Revisiting the role of 'discipline' in writing for publication in two social sciences

KAUFHOLD, Kathrin and MCGRATH, Lisa <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2598-4942>

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Abstract

The role of discipline in shaping writing for publication has been widely acknowledged in EAP research, and a wealth of studies that seek to characterise and differentiate disciplinary writing have been published. However, a conceptualisation of disciplines as clearly demarcated territories may be outdated given the "constantly changing and dynamic […] contemporary university" (Manathunga & Brew, 2014, p.45). In light of these changes, our article interrogates the centrality of discipline in research-based writing, from the academics' perspective. To do so, we adopt Trowler's (2014a) reconceptualization of discipline as an analytical framework. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven scholars in two social sciences. Interview data was supplemented by an analysis of the participants' research-based outputs. The results highlight the contested nature of disciplinary affiliation and reveal the range of factors that participants perceive to be "shapers" of writing for publication, beyond discipline: epistemological/methodological, structural and individual. Based on the results, we argue that Trowler's new metaphor of discipline enables us to account for our findings, and conclude with recommendations for EAP writing for publication interventions.

Keywords: discipline; writing for publication; ethnography; variation

1. Introduction

Writing for publication is widely understood as a social endeavour in which academics join a debate framed by their discipline (e.g. Hyland, 2015; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Within this context, disciplinary discourse - the notion that the writing of disciplines is conventionalised, specific, and can be characterised and differentiated - is now well established (e.g. Dressen-

Hamouda (2014) on geology; Author (2015) on [discipline]; Myers (1990) on biology). Hyland has been particularly influential, arguing that "discipline is *the key factor* influencing publishing behaviour" (2015, p. 68). Becher's seminal *Tribes and Territories* (Becher, 1989; Becher & Trowler, 2001) has also provided a theoretical frame, enabling EAP researchers to pin conventions revealed via textual analysis to disciplinary characteristics, and these studies have informed discipline-specific writing interventions.

While undoubtedly productive, this approach invites an essentialist perspective on discipline, and neglects the research-based writing produced by scholars who straddle disciplinary boundaries, occupy multiple disciplinary writing spaces, or move in and out of different disciplinary writing contexts. How do we as teachers and scholars of writing interpret disciplinary writing in their case? Consider for a moment the question: what discipline(s) do you belong to? Is the answer straightforward? Or as in our case, not obvious?

Discipline is not a straightforward concept, yet writing studies have at times presented discipline as "self-explanatory" (Brew, 2008, p. 426; Thompson, Hunston, Murakami & Vajn, 2017). For notable exceptions, see Gere, Swofford, Silver & Pugh (2015, p. 246) on the "elasticity" of discipline in learner genres, and Prior (2013). Indeed, while most would agree that disciplines exist within departments, associations, and publication outlets (Krishnan, 2009), their privileged status has been challenged in higher education research (Hagoel & Kalekin-Fishman, 2002). For example, Wallerstein (2003, p. 454) claims that "the social construction of the disciplines as intellectual arenas […] has outlived its usefulness", and Manathunga and Brew (2014, p. 45) argue that "a focus on discipline […] is in tension with the dynamic disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas of the contemporary university".

In light of the restructuring of higher education, with merged departments and transdisciplinary research clusters, a conceptualisation of disciplines as relatively stable *tribes and territories* does seem problematic. Trowler (2014a, p. 19) himself argues that the

metaphor holds "when disciplines are viewed through *the wrong end of the telescope*" (our emphasis) but less so under closer scrutiny. He therefore recasts disciplines as "reservoirs of knowledge resources which, in dynamic combination with other structural phenomena, can condition behavioural practices, sets of discourses, ways of thinking, procedures, emotional responses and motivations" (Trowler, 2014b, p. 1728). From this perspective, practitioners have access to a wider reservoir of knowledge, comprising subject knowledge, methods, knowledge of key actors and matters of consensus and dispute (Trowler, 2014b). His fluid metaphor rejects boundaries which delimit core knowledge areas or demarcate "borderlands" (Gere et al., 2015, p. 245), as knowledge resources are shared by various disciplines. Instead, the individual takes centre stage, accessing different aspects of these shared resources.

Against the background of these resources, individuals' practices play out differently in the local context. Groups working together locally in different constellations (e.g. departments, conferences) draw collectively on the resource, which means disciplines look different in different sites. Importantly, scholars' practices are not only conditioned by these disciplinary shared knowledge resources, but equally by other "structural phenomena" (Trowler, 2014b, p. 1728), such as higher education policy or publishing pathways.

Departing from Trowler's new position (and *looking through the right end of the telescope* at discipline), our aim is to re-examine discipline from the perspective of research-based writing. Through interviews combined with textual analysis (see e.g. Hyland, 2005) on different levels of text (see Section 2.2), we uncover the perceptions of scholars in two social sciences as to what shapes their research-based writing and whether Trowler's reframing of discipline can help us theorise our findings. We ask:

1) How do our participants perceive their disciplinary affiliations in the context of research-based writing?

2) What similarities and differences are apparent among our participants' research-based writing on the macro, meso and micro levels of their texts?

3) What do our participants consider to be shapers of their research-based writing?

Our contribution is as follows: First, we expose the contested nature of disciplinary affiliation and variation in the research-based writing (in terms of process and text) of our participants. Second, we uncover individual, epistemological/methodological, and socio-political aspects that shape their research-based writing. Lastly, we discuss the explanatory potential of Trowler's conceptualisation of discipline, and make recommendations for EAP interventions based on our insights.

2. Method

This instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) comprises semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009) and an analysis of research-based writing. In line with case study research, our aim is not generalizability (as further discussed in Bryman, 2016), but rather to capture and facilitate an understanding of (Stake, 1995) the perceptions, texts and writing practices of scholars and the role of discipline in those practices.

2.1 Participants

Given our interest in the writing of scholars who potentially do not sit squarely within disciplinary boundaries, we did not begin by selecting two distinct disciplinary areas (cf. Brew, 2008; Swales, 1998). Instead, participants who self-identified as adopting an ethnographic *approach*, *perspective* or *lens* in their research were recruited (disciplinary affiliation was not discussed in the recruitment process). Ethnography was selected as it is increasingly drawn on by scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds in the social sciences, although its origins lie in anthropology (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

Our two cases are situated in Sweden and the UK. The two countries were chosen in order to take into account the potential impact of different higher education policy contexts (e.g. Author, 2014; Li, 2006). The restriction to two sites ensured that "the influences of the local context are not stripped away but taken into account" (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014, p. 11). Our first case comprises three participants' work at an anthropology department in Sweden with a long tradition of ethnographic writing (Group A); the second comprises scholars who are currently affiliated (and one until recently affiliated) to an institute of education (Group B).

Table 1 shows the participants' institutional association and rank. To maintain anonymity, lecturers and senior lecturers/assistant professors are described as junior academics. Academics at the level of reader/associate or full professor are senior. Thus our sample includes both experienced scholars and relative newcomers. Informed consent was obtained.

Table 1 Participants

Participant	Affiliation	Career stage
A1	Anthropology	Senior
A2	Anthropology	Junior
A3	Anthropology	Senior
B1	Education	Junior
B2	Education	Senior
B3	Education	Senior
B4	Psychology and Sociology, formally Education	Junior

Participants selected three texts they wished to discuss as samples of their ethnographic research approach in the interview. Published RAs were mostly selected, although the sample includes one under review RA, and two published book chapters. This is not problematic as our purpose is not genre analysis. Bibliographic details are not provided as this would identify participants. Nonetheless, participants were informed at the consent stage that inclusion of extracts from their writing may identify them.

2.2 Textual analysis

An initial close reading of the texts was conducted to identify themes for the interviews (see Appendix A), followed by an analysis to explore similarity and variation among the texts. Few studies have attempted to characterise ethnographic writing. Some have focused on anthropological ethnographies (famously Geertz, 1988; also Wulff, 2016); others document the 'weaving' of theory, field note extracts, reference to previous literature and author presence in texts (e.g. Author, 2016; Vora & Boellstorff, 2012). Informed by this research and to enable comparison among our participants' texts, we analysed each text on three levels. On the macro level, we began by mapping the structural patterns of each text, identifying sections as standard, functional or content headings (e.g. Lin & Evans, 2012; Author, 2015). Based on the prominence of 'weaving the argument' in ethnographic writing, we also paid attention to how this weaving was textualised. An inductive analysis of these argumentation patterns produced the following codes: Pattern 1 (empirical material, theory, previous literature *interwoven* in the same section), Pattern 2 (empirical material, theory, previous literature presented in discrete sections) or Pattern 3 (claim/evidence within a discrete section - to clarify, the present article follows this prototypical empirical pattern). We then investigated the method descriptions (meso-level analysis), using extended, condensed (Swales & Feak, 2004) or indexed (a brief reference to methodological procedures) as codes. Since our starting point was ethnography as epistemological/methodological approach, an exploration of the textual manifestation of this approach seemed reasonable. Finally, on the micro level, we were interested in author presence because this has been identified as central aspect of ethnographic writing (e.g. Author, 2016). Therefore, the number of occurrences of first-person pronouns was counted using Antconc (Anthony, 2011).

2.3 Interviews

Theme selection was based on our reading of the texts, our research questions and research on ethnographic writing (e.g. Author & Author, 2016; Reynolds, 2010). We acknowledge that participants' comments are co-constructed as the result of the specific time and context of the interview. Different aspects may be emphasised under different circumstances (Edley & Litosseliti, 2010). Interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes and were transcribed. The transcripts were read by the participants for approval.

2.4 Analysis of interview data

Data analysis progressed in stages (e.g. Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). We began with a close reading of the transcripts independently to identify themes. Next, we coded using Trowler's definition as a heuristic to categorise knowledge resources, background knowledge, structural phenomena, and emotional response (see Appendix B). Both sets of initial codes were then grouped. In our third coding session, we refined our codes and collaboratively constructed a coding scheme (Mason, 2002). During the analysis, we regularly returned to the full transcripts for contextualisation (Swales, 1998). Our repeated individual and collaborative engagement with the data strengthened the trustworthiness and credibility of the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The pre-submission manuscript was sent to the participants. All responses expressed alignment with our interpretations. One participant requested that we underscore the influence of the timing and context on her responses (see Section 2.3).

3. Results

3.1 How do our participants perceive their disciplinary affiliations in the context of research-based writing?

The participants' perceptions of disciplinary affiliation were not straightforward. Group A identified as anthropologists but added a range of qualifications. For example, A1 and A2 specified their affiliation through topical research interests and "nested" (Brew, 2008, p. 428) subfields. These subfields are closely connected to other disciplines, which A2 draws on in her writing:

(1) I worked for a long time in a multi-disciplinary setting and you know just from reading I mean because my field is you know somewhat related- I mean a lot related to [discipline and discipline].

In contrast, A3 stated (2) "I'm not typical if there are any typical anthropologists" and continued simultaneously aligning and disaligning with the discipline:

(3) I feel at home in anthropology and ethnography, but I'm not exactly an anthropologist as you noticed from my writings, I guess, since I am trained in an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary subject.

A3 positioned himself outside disciplinary boundaries as a transdisciplinary scholar, referring to his field as a topical research interest. Unlike A1 and A2, he defined his affiliation through his networks: (4) "My networks and my performance so to speak as a researcher is within [topic] not within anthropology in the first sense". Nonetheless, A3 is positioned by others within his transdisciplinary group as an anthropologist as he engages in fieldwork, but less so by colleagues in anthropology. This, he suggests, is reflected in the diversity of research articles he selected for our study, which he characterizes as (a) "interdisciplinary", (b) "quantitative paradigm" and (c) "an ethnographic tradition".

As expected, the disciplinary affiliations (their identification when it comes to research-based writing) of our second group are even less straightforward. B2 exemplified by stating (smiling): (5) "I've been identified with quite a few different ones [disciplines] by other people, and I think I shift depending on which day of the week". While all of Group B are

institutionally associated (or historically associated) with an education department, they describe their affiliation through research interest rather than a notion of education as discipline. For the senior researchers, this is a niche that "cuts across" (B2) education and another discipline.

B1 provided two connected disciplinary affiliations based on his training as a (6) "sociologist who was trained by an anthropologist". He developed the theme throughout the interview referring to his affiliatory evolution: (7) "At this time in my career, I was still juggling, what am I? Am I an education researcher or am I a sociologist?" Later in the interview, he identified his interest and stance as most relevant to his researcher identity and writing: (8) "it's probably more my politics and my position […] rather than the discipline".

B4 identified as a social anthropologist, largely based on her training and research interest. Central were networks with other ethnographers (not necessarily anthropologists) at a national conference or her department: (9) "that [conference] was the first place […] that I felt my ethnographic background was fitting with the education interests that I had" (B4). She talked of feeling "isolated" in her previous department, and of finding her "place" in her current department working with other ethnographers.

Unlike A3 who simply observed his disciplinary positioning by others, Group B tended to reject external characterisations. B3 queried our question probing disciplinary affiliation: (10) "I don't know about disciplines but I would say I work in the field of […]". Others rejected specific disciplines. B1 commented:

> (11) So, although I claim I'm a sociologist […] sociology doesn't really, in the broadest
> scope, reflect who I am or reflect my interests.

To summarise, disciplinary affiliation is idiosyncratic, multiple, interdisciplinary and shifts over time and from context to context. Participants foregrounded their research interest and fields or methodology (B4, A3) rather than discipline per se. Even when a specific

discipline was identified, participants related to and moved between multiple disciplinary communities (e.g. B1, B2) by drawing on resources they associate with other disciplines (A2), writing for interdisciplinary networks (A1), or referring to their transdisciplinary training (A3, B4).

3.2 What similarities and differences are apparent in the participants' research-based writing on the macro, meso and micro levels of their texts?

In this section, we introduce the results from our textual analysis on the macro, meso and micro levels. We return to these results and contextualise them in Section 3.3 where we discuss how the participants account for their discursive choices. Our analysis identified substantial variation among the participants' samples, and in some cases, within samples. Texts ranged from a statistical study to ethnographies, from prototypical social science IMRD, to innovative presentations of results, such as juxtaposing stories and narratives of composite characters.

3.2.1 Overall structure

Table 2 shows the overall structural patterns of the participants' self-selected texts based on section headings and the argumentation pattern of each text. The overall structure and the argumentation patterns vary within each participant's sample, except for A1 and B4 who both use argumentation pattern 1 throughout.

Table 2 Overall structure and results presentation

Text no.	Type	Standard heading (SH) Content heading (CH) Functional heading (FH) No heading (NH)	Argumentation pattern 1,2,3
A1.1	Empirical RA	NH (vignette, introduction) - CH (weaving) - CH (weaving) - CH (weaving) - FH (conclusion)	1
A1.2	Empirical RA	NH (vignette, introduction) - CH (background)	1

		- CH (background) - CH (weaving) - FH (conclusion)	
A1.3	Empirical RA	NH (introduction) - CH (background) - 6x CH (weaving) - FH (conclusion)	1
A2.1	Conceptual/ empirical book chapter	FH (introduction) - CH (theory, method) - CH (background) - CH (background) - CH (method) - CH (example) - CH (theory/discussion) - CH (theory/example) - CH (theory/example) - CH (own practice) - CH (theory/example) - CH (theory/example) - FH (conclusion)	3
A2.2	Empirical RA	FH (introduction) - Sub-CH (theory) - Sub-CH (method) - Sub-CH (background) - CH (lit review) - Sub-CH (lit review) - CH (background) - Sub-CH (background) Sub-CH (method) - 4x Sub-CH (results) - FH (discussion, conclusion)	3
A2.3	Empirical RA	NH (background/ theory/ method) - CH (background) - 4x CH (weaving) - CH (conclusion)	1
A3.1	Conceptual/ empirical RA	SH (introduction) - CH (lit review) - CH (background) - CH (weaving) - Sub-CH (weaving) - Sub-CH (weaving) - CH (weaving) - CH (weaving) - CH (conclusion)	1
A3.2	Empirical RA (quantitative analysis)	SH (introduction) - FH (theory) - CH (background) - FH (method) - Sub-FH (results) - Sub-CH (results) - CH (results) - CH (results) - Sub-CH (results) - FH (discussion)	3
A3.3	Empirical RA	SH (introduction) - CH (method) - CH (background) - CH (weaving) - Sub-CH (weaving) - Sub-CH (results) - Sub-CH (results) - FH (conclusion)	1
B1.1	Empirical RA	NH (intro) - CH (lit review) - CH (method) - FH (results) - Sub-CH x 4 (results) - FH (discussion, conclusion)	3
B1.2	Empirical RA	SH (introduction) - Sub-CH (lit review) - SH (methods) - SH (results) - 4x Sub-CH (weaving) - SH (conclusion)	1
B1.3	Empirical RA	CH (introduction) - CH (lit review) - CH (method) - CH (results) - 3x Sub-CH (counter story) - SH (discussion) - SH (conclusion)	2
B2.1	Empirical RA	NH (introduction) - CH (lit review) - CH (background) - CH (method) - CH (background) - 2x Sub-CH (background) - Sub-FH (limitations) - CH (results) - 4x Sub-CH (results) - CH (results) - SH (discussion)	3
B2.2	Empirical RA	SH (introduction) - CH (method) - CH	3

		(background) - 2x CH (results) - SH (discussion) - SH (conclusion)	
B2.3	Conceptual/ empirical RA	CH (introduction) - CH (method) - CH (juxtaposed stories) - CH (discussion) - CH (discussion) - CH (theorising) - SH (conclusion)	2
B3.1	Conceptual/ empirical RA	SH (introduction) - CH (lit review) - Sub-CH (lit review, illustration) - Sub-CH (lit review) - CH (method) - Sub-CH (framing results) - Sub-CH (stories) - Sub-CH (discussion) - CH (conclusion)	2
B3.2	Conceptual/ empirical RA	SH (introduction) - CH (lit review) - CH (theory) - CH (method) - CH (method) - CH (results/discussion) - 4x Sub-CH (weaving) - CH (discussion) - SH (conclusion)	1
B3.3	Conceptual/ empirical RA	CH (introduction) - CH (method) - CH (juxtaposed stories) - CH (discussion) - CH (discussion) - CH (theorising) - SH (conclusion)	2
B4.1	Conceptual/ empirical RA	SH (introduction) - CH (method) – 7x CH (weaving) - SH (conclusion)	1
B4.2	Empirical RA	NH (introduction) - CH (background) - CH (background) - FH (method) - CH - 3x CH (weaving) - FH (discussion)	1
B4.3	Empirical book chapter	SH (introduction) - CH (method) - CH (method) - CH (method) - 2x CH (weaving) - SH (conclusion)	1

A1's texts all follow the same pattern; she omits a section heading for the introduction, adds a vignette in two cases, and includes sections in which she weaves the argument. A2's third text (an RA) follows this pattern, but Texts 1 and 2 diverge. For Text 1, this is not surprising as it is a different genre - a conceptual book chapter. The second, however, an empirical RA, resembles an ILMRD structure (Linn & Evans, 2012), although content rather than functional headings are used. A3's texts also vary; while Text 1 ("interdisciplinary") and 3 ("ethnographic") follow a similar pattern to A1, Text 2 combines standard, functional and content headings in a prototypical ILMRD argument structure.

In Group B, variation among and within samples was also evident. In contrast to Group A, argumentation pattern 2 was evident in some of the texts. While all empirical, B1's sample

contains one ILMRD organisation (although headings are non-prototypical). Text 2 presents results similarly to A1. Text 3 is difficult to classify; while following an ILMRD organisation to an extent, the results are presented as a narrative followed by a counter narrative, which are then examined in a discussion section.

B2's texts were also difficult to classify. The two empirical articles comprise an intricate structure with multiple headings, but do not contain the weaving patterns identified in Group A's texts. Nonetheless, Text 3, a more conceptual article, seemed to weave theory and field notes across chapters. B3 and B4's texts resemble some of Group A's, namely an introduction (although no vignette), multiple content headed sections and the weaving of field note data, theory and literature either within or across sections. Interestingly, B4 maintains the same argument structure, irrespective of genre (conceptual/empirical RA, empirical RA, and empirical book chapter).

3.2.2 Method descriptions

As show in Table 3, the method descriptions in the samples vary greatly in length (45 to 1226 words). In group A, indexed, condensed and extended methods are represented. Group B's descriptions tend to be longer than Group A's; all write extended sections, albeit with marked differences in length within samples (e.g. B3, B4). (It should be noted that B4.3 is a paper that analyses method, and therefore the method description is very extended).

Table 3 Methods sections

Output no.	Output length in words (excl. abstract and list of references)	Method section length in words	Method section type
A1.1	6023	50 (including footnote)	Indexed
A1.2	6001	220	Condensed
A1.3	7023	151	Condensed
A2.1	6977	45	Indexed
A2.2	7463	306	Extended

A2.3	5324	713	Extended
A3.1	8881	85	Indexed
A3.2	6244	142	Condensed
A3.3	7331	978	Extended
B1.1	6283	452	Extended
B1.2	7795	502	Extended
B1.3	6567	894	Extended
B2.1	7672	821	Extended
B2.2	5526	1105	Extended
B2.3	7518	1006	Extended
B3.1	7859	459	Extended
B3.2	9440	1055	Extended
B3.3	7518	1006	Extended
B4.1	7106	430	Extended
B4.2	6384	731	Extended
B4.3	8566	1226	Extended

3.2.3 Author reference first-person pronouns (self-mentions)

Table 4 shows the number of self-mentions in the articles. Again, the results are characterized by variation, across participants and within samples. Most striking is B1, who uses considerably fewer than other members of Group B, preferring in one paper to use the impersonal "the researcher". Surprisingly, A3's "quantitative paper" is not the paper with the least self-mentions in his sample.

Table 4 Self-mentions

Output no.	First person sg./pl. (author reference)
A1.1	27
A1.2	51
A1.3	23
A2.1	85
A2.2	57
A2.3	37
A3.1	14
A3.2	49
A3.3	30
B1.1	0
B1.2	7

B1.3	20
B2.1	34
B2.2	18
B2.3	87
B3.1	95
B3.2	79
B3.3	87
B4.1	12
B4.2	53
B4.3	11

To conclude this section, we can make some broad generalizations pertaining to similarities among the participants' writing (i.e. the occurrence of weaving patterns, a general preference for author presence except for B1.1, Group B's tendency to insert longer methods descriptions). Yet more pertinent in the data are the differences and the range of textual patterning (i.e. text structure, extent of author presence, types and length of methods descriptions) not only within groups, but also within the individual participants' writing sample.

3.3 What do our participants consider to be shapers of their research-based writing?

3.3.1 Ethnography

The ethnographic approach adopted by our participants emerged in multiple comments as a clear shaper of their texts. For example, weaving theory, literature and material from the field work (cf. Author & Author, 2016) was mentioned by A1 and A2 and evident in the argumentation patterns across the groups (Table 2) with pattern 1 dominating in Group A. The interviews further highlighted the role of theory in the weaving as suggested by A1:

> (12) The point with a good ethnography is that it contributes to the development of theoretical debate.

Nonetheless, for A2, the centrality of theorising is tied to discipline:

(13) Because in anthropology […] you could focus on one very specific thing and broaden the discussion […] you can draw in, from one specific detailed example, and then a question around that. Usually in anthropology you can discuss much broader things, neo liberalism.

For A3, theorizing goes beyond "just a guess from the theoretical standpoint so to speak". The selection of the fieldwork material is also central in the process:

(14) Those quotations might say something […] it's representing some kind of understanding of it or it gives me a feeling that well this is my field, they are saying something which is crucial to what I want to say. (A3)

These participants also stressed readability and credibility in ethnographic writing. Texts have to be written "in a very readable […] and beautiful way" (A3), "captivating" (A1) the reader through placing them in the text. For instance, A3 wrote: "Anyone who has attended a similar expat event abroad […] will know the kind of atmosphere to which I refer here" and explained that this is used (15) "to create some kind of common frame for the reader and the writer" (A3). Credibility is achieved through signalling the researcher's presence in the field. This is partly achieved through self-mentions (Table 4) but importantly also through clearly referenced field notes and rich description: (16) "not only what does it look like but also what- was there a sound, smell, colours" (A1). A2 observed:

(17) I have these quotes and detailed observations for example about this- about the actual sites […]. Then you know- you as a reader know I was there.

Quotes from interviews are introduced and contextualized (18) "as a way to show my authority or to explain how I got the data […] because who you are in the field affects what data you get" (A1). An extract from A3's writing exemplifies: "Hanna, a very experienced and influential club member" because:

(19) It's a context […] I'm telling the reader that this is not only one voice in the crowd. This is an important actor […] and I think this is quite common with this ethnographic tradition. (A3)

Unlike Group A, B1, 2 and 3 made a distinction between ethnographic research and writing ethnographies. Instead of describing their writing as ethnographies, they used loose terms such as "ethnographic texture", distinguishing between writing ethnographies and applying ethnographic approaches in their research work, such as (20) "hanging out" and being "ingrained with these individuals" (B1) or gathering a diverse data set (B3). Nonetheless, aspects of ethnographic writing described by the participants were found in some of the texts, such as the weaving of theory and field notes (e.g. B1.2, B3.2, Table 2), and high author presence (B3's texts, Table 4). B1 contrasted his ethnographic approach with the form two of his articles take:

(21) In my sociological training, I put myself first, I put my identity in there, but papers 1 and 2 I didn't. It was more, I would say positivist than it was about me. However, what's driven me into that line of work is just because of my emotional ties with people who [specification].

B3 was sympathetic to the ethnographic style of telling stories, "being evocative" and "challenging your reader" and claimed this as part of her writing. Yet she distinguishes between the aims of ethnographies and her own writing. For her, ethnographies try to arrive at a deeper understanding of reality:

(22) Through your unfolding exploration of a particular setting, context, culture, you are arriving at an understanding through- of how that works […]. That's not what I'm trying to do.

B2 added a further perspective. He aligned with ethnographic approaches through his identification with shared practices and ways of thinking in his field which he described as

going (23) "with the territory". He explained how he uses the term "ethnographic texture" as a "get-out clause" to signal his epistemological alignment with ethnographic approaches (also invoking a disciplinary aspect):

> (24) There's an ambition to represent those [lived experiences], but I think the shortcoming is that very often, and this does cut across a lot of education research, because of the limitations of time and funding, the depth is something that gets compromised a lot.

Given Group B's own less uniform understanding, it is perhaps not surprising that their methods descriptions were extended (see Table 3), and that not all adopted a weaving argumentation (pattern 1 or 2, see Table 2). Nonetheless, when asked what characterizes ethnographic writing, Group B's comments echoed Group A. Participants mentioned (25) "being overtly in [the text]" (B3), (26) "I want my readers to understand what I saw" (B4), and B2 explained:

> (27) I've started writing myself into the research a lot more, and particularly through some of the terrain we have been going down, [co-author] and myself, reading about affect and the felt experience, and our histories are also clearly part of what we do and they were always there, but I think we both started to write them in.

This shift is perhaps reflected in the number of self-mentions in B2s articles (earlier work had 18/34, whereas the most recent contains 87, see Table 4).

To conclude this section, the methodological approach emerged as a clear shaper of the participants' writing. However, Group A claimed ethnography unproblematically, perhaps due to the long tradition of ethnographic writing in the department (see Section 2.1), whereas Group B were more cautious. There seemed to be a shared understanding of what constitutes ethnography and ethnographic writing across the participants, but disagreement as to the extent to which their writing falls into that category.

3.3.2 Journals, networks and higher education policy

Journals, networks and higher education policies that seek to regulate publication also emerged as shapers of research-based writing. In terms of their practices, Group A agreed that internationalisation means publishing in highly ranked English-language journals for career progression, as illustrated by A2:

(28) I really need to get something out from this material now. I want and I need an article […]. I just got a position.

A3 problematized this policy development, the power it imparts to journals and its effects on writing:

(29) They [journals] have the decision and they set the standards for the careers for researchers instead of having a kind of diverse community of researchers doing the more free research […] we are different and we shouldn't be measured by the same standard [of scientific writing].

Career stage plays a role: he states as a senior scholar (30) "I have had my career", but laments the impact on junior scholars' writing practices:

(31) They always look for where should I publish and how should I write […] instead of doing what they are trained for, I mean being interested and engaged in their material and write different kind of things. Sometimes peer reviewed articles but on other occasions they could write more open-minded publications like monographs or even in novels.

Policy appears to impact our participants' writing in the two countries in similar ways, although there was more talk of strategic publishing among Group B. A recurring factor was a quality assessment process in the UK used for benchmarking purposes (the Research Excellence Framework (REF)). Discussions surrounding the REF have been critical (Murphy

& Sage, 2014), and this was mirrored by the junior researchers' comments (see also A3's comment). B1's comments evoked unease about the REF in relation to writing, as he juxtaposed his motivation to write, driven by political conviction, with the policy frame that allocates incentives to publish:

(32) At that time I wasn't REFfing, I wasn't being considered for REF […]. But because the work was coming out, I got called by one of the REF coordinators […] 'you seem quite prolific, we should give you some REF time'. And then after that I was like, I don't feel like writing anymore (laughs).

B4 focused on the constraints the REF places on her writing from a genre perspective, suggesting that the REF privileges articles over monographs:

(33) It's all about journal articles and I don't think ethnography always fits into a journal article, so I think that the way the system is going […] could really constrain ethnographic writing.

The limitations of the RA genre (the preferred genre in policy terms) were also discussed by Group A: (34) "It's difficult because articles are so short and condensed there is not much space" (A2). A3 had to "squeeze [an ethnography] into this format"; and A1 and A2 related the status of the journal to the possibilities they see for playfulness in their writing.

(35) These two journals are prestigious and this one- but I think I had more leeway, maybe I could have done it here [prestigious journal] also but I don't, I'm not sure. No I don't think so. This was a different context. So I had a different style. (A1)

(36) I think this [Text 3] […] is more of a regular academic text. Maybe my most boring voice (laughs) […]. Because I wanted, let me write an academic article and get it published in a good journal. So don't experiment too much, don't take liberties. (A2)

Incidentally, this article (A2.3) is most similar to the overall structure of A1's "standard" articles, has by far the longest methods description (713) and the fewest self-mentions (37)

among her texts. For A3, this power means that journals dictate the textual form and research topics, which impacts on researchers' careers and restricts the possibilities for other forms of writing that are meaningful to the participants:

(37) The journals are giving the conditions and the specifications and how you should write and I think this is quite restrictive.

He also spoke extensively and negatively about policy and journal constraints in terms of word limit and the push to publish in English language journals (which all of Group A do).

Journals also provide a frame for writing. The junior researchers discuss finding a "fit" (A2) between the journal and their work, partly by being invited to write for a special issue (B1), by recommendations by colleagues (B1) or previous supervisors (B4). The senior researchers in Group B added another level, as they described how they push the remit of "a quite high impact journal" (B3), "dominated by cognitive psychologists" (B2) but with an education theme. The reason for publishing there was to challenge a narrow approach to the research topic: (38) "time they had something in there that was a bit different" (B2). In contrast to most other participants who experience journal constraints, here we have a perspective that seeks to challenge those constraints, somewhat qualified by B3's comment that (39) "we knew that the editor was open" to other methodologies.

The impact of reviewer comments on research-based writing (cf. Paltridge, 2017) also came up in the discussion. A2 observed, (40) "if a reviewer says really you need to explain what you did, then that's what I have done". The more senior scholars claimed more freedom. For instance, B2 (like A3, 30) noted that because he is advanced in his career and does not have to publish, he can experiment: (41) "because career-wise it doesn't matter". Nevertheless, he also described his choice of journals as "strategic publishing", choosing to do (42) "the politically-driven thing to publish in [journal], every so often".

When asked about concessions they make in their writing for a specific journal, Group B initially rejected the idea. However, in the course of the conversation, the influence of reviewer comments emerged. We explored specifically the influence on descriptions of methodology, as we had noted considerable differences in length (see Table 3). B3 explained (43) when discussing article B3.3: "we deliberately didn't signpost methodology greatly. But we were asked to do that so we did" (B3). More specifically, B2 stated:

> (44) I think I actually put number of hours and number of texts that have been collected just to show that I'm not kind of making it up. You always imagine […] They're not of course the beast that you make them out to be, but they need that: What did you actually do? How much of it?

Indeed, their talk of "challenge" was tempered by a pragmatic willingness to change writing to suit reviewers:

> (45) I deliberately didn't put lots of methodology because they weren't supposed to be empirical pieces and then was asked to. I think it changes actually what the articles ultimately say but never mind. (B3)

Journals therefore impact our participants writing practices, and could account for some of the textual variation observed, particularly reported in relation to the methods description (see Table 3). It is apposite to note here that the articles in the study were not all published in disciplinary journals. Also included were narrow interest journals and journals with an interdisciplinary remit (see Appendix C). In fact, disciplinary journals appear to be in the minority and topic-related dominate in both groups.

Networks and collaboration also emerged from the data as shaping research-based writing. Junior researchers (B1, B4) mentioned advice on where to publish. B1 referred to the encouragement he received for his paper (B1.3) that he describes as "experimenting with the narrative" at an interdisciplinary conference attended by activists: (46) "I got the nod and the

thumbs up […] so I knew I had something going on there". For B2, collaborative writing was essential for daring to innovate:

> (47) I think it's quite interesting to have someone you collaborate with, because that slightly emboldens you I think.

These networks go beyond institutions and disciplines, and relate to specific conferences (B1, B4) or communities connected to research topics (A3, B2, B3). Importantly, these networks can be multi-disciplinary. Our participants traverse disciplinary boundaries in their (sometimes temporary) network membership:

> (48) I was invited to write this article on the basis of, they did this theme issue on physical activity, physical culture. […] But they are sociologists and even though they have an interest in ethnography, the style is different. (A1)

To summarise, structural phenomena (Trowler, 2014b) seem to impact our participants' research-based writing practices. Higher education policy and journals, which cannot necessarily be characterised as disciplinary, impact on what to write and where to publish. This holds for both senior and junior scholars. Finally, a strong collaboration - a research writing partner, a network or a conference (akin to an epistemic community (Haas, 2008)) - seems conducive to breaking with convention.

3.3.3 Emotion, motivation and creativity

Our final theme is the individual's affective and creative motivation in shaping writing practices. For A1 and A2, writing articles is enjoyable: (49) "I like to write about it. I like to use the material [fieldwork data]" (A2), (50) "I love writing. It's my breathing" (A1). A1 sees her writing as creative, experimental, transcending boundaries between academic writing and fiction with the caveat:

(51) Of course, I have to stick to the academic format in certain ways but still I mean

within ethnographic writing and experimental writing there is so many ways.

Interestingly, A1's articles seemed to be the least divergent in terms of structure (perhaps "sticking to the academic format") (see Table 2), but we did notice examples of creative playfulness. For example, the final sentence of A1's article on performance and reading was: "And then they turn up the house lights." A1 explained: (52) "this is a bit like a performance […] I thought it was fun to sort of make it a bit of performance". This creativity was fostered at an early stage in the writer's trajectory:

(53) We were actually taught when we were PhD students here to write in a, you

know, evocative and even provocative way […] in this department here we early

were- had this freedom to write in a more experimental way. It was accepted. (A1)

Like Group A, three of Group B commented on creativity. The junior researchers discussed "traditional ways of writing" as "fit[ting] […] in a box" (B1) in contrast to experimental forms that provide "artistic license" (B1) and motivation. B1 contrasts his first and third text in the sample (see Table 2).

(54) And so that [Text 3] is where I'm putting myself, and having more artistic

license. Yeah, I just said that, more artistic licence, more freedom to write whatever I

want […]. Whereas with this one [Text 1], I feel it's more crafted in the more

traditional way of writing a […] research paper. You've got your literature review,

your methods bit, your findings which I explicitly state, with sub-headings for the

finding themes and then my concluding thoughts, which is how I tell all my

dissertation students how to write.

Interestingly, B4 (who completed her PhD at the department) experienced first-hand the impact of these local constraints on students:

(55) And they [supervisors] wanted me to write it in a traditional way with a separate

literature review, then findings and then a discussion chapter, and I had a really strong

view that I didn't want to do that, I wanted it to be a narrative that came through the

whole thesis. I ended up writing it in two separate parts.

Nevertheless, Group B also described their research-based writing in comparison to novels

(B4) or creative writing (B2). At the same time, B2 (senior) signalled the need for a starting

point, (56) "a very loose disciplinary framework […], you need to say a few things about

why, and then you go off and tell your story". B3 (senior) frames her innovative ways of

writing as challenging conventional forms, but from a genre rather than disciplinary

perspective, for example, inserting juxtaposed stories as in B3.3 (see Table 2):

(57) One of the writing challenges that we've been struggling with recently is how,

within the constraints of an academic article, do you if you like trouble the academic

form […] in order to convey something about the kinds of things that escape academic

form.

Group B also talked about their motivations for writing: taking strong stances, challenging

perceptions and tradition. For example, B4 wanted to "counter some of these myths" and "to

make a difference", and B1 suggested: (58) "[the article] is challenging the orthodoxy in the

pathology of [topic] and that's very central, and that's why I like this paper". This desire to

challenge orthodoxy can perhaps motivate the variation in article structure (see Table 2, B1.3,

B2.3, B3.1).

In summary, emotion, motivation and creativity seemed to be shapers of research-based

writing practices. For Group A, playfulness is a legitimate part of ethnographic writing. For

Group B, a uniting factor is the motivation to change perceptions and transgress borders, a

shared "emotional response" (Trowler, 2014b, p. 1728).

4. Discussion and conclusion

We began by probing our participants' disciplinary affiliation(s). These affiliations are not clearly demarcated or fixed (Brew, 2008) (1-11), particularly for A3, who identified as a transdisciplinary researcher (3), and for B1, B2 and B3. Trowler (2014a) argues that education is a domain, or a cluster of related disciplines focused on a research topic, rather than a discipline. In line with that distinction, those participants referred to various affiliations, which tended to be more topic rather than discipline-based (8-11). This was also true to some extent for Group A, whose affiliations were based around topics that traverse disciplines. Where disciplinary affiliation was most pronounced, it tended to be in oppositional form: for example, A1 noting that sociologists write differently (48), and B2 and B3 writing methods sections based on perceived expectations of editors in a psychology-oriented journal (44, 45).

Our second research question explored similarities and differences among our participants' texts. Our purpose here was not to identify disciplinary convention (the sample and methodology are not suitable for such claims), but to explore textual features in light of our participants' perceptions. Some broad similarities were apparent: both groups on the whole have a preference for strong author presence (although the number of self-mentions varied between 0 and 97). Group B write extended methods descriptions (between 430 and 1226 words) and three results description patterns were identified (although these patterns are of course a simplification for categorization purposes). The high occurrence of first-person pronouns (self-mentions) and the use of weaving patterns chime with previous research on writing in anthropology (e.g. Author, 2016; McGranahan, 2014; Vora & Boellstorff, 2012). More striking, however, is the variation observed, even within participants' samples, which would not be visible if analysed using corpus methods aiming to uncover convention.

Our third question probed shapers of research-based writing in the eyes of our participants. Discipline was not foregrounded. Instead, the ethnographic approach adopted by our participants, structural phenomena (Trowler, 2014b) such as policy and journals (28-33, 34-45), and individual motivations were highlighted (51-58). It is of course known that these factors play a role (e.g. Huang, 2010; McCulloch, 2017; Hyland, 2015; Salö, 2017). However, in our data they take pole position, especially when it comes to questions of creativity and innovation.

We also concede that these shapers are conceptually less abstract than discipline (Hyland, 2015) and perhaps easier for our participants to raise. But their comments do provide a rationale for some of the textual patterns observed and practices described beyond the impact of perceived disciplinary convention. For example, ethnography was revealed as a knowledge resource drawn on by both groups, but interpreted differently in the two sites; networks outside of the remit of disciplines were conducive to risk taking and provided validation, and local collaboration was conducive to innovation and creativity. In short, our data provide some evidence that for our participants across both sites, discipline is not "the key way of understanding academic work [in our case, research-based writing]" (Manathunga & Brew, 2014, p. 45). This finding challenges more essentialist disciplinary conceptualizations of writing in the academy that argue "writing as a disciplinary group involves textualising one's work as biology or applied linguistics and oneself as a biologist or applied linguist" (Hyland, 2004, p. 10). While our participants acknowledge disciplinary boundaries to a certain extent (in part to challenge and redefine), they do not appear to be overtly positioned in a disciplinary *territory* (Becher, 1989).

An essentialist perspective is also problematic for our data in that it privileges the exploration of convention over heterogeneity. Heterogeneity within academic writing has of course been recognised from a genre perspective (e.g. Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993; Hyland,

2004; Swales, 1990; Tardy, 2016). But Trowler's new conceptualization offers a disciplinary perspective, framing discipline as a "knowledge resource" (Trowler, 2014b) rather than "territory" (Becher, 1989). In this reading, heterogeneity is a manifestation of the various disciplinary knowledge resources researchers draw on in combination with other structural phenomena (Manathunga & Brew, 2014), which seems to be a more apt theorization of our findings.

This view of discipline also foregrounds the impact of "localized repertoires" that are shared in smaller networks, both institutionally-based in departments and geographically dispersed in research networks. These repertoires were visible in the participants' comments on collaboration (47) and conference networks (46, 48) and research writing training. Indeed, we observed in our data that research training fostered enduring and shared writing practices among our participants who trained in those same departments, for instance, in A1's account of transgressional writing encouraged by the department (53), or a positioning in opposition to the educating institution, as in B4's case (55).

To conclude, we argue that a more critical eye towards notions of discipline, and in particular assumptions of homogeneity in writers' experiences, practices and texts along disciplinary lines is needed. When working with groups in education or anthropology departments, we may encounter students who have not yet developed and perhaps will not develop fixed disciplinary identities (Author, 2017). Inducting doctoral and early-career writers into disciplinary discourse (i.e. prototypical textual conventions of a specific discipline) may be insufficient if those writers' career trajectories will involve writing for interdisciplinary journals or shifting disciplinary affiliation (as is the case for some of our participants). Thus, in the social sciences (at least), it seems that supporting those writers to develop the strategic ability to adapt their writing to varying rhetorical contexts (e.g. Author, 2018; Devitt, 2015) may be more illuminating than learning disciplinary conventions per se.

This insight calls for materials and tasks that develop students' ability to navigate multiple writing contexts, to reflect on their motivations, and manage the impact of journals and policies (e.g. Li, 2006) on their writing. Thus, interventions for PhD students and new lecturers need to move beyond text-based discussions and explore writing as a contextualised practice. This could include promoting early affiliation to networks, incorporating network members' voices into the learning situation though interviews with experienced writers (Johns, 1997; Author & Author, 2016) and promoting networking sites (Mangan, 2012).

We have suggested that structural changes in higher education challenge EAP practitioners to rethink discipline, and the role of discipline in relation to other methodological, socio-political and individual factors that shape writing for publication. Our discussion also suggests how Trowler's more fluid metaphor of discipline can provide explanatory resources for the research-based writing of scholars with complex disciplinary identities and trajectories. Further research could employ a longitudinal design and follow researchers in their negotiation of these contexts over time.

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Appendix A

Interview questions (adapted for each participant based on their texts)

- What discipline or disciplines do you identify with? And why? Has this changed?

- How do I know this article was written by an anthropologist/educationalist? (their articles)

- What makes your article fit in this journal? Why did you publish in this journal?

- What is important in ethnographic writing? Can you show where you did this in this article?

- What does your reader need to know about methodology to accept your argument?

- How do you convey fieldwork in your text?

- How do you decide which theories to include?

- Can you identify any parts of your article that are very "you"? Are there any parts where you think your voice is particularly apparent?

- Are there any parts where you feel you have made concessions in order to get published?

- Is there anything else you want to add?

Appendix B
Coding scheme

Code	Definition
Epistemology	Explanations of epistemological and ontological stances, e.g. what

(knowledge resources)*	ethnography means for research and writing, aim of the participant's research field
Emotion and creativity (emotional response)	Expressions of enjoyment or frustration, also in connection to innovation, creativity and playfulness
Genre constraints and possibilities	Expressions of: constraints, e.g. to write creatively, word limit constraints; possibilities, playing with genre, e.g. drawing on forms of fiction genres; distinctions between different genres or genre features
Affiliation and identities (practitioners)	Personal disciplinary identity: Discipline of previous degrees with relevance to current work; previous training Personal identity outside work: Personal feelings, motivations, identities, personal histories outside of their professional life Positioning of self and by others: Categorizing self or categorizing self by reference to another person's perspective, includes current affiliations
Common knowledge (background knowledge)	Reference to shared knowledge often through referencing key authors (as a means of situating the research in the text)
Higher Education policy (other structural phenomena)	Policy effect on career advancement, REF, writing in English; departmental, institutional, national policy levels
Research environment (other structural phenomena)	Department, university, national unique contexts; conferences, networks, collaborations (national, international)
Journal power (other structural phenomena)	Perceived constraints and possibilities deriving from the choice of journal; journal reviewers' comments
Pedagogy	How participants' ways of writing are related to teaching students/ how participants contribute to socializing students into the discipline/field

*Codes in brackets refer to codes derived from our interpretation of Trowler's (2014b) definition of disciplines.

Appendix C

Publication and outlet types

The journals/books in which the texts were published (see Table C1) were categorised as disciplinary-focus (e.g. *Cultural Anthropology*); topic-focus (e.g. *Journal of Reading*

Research); or methodology-focus (e.g. *Ethnography*). Categories were allocated based on a reading of the journal home pages and comments from participants.

Table C1 *Publication and outlet types*

Output no.	Publication type (Journal/ book)	Outlet type (Topic, Methodology, Discipline)
A1.1	Journal	Topic
A1.2	Journal	Topic/ Methodology
A1.3	Journal	Methodology
A2.1	Book	Topic/ Methodology
A2.2	Journal	Topic/ Methodology
A2.3	Journal	Topic/ Methodology
A3.1	Journal	Topic
A3.2	Journal	Topic
A3.3	Journal	Topic
B1.1	Journal	Topic/ Discipline
B1.2	Journal	Topic/ Discipline
B1.3	Journal	Topic/ Discipline
B2.1	Journal	Topic
B2.2	Journal	Discipline
B2.3	Journal	Topic
B3.1	Journal	Topic
B3.2	Journal	Topic/ Discipline
B3.3	Journal	Topic
B4.1	Journal	Topic/ Methodology
B4.2	Journal	Topic
B4.3	Book	Topic