are more familiar with.

4. The research problem

As has been argued above, knowledge is largely invisible in EAP practice and therefore knowledge becomes invisible to learners. The learners in this study predominantly come from a knowledge code background whereby success is achieved by regurgitating lecture input (see section 4.2.1 below), however knowledge reproduction alone is not sufficient for success in UK HE; the knower needs to be visible (see for example the valorisation of voice in assessment criteria (Matsuda, 2015). This study is one facet of a larger PhD project that explores the cumulative building of theory knowledgeability (Cowley-Haselden, 2020) and the troublesomeness of moving between educational contexts that valorise differing strengths of relations between knowledge and knower. The diaries that are the focus of analysis in this paper were employed as an instrument to capture this code shift. The research questions addressed in this paper are:

1. Can learner diaries make knowledge visible to EGAP learners?
2. If so, what does this mean for EGAP pedagogy?

4.1. The research site and design

The research site for this study was a UK-based EGAP pre-sessional course (at a post '92 institution) for students preparing to embark on their academic studies in a range of subjects mostly within the social sciences. The pre-sessional course had a bespoke curriculum, written in-house. Spread across the 6-week course there were a series of 'off curriculum' lessons where class content was at the discretion of the class teacher. These off-curriculum sessions were utilised by the

researcher for this study. This meant that participation in the study did not adversely affect the students' learning and progress on this high-stakes course.

The PhD, of which the diary data reported on within this paper is a part, investigates how academic language, knowledge and behaviour can develop symbiotically in a postgraduate EGAP classroom. It is not the intention to go into the PhD research in too much detail here, but it is important to state that the students participated in a series of group discussions based on prescribed academic reading. The aims of the discussions were to develop knowledge of how theory is used within a university context and to accumulate knowledge of a particular theory itself. An assumption was that these discussions would be troublesome for the participants, not just linguistically but also epistemologically, as one participant in the pilot study stated, *"I think we don't know what is theory. We can explain in a dictionary way but when we talk about theory use we are stuck."* The participants were asked to keep a diary recording their participation in these discussions to enable the researcher to gain a sense of whether the participants were aware of developing valorised knowledge practice and becoming less 'stuck'. This investigation of the learner diaries is interested in whether participants feel that they gain knowledge / are aware of gaining knowledge, how they are aware of this and how they feel about this.

4.2. Research participants

The sample used in this study was one of convenience (Dörnyei, 2007) as all postgraduate students enrolled on the pre-sessional course were invited to participate. While a sample of convenience has benefits of accessibility, there are limitations to generalisability (Dörnyei, 2007). In an attempt to alleviate this limitation, data collection took place over two summers with two separate student cohorts. While convenient, the sample was also homogenous in that participants had a shared experience (Dörnyei, 2007) and it is hoped that this affords "in-depth analysis to identify common patterns in a group with similar characteristics" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 127). There was a total of 25 participants in the 2 iterations of the data collection in the summers of 2017 (14) and 2018 (11). There was a range of nationalities in 2017; Indian, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Cameroonian, and Moroccan. In 2018 there were fewer nationalities, with seven Thais, one Iraqi, one Bangladeshi, and two Chinese students. All but one (a PhD student) were either going on to study a master's or a pre-master's degree. Participants are referred to in the data by their nationality, gender and a number (depending on how many students were of the same nationality and gender in the class), and year of study. Therefore, Cm4 2017 is one of at least four Chinese males who took part in the 2017 study.

Dörnyei (2007) accepts that one advantage of convenience sampling is that participants may be more willing to take part in the research. This was certainly the case in this study, however, it is important to reflect here on the researcher's position in this study and account for the role played by the researcher (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015). The researcher was the course director for the pre-sessional course, but not teaching on the course. It is conceivable that the participants felt that they could not refuse to take part in the study given that the researcher was in a position of authority. However, when being informed about the research, participants were assured that they could decide not to sign up to take part in the study, but still take part in the activities with their classmates. Only one student refrained from participating in the study, and while they took part in the activities, they were not videoed, and neither were their contributions transcribed.

4.2.1. Participants' Knowledge code backgrounds

The term 'semantic orientation' is used to refer to "the cognitive-linguistic dispositions which they [students] have developed throughout their lifelong interaction with their educational, social, cultural, material, and economic contexts" (Coffin & Donohue, 2014, p. 4). Assumptions are often made regarding the cognitive-linguistic dispositions EAP students have developed in regard to their previous (i.e. home country) educational contexts, where students are vessels to have knowledge poured in by the expert, only to regurgitate the exact same knowledge in order to

succeed in assessment (in LCT terms, a knowledge code context, where reproduction of knowledge is valorised). The participants in this study were interviewed prior to taking part to gain insight into their semantic orientations and to ensure that the research was not founded on ungrounded assumptions. The semantic orientation interviews revealed that the majority of participants had indeed come from a knowledge code background whereby to be a legitimate knower, one reproduces knowledge at the expense of necessarily demonstrating understanding or indeed at the expense of revealing any sense of the knower. When asked how students succeeded in assessments in their previous university experience, one Thai participant from the 2018 study said: *"who can remember a lot you can win"*. Another Vietnamese participant from the 2017 study observed that *"lecturer taught everybody everything students write everything"*.

4.2.2. Lessons learnt from the pilot study

In line with Dörnyei's (2007) observation of the limitations of diary studies, the diary entries in this study naturally varied in length and breadth. However, they did yield rich data. A pilot diary study was conducted in the autumn of 2015 and diary entries were almost all superficial and focused on describing and evaluating the individual participant's performance in the discussion. Few diaries were available for analysis as participants were given autonomy in how and where they recorded their entries and as a result, few actually kept a diary. Mackey and Gass (2005) suggest that in order to alleviate the potential lack of structure to diary entries, researchers can provide a framework for the diaries (which is seen in the literature, in Kuzborska (2015) for example). Providing structure encourages deeper reflection and more focused entries and facilitates easier analysis (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Dörnyei (2007) also suggests that in order to increase participant motivation to complete the diary, researchers should make the process as convenient as possible. To this end, the participants in the main study (conducted in the summers of 2017 and 2018) were provided with paper diaries by the researcher. The diaries had a label attached to the inside of the front cover to suggest a structure to the entries consisting of five questions (see Table 1). The questions were designed to foreground knowledge acquisition in the hope that this would enable knowledge to become more visible to the participants.

Table 1. Questions included at the front of learner diaries (2017 & 2018).

Diary question
What have I learnt today?
How did that learning take place?
How do I know I have learnt something?
How do I feel about the knowledge I have learnt?
Has my view of my knowledge / myself / university changed?

On the whole, implementing these changes was successful. Some diaries directly answered the five questions after each of the in class discussions (with either bulleted or numbered responses), some wrote narratives broadly covering the five questions. Of the 25 diaries, 21 were eligible for analysis as 1 participant did not return her diary at the end of the study due to absence and three were discarded as they were incomplete with very limited entries, writing only 2/3 word answers. This resulted in 21 diaries that were eligible for analysis for this study. While there was variation in length of entries (a range of 108 words in total to 844 words in total, giving an average of 488 words per diary), this did not necessarily reduce the depth.

5. Coding the data

The research question informing this paper is: Can learner diaries make knowledge visible to EGAP learners? This research is primarily concerned with whether knowledge becomes visible to knowers and therefore the data is categorised within the knowledge code and knower code quadrants of the specialization plane only. LCT affords the researcher the ability to move between theory and data with relative ease. The reason being that "A key task in LCT is … to establish the empirical realizations of concepts within each specific phenomenon and to make this explicit in the form of … what LCT calls a 'translation device'" (Maton & Chen, 2020). Table 2 details the translation device produced for this research. A translation device enables the relationship between theory and data to be made explicit and is an iterative process involving multiple return trips from theory to data (Maton & Chen, 2020). Diary content has first been coded according to its relative strength and weakness in terms of epistemic relations (ER+/-) (the what) and social relations (SR+/-) (the who). The translation device (table 2) provides data from the diaries as exemplars of these relations. The diary content was coded according to 4 groups dependent on the relative strengths of epistemic relations (ER) and social relations (SR) within the diary entries, with greater strength or weakness highlighted by + or ++ and – or -- respectively. The first code (ER++, SR--) reveals the strength of the knowledge code, here entries are focused on reproducing content from the texts discussed showing highly strengthened epistemic relations (ER++) and the participant is invisible showing very weak social relations (SR--). The next code group emphasised the knowledge learnt however the content moves across the specialization plane strengthening social relations as the knower becomes more visible (ER+, SR-). The third code grouping sees a shift in foregrounding the knower and their feelings rather than any specific knowledge (ER-, SR+). The fourth and final code grouping sees knowledge become invisible (ER--) and the diary entry foreground the knower's actions (SR++).

Table 2. Translation device developed for Specialization.

|	Knowledge Code		Knower Code	
	ER++, SR--	ER+, SR-	ER-, SR+	ER--, SR++
Diary content	Reproduces knowledge – knower is absent	Emphasis on what was learnt – specific knowledge and/or academic skills	Emphasis on feelings about knowledge rather than specific aspects of knowledge* Emphasis on change in knower rather than what is known	Emphasis on what was done (description) – knowledge is absent
Examples from data**	*This article showed that the cultural psychology has impacted to developing semiotics*	*I just recognise that semiotics is something like a sign* *I have learnt that we can earn a knowledge from the discussion*	*Knowledge is useful for me and I did it better than the past. I feel more knowledgeable more confident* *I usually ignore the theory of most things due to it I always do experiment or test blindly and gain nothing now I have better understanding the importance of the theory and I will do more reflection for me*	*I spent small moments of free time to do works of contextualiser [sic]*

* not including knowledge about language – for example learning new words. Knowledge is not necessarily 'correct' but is participants' understanding.

** all examples from the data are as spoken / written by the participants, so include original language errors.

It was hoped that by completing the diaries, knowledge would be more visible to participants. This would be evidenced by emphasising their feelings about knowledge and reflecting on a change in academic behaviour (ER-, SR+) and that the participant would be aware that they have gained specific knowledge (ER+, SR-). Simply reproducing content is symptomatic of their previous educational experience or semantic orientation and illustrates that perhaps taking part in the research has not afforded any greater visibility of knowledge (ER++, SR--).

6. Findings

Diaries were analysed by 'move' rather than clause or sentence, with 'moves' reflecting the type of content in relation to the translation device (Table 2). Moves may consist of a clause, a sentence or several sentences, the distinguishing factor being that the move is relative to particular diary content as categorised in Table 2. Figure 2 shows the percentage of diary entries spent in the four content areas outlined above. This percentage has been calculated by number of words within the 'move', showing the proportion of the diary entry dedicated to one of the four specific content categories. The remaining percentage is accounted for by non-analysed data, discussed in Section 6.5.
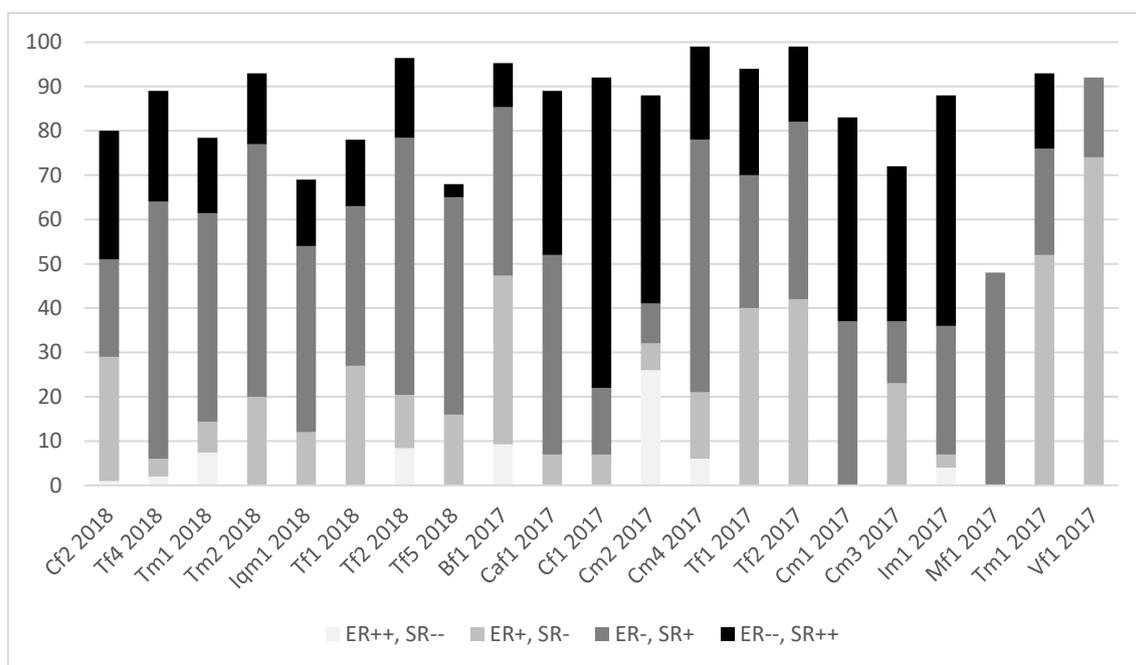
Figure 2. The percentage of diary entries (by word count) occupying the four content categories as defined in the translation device (Table 2).

6.1. Reproducing knowledge (ER++, SR--)

The simple reproduction of knowledge (showing strong ER), void of any social relations (and more typical of the participants' previous educational experience) only happens in a minority of cases (on average taking up less than 3% of the total diary entries across the whole cohort). Entries in this category do not cite the authors and may even be directly quoted from the source. The participant, through their absence, is also absolved of having any relationship with this knowledge and therefore SR is severely weakened as this quote from the data exemplifies:

> *Theory is a forecast or a system of idea intended to explain something. The concept of theory is to connect to concept of science that, in origin at least, refers to research the world according to a set of rules and principles* [Tm1 2018]

6.2. Emphasis on what was learnt (ER+, SR-)

This category occurs less frequently than feelings about knowledge, but more often than simple reproduction (on average 21% of diary entries were dedicated to this content type). There is also a tendency in these entries to focus on knowledge of theory, therefore epistemic relations are still relatively strong (ER+). Social relations are more evident here than in simple reproduction of knowledge as the participant is interpreting what they have learnt about the theory of semiotics. This is done as an individual ('I have learnt') as in this example from the data:

> *I have learnt that theory is the ideas to explain something. Then, semiotics is an example of theory which using signs to communicate and the meanings are based on society. Moreover, semiotics can apply to various discipline for example semiotics has applied in marketing which advertising is used as a sign to communicate with consumers what brand identity is* [Tf2 2017]

or as a group ('we know'), for example; *"We know specifically what the semiotics can be used in life and it can be have different meaning because the different recognition and different culture background"* [Cm3 2017]. There is also some consideration of what the participants have learnt in terms of academic skills rather than knowledge about theory, as one participant recorded:

> *Today I have learnt how to discussion in the group. We called is as an ARC (Academic Reading Circle) which is the type of reading that approach aimed at improving learner engagement and understanding a concept in article or text with collaborative* [Tf1 2018].

6.3. Feelings about knowledge and emphasis on change (ER-, SR+)

The content category whereby participants recorded their feelings about the knowledge they were acquiring and their awareness of change accounted for an average of 37% of the diary entries and reveals a shift towards strengthening social relations (SR+). Epistemic relations are downplayed (ER-) as the knowledge itself is not the focus, rather how the participants feel about the knowledge they are acquiring:

> *"When I read it I can know that is some new knowledge for me and I feel excited when I learn new things in my life."* [Tf2 2018].

> *"Before ARC I quite confuse about semiotic but before finish my discussion leader ask the question that relate with semiotic and I can answer, explain and give example because I understand clearly when I had ARC."* [Tf4 2018]

Not surprisingly, many of the entries that focus on the participant's feelings about knowledge explore feelings of confidence. Feelings of confidence understandably included a lack of it, as one participant entered in their diary: *"I feel not very confident with what I have learnt because I do not understand everything even it related with my previous one"* [Tf5 2018]. However, there were participants who felt that their confidence had increased especially in the later discussions, as this example from the data shows: *"This time quite easy. I feel excited because there is nothing to read before the discussion. Even it was confused but I can connect all of it together…This time made me feel more confident about the theory of semiotic also about the university"* [Tf5 2018].

The emphasis on change is perhaps not so easily disentangled from feelings about knowledge. The extracts from the data show positive change for the participants and tend to focus more on changes in academic literacy: *"My view now is slightly different from my previous view because I have enhanced my academic study skills and my information as a postgraduate student"* [Iqm1 2018]. There were no instances of a change for the worse. Interestingly, for some participants a change was that there is value in discussions as sites of knowledge creation:

> *"I am happy and excited when I got the knowledge because I am able to understand such difficult article by discussing with my group it is distinct progress for me."* [Cm4 2017].

> *"Maybe my understanding with university is quite change because I have learnt that we can earn a knowledge from the discussion."* [Tm2 2018].

Several extracts from the data reveal that interaction with others played a crucial role in enabling the knower to acquire specialist knowledge and highlights the value participants found in co-constructing knowledge in this way:

> *"this learning took place ... by discussion in a group it help me to understand deeply some part of the article that it didn't focus on ....Due to we got different articles, it created a kind of creativity, and cooperation help me to build another understanding about my article on the one hand, and other people article on the other hand"* [Caf1 2017]

> *"I have learnt the useful example of theory from contextualiser that made me more understand about theory. I feel completely understand about theory from ARC [discussion]. I think the informations from our group member are useful for me"* [Tf4 2018].

6.4. Emphasis on what was done (ER--, SR++)

These very descriptive entries, when present, were normally positioned at the beginning of diary entries by way of introduction (unless the whole diary entry was merely descriptive). These entries are perhaps illustrative of more typical diary entries, simply narrating what has happened. Epistemic relations are absent (ER--) as these entries do not focus on any knowledge gained from the discussions. Instead, these entries focus on what the participant did, the discussion role they enacted and how they prepared for it, therefore greatly strengthening social relations (SR++): *"I am a summariser so I conclude it by reading first sentence of each paragraph and sometimes maybe skim reading in some section. After that I paraphrase into my own word."* [Tm1 2018]. On average, 25% of the diary entries fell within this category.

6.5. Some exceptions

Some diary entries were not coded as they fell outside the focus of the translation device. These were often comments that were not a common feature across all participants' diaries. Therefore, the data excludes comments evaluating performance for example: *"Finally, even the ARC [discussion] is finished I know that I need find more opportunities to participate the group discussion or chat with foreign classmates because my speaking is worse than my classmates this way can improve my oral speaking ability quickly"* [Cf1 2017]; comments about the general pre-sessional course: *"Therefore I am confidence about this listening examination and satisfacting about my improve about listening"* [Cm2 2017]; and comments that evaluated the discussion: *"Only if when we make some mistakes the teacher could help us correct the pronunciation or mistakes in class that would be better"* [Cf2 2018].

6.6. Summary of findings

Figure 3 is a visual representation of the data situated on the specialization plane. While it should be noted that this is a heuristic interpretation of the data, it is a useful visualization summarizing the position of the diary entries relative to their strength of epistemic relations (ER) and social relations (SR), with the size of the circles plotted relative to the amount of diary data occupying that space on the plane. As the figure demonstrates, the majority of the diary data occupies more centralised space (the grey circles) where what is learnt is foregrounded (ER+, SR-) and even more so how the participant felt about acquiring this knowledge (ER-, SR+). Very little data occupies the more extreme space of simple knowledge reproduction (ER++, SR--), while a quarter of the entries occupy the other extreme of foregrounding what the participant did (ER--, SR++) ignoring the knowledge acquired completely.

epistemic relations
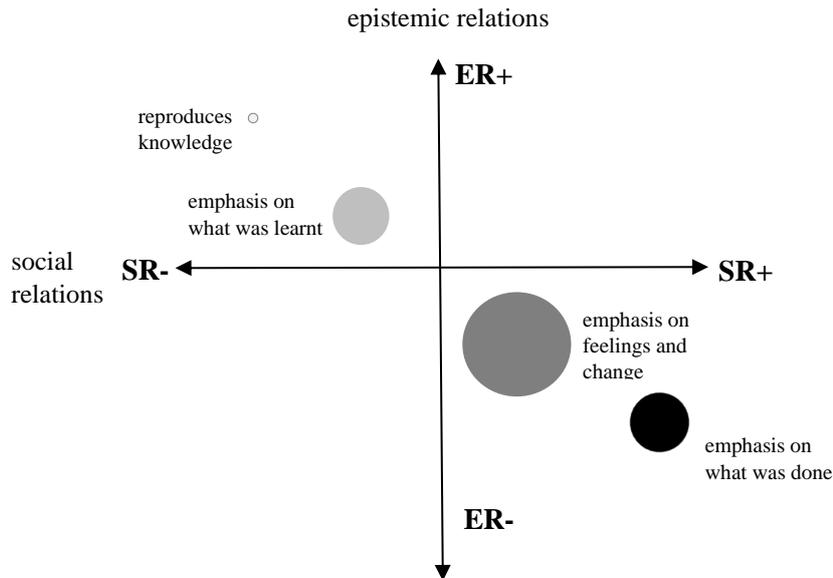
Figure 3. Heuristic interpretation of location of diary entries on
the specialization plane (size of the circle is relative to the total
percentage of diary entries plotted).

7. Discussion and conclusion

One research question for this study was: Can learner diaries make knowledge visible to EGAP
learners? As can be seen from the findings, learners did travel across specialization codes evi-
dencing a greater visibility of knowledge, or at least increased awareness of interaction with
knowledge. Few participants simply reproduced knowledge in their diaries (ER++, SR--) and
ventured from the outer reaches of knowledge code toward the realm of the knower. While a
relatively high proportion of the diary entries appear to simply describe what the participant did
(ER--, SR++) and arguably stray too far into the far reaches of the knower code quadrant where
knowledge fades from view, this figure is inflated by a few participants who spent the majority
of their time here. In reality, for 15 out of the 21 participants the time spent in ER--, SR++ was
not higher than the time they spent in ER+, SR- and/or ER-/SR+ (see Figure. 2). It should be
noted that not all of the data was analysed as the data fell outside of the parameters of the trans-
lation device. It may be that with further return trips between the theory and data, this data could
be better accounted for. However, it was felt that for the purposes of this paper it was not too
detrimental to exclude this data.

Despite the researcher providing some diary parameters, entries did not follow discrete patterns.
Perhaps understandably the first and final entries were generally more concerned with feelings
about knowledge and change (ER-, SR+) as the approach taken in this study was somewhat new
to the students and forced them to engage with some challenging reading and finally to reflect on
the process. The middle two entries (written after participants were more familiar with the idea
of theory and seeing examples applied to their subject areas) focused more on specific knowledge
gained (ER+, SR-). Overall, the majority of the entries address these two areas showing that rela-
tions to knowledge were made more visible. This cannot simply be explained by participants
addressing the questions they were asked as 3 out of the 21 diaries spent most time unable to
move beyond simple description of the tasks they undertook (ER--, SR++). The volume of entries
oscillating at the crossroads of knowledge and knower code show an awareness of knowledge and
a personal interaction with knowledge, and therefore go some way to eradicating knowledge
blindness. The fact that the majority of diary entries focused on relations to knowledge and the

affect this had on the learner is also indication that the method was generally successful in aiding students to become more accustomed to a knower code educational environment.

A further research question for this study was: What does this mean for EAP pedagogy? The data shows that focusing learners on the accumulation of knowledge makes knowledge more visible. It is suggested here that EAP practitioners select texts to explore in the classroom, not solely based on linguistic features, but also based on the knowledge that learners can develop. This is perhaps best achieved when the learners engage in a series of texts that work together to build knowledge (Cowley-Haselden, 2020). The diaries also highlight the importance of interaction in the process of knowledge acquisition. Therefore, learners should be afforded time and space to foreground knowledge by discussing challenging ideas. This seems to give learners a great deal of confidence in their academic abilities. Diaries are also a useful tool to use for teachers to gain an insight into how their learners feel about the knowledge they are acquiring and how they feel about their transition into a different specialization code to the one they are perhaps more familiar with. Ultimately, the specialization code that the students will need to be operating within to succeed needs to be made explicit.

There are obvious limitations to using diary studies as a research method. Most notably the variation in length and depth of entries and focusing the entries to facilitate quality entries. On the whole, however, this paper has illustrated that learner diaries can offer an important insight into learners' developing relations with knowledge. By encouraging learners to reflect on their acquisition of knowledge and the effects of this on them as learners, knowledge practices become 'seen' and a very real object for learners to engage with, being truly transformative for postgraduate pre-sessional students; enabling them to become closer to a legitimate knower in UK HE (in the social sciences at least). This paper is evidence that employing LCT in EAP is crucial to overcoming 'knowledge blindness' in EAP research and practice. As Bodin-Galvez and Ding (2019) keenly observe, the current trend in employing LCT within EAP based research "may soon provide enough confidence and evidence to invigorate the reshaping, rethinking and development" (p. 82) of English for General Academic Purposes. Indeed, one hopes, in EAP more widely. As we move to a more knowledge conscious position, the EAP community, in particular the EAP student, would benefit from further research being conducted into making knowledge practices seen in the classroom and the effects of knowledge on the development of the knower. That is not to say that language is no longer important, on the contrary, the work presented here would have been enriched by a linguistic analysis of the diary entries themselves had space permitted. What is a central argument here is that, as language specialists, we must also afford knowledge equal importance in our research and our practice.

Acknowledgements

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