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Can academic reading empower EAP students?

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Abstract

Academic reading has so far unduly played a peripheral role in EAP and academic literacy research agenda. This work draws on constructivist approaches to reading, and critical view of literacy to foreground academic reading as a proactive and potentially empowering literacy practice. It employed narrative inquiry (group and individual interviews) with international students enrolled on an EAP course to ascertain whether and how academic reading can be empowering. One participant's reading story is presented in its entirety to illustrate international students' complex relationship with academic reading. The data suggests reading has the potential to be empowering, albeit that many current practices are disempowering. Suggestions for more empowering practices on the level of EAP curricula and classroom instruction, as well as the wider academic literacy context are made.

1.Introduction

1.1. Rationale

This research stems from both personal and professional interests. As a language learner, post-graduate student and language teacher I found that studying and working in one's second language can be disempowering - I often used to feel "othered", less visible, as if my voice did not carry the same authority as that of my colleagues or classmates. This feeling has gradually faded and, on reflection, it seems that academic reading has played a key role in this change as reading and "knowing" gave me confidence to speak up and claim my voice. I have noticed that this transition has not been a universal phenomenon – many of my fellow classmates and former students remained "othered", worryingly describing themselves as "just looking down" in class. This experience prompted me to research empowering aspects of academic reading with the intention to propose pedagogical and disciplinary changes in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) profession that could help students exploit their potential through academic reading. To ground these ideas theoretically, it is necessary to first contextualise EAP provision within a changing landscape of higher education.

1.2. Background and definitions

Academic reading is an important aspect of university study in British universities, but research-wise has attracted less attention than writing (Weller, 2010; Abbott 2013; Hill and Meo, 2015; Kuzborska, 2015). This, perhaps, is not entirely unpredictable, as the latter is claimed to be the most visible outcome of learning, thus lending itself to evaluation. It can be argued, however, that ignoring academic reading in favour of writing is indicative of reactive rather than proactive research agenda (Lillis and Scott, 2007). It might be also detrimental to students' development as lack of reading skill will likely hinder access to, and delay the development of an understanding of, their new academic communities, thus preventing a sense of membership. To explain why this might be the case it is necessary to look at the roots of research interest in academic writing.

Much of this interest emerged only as an institutional response to increasing diversity in British universities. Specifically, there have been two unprecedented changes in XXI century landscape of higher education (henceforth HE): widening participation agenda, and the

internationalization policy (ibidem). Both, albeit “rhetorically celebrated in mission statements”, presented a challenge to traditional academic practices (p.8). This is because British universities have long practised and assessed what can be called essayist literacy (Lea and Street, 1998; Lillis 1999), a set of academic practices favouring highly literate written forms of expression identified as being challenging for non-traditional students. To remedy that, institutional solutions in the form of literacy instruction came into place, the two most common in a British context being academic literacy for home and English for Academic Purposes for international students (Wingate and Tribble, 2012). Although the former is largely self-explanatory, the latter is less so and needs further attention. English for academic purposes (henceforth EAP) was defined as “teaching English with the aim of facilitating learners’ study or research in that language” (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001:8), and more recently, as “the study of language in academic contexts” (Bruce, 2011:116).

What both solutions have in common is that they aim to address students’ problems in order to increase their performance during university study. There appear to be two underlying assumptions here that are conducive to disempowering experience and, therefore, problematic. Firstly, “non-traditional” students are viewed in deficit terms with a default position of needing help and secondly, academic practices are seen as neutral and universal rather than acknowledged as being, as Benesh (2001) argues, imbued in existing power dynamics and influenced by socio-political dimensions of university study. Consequently, there is an existing expectation for the students to adapt when entering HE, as part of a one-way assimilation practice (Morita, 2004). This is problematic too, because, as Starfield (2012) argues, not much value seems to be given to non-traditional students’ prior educational experience and ways of knowing. This critique became a springboard for critically oriented researchers to develop new frameworks, notably Academic Literacies () and Critical EAP (Benesh, 2001). Their work has been most insightful and instrumental to challenging some of the current literacy practices, but so far has been limited to writing. Tertiary reading, therefore, remains “unprobed and unaided” (van Pletzen 2006:105) and its pedagogy “narrowly defined” (Weller, 2010:88).

This is unhelpful because, in fact, there is value attached to particular ways of reading in academia, particularly in social sciences and humanities. To illustrate, Abbott (2013) interviewed literature professors and revealed that lecturers want their students to read actively, dialogically and make use of their own critical voice. Admittedly, reading is more central to humanities than to other disciplines, but similar expectations can be assumed for most social sciences and business students. For instance, Hill and Meo (2015) compare

reading in social sciences to academic currency, and argue that choosing *who* one reads might play a role in shaping future academic trajectories. Yet, these aspects of academic reading are rarely reflected on or taught in literacy courses, which effectively renders them invisible for both lecturers and students, a practice that might contribute to misunderstandings and frustrations for both parties (van Pletzen, 2006).

It could be argued that EAP does not do enough to bridge this gap. This might be because of how the field and its practitioners position themselves - EAP emerged as a subfield of applied linguistics (Wingate and Tribble, 2012) and, as can be seen from the definitions referred to above, it is primarily language oriented, which is hardly surprising given it caters primarily for second language learners. My argument, however, is that focus on language is helpful only to a limited extent and that there is a mismatch between how academic reading is conceived of by academics and how it is taught in EAP. Specifically, if language-teaching approaches to reading (focusing on reading comprehension and general strategies such as skimming and scanning) is uncritically applied to academic reading, EAP students' access to academic material remains limited, therefore hindering their full participation in their future academic communities.

In conclusion, current solutions seem disempowering in their focus on fixing problems, and my argument is that engaging with academic reading can be a more proactive strategy, exploiting students' potential instead. Academic reading, therefore, is worthy of EAP attention as it is not only necessary for students' fuller participation in academic communities, but also, importantly for my argument, can have an empowering effect.

1.3. Aims and research questions

The aim of this project, therefore, is to explore whether academic reading can be approached in an empowering way. To address it, I pose the following research questions:

-Do students enrolled on an EAP course perceive reading as an empowering experience?

-What reading practices contribute to empowering / disempowering reading experiences?

Before reviewing literature on academic reading, it is important to highlight that there has been some discussion about the meaning and implications of the word empower. Specifically, it might have negative connotations to some because, similarly to liberatory, it

implies a lack of agency, a degree of helplessness, lack of awareness and dependency on an external savior. To illustrate, quite illuminating here is Clarke's (2003:175) play on words. His suggestion that "empower and liberate are not transitive verbs [...nor...] serums that can be administered to others", *insinuates that* empowerment cannot be *done to* students. This is noted and in the present dissertation the meaning behind "empowering" is not an agentless one, rather, similar to "transformative", indicates an opportunity to *develop themselves*, exercising their agency in the learning environment created by teachers (Morgan and Ramanathan, 2005:155). Thus, an empowered student has the facility to participate fully in, or the tools to subvert or challenge, institutional practices if they find them marginalizing (ibidem).

1.4. Structure

The literature review consists of two parts with part one looking at importance, approaches and meaning of reading in an HE context. The argument is made that perceiving academic reading as an individual and intellectual activity, as opposed to viewing it as epistemic and socially situated, ignores recent scholarship and is detrimental for the student body. It is argued in the second part that text-based approaches dominating in EAP facilitate access to a limited extent only, and a reading lesson in academic literacies critical paradigm is used to illustrate the empowering potential of this alternative approach. The methodology chapter gives rationale behind employing narrative inquiry as research design and explore ethical concerns involved in collecting interview data from my own students. Consistent with the adopted approach, data is presented as participant's reading story and then subsequently analysed and discussed according to the dimensions of accessibility, criticality and visibility to ascertain whether reading can be an empowering experience for EAP students. Specific reading practices contributing to or hindering empowering experience are reiterated and serve as the foundation for suggestions for a more critically engaged approach in the implications chapter.

2. Literature review

2.1. The nature of academic reading in HE

2.1.1. Academic reading research and critique

Reading in an HE context has been long established as important. At post-graduate level it is linked to assessment, which is why its link with writing is the most widely discussed aspect of academic reading. However, academic reading is more than that. It is a primary resource for learning (van Pletzen, 2006) and a “fundamental social research practice” necessary to situate oneself within the discipline and its ways of knowing (Hill and Meo, 2015:845).

Owing to the aforementioned reasons, research on academic reading in both home and international students is extensive. Primary areas of interest include reading compliance (Sappington et al. 2002; Brost & Bradley, 2006), comprehension (He, 2008; Nergis, 2013), strategies (Shih, 1992; Hirano, 2014; McGrath et al., 2016), attitudes (Brost & Bradley, 2006; Ro, 2016), habits (Pecorari et al., 2012; Bozkurt et al., 2016), digital practices (Chou, 2012; McGrath et al., 2016), critical reading (Weller, 2010; Toh, 2011) and the notion of reading to write (Asencion Delaney, 2008; Grabe and Zhang, 2013). This brief review suggests that research interest is wide-ranging and affords invaluable insights into both reading theory and pedagogy. Developments in the field, however, have been hindered by a certain homogeneity of methodological approaches and insufficient interrogation of epistemological and philosophical assumptions behind academic reading research.

Most research on academic reading appears to investigate undergraduate students, with only a limited number of studies covering post-graduate reading practices. This is probably because transitioning to university study is generally a challenging experience (van Pletzen, 2006; Weller, 2010; Hirano, 2014), but is nevertheless surprising given the significance of reading at post-graduate level. Furthermore, studies on academic reading are mostly conducted within a quantitative research design paradigm drawing largely on questionnaires that, despite providing extensive coverage, are limited regarding the depth of insights. More importantly, however, a considerable proportion of the research on academic reading might be challenged on epistemological grounds. Broadly, the areas of study referred to above appear to demonstrate several aspects: disquiet about whether students read enough, a belief *there are* “correct” readings of the text that can be assessed via comprehension questions, that there exists a set of universal cognitive strategies that can be employed to

become a more “successful” reader, and that reading is a pre-writing activity. This is problematic for three reasons.

First, it appears those researchers represent the school of thought that sees text as object, that is, merely a carrier of meaning that can be deciphered via close reading. Yet, more critically oriented researchers argue this “fetishizing of the text” (Weller, 2010:102) can be challenged by insights from constructivist literary theories (cf. van Pletzen, 2006; Weller, 2010; Hill and Meo, 2015). Such theories conceptualize reading as an interpretive process of meaning making, although it must be reiterated here that Louise Rosenblatt (1994), reader-response key theorist, did not believe all interpretations to be equally accurate. What is important for the purpose of this work, however, is that in the constructivist view text is no longer “controlling the reader” (Goodman, 1994:1094), and instead, the reader’s agency (Block, 1995; Travis, 1998) in co-constructing meaning is emphasized. Such understanding affords thinking about reading as an empowering experience.

The second problem is that a belief in the existence of an objective meaning of text assumes the reader as the source of any challenges the texts might pose. This psycholinguistic approach understands literacy as an extension of individuals’ cognitive competence (Hill and Meo, 2015), which has important implications for the quality of any solutions proposed. In an HE context, proficient reading skills are often assumed (Weller, 2010; Abbott, 2013), so when problems do arise, solutions are often sought in decontextualized study skills provision (Wingate, 2006), which Weller (2010) argues is reductive as it fosters an instrumental approach to text that is merely information seeking, rather than seeing it as central to educational experience. What is problematic here, therefore, is that seeing students from a deficit perspective does not lend itself to devising solutions aimed at empowering reading experience.

Finally, even though reading is often done regardless of assessment (Weller, 2010), it is rarely theorized on its own. Rather, it is regularly being neutralized as merely pre-writing (Hill and Meo, 2015), an activity that is politically and ideologically neutral (Weller, 2010). This is inconsistent with wider post-structural conceptualizations of how language is used to position and inculcate (cf. Norton and Morgan, 2012) and, applied to academia and reading, was challenged by Hill and Meo (2015) and Weller (2010) who argue that texts and the way they are used reveal disciplinary values and practices regarded as legitimate. Without acknowledging and explicitly addressing the ways in which texts convey values and position

their readers, it can be argued that students might find it harder to navigate the implicit world of legitimate academic practices and, should they be marginalising, difficult to resist.

All three suggest a traditionalist, individualistic and uncritical view of literacy famously criticized in Lea and Street's (1998) influential paper, where they propose a post-structuralist view of academic literacy as, on the one hand, being a socially situated set of practices (rather than as individual qualities) and, on the other, as being more critically engaged and as recognizing the power dynamics inherent in the socio-political context of academia (rather than maintaining an apolitical and neutral view). Two decades later, however, identifying reading as a primary research focus, revealing readers' experiences and interpretive processes, and problematising the non-neutral context in which reading practices occur is still uncommon. Notable exceptions of research on academic reading, acknowledging it as occurring within an institutional and disciplinary as well as socio-political context, will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.2. Academic reading as situated practice in socio-political context

One of the first researchers to theorise reading beyond narrowly defined learning outcomes was Mann (2000:300), who draws on Foucault and Marx to support her argument that educational settings produce a "disturbed quality of reading". She investigated the reading experience of first-year British linguistics undergraduates through in-depth interviews to reveal how reading changes from a pleasurable activity to "work" in academia, as students read in response to external requirements rather than intrinsic interests, which she famously theorised as an alienating reading experience. Mann then goes on to insightfully argue that reading is not neutral as it serves assessment purposes (written or seminar) and since these involve inherent power relationships, academic reading essentially becomes a public activity affecting self-concept. Based on these observations she concluded that individual history and socio-political context, causing possible inequalities need to be considered when discussing academic reading.

Another author determined to problematize academic reading is van Pletzen (2006), whose ethnographic study aims to make reading practices more visible by investigating reading experiences and affective responses in first year "black" ESL medical students in post-apartheid South Africa. It drew on the constructivist literary theories referred to above and Gee's (1996) theorization to illustrate how the academic setting of medical school curriculum (secondary discourses) can be marginalizing by ignoring students' home literacy

practices (primary discourse). Specifically, she reveals how assigned anatomy readings caused little frustration because they allowed students to draw on their “inner capital” (Rosenblatt 1994: 1061) of prior knowledge and experience, which contrasts with anxiety and exhaustion caused by psychosocial texts that students not only had no background in, but that, as van Pletzen (2006) perceptively speculates, by being more reflective and inward-oriented in nature, might have threatened their identity and very ways of being. This clash between home literacies and school curriculum is important to my argument and will be referred to again in the later sections. It must be also noted here that even though a home literacies argument is essentially related to social class, it is still valuable to theorizing international students’ academic reading as it is parallel to local ways of knowing (discussed in section 2.3) and how these might mediate cognitive and affective demands associated with academic reading.

Similarly to van Pletzen (2006) (although surprisingly without making any reference to her work), Hill and Meo (2015) too resolve to make academic reading more visible, although they seem to take it further by designing a practical literacy module for their post-graduate South-African social-sciences students. Drawing on Bourdieu, they conceptualize academic reading as both technical and social competence in a South African context where academic reading is often associated with English language competency, which, similarly to van Pletzen (2006), they see as inextricably linked to “primary discourse”, though here theorized as “habitus”. Most importantly though, they then go on to argue academic reading serves to position – knowing who to read and how to establish one’s voice and position while reading will probably affect students’ and researchers’ future academic trajectory. Their practical intervention problematizes reading as private, relative to writing and ideologically neutral, which contributed to students’ heightened awareness and reflexivity, as declared in an open-ended survey, but regrettably this has not been explored in depth through interviews or observations of students’ academic practices after participating in the module.

The above studies have been most illuminating: the first one in theorizing reading as potentially alienating and as altering self-concept, the second in suggesting a positive effect of inner capital on cognitive and affective dimensions of reading, the third, in shedding light on reading as a positioning activity. These perspectives on academic reading, however, are still in minority and as a result reading continues to be an invisible and implicit practice (van Pletzen, 2006; Weller, 2010; Hill and Meo, 2015), regularly leaving both educators and students frustrated (van Pletzen, 2006). One of the potential reasons for this could be

different understandings of the purposes of reading, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.3. Academic reading as new ways of knowing

When debating and theorizing university transition what is often lamented is secondary students' ill-preparedness to fully engage and participate in their new learning context. This appears to be a universal phenomenon and has been discussed in multiple contexts by British (Wingate, 2006), South African (van Pletzen, 2006) and American (Hirano, 2014) researchers. What these accounts fail to explicitly acknowledge, however, is that this might be due to a larger, intangible epistemic shift taking place - a changing understanding of what it means to know and what knowledge types are legitimate in an HE context.

Erdreich and Rapoport (2002) bridge this gap by helpfully highlighting that as opposed to the facts-based instruction of high school, university knowledge is constructed, open for criticism and contains multiple perspectives. Indeed, their post-structural discussion of first-year female Palestinian Israeli university experience reveals how memorization and pursuit of "correct answers" is expected to give way to deeper engagement in social and political debates and the use of knowledge to critique them. They theorise the above phenomenon as "disruption in knowledge" (p.495), a realization particularly useful for the present dissertation as it appears to some extent parallel to international students' experience whose already formed ways of knowing and literacy practices do not always match these of post-graduate study.

Erdreich and Rapoport (2002), however, are fairly narrow in their explanation of disrupted knowledge. Similarly to van Pletzen (2006) they see it as indicative of power dynamics, drawing on Gee's (1996) theorization of dominant discourse power to position an individual as either an insider (powerful) or outsider (powerless). In other words, if students' prior educational experience is dissimilar to that of the ways of knowledge valued in academia, they might become outsiders and positioned as less well versed, or even marginalized. This interpretation, however, is inherently linked to social class and while it has considerable explanatory power, there is more to the nature of university study than class-related literacy practices. Here, illuminating is Gamache (2002) who sees university transition on a deeper, epistemological level. Specifically, he contrasts knowledge presented as a bundle of facts to knowledge as multiple and contested. A Gamachean interpretation of the "disruption of knowledge", therefore, would likely be different – not theoretical like Erdreich and

Rapoport's (2002), but philosophical, involving an epistemic shift from the objectivist to constructivist paradigm. This realisation is central to the present argument as academic reading becomes the main tool of accessing and constructing these new ways of knowing.

Such change in conceptualising knowledge, and reading as ways of accessing, is rarely pondered or explicitly discussed, which seems to lead to a paradoxical situation - epistemic change is as difficult as it is necessary in order to become a legitimate reader in, and of academic communities. Consequently, it would appear that reading practices on a tertiary level need to be made visible, critically interrogated and explicitly taught. One way of addressing this need is doing so in preparatory courses such as EAP. This is more complicated than it seems, however, as EAP students are L2 users and their prior experience as language learners mediates their reading practices.

2.1.4. Reading to know in L2

To understand the need for explicit reading pedagogy for international students it is necessary to understand how L2 learners tend to understand and approach texts.

For L2 learners, reading in English is a source of input (Bernhardt, 2011) often used in class to present linguistic systems such as grammar or vocabulary. This means L2 learners tend to actively search for unknown words or structures and often translate them, which in terms of academic reading appears to be an undesirable practice as it treats text primarily as a linguistic object. Recent developments in teaching methodologies discourage excessive use of such strategies and call for a more authentic reading approach focusing on purpose, meaning and reactions to text (Richards, 2006). Providing meaningful reading tasks in the language classroom is nevertheless challenging (Hedge, 2000, Howarth 2006) and it is unclear to what extent this approach informs reading instruction.

As well as language pedagogies, students' reading approach is further shaped by having undergone language testing experience in their schooling system (Liu, 2015) and through access examinations such as Academic IELTS, which, it is fair to assume, most international students undertook. It can be argued, however, that the type of tasks, test taking strategies and texts used in them do not fully represent academic reading practices on post-graduate level. Scanning for information to address comprehension questions, using linguistic cues and reading closely in order to find *correct* answers for questions being asked are not what, as discussed above, post-graduate lecturers expect students to do, and indeed, IELTS' report

itself admits that careful reading is tested more than other competencies (Weir et al., 2012). Regarding texts, IELTS corresponds to academic texts written for a general audience similar to those written for first year undergraduates (ibidem), and, arguably, post-graduate reading practices are more challenging as they go beyond textbooks to primary research. It must be noted here that this is not meant as IELTS criticism, but rather to point out a need for awareness-raising because, as professional experience tells, it is not uncommon for students half way into the course to use these exam practice booklets in order to improve their academic reading competency, which worryingly suggests students have no full understanding of what post-graduate academic reading practices actually are.

The above two points suggest, therefore, that L2 learners' prior educational experience is that of "learning to read", viewing text as a linguistic object and deciphering its true meaning based on linguistic cues, whereas, as previously discussed, academic reading can be described as "reading to learn" (MacLellan, 1997), where reading provides access to contested disciplinary contents. Indeed, many EAP researchers identified this shift as being the key transition in university study in L2 (Grabe and Stoller, 2002; Ohata and Fukao, 2012) in need for more research (Liu, 2015).

2.1.5. Summary

This section argued that post-graduate reading as new ways of knowing is hindered by students' prior educational experience and "reading to learn" mindset. These contribute to a mismatch between students' reading practices and what is expected from a post-graduate reader, and a delay realizing their full potential. The next section reviews approaches to reading in EAP in order to ascertain whether EAP instruction addresses the above learning need.

2.2. Approaches to text and reading in EAP

It is difficult to review approaches to reading in EAP as, firstly, systematic studies of reading are rare (Ohata and Fukao, 2012; Kuzborska, 2015) and, secondly, methods of teaching it depend on how practitioners conceptualize EAP. To illustrate whether reading practices can be empowering in EAP provision it is, hence, necessary to first show its purpose and position compared to other literacy courses. This explanation is central to the argument as, I would argue, not all the approaches are equally conducive to empowering reading practices. This first subsection maps EAP against other academic literacy instruction in the UK, and the second reviews approaches to text and reading in EAP.

2.2.1. Locating EAP within general models of academic literacy

2.2.1.1. General models of academic literacy

Three main approaches to academic literacy provision in the UK (summarized in table 1) have distinct aims as they stem from dissimilar theoretical and epistemological traditions. Study skills was born as an institutional response to diversity and aimed to aid “at risk” students to succeed at university (Wingate, 2006). It was subsequently heavily criticized for being instrumental/mechanical in conceptualizing literacy as a set of discrete, transdisciplinary and standardized skills (Lea and Street, 1998; Hill and Meo, 2015), and for its remedial nature contributing to deficit view (Wingate, 2006), which was in fact contrary to its purpose. To address these issues of access commonly named socialization courses emerged, aiming at facilitating students’ success via explicit teaching of the typical academic practices (genres) of experienced versed academics. However, the critics problematise this “master-apprentice” relationship since conceptualizing legitimate practices as “a gift in the hands of their expert lecturers” denies learners agency (Weller, 2010:91) and implies a normative development path (Lillis and Scott, 2007) and as such does little to challenge power relationships inherent in academia (Turner, 2012). It is the latter criticism that prompted the development of an academic literacies (ALs) approach, which, in stressing the plural form of the word, highlights that academic practices are situated and changing and cannot be studied nor described as the fixed entities intended in socialization approaches (Lea and Street, 1998). Learning is conceptualized here as epistemic and linked to students’ identities and, as such, it aims to empower students to negotiate affective and ideological tensions resulting from the contested and inequitable academic practices they are subjected to (ibidem). It also urges critical examination and for changes to be made in institutional and

disciplinary practices to be more equitable, which is why its orientation is considered transformative, as opposed to an academic socialization approach (Lillis and Scott, 2007; Lillis and Tuck, 2016). Main criticisms of this approach are reliance on small-scale research, excessive disregard of text (Lillis and Scott, 2007), insufficient practical pedagogical frameworks (Lillis, 2003) and slow response to the digital turn (Lea, 2016).

Table 1. Approaches to academic literacy in the UK

<i>Approach</i>	<i>Brief description</i>	<i>Success criteria</i>	<i>Epistemological and theoretical grounds</i>
Study skills: <i>literacy as skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high cognitive abilities needed for HE study -skills standardized and transferable 	-developing effective study skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -objectivistic paradigm -cognitive theories of learning
Academic socialization: <i>literacy as induction to academic genres</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -there exist typical practices in academia (genres) -focus on orientation to learning (deep, surface, strategic) -master-apprentice relationship 	-mastering of legitimate practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -constructivist paradigm -Socio-cultural theories of learning
Academic literacies: <i>literacy as forming identities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -academic practice contested and situated within a wider socio-economic and political context -practices must be critically interrogated and changed to offer more equitable participation 	-deploying appropriate linguistic resources and negotiating social and personal meanings in response to different academic requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -socio-critical paradigm -draws on: New Literacy Studies, Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics

Source: adapted from Lea and Street (1998), Gamache (2002), Wingate (2006), Lillis and Scott (2007)

2.2.1.2. EAP and literacy models

It is challenging to confidently locate EAP within the above literacy models. On the one hand, because of its origins in applied linguistics, focus on writing pedagogy, and, consequently, text and genre, it can be identified as an academic socialization approach. Indeed, many AL and EAP practitioners themselves appear to believe so (cf. Wingate and Tribble, 2012; Hyland and Shaw, 2016; Lillis and Tuck, 2016).

On the other hand, although the focus of EAP explicated in its definition is clear, there is a significant diversity within the field (both in theoretical and instructional terms) and so the above generalization appears overly simplistic. Although it is beyond the remit of this work to review all of them, it must be mentioned that many traditions within EAP have a critical orientation and are, therefore, more similar to ALs model¹.

On instructional level, there is little specificity on how to approach teaching reading, especially compared to writing research. Particularly illuminating here is Campion's (2016) research on transition from General English to teaching EAP in which she points to teachers' perceived lack of subject knowledge rather than concerns about teaching methodology. What appears to emerge from this research, therefore, is that teachers are resourceful in drawing on their language teaching expertise; however, it must be equally noted that new EAP teachers might be at risk of uncritically carrying over General English reading approaches that tend to be associated with the "learning to read" notion referred to above. Lack of specific requirements or limited available training on how to teach EAP means new practitioners are left unaided as how to teach reading, which is worrisome, as there is no way of ensuring consistent conceptualisation of reading literacy, especially in short-terms courses that rely on external recruitment.

This multiplicity of approaches translates to a variety of literacy models within EAP; the author's personal experience has been that of EAP being imparted as a language, study skills, academic socialization or ALs course, and it is argued here that not all of them exploit EAP's transformative potential fully. Thus, rather than glossing over reading or treating it as a primarily linguistic activity, there is a need to engage in reading practices as an epistemic and identity negotiation activity afforded by a critical paradigm because, as discussed in section 2.3, it is how reading is understood in an HE context.

¹ For instance, critical EAP (cf. Benesh, 2001, Turner, 2012), critical pragmatic (cf. Harwood and Hadley, 2004) and systemic functional linguistic (cf. Coffin and Donohue, 2012)

2.2.2. Approaches to text and reading in EAP

For the purpose of this work I have chosen, albeit simplistically, to distinguish between three broad approaches to academic text drawing on three theorizations of literacy discussed above: traditionalist, social and critical paradigm. A brief review of inferred approaches to text and examples of research in each tradition is available in Table 2. Only the critical paradigm is illustrated in more detail as it is of most relevance to the specific interest of this dissertation. The present work draws on examples from ALs scholarship to illustrate a critical paradigm because no EAP treatment of reading in a critical paradigm could be found.

ALs and EAP are two main approaches to literacy in the UK (Wingate and Tribble, 2012) and are here considered complementary as they have the same purpose of facilitating access and transformative learning, regardless of some disagreement about how to achieve it (Wingate and Tribble 2012; Lillis and Tuck, 2016). Even though the differences between EAP and ALs are not to be dismissed (cf. Lillis and Tuck (2016) for a more comprehensive analysis), this decision is inspired by McGrath and Kaufhold (2016), who, having designed a successful course together despite coming from these two different traditions, call for a more eclectic approach. As a practitioner, it is my position that attempting to offer some systematisation to reading practices, although problematic in some ways, will ultimately be more beneficial inaccurate.

Table 2 shows an attempt to categories existing approaches to academic reading, drawing on the research I have done. All of them have different understandings of text and reading, and consequently will likely propose teaching it differently. It is my argument that only a critical model can lead to an empowering reading experience because of how it conceptualizes both text and reading (table 2). Because this paradigm is relatively new and there is some disquiet about its pedagogical propositions, it is interesting to see how a reading lesson within this approach might look. Gimenez and Thomas's (2015) practical example of how reading activities were designed to promote text accessibility and students' criticality and visibility, aiming at a transformative experience is explicated below.

Table 2. Understanding of academic reading in academic literacy practices.

Broad approach to text and example schools of thought	Understanding of text	Understanding of reading	How might they teach reading	Examples of empirical / theoretical work
<p><i>Traditionalist: Skills oriented</i></p> <p>-Study skills</p>	<p>-texts as objective carriers of knowledge</p> <p>-text as object whose meaning can be deciphered via close reading</p>	<p>Reading as:</p> <p>-a tool to gain knowledge</p> <p>-comprehension of study materials</p> <p>-individual, intellectual activity</p> <p>-one of university requirements</p>	<p>-reading strategies: scanning, skimming, prediction, etc.</p> <p>-speed reading</p> <p>-texts not always authentic</p> <p>-critical reading²: examining the argument</p>	<p>-Taillefer and Pugh (1998)</p> <p>-Anderson (1999)</p> <p>-Beglar et al. (2012)</p> <p>-Pecorari et al. (2012)</p> <p>-McGrath et al. (2016)</p> <p>- McVeigh (2016)</p>
<p><i>Social: text oriented</i></p> <p>-Genre approach</p> <p>-textual approaches</p> <p>-Community of practice</p> <p>-reading to write</p>	<p>-text represents expert academic practices and novices benefit from analyzing its features</p> <p>-text communicates authors' purpose</p>	<p>Reading as:</p> <p>-gaining access through developing knowledge and absorbing disciplinary practices</p> <p>-reacting to authors' rhetorical choices</p> <p>-an important pre-writing stage</p>	<p>-exposure to authentic texts</p> <p>-teaching features and structure of different genres</p> <p>-consider purposes and audiences</p> <p>-the effect of rhetorical devices</p> <p>-critical reading²: examining the argument and disciplinary value</p>	<p>-Hazel and Hallam (2000)</p> <p>-Abbott (2013)</p> <p>-Ohata & Fukao (2014)</p> <p>-Kuzborska (2015)</p> <p>-Liu (2015)</p>
<p><i>Critical: practices oriented</i></p> <p>-Academic literacies</p> <p>-critical EAP</p> <p>-critical pedagogy</p> <p>-SFL</p>	<p>-text not neutral but ideological and may serve to position and induct hegemonic ways of knowing</p> <p>-text production and consumption embedded in power relations</p> <p>-text as "usable resource" rather than a sacred object</p>	<p>Reading as:</p> <p>-positioning act</p> <p>-epistemic and identity act</p> <p>-social and political activity</p> <p>-resource to forward students' agendas and negotiate positions</p>	<p>-exploit readers' inner capital</p> <p>-interested in readers' affective reactions to text</p> <p>-appropriating text by simplifying and fragmenting it</p> <p>-critical reading² of words and worlds</p>	<p>-Clarke (1993)</p> <p>-Van Pletzen (2006)</p> <p>-Gimenez & Thomas (2015)</p> <p>-Good (2016)</p> <p>- Fox & O'Maley (2017)</p>

Source: own work

² cf. Davies and Barnett (2015) and Wilson (2016) on three approaches to criticality

The authors' intervention was motivated by Arts and Design "non-traditional" students' difficulties in appreciating theoretical modules' relevance to their studio practice, which is actually representative of the chasm between theory and practice inherent in academia, and dissimilar values ascribed to each (ibidem). Their session attempts to bridge this epistemic gap - it starts with discussion of a work of art and only then moves on to relevant reading. Teachers encourage interactive reading by objectifying the text – it is split into sections and students encouraged to find their centers of interest (starting points), just like in a gallery, rather than read the text in its entirety. Linguistic and genre features are discussed and, to facilitate comprehension, students perform a group task designed to simplify the text. Finally, students explain the text's relevance to their studio practice to subject teachers present. By starting and finishing off with links to studio practice, it seems the educators attempt to exploit students interest, reactions and sense of competency (cf. inner capital); this activity liberates from the *power of text* and foregrounds readers' choice and agency in seeing text as a "usable resource" (ibidem, p.37) that can be appropriated for one's own purposes (Good, 2015).

2.2.3. Summary

This section shows that reading academic texts within a critical paradigm of academic literacies has the potential to be an empowering experience. As can be inferred from the first section of this chapter, however, these approaches are still in minority, and little is known about academic reading within the EAP field. In order to address this gap, this dissertation will investigate whether academic reading has been an empowering experience for a student enrolled on an EAP course and what practices contributed to and hindered their transformative reading experiences.

3. Research design: narrative inquiry and its ethics

3.1. Philosophical underpinnings of narrative inquiry: eclectic approach

Narrative inquiry (NI) is an approach primarily interested in how people make sense of their life experiences through telling stories (Moen, 2006; Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007) and it has become increasingly popular in Western social research (Squire et al., 2013). NI allows for a deep understanding of the learning context, tracing learners' development over time (Bell, 2011) and hearing learners voices (Pavlenko, 2002) and as such it is particularly useful to investigating language classrooms.

The above definition is a necessary simplification as Squire et al. (2013) remind that NI is an umbrella term for a variety of approaches with distinct historical roots and theoretical grounds. It is, therefore, important to clarify how NI is understood in my research. Two schools of thought I draw on are critical theory and Deweyan ontological pragmatism; they both see research as a practical activity that must facilitate the betterment of social worlds and as such are considered empowering and transformative (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007; Frega, 2014). Indeed, Squire et al. (2013) see narrative research as a mode of resistance to existing power structures. At the same time, the differences between them do not go unnoticed; for me the most important being the role of human agency. Critics reproach the former that by subscribing to grand-narratives of human pathology they deny individuals' agency (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007; Frega, 2014), whereas the latter, conversely, are criticized for placing *excessive* faith in it and in prioritizing personal experience whilst disregarding wider context (Squire, 2013; Goodson, 2017), a remnant of the humanistic psychology it is rooted in. Thus, wanting to choose neither a pessimistic nor naïve option, similarly to many practicing researchers who foreground affordances of NI over resolving its deeply rooted philosophical and theoretical disputes (Squire et al., 2013), I draw on both. Human agency is central to my argument, as denying it renders any critical educational intervention pointless. At the same time, my data analysis considers socio-historical/cultural contexts (Pavlenko, 2002; Goodson, 2017).

3.2. The participants and setting: EAP students

Participants were my own students and although this close relationship presents ethical concerns, it is generally consistent with narrative inquiry's relational epistemology (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). It is not uncommon for NI researchers to spend much time with and even befriend their participants in the process of trust-building (cf. Menard-Warwick, 2004; Bell, 2011); therefore, here I consider it an advantage.

The participants were 16 Asian students enrolled on an annual NQ level 6 course in a XXXXXXXXXXXX educational company. Course completion is a requirement of a post-graduate study conditional offer. It consisted of 30h weekly instruction including credit bearing 10h EAP, 3h Study and Research Skills and subject instruction as students often move within or across disciplines. I was their EAP teacher and personal tutor for over 7 months during which we developed a friendly and confident relationship. All students agreed to participate in the group interview (first stage) and then five reaffirmed their consent to participate in in-depth interviews (second stage).

3.3. Data collection: group and individual interviews

The nature of my research question determined the method used in this study and its form. Since investigating an invisible phenomenon, an interview seemed to be an appropriate choice as it generally grants a focused and in-depth inquiry (Forsey, 2012). Given an exploratory character of this study, a semi-structured form inquiring into the "what" and "how" of the phenomena (Agee, 2009) seemed most fitting. Additionally, importantly for the NI perspective employed, it reduced my control in favour of interviewees' agency in identifying and further expanding on specific aspects of their choice.

The first stage was a group interview that started with my own reading story and short rationale for the research. This was done to set the tone for a more empowering "collective inquiry" (Haggis, 2006:08) and lessen my position as a teacher and researcher. By bringing the group together I also hoped to unlock the power of collective storytelling as Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) and Stein (1998) observed that, if pooled together, individual narratives can have a transformative effect on the group. I am not sure if this occurred. On the one hand, there was some animated discussion during and even after the interview, and on the

other, participants already knew each other which made it difficult to manage group dynamics and dominating participants.

I ran three group interviews of approximately 40 minutes with 5-6 participants recommended by the methods literature (Morgan, 1997) in which we discussed three broad areas: emotional reactions to academic reading, examples of positive and negative reading experiences and their proposed changes to the reading curriculum (appendix 5). I had initially intended to research resistive reading, but found very little evidence of it in the group interview. I had prepared too many prompts without narrow enough focus and running the group interview back to back left no extra time for probing / follow-up questions, so my questions had to be adapted for the second stage.

I chose five participants for the second stage in-depth interviews based on their self-reported relationship with academic reading and perceived degree of academic adaptation to ensure multiplicity of accounts. Given that I was worried about power asymmetry inherent in interviewing (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015), Rubin and Rubin's (2011) conceptualization of interview as an extension of natural conversation proved inspiring and it would appear I managed to enact it, as reflected in one participant's statement: "I'm sorry our interview wasn't useful. We've just had a normal chat". This two-sided, reciprocal approach to interviewing has been largely influenced by feminist ethics and epistemology (Forsey, 2012) and is consistent with conceptualization of NI as relational methodology (Clandinin et al., 2007). The interview questions and tasks attempted to operationalise reading as empowering/disempowering experience and probe participants' status in their academic communities and were sent in advance (appendix 6 and 8). Interviews lasted between 50-90 minutes and were recorded with the participants' consent (appendix 3 and 4).

3.4. Data analysis and presentation: reading story

I collected considerable amount of data that cannot be presented here because of word count constrictions. As there is no prescriptive approach to data analysis and presentation in NI (Squire et al., 2013), I decided to pick only one story for in-depth analysis. This is because I was determined to ensure internal consistency through keeping the data's storied character and paying tribute to my participant, Bea, through presenting her reading story in its

entirety. To do that I collated group and individual interview data (appendix 1 and 2), searched for emerging themes and applied aspects of classic Labovian narrative structure (1972, 1997) to refine its readability.

Regarding data analysis, I selected the most complex story, searched for emerging themes (language, time, confidence, strategies; see appendix 2 and 9 for complete data set categorisation) and used them to reorganise (re-story) Bea's account. I then ordered each paragraph according to Labovian narrative structure (orientation, complicating event, evaluation, end result; cf. appendix 9) for readability and cohesion purposes. I did not use it on a story level because, consistent with Patterson (2013), Bea's story was non-linear and emotional and so applying orderly event-oriented structure to it would be reductive.

Regarding data presentation, one story is retold in its entirety rather than multiple interviews' themes with illustrative examples as is the usual practice. This is deliberate and motivated by an attempt, consistent with NI tenets, to preserve participants' voices and share power over how the story is published or re-storied (Bell, 2011). In his seminal work Kvale (1996:145) argues that interview is a "self-communicating" story and requires little explanation or description. It is my intention to have let Bea herself communicate her story to the reader as it minimalises my intervention and democratizes its interpretation.

Although this way of presenting data is uncommon, ethical concerns regarding power over participants' stories have been raised by other critically oriented researchers. NI is often chosen for the complex picture it helps to paint and some warn that looking for common themes across stories (thematic or content analysis) can be reductive (Pavlenko, 2002), fragment the story (Atkinson, 1998), and others go as far as to claim it is indicative of post-positivistic search for generalizability (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007). Noting these concerns, I chose to present Bea's story in her own words and kept the original syntax. I corrected grammar slips and occasionally added necessary clarifications, cohesive language and questions; these are marked by <....> to signal my intervention. After completing this process Bea was asked to verify her collated reading story- her additions are underlined.

3.5. Research quality and ethical considerations

Research ethics can be broadly viewed in terms of compliance or reflexivity (Jennings, 2010). Since NI is a relational methodology (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007), procedural ethics are not sufficient and need to be supplemented with situational and relational ones (Downs, 2017).

In the reflexive spirit, therefore, the ethical reflections form an integral part of this chapter and have already been partially explored. Nevertheless, it is worth devoting additional space to a more focused and in-depth discussion of ethical consideration in this section; it is argued here that in NI quality and ethics are inextricably bound.

There have long been debates over what indicates quality in qualitative research and over criteria to assess it. Forsey (2012) discards reliability, validity and generalisability as aspects of positivistic scientism similarly to Koro-Ljunberg's (2010), who argues external validity measures are simplistic, mechanical and debilitating to researcher agency. Finally, Reynolds et al. (2011) insightfully indicate that research validity can be viewed in two separate ways - as an outcome or as a characteristic of the entire research process. All three appear to take a broad view of research quality, and this understanding guides this section - quality as a process, internal consistency and researcher's responsibility and reflexivity manifesting in all aspects of research design. This section draws on Tangen's (2013) framework based on, what he considers to be an inseparable foundation, research quality and ethical considerations. He proposes considering research ethics, and thus quality, on three distinct levels - participants, research community and externally, a wider impact of research on educational practice.

3.5.1. Participants and affected groups

Three aspects need to be considered here: participant status, linguistic challenge involved in the interview and ensuring respect for all parties involved.

My students are considered vulnerable adults, they are young adults with a limited support network and in a dependent relationship with the researcher who is their personal and academic tutor, so it needs to be noted that I have a DBS qualification necessary to work with vulnerable adults in England. The power relationship that might have complicated withholding consent was mediated by conducting research after the course/exams were finished.

Secondly, discussing abstract topics in depth might be challenging for language learners, as observed in Menard-Warwick's (2004) research - participants simplified problematic or complex experiences when it exceeded their linguistic ability and she only obtained a fuller picture after an informal chat in their L1. I mediated this difficulty by sending the questions in advance and drawing on more than one mode of expression. Inspired by Good (2016:56),

the participants were asked to bring a visual representation of their academic reading (appendix 7) which facilitated our communication via the use of metaphors and imagery and hopefully “cut through the power relations around difficult language”. Admittedly, there was some misunderstanding between us but Bea was prompt to correct them saying “I don’t mean that” or clarifying “but why I’m telling you this is..” when necessary.

Finally, researching my own educational company put me in a difficult position. Conducting research “dear to my heart with others like me” (Dowson, 2017:458) caused a strong students’ advocacy position, which could be read as critique and therefore undesirable for my company’s interest. To prevent that, my critical orientation was explicitly discussed in the company’s ethical clearance form and I adopt a constructive approach - proposing solutions foregrounds critique.

3.5.2. Qualitative research community

As discussed above, there is certain methodological vagueness in NI (Squire et al., 2013) and many argue an explicit subscription to a strand of NI is important to ensure status of this methodology (Pavlenko, 2002; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Thus, I familiarised myself with both philosophical foundations and historical and theoretical development of NI (discussed above), which has informed my methodological choices. Overall, by ensuring research’s internal consistency I am making an attempt at what Greckhamer & Koro-Ljungberg (2005) call an epistemological use of methods which, as they posit, contributes to reliability of qualitative inquiry overall. In Tangen’s (2013) view, this adds to both research quality and ethics.

3.5.3. Relevance for educational practice

Implications for educational practice and extending researchers’ responsibility beyond academic community are considered here. Tangen (2013) proposes evaluating research’s value based on its immediate (direct application) or potential (independent critique) impact. The present study matches both criteria as it problematises solutions offered on EAP courses and proposes possible changes to reading curricula. Regarding the potential impact, Tangen (2013) appears to take a proactive view of ethics in arguing that “doing no harm” is only a basic consideration and urges for research to offer benefits instead. Bron and Thunborg (2015) suggest that in storytelling students engage in forming identities, thus, arguably,

participating in the interview might have encouraged some valuable reflection on their positions within British academic communities. Additionally, in the present research participants were given space and voice to discuss their often-negative reading experiences and did not hesitate to offer suggestions, many relevant and easily implemented. Their stories might have a future potential impact too. Narrative is a powerful learning and teaching tool (Nelson, 2011) and I plan to share it with other teachers and future students to shed more light on reading experiences. Consent forms do mention this (appendix 3 and 4).

3.6. Narrative inquiry: lessons learnt

Collating the reading story was part of the analysis I struggled most with. I had thought this form would be powerful, but this came at a price – I tempered with the sentence sequence, which caused me considerable stress as I was worried I was effectively creating meaning rather than reporting it. I did ask Bea to read the re-storied interview, which caused another unexpected outcome – she highlighted some of her statements as irrelevant and after I explained why they were interesting to me she agreed to keep them in the story. On reflection, this seems representative of some lingering power asymmetry between the two of us; first she yielded to my rationale, and second, she must have interpreted it as another task rather than power sharing as she later explained she had been very tired when reading the story but wanted to comply with the deadline I had given her. If I were to do it again I would ask whether she wanted to do it.

Another anxiety is linked to my interviewing style. Brinkmann (2007), exploiting his understanding of interviews as therapeutic events, proposes for them to be epistemic, that is, engaging with values and beliefs rather than being mere qualitative opinion polling. This means sometimes it is necessary to confront interviewees and I did. Although it was meant to reveal what I perceived as unjust (appendix 2 p.65 in bold) and thus, transformative, Bea's reaction was ambiguous. I now think such confrontation is necessary only if it is directly linked to the research question and in any case should be done more sensitively, by probing rather than stating.

I have also learnt that it is too easy to dismiss reflexivity. Blaming word count constrictions, I did not include any of the above comments in the first draft, and it is only thanks to my supervisor's advice that they are here now. This makes me think qualitative research should not be a lonely endeavor, as voicing concerns to others makes them harder to ignore.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Findings: Bea's reading story

READING IN SECOND LANGUAGE IS LIKE DOING MATHEMATICS BUT IT CAN HELP ME BREAK THE WALL IN MY BRAIN.

Academic reading is complicated. I think it's a language problem. At school English was my weakest subject, but there are many other reasons <to study abroad>... It's just language and I don't want it to stop me from learning things.

<In reading>, there is a lot of information and a lot of tasks. When I get the task, I read a lot, many times. When I read, my brain, eyes and body struggle. I read sentence by sentence and I'm not familiar with the content. The content is too much. <For example, for the Corporate Social Responsibility essay> I read the article 4 times because I was afraid to miss important points. <I do it because> I want to know if there's a strong argument against my own, if there is, I'll be worried. More reading and understanding other perspectives gives me safety, so I tried to read as much as possible. I prefer reading to writing because with writing nobody can help you check <whereas> by reading again and again you can check yourself.

In semester two it was getting much better <but in the first semester> sometimes it's not clear what the author means, maybe I read one part and get my understanding from the other part but a native speaker can see the whole picture and why the authors think like that, argument is not the same. If I have different understanding in different sections I'll read again. Sometimes I understand the sentences but in the second reading the meaning is different. And I don't know why, I thought I'd understood... It feels as if you did nothing <so> I will read it again. I don't want to give up because then it's really for nothing. To ensure my understanding is correct I need to go back; in Chinese I find it very quickly but in English I can only remember the page and part, so I need to find it again. And if you check all new vocabulary you forget what the previous part said. Compared to native speakers I spend a lot of time. Sometimes I have mistakes in understanding, but sometimes my understanding of different information depends on how I <want to> use it. After finding another article I realise I can use the information differently.

<This is how I read>. The first time is passive, I just highlight, but if just read passively I can only get one idea from the author. <On the other hand> if I read actively by offering my idea and questions then I can get more. <So> in the second reading I take notes and try to find logic between them, categorise the arguments and I sometimes write my own ideas on the side or translate. I ask questions “why?”, “is that enough to rely on this information?” or draw a star – to check this information <in the original source>.

<How long does it take?> Too long. I spend a lot of time, the day is gone, all my day on reading. Sentence structure is complicated <so> I have to make it simple - find a person <subject>, verb. <I think> reading in second language is like doing mathematics, a technical skill. In the first reading you just try to understand, there is no time to enjoy it. Second time you enjoy it.

Second reading is better, you feel interested. After I know the structure or when it's simple it's much better. When the structure is complicated I don't know what they want to say, just always repeat the content. At first I thought they have to do it to meet the word limit; now I <still> think some things are useless but many are necessary to repeat. <In CSR essay> in the first reading I only got the main idea so I thought the author repeats. <Later, it changed and> I felt I can use all parts differently in my essay, but because of the structure, I didn't know its effect. Now I always scan the whole thing to see the structure, it saves the time. In the exam if I hadn't scanned the structure I would have been nervous.

I sometimes read in Chinese but there's a drawback. When I use <English> key words from these articles I only get Chinese researchers, not the foreigners. And sometimes when I have my own idea and want to find evidence, this evidence is only in Chinese; it seems what Chinese people think is important is the same. <So> I thought I had to change my logic and then many foreign articles showed up. <I think> it's very important to read authors with different experience, <for example> when I read I found the basic idea such as the role of price in online business is different in Britain. If I hadn't read <about it>, I wouldn't have understood why, I wouldn't have shown the whole perspective <in my essay>. <It's true that> British articles are often not applicable <to my context>, but I want my supervisor to understand me so I need to talk about the UK. If I want them to think it's rational and makes sense I need to do it.

I read and think about <the articles> with my own experience so I'll read them according to *me*, but if <the topic> is totally new, maybe it doesn't speak to me. <With topics such as> freedom or else, <there's> different understanding and values. I found some articles online,

not academic reading, in which they will think it's correct and totally right and want to communicate to other westerners and just enjoy their world (soft laugh). At first, after discussing it with my English friends, I adapted my idea, but after I thought about it again <I concluded> I'm not *just* affected by <government> propaganda. However, this feeling has been changing. Recently I read an article talking about the reason why western people have different value about the concept of country, so I start to understand the understanding gap of government between us, thus I think articles about this kind of topic is speaking to me now, I enjoy getting new idea from different values). <In terms of other topics> for humans, we have similar experience and many academic articles are universal. <For example>, CSR communicated with me, but with Culture shock essay the feeling was different. This article made me realise something is wrong, like I have culture shock <so> I tried to discuss it with my classmates, ask if they have similar experience. With CSR essay, I wasn't very familiar with the topic, so I had to rely on the article to find sources. I didn't put me in there, I took ideas from others, rather than create by myself. If you just base on others, for teachers with much experience, my idea will be similar to previous students. With Culture shock, because you might think what the author says is wrong or not perfect and you have a lot of your own ideas against it, it will help you find other sources.

<Do I like reading?> Kind of. Most of the time I just want to learn the language so I have to read articles. I'd like to read like a native speaker one day, like that I will enjoy it. It's easy to read simple books but complicated things with good things inside, I struggle for language and not content. Now I still feel bad, but want to read. Sometimes, wow, there is like a surprise, something unexpected, interesting content that makes me break the wall in my brain. In China it's enough to go with your initial idea and here people value you to break your wall, so it's very positive to me. And I think if teachers value it, students will value it, people will be brave to discuss it in class. Before that I was really fed up with reading when I couldn't find the evidence for my initial idea, but now it's not a problem as I will show all.

Now I also value my own effort, what I did for this research and my own idea, I know what's a very important point. Maybe before I didn't care about my own idea, I just wanted to finish it, or <do> what the teacher prefers. <Now I just say to myself> "don't look for specific information, get as much as possible and then offer your own idea".

4.2. Research question 1. Do students feel empowered by academic reading?

Section 2.2 explained how reading within an academic literacies framework has the potential to be an empowering experience. To ascertain whether this has been the case for EAP students this dissertation draws on Gimenez & Thomas' (2015) important work on operationalizing academic literacies. Their practical framework consists of three dimensions: accessibility, criticality and visibility, contributing to a more *transformative* teaching and learning. Since transformative and empowering have similar meaning, it was useful to adopt this analytical framework to categorise Bea's account to address my research questions. See appendix 10 for full categorization. To interpret the findings, I draw the connection between accessibility, criticality and visibility and 3 main themes/identities emerging from Bea's story - a language learner, junior academic and international student.

4.2.1. Accessibility: a language learner

For Gimenez & Thomas (2015) accessibility means being familiar with academic literacy practices and deploying linguistic and analytical tools to make oneself understood in academic communities. To analyse whether Bea's reading has been an empowering experience in terms of accessibility four factors are taken into consideration: language, subject knowledge, structure and workload. All these seem mediated by her position as a language learner.

For Bea, reading has been an overwhelming and laborious task. She struggles with understanding "*sometimes it's not clear what the author means*" and appears to feel powerless "*I don't know why, I thought I'd understood...*", which she directly attributes to her linguistic skills. What is particularly illuminating here is that reading becomes reduced from an enjoyable activity to a technical skill: word by word, sentence by sentence decoding "*I have to find a subject, verb. It is like doing mathematics*". These difficulties are exacerbated by a lack of subject knowledge "*the content is too much*", "*if the topic is totally new, maybe it doesn't speak to me*" and unfamiliarity with a genre "*because of the structure, I didn't know its effect*". Finally, even though Gimenez and Thomas (2015) do not explicitly consider it in their definition, what emerges from Bea's story is that workload might be another factor moderating accessibility. It is clear the amount of reading she must do is

substantial. Bea has “tons of homework” (appendix 7), exacerbated by the perceived need to reread the sources “*when I get the task, I read a lot, many times*”. What emerges from above analysis is a person overwhelmed by endless mass of tasks and cognitive workload “*and if you check all the new vocabulary you forget what the previous part said*”. Bea constructs academic reading as time consuming “*all my day on reading*” and laborious, resembling physical effort “*my brain, eyes and body struggle*”.

Nevertheless, there are traces of empowering reading experience. Unlike with writing, she feels in control of her understanding “*with writing nobody can help [...] by reading again and again you can check yourself*” and stresses that the more she reads the better she copes “*second reading and semester are better*”. Reading more boosts her confidence “*gives me safety*” and facilitates manipulation of ideas “*after finding another article I realise I can use the information differently*”.

Overall, in terms of accessibility, reading has not been an empowering experience for Bea in the first semester. With reference to sentence level text comprehension, in their famous work on academic language in education Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, p. 111) asserted that “word-for-word decoding of a hidden message, [...] reinforces [less confident student-readers] sense of incapacity”. This regime of text is also evident in Gimenez and Thomas’ (2015) account of a *power relationship* between a reader and text. Text regime seems to have been Bea’s experience in the first semester when her meticulous reading gives the impression it is the text who is in control, to some extent even physically, by keeping her home all day.

An equally disempowering effect on Bea has been unfamiliarity with text genres, consistent with research on postgraduate academic reading that reported students felt anxious (Hazel and Hallam, 2000) and incompetent (Sjølie, 2015:450) with “form getting in the way of the content”. Interestingly, Kamler and Thomson (2006) too talked about genres “deskilling” students by positioning them as novices which might induce uncritical reproduction of the existing genre conventions. This is probably why English (2011) argues genres should be researched and taught not for what they *are* but what they *do*. Even though the latter two researchers talk about genres in writing their insights are relevant to reading too.

This has important implications as yielding power to text seems to hinder the progression from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”, signaled in the literature review chapter to be a major transition in international students’ academic reading literacy. Even though there is

evidence of reading to learn in Bea's story, she still identifies herself as a language learner *"Most of the time I just want to learn the language so I have to read"*, which arguably limits her reading in terms of access. This is not uncommon - Kuzborska's (2015) research on post-graduate international students' engagement with text revealed the most common reason for reading academic texts was to learn the language. This points to a pressing need for further reading instruction in EAP because helping international students achieve this shift in self-concept might be the first step in making reading more empowering in terms of accessibility. Walker's (2015) and Ohata and Fukao's (2012) research on L2 academic readers' self-concept is promising in this respect. Even though approached from a literacy as academic socialization perspective, their work suggests students reading behavior/attitude is influenced by how they understand their role as academic readers, which means EAP practitioners might have an impact on creating a more empowering reading experience by helping students develop as "readers to learn".

4.2.2. Criticality: a novice academic

The second element in Thomas and Gimenez's (2015) framework is criticality. Consistent with a socio-political approach to literacy, the authors propose developing a critical approach towards academic discourses and the wider contexts in which these discourses are produced and consumed, including disciplines and institutions. In brief, it is about students' role in the community and how it affects their production and consumption of texts. To decide whether reading has been empowering in terms of criticality it is useful to analyse Bea's position as emerging from her story - that of a novice academic gradually building her confidence.

Reading has been emotionally challenging for Bea. She demonstrates a lack of confidence *"if there's a strong argument against my own I'll be worried"* and frustration for not being able to find necessary support for her own ideas. This can be explained through Mann's (2000) theorization of reading as a public activity - it serves assessment purposes so that one's worth is effectively decided by it. Comparable results were revealed by Hazel and Hallam (2000) – postgraduate participants felt anxious when their text understanding differed from that of their peers.

Gradually she became more active *“if I read actively by offering my idea and questions then I can get more”* and engaged critically with text *“I ask questions “why?”, “is that enough to rely on this information?”*. Both active reading and developing a critical voice were identified by Abbott (2013) as threshold competences that lecturers wished for their students to develop, so it seems a positive change for Bea. Criticality is a concept that requires further elaboration here, as it has three different understandings (Davies and Barnett, 2015; Wilson, 2016). Questions Bea is asking suggest criticality as a skill, a Cartesian view rooted in western tradition of interrogating the logic and strength of the argument, typical in a positivistic objectivistic paradigm as opposed to interrogating the *context* in which the argument is made, which is indicative a critical/ideological paradigm (ibidem). Her criticality seems to develop in the “culture shock” assignment; Bea transitions from merely asking questions and doubting the text to rejecting it and expressing a need for further reading *“With Culture Shock essay, because you might think what the author says is wrong or not perfect and you have a lot of your own ideas against it, it will help you find other sources”*, which is indicative of her developing a “critical disposition” (ibidem). It appears the role of personal experience is important here; reading about something she had firsthand experience of seems to make her more entitled to have a strong opinion or disagreement. It could be also argued that drawing on her inner capital (Rosenblatt, 1994) allows Bea to free herself from the power of text.

Further engagement with the text is perhaps most illuminatingly demonstrated when Bea declares that *“interesting content breaks the wall in my brain”*. This suggests transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997). Since transformative learning is defined as changing one’s worldviews, and “critical disposition” as openness for new ideas, arguably, both suggest an epistemic shift in understanding what constitutes knowledge, taking place as a result of reading, thus, reading can be categorized as empowering here.

Yet, there is some room for improvement because there is little evidence of criticality as understood by the critical/ideological paradigm, which would situate Bea’s reading in a broader context and make her more inclined to notice and resist inequalities she faced. Specifically, she did not engage in discussing her status as an international student and being positioned by academic texts; this is elaborated on below.

4.2.3. Visibility: an international student

Visibility in an academic literacies practical framework occurs when students are “active participants in the processes of knowledge telling, transformation and creation” (Gimenez and Thomas, 2015, p.29). Becoming less peripheral and thus visible is possible at different levels – to themselves, fellow students, teachers and institutions. Even though the authors explicitly refer here to hearing and respecting the *writer’s* voice, *visibility* can be also applied to reading, as this is when opinion-forming starts and students begin to articulate (voice) them through annotating texts, which is why visibility is a powerful aspect in contributing to students’ empowering reading experience. This section aims to evaluate whether Bea’s reading practices make her visible to the academic community.

Data analysis suggests that Bea’s visibility seems to be mediated by her position as an international student. For Bea, Western researchers are “foreigners”, which suggests perceiving the division between familiar (“us”) and distant/different (“them”), which is how Said (1978), a key post-colonial theorist, conceptualized “Otherness”. Based on her story, Bea is a linguistic, cultural/common knowledge, and academic Other.

Linguistically, Bea appears to often compare herself to imagined native speakers, and what emerges from her account is a feeling of loss and incompetence. She wastes time reading *“Compared to a native speakers I spend a lot of time”*; *“the day is gone”*, cannot appreciate articles’ full complexity “a native speaker can see the whole picture and why the authors think like that, argument is not the same”, laments not being able to enjoy valuable literature *“It’s easy to read simple books but complicated things with good things inside, I struggle for language and not content”* and is deprived of the sense of pleasure reading offers *“I’d like to read like a native speaker one day, like that I will enjoy it”*. Bea also declares that reading in her native language makes it more difficult to do research as she is often unable to find “Chinese ideas” in Western academic literature, which is traumatic in a sense that it represents a loss of lifelong ways of knowing. This uncertainty about what constitutes common knowledge will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Another “otherness” present in her account is a lack of shared common knowledge in terms of what constitutes common knowledge. Bea’s supervisor did not understand her argument and so she was not allowed to follow her area of interest, which effectively rendered her invisible as *“British articles are often not applicable to my context”*. It was through reading that Bea discovered their understanding of a simple concept differed *“when I read I found*

the basic idea such as the role of price in online business is different in Britain. If I hadn't read about it, I wouldn't have understood why". This is not uncommon with "cultural others". For instance, Hirano (2014) reports how refugees in an American college struggled to write in depth about Martin Luther King because they had no background knowledge of the civil rights movement. A research process in which one cannot draw on their inner capital/world knowledge ("reading in Chinese is a drawback") must be frustrating. However, an alternative interpretation would be that of Bea strategically changing her reading focus to ensure higher marks. It is noteworthy that Bea does not seem to perceive this situation as unjust, and when I confronted her asking whether supervisors should "break their walls" her reaction was evasive (appendix 2 p.65 in bold). This links to the next section - what constitutes legitimate knowledge and ways of knowing.

This lack of common ground exacerbates the last "otherness" experienced by Bea – that of an academic other. Talking about the just-mentioned supervision process Bea reflects how she decided to change her area of interest and a general way of approaching the task to adapt to her supervisor's requirements "If I want them to think it's *rational* and *makes sense* I need to change my logic". This extract shows that if she did it her way it would have been *irrational* and made *no sense*, the very qualities that constitute Otherness in Said's (1978) influential theorization of the concept, and suggests deficient ways of knowing. Indeed, Wilson (2016:264) believes that many EAP practitioners unconsciously perceive their students as "shackled by deficit", and Canagarajah (2002) believes local knowledge enjoys lower status than Western ways of knowing. Bea's observation that "they will think it's correct and totally right and want to communicate to other westerners and just enjoy their world" reveals the predominantly anglocentric world of research with dominant Western values and hegemonic practices. While assumptions behind doing research in the Western world might be "othering", Bea's comment seems rather good-humoured and evidence of "healthy" resistance. Yet, the power relationship is present there and has been observed by other EAP researchers (Khany and Tarlani-Aliabadi, 2016).

Otherness is disempowering but Bea demonstrated resistance not just in her ironic comment but also when she states "it's just language, it won't stop me from learning things". Given the central role of language in identity formation and as a carrier of culture (Joseph, 2016), calling it "just language" seems to suggest an appropriation of English for her own purposes. Interestingly, in his research on Indian students learning English Canagarajah (1993) showed a similar phenomenon – students appropriated English for the social mobility

it afforded, but dissociating between language and culture allowed them to resist and actively claim their identity in the wake of post-colonial dominance.

What emerges from this analysis is a complex picture that additionally shows the limitations of applying Gimenez and Thomas's (2015) framework to international students' experience, which will be discussed in more detail in theoretical implications. Regarding accessibility, Bea struggles but this is naturalized as a linguistic problem with the onus on the student. There is evidence of Cartesian criticality and critical disposition but linguistic and academic otherness are talked about in neutral terms. Regarding visibility, despite evidence of some discrimination Bea does not perceive this as being so and feels relatively confident about her membership in the academic community (appendix 8). Overall, reading has the potential to be empowering but most practices seem disempowering.

4.3. Research question 2. What practices contribute to empowering and disempowering reading experiences?

4.3.1. Disempowering practices

Based on the above discussion, several practices seem to be disempowering: text as object, reading as alienating, being positioned by teachers, non-native speaker discourse and text, misalignment of academic cultures and a lack of agency.

Perhaps the most noticeable is a traditionalistic approach to texts as object (cf. table 2) where Bea appears to be under texts' power and feels compelled to decipher them in close and repeated readings. Doing so does give her a sense of safety, but what cannot be ignored here is the underlying anxiety that obliges her to reread in the first place. This is exacerbated by reading purpose – Bea does it knowing her ability to understand and use texts, either in writing or seminars, would be evaluated. Evaluation takes place in regular classes too: "every time someone says their idea, this teacher knows everything. They translate classmates' ideas in other words and say "that's correct" and offers a very good summary" (appendix 2 p.65 in bold). What seems to be an automatic and innocuous teaching recast positions Bea's classmates in a traditional unilateral teacher-student relationship. In the above example, reading was not undertaken as a precursor to discussion of equals but

teachers' knowing and evaluating positions students as learners instead. There are two more types of positioning evident in Bea's account – as a language learner and by text. The “less than” discourse surrounding non-native speakers (Faez, 2011) seems to have been internalised for Bea and uses it to explain why reading is more difficult for her. She is also positioned by academic texts, that, written mostly by and for Westerners, do not include Bea nor represent her worldviews or values. Another aspect, cultural and academic misalignment *“It's obvious – why would I do research on this?”* (appendix 2 p.65 in bold), contributes to her having only few opportunities to be agentive and creative when using reading. This becomes apparent when combining two interview extracts: *“British academic culture is individual, very focused on the identity of the article, if you take something from others, it's others and not yours”* and *“if you just based on others, for teacher with much experience, my idea will be similar to previous students”* (appendix 2 p.67 in bold). Evident here is Bea's desire to be creative, competent and contribute, which, in her perception, academic culture denies her.

4.3.2. Empowering practices

Practices that seem to encourage a more empowering reading experience are familiarity with academic practices, interactive reading, drawing on inner capital, seeing text as a usable resource, assigning epistemic value to reading and using it to increase one's visibility.

What seems to boost Bea's confidence is knowing what to expect in terms of accessing and using the source - familiar structure and appreciation for the idea that writing does not have to be done from one perspective makes her reading process less stressful. Additionally, annotating and commenting on sources is soothing in that it monitors understanding, allows expression of opinions and relates reading to its potential future uses. Interestingly, she often does that in her first language as it is quicker, which can be seen as drawing on her inner capital. The role of inner capital is also clear in Bea's account of the Culture Shock assignment, in which she felt more entitled to disagree with texts and more confident about searching for and selecting her reading. Another aspect, viewing text as a usable resource rather than as a holder of secret meaning, seems to be linked to Bea's stage of writing – she reads more selectively, and thus confidently, when her assignment is in an advanced stage. Most importantly of all practices, however, is that through reading a variety of sources with multiple perspectives reading became an epistemic activity *“a lot of people have different views, it breaks my wall”*. Constructivist conceptualization of knowledge becomes also

evident in another quotation, when talking about text misunderstandings, Bea says “*when I find another article I realise I can use it differently*”. Thus, by not searching for correct information anymore she has become more aware of the contested nature of knowledge in the HE context and reading seems to have enabled that. This does not stop on a theoretical level, though, as Bea uses texts for personal purposes; she theorises her international sojourn experience which renders it more visible and allows taking some action (it made me realise something is wrong. I tried to discuss it with my classmates, ask if they have similar experience).

It can be seen, therefore, that while the first two empowering practices are consistent with genre and study skills models, further analysis suggests that there exists more empowering potential and yet, rather than being facilitated by a consistent approach, it appears to have happened on its own, almost as a by-product of Bea’s learning. It is my argument that harnessing this potential or making it less dependent on contingent factors is possible via designing a consistent reading curriculum. This process is undeniably complex and, as demonstrated above, involves a variety of elements: students’ attitudes, programme design and even individual tutors’ practices. The next section explores some of the practical and theoretical implications for academic reading practices in EAP.

5. Implications

Gee (1996) argues that dominant discourses can be gradually transformed by outsiders who challenge and alter them. Thus, based on insights outlined in response to the second research question, this section discusses practical and theoretical implications emerging from Bea’s story. General implications consist of making academic reading practices more visible and approaching it from a more critical perspective - acknowledging reading as an ideological activity and, consequently, texts as containing implicit values and worldviews and preferred ways of knowing related to doing research in social sciences. Below are some suggestions on how to foster accessibility, criticality and visibility (Gimenez and Thomas, 2015) – all three being needed for a more empowering experience. They are not to be read as discrete techniques, rather, there is a need for a more critical overarching approach in which texts’, teachers’ and students’ positions shaped by institutional practices are critically interrogated and subject to change, if necessary. Proposed practical implications concern EAP curriculum, classroom instruction and its wider context.

5.1. Practical implications

5.1.1. Curriculum level

At curriculum level, the first implication is that, to be empowering, reading should draw on students' inner capital including other ways of knowing and literacy practices - this grants them opportunities to demonstrate competence and achievement. It might be worthwhile to critically interrogate selected course readings and assignment topics to ascertain whether they are culturally inclusive and allow drawing on students' previous life experiences and ways of knowing, which might alleviate a lack of agency experienced by Bea in not being able to creatively contribute to academic debate. Including students in decisions about materials for classroom use could be a first step for a more empowering experience, as could be inquiring more about their experience of and reactions to texts; both facilitate criticality and visibility. Interestingly, Sjølie (2015) research revealed that the relevance and meaningfulness motivating post-graduate students to read was not necessarily linked to their future professional careers as the tutors have expected, but rather resonated with their very individual interests and life experiences, which suggests there should be more space to explore them in the EAP classroom.

Next, attitudes towards L1 in reading related activities need reshaping. Although use of L1 in language classrooms has long been established as beneficial (Hall and Cook, 2012) and by some even considered to be an empowering resistance practice (cf. Lin, 1996, 1999), to many practitioners' it remains undesirable. It might be also worth allowing to use L1 sources in the research process and class preparation, although it must be done sensibly so as not to impede accessibility and visibility. This suggestion is rather general as research on L1 use in the EAP setting is scarce and further, there is no one-size-fits-all manual for L1 use with L2 learners (Hall and Cook, 2012); instead, teachers must make informed and strategic decisions appropriate to their context. Involving students in decisions about it might be a good place to start.

Redefining what constitutes legitimate sources is another way to respect other ways of knowing on curriculum level. There has been some discussion on using unconventional web sources (interest group, news, commercial, personal and collaborative sites) in writing (Radia and Stapleton, 2009) and since 2009 there has been an increase in online academic presence, i.e. academic blogs (i.e. <https://theconversation.com/uk>) and social networks (i.e. <https://www.academia.edu>) proliferate. Texts published there are usually shorter and

easier; in that they address students' preferences (Bischoping, 2003), so rather than dismissing them as non-academic it is worth exploiting them while simultaneously developing criticality in source selection. Significantly, using websites is considered more democratic and accessible (Lankshear et al., 2007; Leah, 2016) and, appears to afford more communicative opportunities than traditional journal publications. Specifically, students can read others' reactions and could post a comment, so drawing on these caters to all three dimensions – accessibility, criticality and visibility.

It would be also beneficial to adopt a more reflective approach that would create space for students to ponder the changes in their perception of academic reading, because naming the lived experience can help students process their epistemic transition. Gamache (2002) argued that students too are responsible for developing how they think about knowledge and knowing, and EAP instruction could facilitate this process. This could be done via written or oral accounts, in or outside the classroom. On our programme, students reflect on their reading early on (October) and can choose to do it again in their final assessment. An interesting comment from a student (Appendix 11) shows they initially underappreciated the importance of reading by worrying about technicalities such as speed and vocabulary, only to later change their perspective ("Now it seems that this observation is quite superficial. My problem on reading is not about the speed, my knowledge level of the content and the ability of critical thinking need to be improved"). Professional experience teaches that this is broadly representative of other students, which suggests developing ways of reading is a lengthy and complex process, and it is my argument that some reflective space needs to be given in EAP sessions to aid making sense of this experience.

Another suggestion concerns assessment. Reading is often assessed via written assignments or comprehension tests, which, as discussed, has two implications, first, it is neutralised as merely pre-writing and, second, the public aspect of assessment (Mann, 2000) can be a source of anxiety and alienation. In order to encourage a more empowering experience alternative assessment could be taken into consideration. Assessment can be formative or longitudinal through reading portfolios (Valencia, 1990), blogs (James, 2007; Penketh and Shakur, 2015) or reaction diaries (Evans, 2007). Another researcher who thinks assessment contains inherently unequal power relationship is Pearson (2017) who, after her research on EAP writing assessment, puts forward that it should be substituted with formative evaluation. This is consistent with current trends in assessment (Brown, 2014) and low-stakes formative evaluation has been greatly appreciated by non-traditional students at British universities who were largely unfamiliar with, and anxious about, its format (Sambell

and Hubbard, 2004). Obvious financial and time limitations of such an approach cannot be ignored, but a different attitude to assessing reading might be conducive to conceptualizing it as less peripheral to academic practices and to shaping sustainable reading practices that students would be able to draw on in their future study. This could also help encourage an understanding text as more than a literary object.

5.1.2. Classroom instruction

Modelling and promoting the view of text as a usable resource rather than as a linguistic object could make reading a more empowering experience. To facilitate criticality and visibility, Gimenez and Thomas (2015) propose “objectifying text” when approaching the article. This involves presenting it in ways that are not overwhelming, using the full physical space of the classroom to literally disassemble the text, allowing movement to approach and abandon extracts, and promoting agency through the students’ picking of their own centers of interest. Physical dimension of reading is also visible in another study. Fox and O’Maley (2017:8) encourage students to use whiteboards around them to draw “reading constellations” – representations of their understanding of texts and connections within, challenges with and questions about it. The authors suggest this visual form helps students to see the potentials and limitations of text more clearly and discourages the idea that there exists only one “correct” knowledge as this knowledge is literally being constructed in front of them on the whiteboards. Interestingly, both techniques free students from desks and, consequently, the shackles of text, so the physical dimension to this activity appears to play a role too. Bea’s story suggests such activities should be planned especially carefully in the beginning stages of the research process as many EAP students move across disciplines between undergraduate and postgraduate studies and the topic/discipline might be entirely new to them.

In the above suggestion reading is done via group activity, which can be another way of making it more empowering. This is because students actively construct knowledge in more equal power relationships when they draw on each rather than from an expert teacher and, further, it seems a more sustainable approach for their future learning. Previous studies on the benefits of group reading are disputed. Finlay and Faulkner (2005) report heightened criticality and reduced workload, but Hazel and Francis (2000) revealed that students’ different interpretations caused anxiety and alignment rather than furthered understanding. Interestingly, most students in their study nevertheless expressed their wish to work in

groups more because they felt reassured and/or enlightened. Perhaps students participating in this research had no previous experience of collective reading and so a group dynamics process was allowed to dominate; therefore, it could be argued that if done more often, and if scaffolded by clear instructions, the technique could gradually make reading more empowering through making students more visible to each other.

5.1.3. Wider context

The need for such a systematic approach must be reiterated here as it cannot be modular or implemented by a few keen teachers, and a more systematic approach to academic reading beyond the EAP classroom is necessary. As observed in Gimenez and Thomas' (2015) lesson, subject teachers were involved in EAP classes, which must have facilitated a more holistic view of reading as opposed to reading for EAP only. This is difficult in practice because there exist some tensions between EAP and universities as its status has recently been reduced from "academic" to "services". However, an excellent illustration here is van Pletzen's (2006) intervention aiming to demonstrate to subject teachers how reading, though usually taken for granted, is actually a frustrating and intellectually challenging activity. This could be taken further and subject teachers encouraged to notice how their disciplinary texts are ideological and inculcate certain ways of knowing, as heightened awareness of academic mysteries could be the first step to critique and engagement. By presenting knowledge not as facts but as contested space, teachers model elements of criticality and visibility that may contribute to more empowering reading.

The last suggestion is more tentative but stems from difficulties encountered in selecting materials and structuring this argument, as often there was very little difference between international and local students in terms of needs, positioning experienced and study experiences. Indeed, it is the view of some EAP professionals that EAP instruction and scholarship would be beneficial to local students too, and others add that singling out differences is, in fact, counter-productive to international students' experience (Hathaway, 2015; Poulson, 2017). Indeed, disempowering comparisons with an "imagined native speaker" were central to Bea's making sense of academic reading and are generally common among international students; thus, the argument can be made that bringing both home and international students together in literacy instruction might facilitate a more realistic and positive self-concept in international students.

5.2. Theoretical implications

Using Gimenez and Thomas's (2015) framework for analysis rendered additional insights into further development of their model for transformative learning. The first has to do with operationalization, that is the model's descriptors of the three dimensions. Since Academic Literacies deals predominantly with local students and is primarily interested in writing, difficulties arose when analysing the reading experience of an international student. Thus, developing descriptors to make them more representative of other skills such as reading, listening and speaking, but also interrogating factors affecting international students' accessibility, criticality and visibility such as "non-native speakerism", race and academic otherness, is required. Additionally, although Bea's account was not particularly emotional, it proved difficult to categorise in instances where it was. Including an emotional dimension of learning was central to van Pletzen's (2006) argument and thus it should be more clearly integrated within the model, as it is also consistent with critical paradigm tenets.

The second aspect is the model's visual representation. For the authors, the model is like a pyramid – accessibility is needed in order to build criticality and visibility. My data tentatively suggests this might not be the case. Bea's example is especially revealing here because despite obvious linguistic problems she manages to develop/negotiate her positions in the community and even claim voice for herself. This would suggest linguistic proficiency is not the main barrier to empowering educational experience, which is consistent with other researchers suggesting students draw on different resources when needed, such as a nurturing environment, friendly tutors and prioritizing tasks (Hirano, 2014), extensive subject knowledge (Lee and Chern, 2011) and life experience (Marshall and Case, 2010). Thus, revisiting the model's visual representation and designing more exhaustive theoretical descriptors might help increase its applicability.

The last two implications stemmed from difficulties encountered in the research process. Firstly, there was surprisingly little published material about reading in a critical paradigm perspective, which suggests that EAP and ALs researchers are partly responsible for the lack of visibility of reading practices. This is both on theoretical and practical levels, as accounts of reading pedagogies are scarce too. There is an evident need, therefore, for further critically oriented research into academic reading and for practitioners to articulate and make their pedagogies available for wider audiences, as sources for inspiration and debate.

Finally, it can be also argued that diffusion of terms and definitions is a barrier in communicating for like-minded individuals and, consequently, advances in the field. Debates

exists around terms like “empower” and “liberating” which are then substituted for other terms like “transgress” and “transformative” (cf.introduction); likewise, academic literacies, critical pedagogies and critical EAP have theoretical differences. However, in the present dissertation it was found that all of the above terms have similar propositions and so, after McGrath and Kaufhold (2016), a more eclectic approach in critical research could prove more productive.

6. Conclusion

Academic reading has unduly played only a peripheral role in EAP and academic literacy research agenda. This is primarily because reading is considered an individual and neutral pre-writing activity, a view that largely ignores a post-structural conceptualisation of text as a carrier of ideology, values and desirable disciplinary practices. This hidden dimension of academic reading is detrimental to students as it positions them as less versed outsiders to academic communities. International students are even more disadvantaged here because their understanding of what it means to read in English is dissimilar with preferred ways of reading in academia. There is a need, therefore, to make reading more central in both EAP and academic literacy instruction and research agenda. This must not be understood as a call to ignore writing or abandon genre or skills approaches in EAP, as they are all necessary for students’ holistic development. Instead, I argue that that teaching reading as epistemic, social and value laden can be a more pro-active and positive pedagogy, exploiting students’ strengths and interests rather than focusing on addressing the weaknesses. Academic reading taught from a critical perspective can reveal disciplinary values, expose the ideologies and values embedded in texts, and analyse how texts position the reader. Making these aspects of academic text visible is necessary for students to be able to appropriate the text for their own purposes or resist it if they so choose. Overall, using reading for a more positive pedagogy and as a tool for academic identity formation appear to more fully exploit the transformative potential of EAP (Morgan 2009; Wilson, 2016).

6.1. Limitations

Limitations of the present study relate to its research design and exploratory nature. The former is largely discussed in the methods chapter; however, it must be reiterated here that its main limitation is that the analysis is based on only one participant. Analysis is carried out with a degree of confidence as similar patterns were found in four data sets collected and are consistent with my professional experience, yet these could not be presented here due to limited space. Selecting one account was a conscious decision attempting to preserve its integrity and particularity. Another weakness is its cross-sectional design, as a fuller, less memory dependent, story might have been given if the data had been collected at various points.

The present study is largely exploratory and many difficulties were encountered when searching for literature and presenting the argument. Lack of systematic reading scholarship has enforced inferences and generalizations, which, given the multiplicity of EAP practices, might seem unfair to some researchers and practitioners. This is particularly true in section 2.2.2 where proposed reading approaches are largely inferred from secondary sources. Possibly consulting seminal authors in New Literacy Studies literacies, CDA, SFL and critical EAP / pedagogy would have rendered a more nuanced analysis.

This links to another limitation; Squire et al. (2013) point out that over-interpretation is one of the most common criticisms of NI. In this dissertation, occasional cause and effect or contrast linkers were added in the re-storying process. Although they are marked <> for the reader to pass their own judgment, I sometimes wondered whether I merely report the links or actually over interpret and make them.

6.2. Further research

As a direct response to the last limitation, Andrews (2013) recommends revisiting data and that is exactly the topic of Drake's (2010) reflexive article where she shows how the pass of time has changed her focus and even interpretation of the same data. Thus, going back to participants' reading stories on some future occasion seems to be an interesting avenue for the further research.

Additionally, what becomes apparent from this work is that there must be more theoretical and practitioners' research on academic reading in both ALs and EAP. Specifically, consistent with a critical perspective, possible areas of interest are insights into identity and, secondly, the changing conceptualization of knowledge.

There exists considerable scholarship into writers' identity in both EAP and ALs (Ivanič, 1998; Hyland, 2002) and readers identity in children and adolescents (McCarthy and Moje, 2002); however, academic reader identity remains largely unexplored and it is arguably a fascinating new avenue to discover more about students' learning, engagement and, inextricably, also writing. This is additionally inseparably bound with postgraduate identity, which, as opposed to undergraduate transition, doctoral and early academic career professional identities, has attracted far less attention. Another area of interest is the notion of reading as facilitating epistemic shift - how it develops and whether it can be assisted via literacy instruction.

Finally, as mentioned in the limitations section, a different research design could be used to address the research question in a less speculative manner. Specifically, an emancipatory/critical action research (Crooks 1993; Kemmis, 2009) following the introduction of changes to a reading curriculum could allow a more detailed analysis of empowering practices, and if longitudinal data was collected at various points, there would be more insight into the development of this process and learners identities (Bron, 2017).

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APPENDIX 1. Transcript of the group interview with Bea

Group interview nr 2.

4:28	Instructions and task: Most negative
Sarah	Now I realise how I struggled with reading Exactly remember when “faced” culture shock – shocked. ... inaudible Too sudden. Just arrived 1 st /2 nd class – so long, so many pages . not fluent . difficult reading – shocked
Nigel	International relations – 2-3 chapters. Such a tough work, sometimes just give up, feel tired. Gradually improved. Jump to easier one
Denise	Check words but too much. “just a word” how the author defines them and not what they mean in my lang. why not? Waste of time – one more step in brain. Study is not translation.
Vicky	Always check words.
Bea	If you check you forget what the previous part says
Vicky	Read, check, read again
Researcher: 9:00	<i>Me Sharing and challenging: Only about language?</i>
Nigel	Knowledge. Changed the strategy -
Louise	Accumulation of knowledge. Cant engage. Culture shock – interested .approached differently even though academic, logical way, I engaged. Feeling when im interested – stimulate my energy / attention
Bea	Different feeling in reading in 2 language. It's like doing mathematics, technical skill. Understand sentences but in 2nd reading meaning different. I don't know why. I thought I understand
Nigel	The problem – it will shock you when it doesn't meet your assumption
Group	Yes, yes, agree
<i>R</i>	<i>Me sharing Focus on different aspect</i>
<i>R: 13:13</i>	<i>how does it make you feel? Group answers: Feeling shocked, terrible</i>
Sarah	Headache
Denise	Read again
Louise	Language – focus
Denise	Problem – similar problem in mother language Always misunderstand authors idea.. but you always think youre right
Bea	Different – in the exam it's “what the author wants to say?” but this ...
Nigel	Feelings
Denise	Authors argument – it's the same
<i>R: 15:00</i>	<i>I asked a confusing question</i>
<i>15:58</i>	<i>Theories of reading. Reader makes the meaning – now they understand</i>
Nigel	... (inaudible)
Sarah	Culture shock – didn't catch. Fed up. Have to understand. Sick of this material. Found another. I just believed cause it was easy
Bea	Read one part and get understand from the second part.. but native speaker – see the whole picture. Why they think like that. Argument is not the same as I guess – I think it's a language problem
<i>R: 17:50</i>	<i>Q: Strong / negative reactions to text?</i>

Bea	Frustrated when searched for evidence I want. Now I show all so not a problem
Louise	Never – threatened by authorities. Believe in them – I don't have the confidence that I can evaluate. I gave up myself a little bit. Totally focused on what they want to tell me and gain knowledge
Sarah	Trust what the authors say
Vicky	Trust. If you to question – you need more knowledge. Trust it first
<i>R: 19:25</i>	<i>Me: another author / knowledge to disagree. How about your life / experience?</i>
Nigel	Yeah
Vicky	It really related, yeah
Bea	But: If you write extended essay – find another agreeing to support
<i>R: 20:20</i>	<i>If disagree / feels fascinating</i>
Louise	Sometime si ...
Bea	Against back – give another argument
<i>R: 20:45</i>	<i>What do you do?</i>
Sarah	Just angry
Nigel	Confused. Calm down and think I need more knowledge to equip me
Louise	Editorial, blog – explain yourself.
Nigel	Emotional comment
Louise	Not in journal articles – I won't do this. If against – I need more evidence
Nigel	I never do that
<i>R: 22:24</i>	<i>Me: I post comments or scribble down</i>
Denise	I ...
Nigel	Strongly disagree
Denise	You need critical thinking right? Take notes – I disagree. Check the ref. list / find other articles. Find disagree point
<i>23:30</i>	<i>Question 3</i>
Sarah	No. come here to improve English. I have to deal with it by myself. Nothing to help.
Denise	Ok, because I do it now. Find articles in Chinese.
Vicky	Topic is too difficult – search for Chinese articles. Get the basic background
Sarah	??? (inaudible)
Bea	Also use it – drawback – Chinese thinking similar, not foreigner research – change my logic, English thinking
	Key words or thinking???
Vicky	Different thinking – read articles in both languages, different thinking
Bea	Thinking – evidence only in Chinese papers
Louise	
<i>27:40</i>	<i>Q: Would you Prefer to read in your first language</i>
Nigel	Escaping from difficulty. Have to struggle – topic and language. Our duty as a student. feel confused but enjoy
Louise	Translation – important problem for reading. Force to read in English. Compare this before – translation not very original, slightly different. Interrupt your thinking

APPENDIX 2. Transcript of the individual interview with Bea

<p>PICTURE: feelings Researcher: Can we start with this (picture). This looks very, umm, complex. Bea: complex? R: yeah.. tell me about it? so what is it? B: my feeling is.. because doing a lot of reading now, we have to face the computer... expose to it.. and you have a lot of second language on the screen so I feel like brain, eyes and body is very struggle. R: ok, I understand brain is because of the language, eyes because of the computer, and body... B: at the beginning I'm not familiar with the academic article, so I have to .. I really afraid to lose something so I have to read it one by one R: you mean word by word, sentence by sentence, very closely? B: sentence by sentence (at the same time), yeah yeah R: I see. How come your body hurts? B: you have to sit here for a full day (laughs) R: (laughs), ok, continue, please B: and after find sth I think is very interesting or good for my research for my research I will feel Wow! Like surprise R: why surprise? B: because it's struggle and after you find something you don't need to read it for that kind of info so you feel, yeah, surprise R: you mean you did not expect to find it or that .. B: yeah, it's interesting and another thing I didn't realise I will in that way is like in this picture. Some interesting content will break the wall in my brain R: right.. let me check if I understand. You're looking for A, but you found B B: Yes! R: can you give me an example? B: maybe later... R: and this is... B: Too much content. There are different viewpoints and I don't know how to link them in my article. Especially in semester 1, I feel really struggled for that. The feeling is too messy. R: is that about reading or more about writing? B: reading. Because when you read a lot of message, even they are in one article, because of the second language I didn't make it clear what the authors mean. That's also the reason why I found when reading the article the idea of author, like on the first page and second page are different, it's not the author's problem. It's my problem. R: so when you find the ideas are different, what do you do? B: (gravely) read again R: and then can you find which one is correct</p>	<p>Physical effort</p> <p>Afraid to miss info</p> <p>Word by word</p> <p>Break the wall</p> <p>Confused about the content</p> <p>It's MY problem, not the authors!</p> <p>Multiple readings</p>
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<p>B: yeah, after like the second time I feel much better. So it's also a language problem.</p> <p>R: I can imagine.. this is why I wanted to talk to you about it, you mentioned this in the group interview. So how does it feel to find information that is completely different to what you'd read?</p> <p>B: the feeling is like I did nothing, like I didn't read this article because it didn't help me to understand new information.</p> <p>R: uhm, as you you wasted your time maybe or energy</p> <p>B: yeah, yeah, like that. So I have to read it again, because don't want to give up because if you give it up then it's really give you nothing. I don't want to waste my time.</p> <p>R: well, when your read again you waste your time, but at least then you can get the info</p> <p>B: yeah, get something.</p> <p>R: ok. Anything to add?</p> <p>B: I think this is the main problem.</p> <p>R: is that the solution? (point to the picture)</p> <p>B: After I familiar with academic article, know the structure – better than in semester one.</p> <p>R: and now?</p> <p>B: much better for simple structure, for complicated structure it's the same.</p> <p>R: do you like reading?</p> <p>B: in English? Kind of. Most of time I just want to learn language so I read English articles. Because I have to read.</p> <p>R: have to learn for uni or.. ?</p> <p>B: emmm. Actually, if I... because.. actually, I want, one day I can read it like a native speaker. If I do it in that way I think I will enjoy it. I can read more books on the (inaudible). Like Western author. Because you know a lot of academic book or very good book if I read them in Chinese sometimes meaning is .. not very well I think. So I want to read the original one but ughh (sighs), in current, like, still feel bad for that.</p> <p>R: so your approach is with negative feelings or not really?</p> <p>B: with negative feelings but I want to read. Because many books... if they're simple book for children, I think there's nothing for adult to learn about the world and the language is simple I think it's good, but for completed books with good things inside, when you read it for the first time you think you cannot understand it. you struggle for language and not content or learn from it. First time is boring, second time you know what the author wants to say maybe that time you feel interested.</p> <p>R: I'd like to know what makes you read it again... some people would just give up</p> <p>B: for Second language students like me, the reasons why I chose it is because I know its good, from others, maybe a lot of people discuss it, it's famous, so I want to choose it. but many famous book are complicated. You know..</p> <p>R: maybe it's a good moment to ask question 4 now, because you're talking about this negative feeling. Can you remember it?</p>	<p>Language problem</p> <p>As if I did nothing</p> <p>You don't want to give up</p> <p>Familiar structure – better</p> <p>Read to learn language</p> <p>Read like a native speaker – enjoy</p> <p>“good” books your struggle for lang not content</p> <p>Missing out on valuable lit / books</p>
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<p>B: can I read it again? R: yeah yeah</p>	
<p>NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE B: Academic? CS – first time. Complicated, structure – don't know what they want to say. R:What made it difficult? B: Structure – in the first sem. didn't realize it was about structure. CSR – always repeat the content. Because of the structure we didn't know its effect. Word limit – have to repeat content and add a bit more in each part. Now I think some things are useless but much makes sense, not repeat, some is necessary to repeat. i.e.reason why they have to do CSR. Actually reason why is different. First time I can only get the main point – so I thought it repeats. Later – feeling I can use all parts differently in my essay.</p> <p>R: How progress? B: Read as much as possible, as it was a task. Reading and dividing into categories. Maybe 4 times to read the article. Reading 1-2 are different, 3&4 are similar. Understood but wanted to clarify it, be specific.</p> <p>How long does it take? Too long. For English – I can only remember page and part. In Chinese I find very quickly. So I need to ensure – takes long. So much time. Compared to native speaker – spend a lot of time.</p> <p>R: Is there such a big difference? Not a bad thing – active reading. B: sometimes I read it again with reasons, my own idea. Not sure if my understanding is right. R: that's a negative understanding of it. Maybe active B: both exist. B: try my best to be active reader. Can get more. If just read passively – one idea from the author, if actively – offer my idea and question, then can get more. Passively just read it, use it. First time – passively, just write down, find logic between them, question it, ask my own questions and if the author can answer then, if not, find another source.</p> <p>STRATEGIES Taking notes – help me clear line of argument, rely on my notes to manage my own line of argument. Sometimes – translation or my own idea on the side, then I will classify it – arg, c-arg, interesting point, sometimes something in between. Notes in the second reading. If mistakes in understanding – my understanding of different info depends on how I use them. After finding another article – I realise I can use the info differently. Colours. Write in Chinese on margins – in English too much time. If in English – use some expressions from the author, maybe I don't</p>	<p>Don't know what they say</p> <p>Structure</p> <p>Multiple reading reveal new layers / understanding</p> <p>Task – understands but wants to clarify</p> <p>Time</p> <p>NS comparison</p> <p>*** conciliatory answer</p> <p>Active reading , think and ask questions</p> <p>Categorise</p> <p>More reading – use info differently</p> <p>Write in Chinese</p>

<p>know how to express it better in English, use English skills from the author. Into Chinese – Translate into English cause author used too many words.</p> <p>First reading – highlight. Second – classify – arg, c-arg etc.</p> <p>Now: exam – scan the whole things to see the structure. If not I will be very nervous.</p> <p>Cs-from the beginning. Depends on the essay-if im almost done, read some sections only, if I begin – from the beginning. More reading-sense of safety, afraid to lose important points, you care a lot about depth. I think you're interested in the text.</p> <p>A: normal.</p> <p>B: if im - Not interested – other content repeats. Own idea / feature. I can understand why they say this – same title year by year, no surprise for you.</p> <p>Other perspective to get a sense of safety. I want to know if there's a strong arg against my own, if there is, ill be worried.</p>	<p>Scan structure in the exam</p> <p>Selective reading</p> <p>Safety</p> <p>Safety</p>
<p>PICTURE – meaning.</p> <p>Similar with feeling, mix them</p> <p>Read a lot when given a task. A lot of info a lot of tasks.</p> <p>Lot of time – day is gone, all my day on reading. First two pic are negative.</p> <p>Third academic reading breaks my wall/</p> <p>In China – Chinese are not very curious about evaluation. Here teachers push you read more to break a wall in my head, stereotype</p> <p>Example – low score for own report; only one correct answer</p> <p>Wall – own idea for the task/experience. Searched for correct result – when I read - lot of people have different views, it breaks my wall. But why im telling you about china is that there it's enough to go with one idea , don't need to break the wall. And here people value you to break your wall, so it's very positive to me. And I think if teachers value it, students will value it; people will be brave to discuss it. high school – not judge, value it, but sometimes just ignore it. examples – useless “new method”, wrong result – so it's wrong</p>	<p>Tasks</p> <p>Read – breaks walls</p> <p>Wall – own idea, correct result</p>
<p>GROUP INTERVIEW</p> <p>** R: in Gr. Interview you said Reading in English was like doing mathematics</p> <p>Writing... a lot of complicated structure – take people / verb / ... make the sentence structure simply, so it's like doing mathematics.</p> <p>First reading – try to understand. Second reason you enjoy it, first time you have no time to enjoy it.</p> <p>R: hard task</p> <p>B: my weakest subject, English.</p> <p>R: still came</p>	<p>Doing maths</p> <p>I. won't stop me</p>

B: there are many other reasons.. this is just language, I don't want it to stop me from learning things	
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<p>Some references just in Chinese</p> <p>My own idea – researched for this idea</p> <p>Wrong key words</p> <p>Different ideas on the role of price in high street business - It's obvious, why would I do research on this? But when I read - Britain it's different. Didn't realise the cost or time of transportation.</p> <p>Author with different experience are very important to your reading.</p> <p>British articles often not applicable – I want my supervisor understand me so I need to talk about the uk. If I want them to think it's rational / makes sense I need to do it ...</p> <p>They don't understand me if I didn't read the article</p> <p>Explain again – if I didn't read, I will not understand why... I didn't show the whole perspective.</p> <p>R: this could also mean the supervisor didn't break their wall</p> <p>Silence</p> <p>B: yeah, You're right.....</p> <p>Silence</p> <p>B: it's normal, teacher's not familiar with the topic</p> <p>B: teacher need to have knowledge... yeah, you're right, they didn't break their wall, the article is British and not others...</p> <p>B: because of the language, key words...</p>	<p>"Chinese thinking"</p> <p>Different exp. important to your reading</p> <p>Western domination</p> <p>*** conciliatory</p>
<p>QUESTION 5. VALUED AS INDIVIDUAL.</p> <p>B: sometimes I don't know im valued by XXXXX, like that.. every time someone say their idea, he knows everything. He translates in other words, ah, that's correct, and offers a very good summary</p> <p>I don't know, we cannot get the reflection from them. If the standard whether were valued, if they ear us, then we're valued. This depends on the meaning of valued.</p> <p>After you give your own idea they will discuss it.</p> <p>R: explains</p> <p>B: I think we're valued. For example George, when we discuss sth with him, he's objective. He hasn't a lot of strong bias to show you.</p> <p>R: in reading?</p> <p>B: yes, I read with my own experience I think it with my own experience so ill read it accordingly to me, if it's totally new, maybe it doesn't speak t me, but for human, we have similar experience.</p> <p>B: yea, towards those topic yes,.. this is also right.. CSR – those academic article are universal, communicate with me, when freedom or else, different understanding and value, and they will think its correct and totally right. and want to communicate to other</p>	<p>Contribute</p> <p>Read according to me</p>

<p>westerners. And they just enjoy their world (laughs). But not in reading.</p> <p>R: ironic?</p> <p>B: a little bit, always try to convince me how bad your political system is... sometimes ... my first reaction is express my own idea and show them both but later I gave them up, I found I cant convenience them, show positive, they think it's fake, your government want to cover your eye, I just want to see the result, if the result is good, I don't care about the process. At first I adapt my idea, but after I think about idea, but after I think about it again, im not just affected by this propaganda.</p>	Western domination
<p>Reading on paper / computer</p> <p>Summary in Chinese. Notes on article – first time reading, second time – writing notes, but didn't bring. Some questions - "why".</p> <p>Red? I evaluate – is that enough to rely on this information, star – to check this information (original source).</p>	! ACTIVE READING
<p>CULTURE SHOCK</p> <p>this company – positive. Like breaking a wall</p> <p>Yes, you have a lot of your own ideas against it, it will help you find another sources. In SCR you need to rely on the sources to find more sources. But in culture shock you might think what the author says is wrong or not perfect.</p> <p>Article – made me realise sth is wrong, culture shock, ty to discuss it with my classmates, ask if they have similar experience.</p> <p>Deeper understanding of yourself?</p> <p>Yes, but one thing they didn't mention recording, after that one I realised I have culture shock</p>	DISAGREE!!! Discuss it with classmates
<p>GROUP INTERVIEW</p> <p>Feeling – yes, somebody has different problem, if I go deeper in the reason, they will be similar.</p> <p>Reason – not famialr .. I forget...</p> <p>Useful to compare? Ah, yeah, I agree with you... but I don't really care about the agreement but that's the problem you need to face, so even if they agree, it's useless.</p>	Catharsis but useless
<p>READING OR WRITING?</p> <p>Reading easier.</p> <p>Writng nobody can help you to check, reading again and again you can check yourself.</p> <p>Read with somebody? B: both of them, most of time alone. Task from xxxx, group task, same article. Not against it, it's use it.</p>	Can check yourself

<p>ACADEMIC CULTURE</p> <p>Academic Culture – individual, I want to know the individual idea, not of most people. The essay you have to be very evaluative, rather than just state sth. They are very focused on the identity of the article, if you take something from the others, it's others and not yours.</p> <p>R: referencing. B: yes, but that's too simple</p> <p>B: can I just say about xxxx? I'm not sure XXXXXXXX is the same with XXXXXXXXXXXX.</p> <p>R: it's ok, your understanding of it.</p> <p>This one (check with the picture) – I think I understand it, much more closely than before I understand the rules because of the tasks and experience. Member of community – when I arrived I was here, but now I also value my own effort, that I did for this research and my own idea, I know what's the very important point ... maybe before I don't care about my own idea, I just wanted to finish it, or what the teacher prefers... but not close because I can also have some progress in the post-graduate. If I'm closer, maybe I'm lazy... I think valued for myself is something new or very valued by others, lot of idea from others, I didn't put me in here, I took ideas from others, rather than create by my own. if you just based on others, for teacher with much experience, my idea will be similar to previous students.</p> <p>R: experiences - writing can show differences</p> <p>B: yes, that's why not far.</p>	<p>Individual</p> <p>Value myself</p> <p>Didn't put me in there</p>
<p>TRAVEL IN TIME</p> <p>I know XXXX's answer.</p> <p>Similar – culture shock, if you want to change it, it takes time, I just wanted to tell myself, be confident to show everything in your essay rather than just focus on, try to find the correct one..</p> <p>Reading: Don't look for specific information. Get as much as possible and then offer your own idea.</p> <p>Useless to say many things to myself</p>	<p>Don't look for specific info; offer your idea</p>

INFORMATION SHEET & RESEARCH STUDY PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project: Can academic reading become a tool facilitating academic socialisation in EAP students?

Researcher: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Institution: University of XXXXXXXXXXXX

In order to help me with my master studies at The University of XXXXXXXXX, I would be very grateful if you could participate in my study. This will involve a group discussion, analysis of your coursework, and an interview of some of the group discussion participants.

This project looks at reading habits of students enrolled on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses and the extent to which they can be conducive to developing confident academic identity. This means I am trying to understand how you feel when reading academic texts, whether you try to make academic reading personal and what activities would help you feel even more confident about academic reading.

I would like to use these results in professional meetings and conferences, but can assure you that your responses will be kept confidential. Information identifying you will not be disclosed under any circumstances. The interview is anonymous, your coursework data will be coded and you will not be required to give your name in the discussion.

I would also like to point out that participation is voluntary and you may withdraw and refuse to participate at any time.

If you have any questions about the study and/or your participation, then please do not hesitate to contact me anytime on XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. You may also contact me to require a copy of the results. Additionally, in the event of any concerns or complaints, you may also contact the Ethics Committee members at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Researcher's signature: _____

Participant's signature: _____

Date: 28.04.2017

Thank you very much for your help.

APPENDIX 4. Consent form for the researcher

RESEARCH STUDY PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project: Can academic reading become a tool facilitating academic socialisation in EAP students?

Researcher: XXXXXX **Institution:** XXXXXXXXXXx

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

☐

2. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time,
without giving any reason and without any consequences.

☐☐

3. I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded.

☐

4. I understand that anonymity will be guaranteed at all stages.

☐

5. I understand and agree that the researcher has access to and might use Graduate Diploma programme data (assignment content, scores, etc.).

☐

6. I understand and agree that the data collected will be used for a research thesis and might be made publically available to other researchers/teachers but with any information that could identify me removed and any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential.

☐

7. I agree to a summary of the data collected being provided to relevant institutions (i.e. universities) and I understand that I will not be identifiable from this data.

☐

8. I agree to take part in the above study

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

APPENDIX 5. Group interview prompts

Task 1. Circle all the emotions you associate with academic reading.



Task 2. Circle Yes or No based on YOUR experience so far. We will then chat about your answers.

1. The link between academic reading and my life experience is clear to me. Y / N
2. Academic reading relates to my interests / issues I care about. Y / N
3. There is room for my opinions and my voice in academic reading. Y / N
4. I can draw on academic experience from my country when doing academic reading here in the UK. Y / N
5. I find it easy to disagree with academic reading Y / N

Task 3. Imagine all the reading in EAP programme was done in your L1. What do you think about it? What other changes to the programme re reading would you like to propose and why.

APPENDIX 6. Individual interview tasks and questions

Task 1. please make a drawing of what academic reading means & feels to you

Task 2. bring a couple of texts you recently read (they could be editorials we used for EAP seminars or recent academic articles you've read - computer is fine if you did that digitally) - this is for us to look together at your reading style.

Interview questions (order might change)

1. Do you have any thoughts / comments / anything to add after the group interview? Did any of the comments surprise you?
2. Which of the two, academic reading or writing, is easier for you and why?

(*** Drawing here)

3. Please think about a text that you felt positive about or confident when reading. Tell me more about this experience.
4. Please think about a text that you felt negative about or lacked confidence when reading. Tell me more about this experience.

(*** examples here)

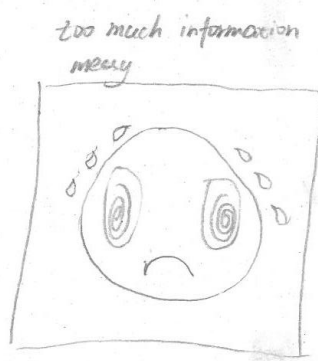
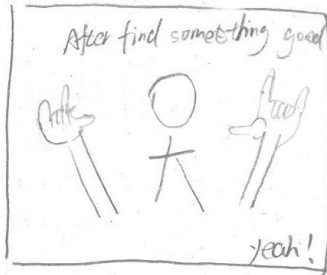
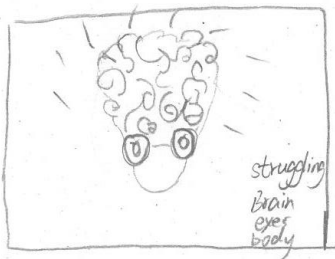
5. Do you feel valued as individual when you read academic texts?
6. If you could travel in time and give a piece of advice about academic reading to Denise in September 2016, what would it be?

(*** Anything to add? Have I missed anything? What kind of questions were you expecting? What else would you have liked to talk about?)

APPENDIX 7. Bea's illustration of academic reading

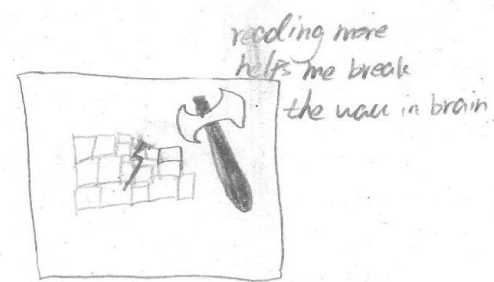
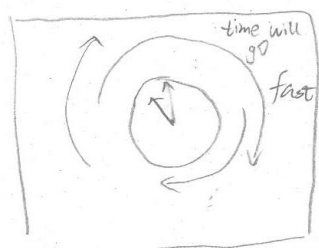
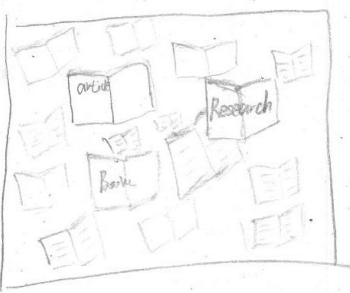
academic reading means & feels to me.

feels

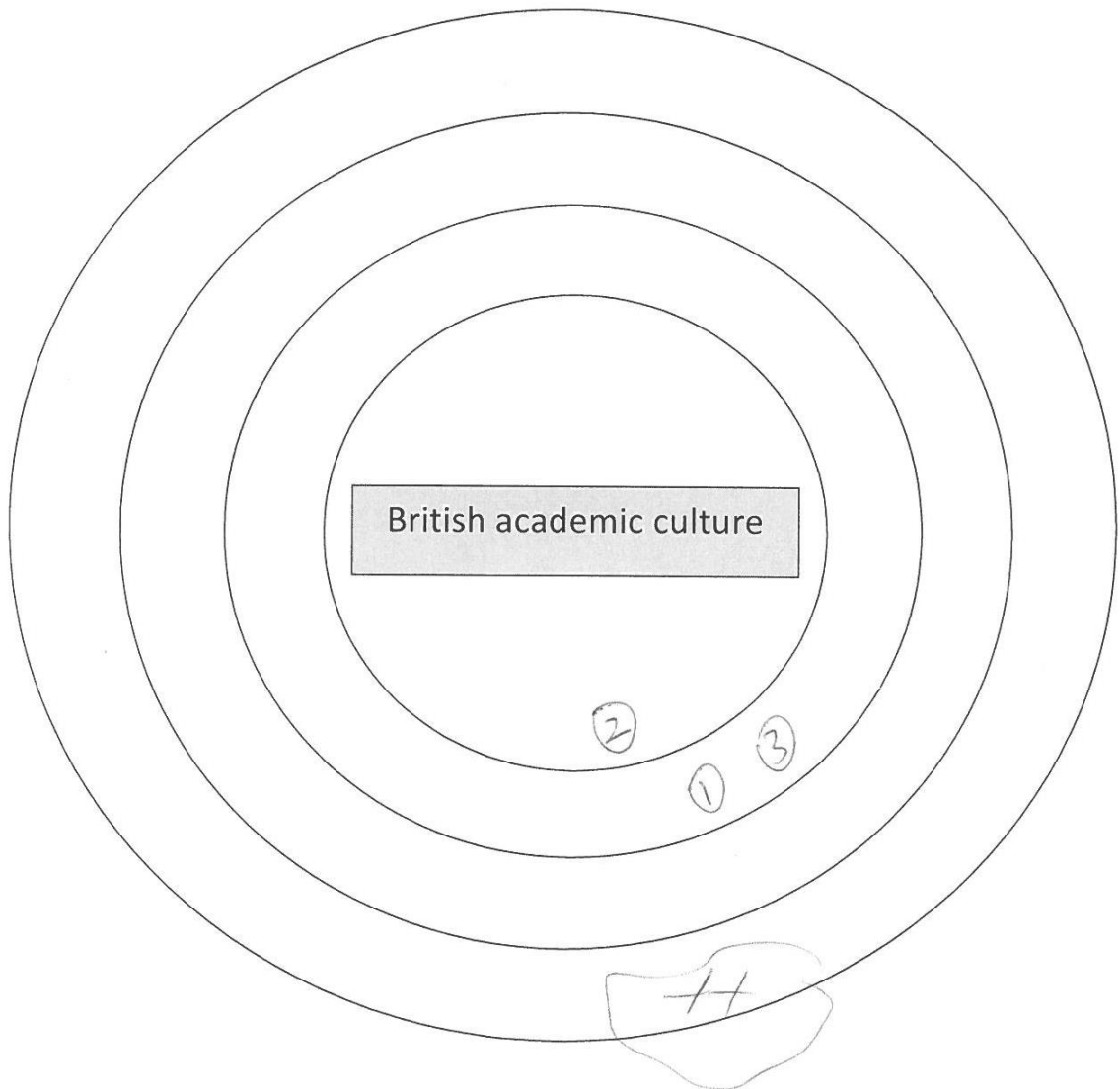


means

tons of homework



APPENDIX 8. Bea's self-reported position in relation to British academic culture



How much do you feel you

1. Are a member of this community
2. Have understanding of it (Know the rules)
3. Are valued / visible as a member

APPENDIX 9. Themes reorganized according to classic Labovian narrative structure

Orientation	Complicating action	Evaluation – so what	Result – what finally happened	Other
*Language	1. Understand sentences but in 2 nd reading meaning different. I don't know why. I thought I understand	1. native speaker – see the whole picture. Why they think like that. Argument is not the same as I guess – I think it's a language problem	1. Read one part and get understand from the second part. Multiple reading	
*language	First reading – try to understand, you have no time to enjoy it. a lot of complicated structure – take people / verb / ... make the sentence structure simply,	- so It's like doing mathematics, technical skill.	Second time you enjoy it	
*language	Sometimes not clear what the author means – second language – difficult to compare across. When different understanding (in different sections) read again.	It's as if you did nothing, as if I didn't do anything	Read it again, don't want to give up because then it's really for nothing. Second time reading – better. After I know the structure – better. much better for simple structure	
*language	my weakest subject, English		there are many other reasons.. this is just language, I don't want it to stop me from learning things	
Structure	Complicated, structure – don't know what they want to say. always repeat the content.. Word limit – have to repeat content and add a bit more in each part	Because of the structure we didn't know its effect	Now I think some things are useless but much makes sense, not repeat, necessary to repeat. i.e. reason why they have to do CSR. Actually reason why is different. First time I can only get the main point – so I thought it repeats. Later – feeling I can use all parts	Read as much as possible, as it was a task. Reading and dividing into categories. Maybe 4 times to read the article. Reading 1-2 are different, 3&4 are similar. Understood but wanted to clarify it, be specific.

			differently in my essay - Now: exam – scan the whole things to see the structure. If not I will be very nervous	
Physical and mental effort: Body and time	Brain, eyes, body – struggle. Read sentence by sentence – not familiar. Too much content Different viewpoints and how to link them. Messy, (picture analysis: sweating, confused). Read a lot when given a task. A lot of info a lot of tasks.	Complicated	Surprise, Wow! not expected Interesting content will break the wall in my brain. But why im telling you about china is that there it's enough to go with one idea , don't need to break the wall. And here people value you to break your wall, so it's very positive to me. And I think if teachers value it, students will value it; people will be brave to discuss it	
Time	How long? Too long Too long. For English – I can only remember page and part. In Chinese I find very quickly. If you check vocab you forget what the the previous part said	So I need to ensure – takes long. So much time. Compared to native speaker – spend a lot of time.		
Time	Lot of time – day is gone, all my day on reading			
Saving time			Write in Chinese on margins – in English too much time. If in English – use some expressions from the author, maybe I don't know how to express it better in English, use English skills from the author	
time				depends on the essay-if im almost done, read some section sonly, if I begin – from the beginning

Strong reaction to text Initially	because wants to show Evidence I want.	Fed up	Now no: show all so not a problem	
Disagreement with text	Fight back but need to find research supporting it			
Chinese thinking	<p>-Sometimes read in chinese but Drawback – Similar. Key words on the website -Chinese researchers & articles. Chinese people think what is important is the same</p> <p>-Sometimes I want to find evidence -my own idea, But when I read - Britain it's different. Didn't realise the cost or time of transportation</p>	<p>-but no foreigner reserch</p> <p>-this evidence only in chiense</p> <p>Author with different experience are very important to your reading. if I didn't read, I will not understand why... I didn tshow the whole perspective.</p>	<p>I think I should Change my logic (me: English thinking). A lot of article showed up</p> <p>British aricles often not applicable – I want my supervisor understand me so I need to talk about the uk. If I want them to think it's rational / makes sense I need to do it ...</p>	
Like reading?	Kind of. Most of time I just want to learn lang so I read articles. I have to. I want one day to read like native speaker, like that I will enjoy it. I can read original good/famous book..	Now – still feel bad. Negative feelings but want to. Simple book – good, but completed things woth good things inside, struggle for language and not content	First time is boring, second time you feel interested.	
Lack of confidence	sometimes I read it again with reasons, my own idea. Not sure if my understanding is right.			
confidence	you care a lot about depth. I think you're interested in the text.	afraid to lose importnatn points. I want to know if theres a strong arg against my own, if there is, ill be worried.	More reading-sense of safety. Other perspective to get a sense of safety.	
Confidence	In SCR you need to rely on the sources to find more sources.		But in culture shock you might think what the author says is wrong or not perfect. you hve a lot of your own	

			ideas against it, it will help you find another sources	
Confidence	Writing nobody can help you to check	reading again and again you can check yourself.		
active reader (listen again for this)	First time – passively, just write down, find logic between them, question it,	If just read neatively – one idea from the author, if actively – offer my idea and question, then can get more.	ask my own questions and if the author can answer then, if not, find another source.	

Coda: reflection / ending

APPENDIX 10. classification of empowering and disempowering reading practices based on interview data

Academic literacies practical framework adapted from Gimenez & Thomas (2016)	Evidence for empowering	Evidence against empowering
Accessibility -language -rhetorical devices -structure -institutional and subject “mysteries”	- by reading again and again you can check yourself - Second reading is better - After I know the structure or when it’s simple it’s much better -second semester better	- language problem - I read sentence by sentence and I’m not familiar with the content. - Sometimes it’s not clear what the author means - And I don’t know why, I thought I’d understood - And if you check the vocabulary you forget what the previous part said - I spend a lot of time, the day is gone, all my day on reading - because of the structure, I didn’t know its effect - if <the topic> is totally new, maybe it doesn’t speak to me
Criticality - of discourse and context. - students’ role in the community and how it affects their reading of texts.	- if I read actively by offering my idea and questions then I can get more - I ask questions “why?”, “is that enough to rely on this information?” -authority to make an evaluative statement: now I <still> think some things are useless - With Culture shock, because you might think what the author says is wrong or not perfect and you have a lot of your own ideas against it , it will help you find other sources.	-Lack of authority: I want to know if there’s a strong argument against my own, if there is, I’ll be worried
Visibility -voice -visibility to themselves, other students, teachers etc	-more visible to herself: More reading and understanding other perspectives gives me safety -I don’t want to give up - I read and think about <the articles> with my own experience so I’ll read them according to <i>me</i> - With Culture shock, because you might think what the author says is wrong or not perfect and you have a lot of your own ideas against it, it will help you find other sources. - Now I also value my own effort, what I did for this research and my own idea. Maybe before I didn’t care about my own idea, I just wanted to finish it, or <do> what the teacher	-- a native speaker can see the whole picture - Compared to native speakers I spend a lot of time It feels as if you did nothing - <So> I thought I had to change my logic -British articles are often not applicable <to my context>, but I want my supervisor to understand me so I need to talk about the UK. If I want them to think it’s rational and makes sense I need to do it -With CSR essay, I wasn’t very familiar with the topic, so I had to rely on the article to find sources. I didn’t put me in there, I took ideas from others,

	prefers	rather than create by myself. If you just base on others, for teachers with much experience, my idea will be similar to previous students
Other	-Sometimes, wow, there is like a surprise, something unexpected, interesting content that makes me break the wall in my brain. In China it's enough to go with your initial idea and here people value you to break your wall, so it's very positive to me	

APPENDIX 11. An extract from a student's reflective writing on academic reading.

According to my reflective record, I firstly thought my learning needs should focus on improving my reading speed:

I should improve my reading speed without losing the understanding of information. Read faster and understand more information at the same time. Slow down in the beginning, reflect the information and then try to move on faster gradually (Reflective Writing Journal, p.11).

Now it seems that this observation is quite superficial. My problem on reading is not about the speed, my knowledge level of the content and the ability of critical thinking are need to be improved. Although in the second part of the reflective records says my reading speed did increase since I finished my reading test earlier. However, I also admitted that my digestion process of that information was still slow and I cannot fully keep up with authors' line of argument. I assumed this might because when I was introduced a profound theory which was too strange for me, I would do sub-translation. However, I found when I approach easier articles such as the editorial articles online, some blogs or even Wikipedia, this situation would become better. Therefore, I read those materials in advance to widen my knowledge before I started my research. Although the credibility of these articles is limited, but the authors have more freedom to express bolder and more interesting ideas.