



# Bridging disciplinary knowledge: the challenge of integrating EAP in business education

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## Abstract

The growing market of international students puts increasing pressure on higher education providers to also provide language support, as students from non-English speaking background face the dual challenge of developing their English language proficiency alongside their subject content. However, there is little research on how knowledge about language is actually integrated with content knowledge in practice or how such an integration can be supported by curriculum design. Using a case study of a popular academic language support program implemented in an Australian university, this paper examines the relationship between academic literacy and business ethics as two distinct forms of disciplinary knowledge, to investigate how the complexity of their integration is managed dynamically in the classroom. In this study, we draw on Legitimation Code Theory to analyze the role of language in constructing discipline-specific knowledge. Our findings suggest that students do not automatically understand the relevance of language support and that shifting knowledge practices during classroom interaction can enhance students' motivation as well as help students to relate their knowledge about language to the discipline.

**Keywords** Academic literacy · Curriculum design · Legitimation Code Theory · Genre pedagogy · Business study · EAP

## Introduction

Courses supporting international students in English medium tertiary education continue to be important for higher education (HE) providers, with 1,078,822 international students hosted by

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US colleges and universities in 2016/2017 (Institute of International Education [n.d.](#)), 442,375 non-UK students studying in UK HE in 2016–2017 (UK Council for International Student Affairs [n.d.](#); Higher Education Statistics Agency [2019](#)), 624,001 international students studying in Australia in 2017 and 350,472 international enrolments in Australian HE (Australian Government Department of Education and Training [2017](#)), and more than 414,000 active study permits issued for international students in 2016 in Canada (Canada Immigration and Citizenship [2017](#)). These figures show the high market demand for international study within tertiary education. Once enrolled, universities need to support international students in facing the challenge of studying in unfamiliar countries, cultures, and, for many, different languages. Students face the challenges of developing their English language writing proficiency alongside their subject content. This paper focuses on the nature of this dual demand and how it can be managed at the program level. In particular, this paper applies the concept of autonomy tours (Maton and Howard [2018](#)) or the shifts in relations between the content and purposes from within and across disciplinary contexts, to investigate how the enactment of such shifts by the teacher's selection, sequencing, and pacing of knowledge in classroom practice leads to a potential resolution between two different forms of disciplinary knowledge, in which content knowledge is successfully employed to serve the purpose of academic literacy development.

The kinds of writing students are required to produce at English-medium universities can be challenging for proficient speakers of English; for non-English speaking background (NESB) students, this challenge increases greatly. Support is often provided in the form of English for academic purposes (EAP) courses, defined as “teaching English with the aim of assisting learners’ study or research in that language” (Hyland [2006](#), p. 1). Within such programs, the teaching of writing is particularly important, because learning is often assessed through student writing, and it has been described as “probably the single most important skill necessary for academic success” (Nesi and Gardner [2012](#), p. 3). Consequently, support often comes from two mutually exclusive sources, namely, writing instruction for non-native-speakers of English or remedial writing workshops (Wingate and Tribble [2012](#), p. 481) offered in English Language Centers and Study Skills or Learning support units, respectively. The effectiveness of study skills when they are separated from subject content and the process of learning has been questioned (Wingate [2006](#)). Conversely, the strengths of courses that are contextualized, embedded, and mapped to subject courses have also been identified (Sloan and Porter [2009](#)). Furthermore, research by functional linguists has revealed how different subjects require the use of different linguistic patterns (Rose and Martin [2012](#)). Together, these developments have led to a move towards discipline-specific EAP courses, with some schools and faculties developing their own concurrent language support courses. At the center of this movement is a growing awareness of the role of language in constructing different forms of discipline-specific knowledge (e.g., Kuteeva and Airey [2014](#)).

By adopting a sociological approach to curriculum design, the present study explores the issues of teaching and learning writing in the context of concurrent academic language support, which is an increasingly common context for learning among international students at English medium universities. In doing so, it seeks to bridge the gap in the current literature between sociolinguistic perspectives on academic writing and sociological studies on knowledge practices (see Paxton and Frith [2014](#)). This paper examines the relationship between EAP and subject content as two distinct forms of knowledge that are integrated in concurrent academic language support courses, to investigate how the complexity of their integration is managed in the classroom. Specifically, our case study aims to answer three questions: (1) what is the nature of the relationship between these two fields of knowledge integrated in the

course, (2) how is this dual focus managed in the classroom, and 3) how do students respond to the integration of different forms of knowledge in the program?

To do so, we situate our study within empirical studies into both the linguistic features and sociocultural aspects of writing in higher education (Nesi and Gardner 2012; Lea and Street 1998, 2006; Hyland 2002; Johns 1997; Swales 1990; Gee 1990) as well as sociology of education research (Maton 2005, 2014) that analyzes the underlying principles of knowledge practices. Many of the previous sociocultural studies of writing in higher education have examined the expectations, purposes, and structures of writing at university, and these have guided the development of concurrent support for international students. However, these studies have not investigated the nature of knowledge in these courses and how the teaching and learning of writing relates to knowledge practices in such courses. To answer the first research question, we first present a case study of the concurrent academic language support provided at the Business School of an Australian university and analyze the underlying principles of the classroom dynamic in terms of knowledge practices. To answer the second question, we review student feedback on the course to suggest how carefully managed shifts in classroom interaction can be used to bridge different forms of disciplinary knowledge.

## Case study

While the knowledge practices of a discipline-specific EAP course are located within a multitude of local and broader social factors, the course itself provides “readily observable, accessible, multidimensional individuals, events, and sites, [ ... ] in researchers’ immediate environments” (Duff 2014, p. 233), where we can observe how those factors play out in actual classroom practice. As such, we adopt a case study approach with empirical observations to provide an “in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (Gall et al. 2007, p.436) and to develop a deep understanding of the phenomenon using the case as an exemplar (Duff 2014, p.237). Furthermore, Stake (2005) makes a distinction between case studies that are undertaken because of the particular case of interest, i.e., intrinsic case studies, and case studies in which the case leads to a greater understanding of other phenomenon, i.e., instrumental case studies. While our case study has features of both, in this paper, we foreground its instrumental properties in order “to provide insight into an issue ... and [the case] facilitates our understanding of something else” (Stake 2005, p. 445). Through the case study, we present a contextualized profile of the lecture as an example of knowledge practices in a particular educational context and a specific learning event. While our broader case study involved examining multiple sources of information such as teaching materials, student evaluation data, the observations of lectures and tutorials, and discussions with stakeholders, the present paper focuses on how the lecturer integrates the knowledge of EAP and business ethics during a lecture.

Approximately 25% of international postgraduate students at the university in our study are enrolled in the Business School, and 90% of them are NESB students. As instruction and assessment in the school are conducted in English, the school has set a language entry requirement of 6.5 in IELTS or an equivalent standard. In practice, however, students have to progress from composing 250 word “essays” in such entry tests to extended writing anywhere between 1500 and 6000 words. The school also faces pressure from industry, as it is accredited by Advance Collegiate Schools of Business and EQUIS that require quality

assurance on graduates' ability to "communicate effectively orally and in writing," while Australian employers repeatedly demand better communication skills from graduates in their surveys (Lindsay 2015; Matthews 2016). Consequently, the course Management Communication was introduced in 2016 to provide concurrent language support to meet the demands from both academia and industry, after a review of the Master of Business (MBA) program with an enrolment of more than 90% international students. The course was designated as a compulsory course for all students in the MBA program as the largest postgraduate program in the school, which has seen an increase in intake from 181 students in 2016 to 437 in 2018, proportional to the general increase in international postgraduate students in the school. The course is also available as an elective to students enrolling in the Graduate Certificate in Business and Master of Engineering Management programs.

However, the dual purposes embodied by the course present a two-fold challenge to course design. On the one hand, the course has to simultaneously provide students with academic language support to succeed in their program while at the same time providing them with skills to succeed in the workplace. On the other hand, students enroll in the course expecting to acquire knowledge related to business content rather than literacy skills and have to be convinced of the relevance of the course to their degree program. Both of these challenges were very evident in student feedback during the initial run, and the course subsequently bridges the gap between the domains of literacy and business ethics by adopting a genre pedagogy that draws heavily on texts specific to business ethics, following a redesign in 2017. The course design is based on the Sydney School genre pedagogy (Rose and Martin 2012) that has been used for language support in a range of Australian educational contexts from primary, secondary, tertiary, and vocational to English programs for adult migrants. The focus of the language support is discipline specific and aims to help students develop a foundation in business ethics. As such, the course draws upon two distinct fields of knowledge, namely, EAP and business ethics.

## Data

The course is undertaken by students in their first semester in the Master of Business program and spans 13 weeks. In each week, students attend a 2-h lecture and a 1-h tutorial. The lessons are designed as a teaching-learning cycle with 4 stages, based on the genre pedagogy.

In stage 1, the lecturer discusses with students the context of the reading, extracted from a text about business ethics, such as a book, journal article, or an industry report. In stage 2, the lecturer deconstructs the text and annotates it with a highlighter, pen, and document camera together with the students during a detailed reading and introduces the language features of the text in depth. Stages 1 and 2 take place during the lecture. In stage 3, which takes place during a tutorial, tutors collaboratively co-construct a new text with students in a small group setting, using the techniques acquired. In stage 4, students construct a new text independently at home. Apart from class administration, all lessons are very similar in pacing and development.

The 4 stages of the teaching-learning cycle are an integral part of the course design, regardless of the instructor who is teaching and lessons throughout the semester generally follow a similar sequence. For the purpose of this study, we therefore conducted a qualitative analysis of the recording of one such lecture, including the instructor's voice and annotation of the text on the document camera as a representative example of this sequence. The instructor conducting the lesson is an experienced academic in genre pedagogy. Both authors observed

this lecture in person and transcribed the video recording, before analyzing it using Legitimation Code Theory as a methodological framework, which we outline in the following section.

## Methodological framework

Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) is based in an approach to educational sociology known as social realism (e.g., Maton 2000; Moore 2000; Muller 2000; Morais 2002) that is concerned with investigating the socially constructed, dynamic, and historical nature of different forms of knowledge with their own properties. As such, LCT provides a multidimensional analytical framework for examining the properties of knowledge in the course in terms of *knowledge-knower* structures, as well as the contested space between different types of knowledge in terms of *autonomy codes*. While LCT has historically developed alongside the Sydney School genre pedagogy (Maton and Doran 2017), the pedagogy has been developed independently from the LCT tools (Maton et al. 2016) we use to analyze the nature of the pedagogy. In this paper, we argue that the careful management of the autonomy codes in Management Communication is essential to the successful integration between the fields of EAP and business ethics that are characterized by different knowledge-knower structures that we elaborate below.

### Knowledge-knower structures

Building on Bernstein's (1977) concepts of "classification" and "framing" that describe the boundaries between and control within the contexts and categories in a field (Maton 2016, p. 236), knowledge-knower structures (Maton 2014) describe the basis of knowledge claims in a field. From this perspective, the integration of EAP and business ethics in the course is particularly challenging because the two fields are characterized by different knowledge-knower structures.

EAP in the Sydney School genre pedagogy uses explicit linguistic concepts and procedures as a metalanguage that students are required to apply to their writing. The metalanguage used to instruct students in the course is hence characterized by a relatively strong classification and framing of epistemic relations, with a relatively weak classification and framing of social relations. This results in a "vertical" knowledge structure and a "horizontal" knower structure that Maton (2014) describes as a *knowledge code*.

On the other hand, business ethics exposes students to a series of specialized moral arguments, and students display the knowledge through their social values and dispositions. The content knowledge of the course is therefore characterized by a relatively weak classification and framing of epistemic relations, with a relatively strong classification and framing of social relations. This results in a "horizontal" knowledge structure and a "vertical" knower structure that Maton (2014) describes as a *knower code*.

Integrating the fields of EAP and business ethics in the course with different knowledge-knower structures potentially leads to a "code clash" that has to be managed by the instructor, in terms of when and how the concepts and purposes of each field are introduced and emphasized during the lesson.

## Autonomy codes

To understand and potentially resolve such a code clash, we turn to the LCT dimension known as autonomy (Maton 2016, p.237). Autonomy codes identify the degree of external control or influence on knowledge practices (Maton 2005; Maton and Howard 2018). As the course encompasses two knowledge areas, EAP and business ethics, autonomy codes allow us to investigate the nature of the relationship between these two areas of knowledge in the course during the text deconstruction stage of the lecture and how texts on business ethics are used to teach subject content and academic writing. Examining the educational discourse from the lecture allows us to see how the lecturer manages this dual focus when teaching writing.

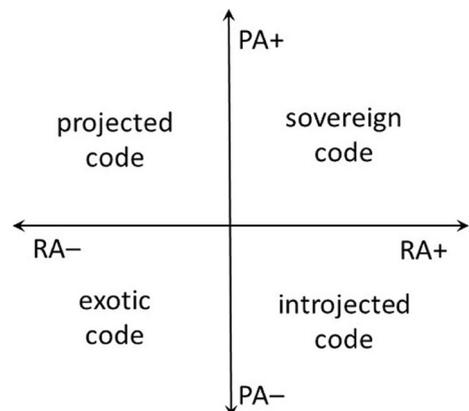
The two aspects of knowledge practices that are investigated in Autonomy are *positional* and *relational autonomy*. Positional autonomy (PA) is concerned with the strength of relations between the elements from within a specific context and those from outside of that context, and it describes the nature of the concepts that are learned. By defining EAP as the core purpose of the course, we can identify elements from within the field of EAP instruction such as grammatical concepts as features of a stronger positional autonomy (PA+) and elements outside of EAP, such as the discussion of concepts in business ethics as features of a weaker positional autonomy (PA-).

Relational autonomy (RA) is concerned with the strength of relations between the principles from within a specific context and those from outside of that context, and it describes the basis for deciding what is considered successful learning in the course. One way to interpret this aspect is the purpose that drives the learning activity, which can be identified through the objective of learning tasks. For example, relational autonomy is stronger (RA+) when the activity is designed to produce proficient writers and weaker (RA-) if it is designed to produce ethical practitioners.

In practice, EAP lessons often involve both knowledge about language and the content of the language of course, and hence, a degree of both PA and RA are present in every classroom. However, the relative strength of both these aspects can be represented on a Cartesian plane, characterizing four types of curricula, known as autonomy codes as shown in Fig. 1.

In the *sovereign code*, classes focus on language elements such as grammar, while texts, if used at all, are treated as mere examples of grammatical structures. Traditional decontextualized grammar classes tend to remain within this code where texts are often

Fig. 1 Autonomy codes



artificially constructed, and lexical items are generally interchangeable; students are given explicit instruction on abstract language elements that they are required to reproduce during assessment. An example of this is the grammar-translation method (Richards and Rodgers 2014, p. 6) and its focus on reading and writing, with students translating sentences into and out of the target language. While this method places few demands on teachers and gives them a sense of control and authority, applying complex grammatical rules to written exercises can be frustrating for students (Richards and Rodgers 2014, p. 7).

In the *introjected code*, contextual knowledge serves to facilitate learning about language, and students rely on contextual elements as a way to understand the text. Process models and critical literacy tend to remain within this code by focusing on contextual awareness without explicit instruction about language elements. Strong forms of Communicative Language Teaching are an example of this, in which they foreground communication with little or no attention paid to language itself. This is based on the assumption that when classroom activities “are directed exclusively at involving the learners in solving communication problems in the target language, then language learning will take care of itself” (Allwright 1979, p. 170). However, research has highlighted the importance on focusing on language form (see Ellis 2016 for a review), while another major drawback of this approach is that it is an example of an invisible pedagogy (Bernstein 1977, p. 119–120; Rose and Martin 2012) as assessment criteria are known only to the teacher who assesses without explicitly working on these assessed areas in the classroom.

In the *projected code*, the acquisition of knowledge about language elements is a means towards a purpose other than that of literacy, and the instrumental function takes precedence over language mastery. For example, in cram schools designed primarily to address migration requirements or to gain entry to academic programs, students may focus on test taking skills to meet certain standards rather than to develop a deep understanding of language mechanics. An example of this can be seen in cram schools and private tutoring such as juku cram schools in Japan (Allen 2016, p. 54) and hagwons in South Korea (Lee 2010). These are termed shadow education (Bray 2009) because of the way they copy changes in mainstream education. Research into English private tutoring (EPT) in Hong Kong has identified the primary aim of these courses as “developing examination competence” (Yung 2015, p. 17) rather than language proficiency, therefore learning English for the purpose of passing an examination.

In the *exotic code*, discussions remain outside the field of language instruction, and they involve neither the elements nor the purposes from the field. An example of the exotic code in language learning is learning by immersion, where the individual who is neither taught nor assessed about language learns it incidentally by participating in activities or associating with speakers of that language. Examples of research into immersion include case studies into naturalistic (non-instructed) language learners that show a range of possible outcomes, from limited progress (Schumann 1976) to limited grammatical development but communicative success (Schmidt 1983) to native speaker-like proficiency (Ioup et al. 1994). However, institutions for tertiary education that do not provide language support programs may implicitly adopt such a model, in which students are assumed to learn language simply by immersing in their academic programs.

While each of these pedagogical approaches historically developed to overcome the weaknesses of the preceding one, when restricted only to a particular code, they may nonetheless be inadequate for addressing students’ learning needs (see Kalantzis and Cope 1993 for a fuller critique). Moreover, these approaches are often assumed to be mutually exclusive, obscuring the possibilities for combining them (Maton 2014, pp. 155). In the

following section, using the analytical concept of autonomy within Legitimation Code Theory (Maton and Howard 2018), we will show how the use of discipline-specific texts in genre pedagogy facilitates movement across these codes, by drawing on each of their strengths without remaining confined to any one of them.

### Positional autonomy

A discipline-specific text can potentially serve as both a semiotic object as well as a source of topical content for discussion. In terms of the field of EAP instruction, a metalanguage can be used to refer to parts of its textual structure, such as words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, and in that sense, the text can be treated as a semiotic object. For example, the instructor may physically point to a chunk of text on display and refer to it as “this paragraph.” However, as the text has been produced in a specific communicative context other than purely for instructional purposes, elements in the text are also coherently assembled from sets of concepts related in a specific field of practice, such as business ethics. The text is therefore ontologically ambiguous, and the instructor may choose to highlight either of its two aspects at any given moment in the lesson, by shuttling verbally between the two fields in the instructional discourse.

One way to examine such fine-grained shifts in the instructional discourse for is by using a translation device. Translation devices are a means of relating concepts to something beyond a theoretical framework. Forms include external languages of description for translating between theory and empirical data within a specific problem situation; external languages of enactment for translating between theory and practice; and mediating languages for translating between theory and all empirical forms of a phenomenon (i.e., a non-specific external language) (Maton 2016, p.243). These relate to Bernstein’s notions of internal and external languages of description (Bernstein 2000, pp.131–141), that is, the conceptual language of the theory and how a theory’s conceptual language “can describe something other than itself” (p. 132).

The process of creating a translation device is described in detail by Maton and Chen (2016). We followed a similar process that involved a review of the literature and discussions between the researchers, followed by observing and recording the lecture and transcribing the recording. This was followed by several cycles of analytic coding (Maton and Chen 2016, p. 40), discussion, and reflection. An initial translation device was devised, and each researcher used it separately, comparing analyses and discussing them, leading to further reflection and refinement of the translation device. The process mirrors the engagement and immersions and moves back to theory described by Maton and Chen (p. 33), and the timings of the movements were decided after the researchers’ discussions and reflections. The process is summarized as follows: we use a two-step process to construct the device. We start by defining EAP as the target field in our study, as it is identified as the objective of the course by the school. Following that, we can distinguish between a stronger and weaker PA by identifying if the text has been treated as an object (as pertaining to EAP) or content (as pertaining to business ethics) in the transcription. Within each category, we then further distinguish between a relatively stronger and weaker form depending on whether it is core or ancillary to the field. The four categories derived in this way are then assigned as PA++, PA+, PA–, and PA– – from strongest to weakest, shown in Fig. 2.

Wordings in the text can be treated as objects by breaking them down into *textual units*, such as a sentence or a keyword to provide a way for students to identify them structurally, hence foregrounding their discursive function. Conversely, the teacher can background the

PA	Type	Subtype	Examples from data
+ ↑ ↓ -	text as <i>objects</i>	<i>linguistic concepts</i> (++)	structure, genre, thesis, topic sentence
		<i>textual units</i> (+)	book, article, sentence, keyword
	text as <i>content</i>	<i>vocabulary</i> (-)	eco-business, Ikea, furniture, wood
		<i>subject matter</i> (--)	supply chain, manufacturer, resources

Fig. 2 Translation device for positional autonomy

structural aspects of the textual expressions by redirecting students’ attention to their referential function to concepts such as eco-business as *vocabulary* in the text. These textual units and vocabulary are primarily elements that can be identified within the text.

At a step removed from the text, the semiotic objects may be located within the more specialized field of EAP as *linguistic concepts*, relating, for example, the genre structure to topic sentences. In this way, the actual instance of its textual form is backgrounded, while the linguistic theory itself is emphasized. Conversely, the text as content may be located within the more specialized field of business ethics about supply chain and their resources as part of the *subject matter* beyond the concepts found within the reading. In this way, the specific instance of a concept is backgrounded, and its association with ideas beyond the text is foregrounded. Linguistic concepts and subject matter are elements that the text alludes to or the necessary context for understanding the text.

In a sense, the text provides an intersection between the broader fields of EAP and business ethics, as shown in Fig. 3. The text serves as an instance of both fields, realizing part of business ethics in specific linguistic units. However, in order to understand the text, students have to draw on knowledge from the broader fields beyond the text. It is therefore part of the instructor’s role to bring in concepts from the respective fields during class discussion.

While the textual units and vocabulary can be identified by general readers reading the text, linguistic concepts and subject matter are only meaningful to those with access to the specialized fields. They are crucial to students’ learning, because mastery of linguistic concepts

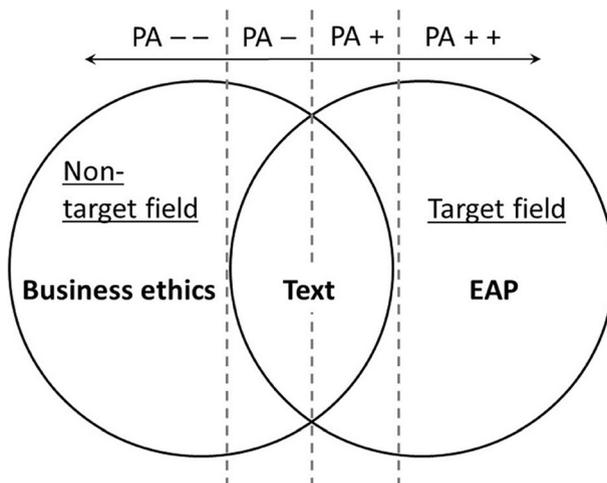


Fig. 3 Text as intersection between two fields

and subject matter is what constitutes their membership into those respective fields. Hence, the text functions as a means to initiate students into the specialized fields, by providing them with a more commonsense way to relate to them while at the same time providing them with corresponding reference points for identifying linguistic concepts with subject matter, e.g., a “book” about “eco-business” and “Ikea” as a “keyword.”

## Relational autonomy

The same procedure is applied for relational autonomy by examining the purpose of the task, as the instructor may choose to direct the students’ attention either towards learning about language or about content at different points in the lesson. Relational autonomy can be identified in the exchange because each exchange constitutes a learning task, to which students can respond successfully or unsuccessfully. For example, the teacher may instruct students explicitly to carry out an action that relates to a focus on writing technique, and students have to orient themselves accordingly to successfully complete the task. Conversely, the teacher may ask a question to direct students’ attention to the content of the reading, and students have to orient themselves accordingly to successfully answer the question. By defining the learning of language as the target purpose identified by the school, we similarly distinguish between RA++, RA+, RA–, and RA– –, as shown in Fig. 4.

At one end, there may be an orientation to *technique*, in which the task is directed towards the acquisition of writing skills, such as the procedure to identify the author’s position. This form of task is core to the purpose of the course, as it supports learning that can be reapplied across other courses. At the other end, there may be an orientation to *topic*, in which the purpose of the task is directed towards understanding the concepts and values specific to business ethics, such as what other potential positions can be found across the field, to explore the background of the reading.

As intermediate steps between the two ends, an orientation to *task* involves applying the rules of language to locate the arguments within a specific reading, while an orientation to *argument* involves identifying and engaging with those arguments in the reading. By managing and shifting the moment-to-moment orientation of the learning tasks, the instructor draws on students’ knowledge about business ethics and redirects it towards learning about language while drawing on their knowledge about language to learn about business ethics. In this way, the instructor is able to overcome the learner’s paradox where students are trapped by being unable to recognize material that they have not already learned, because the items in one field serve as the means to access those in another, as we will demonstrate in the following section.

RA	Type	Subtype	Examples from data
+  -	learning about <i>language</i>	orientation to <i>technique</i> (++)	“How do you identify the author’s position?”
		orientation to <i>task</i> (+)	“Where is the author’s position?”
	learning about <i>content</i>	orientation to <i>argument</i> (–)	“What is this author’s position?”
		orientation to <i>topic</i> (– –)	“What other positions are there?”

Fig. 4 Translation device for relational autonomy

## Analysis

We will illustrate below our application of the translation device for positional autonomy and relational autonomy to representative extracts of the interaction in the third week of the course. Our analysis focuses on stages 1 (field building) and 2 (detailed reading) of the learning cycle, in which the instructor builds the context of the reading with the students and deconstructs the text, highlighting keywords and phrases and annotating them with the students.

### Field building

The instructor starts by building a shared context of the reading in 3 distinct phases. The instructor begins in the exotic code, by paraphrasing the reading in common sense expressions, for example:

So the only way to be **eco-friendly** is to change these things, right, to stop doing these things, but they don't want to change.

In other words they want the **status quo**. They want to remain the leading brand. They want to remain highly profitable.

So big brands are practicing eco-business in a way that increases risk and contributes to global, **environmental and social crisis**.

The things that they do are harming the environment.

**The book also argues that** big brands are harming sustainability and that other actors...

Terms (in bold) such as “ecofriendly,” “status quo,” and “environmental crisis” are not from the reading but from other parts of the book and are hence drawn from the wider subject matter (PA–) to provide students with the context of the reading. The instructor also orients students to the main argument (RA–) of the reading.

The instructor shifts to the introjected code to re-orient students to the linguistic task underlying the reading:

...so, there are many of you who picked out the last line, right? It's important, so you put that in your summary, but then when you wrote the summary, you talk about other actors. But what's wrong with that? **You didn't say who the actors are.**

Who are the actors? Not Keanu Reeves. We are talking about **supply chains, smaller businesses, civil society, government, other businesses, professional associations, NGOs like WWF** – these are the other actors that we are talking about.

The instructor thus forges a connection between the reading and a summary task (RA+) that students have attempted previously and paraphrases expressions in the reading using common sense terms from the subject matter (PA–) that students already know, such as “supply chains,” “government,” and “NGOs.”

The instructor then shifts to the exotic code to bring the discussion about the linguistic task back to the context:

So, they were saying that these are the groups that should take action to stop the **big businesses** from doing what they're doing.

That's **what they are trying to say.**

Finally, the instructor re-orientes students back to the argument (RA–) of the reading by reminding students of “what they are trying to say” and summarizes the various concepts of

“supply chains,” “government,” and “NGOs” with the vocabulary (PA –) found in the reading, so that students are now able to read the expressions with understanding. By shifting from the exotic to introjected code and back again, the instructor orients the subject matter and arguments of business ethics to the linguistic task of reading academic language.

## Detailed reading

Following field building, the instructor teaches students about how to provide an outline in the opening paragraph to help readers identify the main points covered in the text. The instructor does this by identifying parts of the outline in the opening paragraph and labeling them, before connecting them to the main points covered subsequently in the body paragraphs.

The detailed reading begins similarly in the exotic code, in which the instructor highlights and paraphrases a line in the paragraph:

Now, let’s look at the next part here.

“The process will be messy and complex, with even small changes to products and processes requiring great efforts with often unanticipated setbacks.”

So what is this line about? **This line is about setbacks.**

Unexpected setbacks.

As students are already familiar with the context from the field building stage, the instructor is able to start with *vocabulary* (PA–) “about setbacks” found in the text in this stage and draw on students’ orientation to the *argument* (RA–). Once the concept of “setbacks” has been established, the instructor underlines the word and numbers the line “1” in the margin beside the line, prompting students to do likewise.

The instructor then goes through the same steps to identify the next few points about “revenue” and “profit” line by line:

Now, the next line says “The financial investments, though measurable and real, are also a tiny fraction of a company’s revenue turnover or total profits.”

Is this the same point as the setbacks? It’s not, right?

**What is this line about?** [student talks]

Yup, it’s about **revenue**, or **profit**, okay, so this part is about money.

It’s not about setbacks. This part is about money.

However, in covering the final point about “collusion,” the instructor transitions into the introjected code in the second phase, in order to shift the students’ focus from learning about the content to learning about language:

Okay, let’s look at the next line.

“Company forums and consortia to share sustainability ideas and cooperate on standards may even function as a veil for collusion.”

So what’s the **main point** here?

This is about **collusion**. Is that the same as money?

No, it’s not. It’s a separate point.

**So we have three different points together.** Okay?

Now, next.

Even though the focus remains fixed on *vocabulary* (PA–), the orientation has shifted subtly from describing the content line by line to the linguistic *task* (RA+) of identifying them as three distinct “main points.” Following this, the instructor strengthens the relational autonomy further by asking the question “why,” in order to re-orient students towards the main points about “setback,” “revenue/profit,” and “collusion” that students have numbered as a linguistic *technique* (RA++):

Now, so you have three different points, right? **Setbacks, revenue/profits and collusion.**

This is point number one: setbacks. Money, point number two.

Veil of collusion, point number three. In other words deception, hiding something bad.

Ok, so you have something going on here.

**Why** are there three different points lumped together at the beginning?

The instructor then uses the orientation to technique as a springboard into the sovereign code in the third phase of the interaction, by connecting those main points to individual segments of the rest of the document to reveal the structure of the genre:

So what are these three things telling you? They are telling you that you’re expecting things to improve, but there are setbacks.

Where did you hear about setbacks? Point number 1. Do you see that?

So this point number 1 refers to **argument 1.**

And then it refers to **argument 2.** And then, it refers to **argument 3.**

So do you see that what I’ve put down as

point number 1 **has been developed into** arguments 1, 2 and 3.

Having shifted students’ orientation to the linguistic *technique* (RA++) of textual “development,” the instructor asks students to distinguish between segments of the reading as *textual units* (PA+), by labeling them “argument 1,” “argument 2,” and “argument 3.”

As a final step of this sequence in the lesson, the instructor shifts further into the sovereign code by strengthening positional autonomy, to introduce a metalanguage for discussing linguistic techniques:

Okay, now that we’ve seen this, we can go back to this part again. We have points 1, 2, and 3, right? This is actually **the outline.** This part here is the content page of the article.

It tells you there are three points.

So part of the **skill and technique** of reading is to be able to figure out where is the content page. Now once you’ve figured out the content page or the structure, you will know what to look out for.

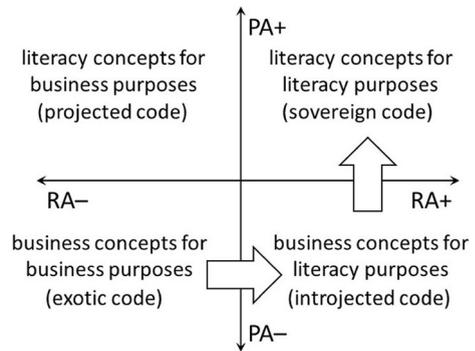
That makes it a lot easier when you’re looking for points.

In this part of the sequence, the instructor introduces the technical term “outline” as a linguistic concept (PA++) and consolidates the lesson by providing the rationale for learning the “skill and *technique*” (RA++). By writing the term “outline” beside points 1, 2, and 3 in the opening paragraph, the instructor establishes the concept as part of the metalanguage that can be reapplied to other readings, fulfilling the objective of the EAP course.

## Discussion

The analysis has demonstrated that successfully moving through the teaching-learning cycle involves shifts in positional and relational autonomy as two distinct but related variables,

**Fig. 5** Autonomy tour for textual deconstruction



which impact on the students' learning as well as their experience of the EAP course. This is possible because EAP and business ethics are integrated. A non-discipline-specific EAP course would not have such an impact on students' understanding of the disciplinary knowledge due to non-disciplinary course readings. In such a course, the students could develop their writing skills but not necessarily the types of writing valued by the discipline and not their subject knowledge.

Introducing students into the context of reading in the field building stage of genre pedagogy involves a shift from the exotic code (PA–, RA–) to the introjected code (PA–, RA+), before returning to the exotic code (PA–, RA–). By maintaining positional autonomy, the instructor is able to shift the focus from business ethics (RA–) to EAP (RA+), allowing students to relate the learning objectives across both fields. The instructor also makes use of this shift in orientation to transition from students' commonsense contextual understanding (PA–) to a more critical focus on key terms in the reading (PA–).

Deconstruction of the reading in the detailed reading stage involves shifting from the exotic code (PA–, RA–) to the introjected code (PA–, RA+) and strengthening relational autonomy (PA–, RA++), before arriving in the sovereign code (PA++, RA++). The gradual strengthening of relational autonomy from RA– to RA++ allows the instructor to establish a sense of continuity between elements from the two fields, linking the keywords (PA–) to linguistic techniques (PA++) via an understanding of reading as a linguistic task (PA+) and shifting the autonomy code from exotic (i.e., non-target) to sovereign (i.e., target) via introjected. Aside from the interaction detailed in the analysis, we also observe that the same shift recurs with respect to different techniques for the remainder of the lesson in the form of an autonomy "tour," as shown in Fig. 5.

By selecting, sequencing, and pacing knowledge in the classroom, the teacher enacts shifts in autonomy codes, in the form of an autonomy tour. The autonomy tour highlights for students the nature of the relationship between business-related concepts and linguistic ones while simultaneously raising students' critical awareness about language use. The shift in field provides students with tools beyond the reading (PA++) that they can subsequently apply to a new reading in business ethics (RA–). In this way, the text plays a crucial role in bridging EAP and business ethics. It serves as an ontologically ambiguous object that functions in both fields, so that students can associate elements across them, depending on the nature of relational autonomy in a given part of the interaction.

The autonomy tour also plays an important role in bridging the students' and the instructor's perspectives. While the school has created the course to provide academic language

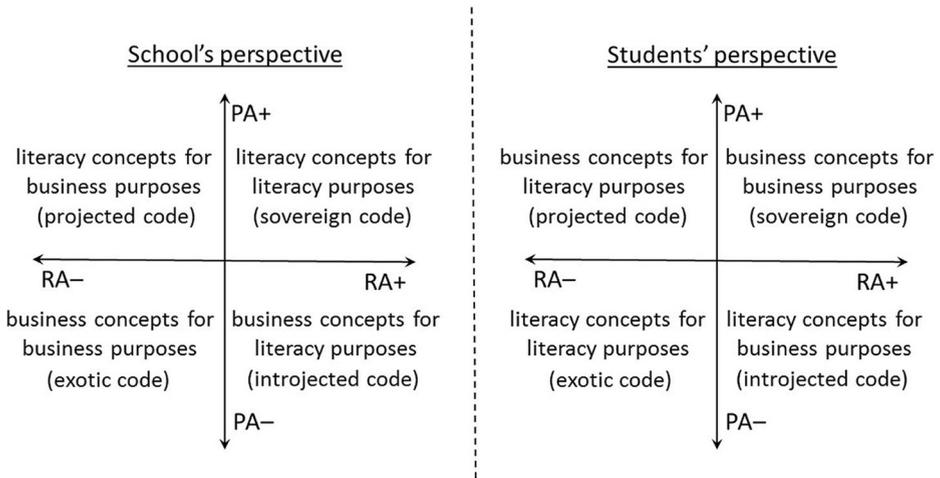


Fig. 6 Autonomy from clashing perspectives

support, students do not automatically see its relevance to their academic program, because they enrolled in the MBus program primarily to acquire knowledge related to business content. For instance, the course did not have the teaching-learning cycle when it was first introduced in 2016. In an anonymous student course evaluation held by the university, qualitative feedback that mention business communication specifically are the following:

- I think it lacked in providing actual business communication knowledge and writing skills.
- I hope this basic writing course can explain more skills about writing an essay/research paper instead of teaching grammar.
- I would rather contributed my efforts and time to studying more business-related course that is more useful in my future career.
- It would be better if this course teach us more about practical communication in business world rather than just only teach us how to use the perfect grammar in writing.

One way to understand the feedback is that while the school adopts a perspective that regards academic literacy as the target field of the course, students see business studies as the target field. In other words, students and the school adopted clashing perspectives on the course, as shown in Fig. 6.

When the course was designed as a traditional grammar class in 2016 in what may seem like a sovereign code to the school, it in fact appeared to be in exotic code to the students, highlighting the fact that the nature of knowledge has to be analyzed from a specific perspective. In this case, the understanding of each field as a sovereign or exotic code depends largely on whether it was viewed from the school's or the students' agenda. This is demonstrated by a substantial improvement in students' rating of the course from 3.5 to 4.37 out of 5 after introducing an autonomy tour in 2017. Even though there are understandably positive and negative comments in both runs, after the implementation of the autonomy tour in 2017, student feedback that focuses on business communication are the following:

- Good introduction to the technical aspects of business communication.
- Helped me with business writing.

- Relating communication aspects of business was excellent.
- It gave a great basis of business communications for people who do not work in that type of environment.
- Before starting the course, I hoped that it will improve my academic skills, not only it did that, but also the course vastly improved my business skills.

Interestingly, the content of the course and reading material has not changed substantially between these two periods. What has changed is its pedagogy or the sequence and manner in which the content is delivered to incorporate the autonomy tour. The teacher's enactment of autonomy code shifts has led to the potential resolution of the clash between the school and its students understanding of its value.

## Conclusions and further research

While academic language support is increasingly important in higher education, how this is most effectively provided for students remains unclear. Recent research has found that the explicit teaching of knowledge about language is important to success of discipline-specific genres (Rose and Martin 2012). However, academic language and genres are also intricately linked to discipline-specific epistemologies (Hyland 2015). Instead of assuming that the two forms of knowledge simply integrate in the classroom, the present study demonstrates that academic language support and content knowledge can have substantially different knowledge-knower structures that have to be managed by the instructor, where the text serves as a bridge between the two fields, by allowing gradual shifts in positional and relational autonomy. Managing the competing demands between learning about language and content knowledge by using an autonomy tour, the instructor uses students' understanding in one field as a springboard for learning in the other, to allow for deeper understanding and integrated learning. Rather than keeping to a specific autonomy code by teaching decontextualized grammar or leaving students to their own devices to learn through immersion, students felt more motivated to learn and were able to relate knowledge about language to their subject area, as we have found in the student feedback.

However, due to the limitations of this study, there are two forms of pedagogical practices predicted by the autonomy framework that remain to be investigated. The first is an orientation to topic (RA- -) that simply has not been observed in the interaction; it seems that the instructor has not found it necessary to explore other potential positions or arguments available in the field of business ethics beyond the scope of the reading for the purpose of discussing and deconstructing the linguistic features of the text. This could be a result of a strong focus on EAP as the target field, although the exploration of alternative positions is arguably an important aspect of critical thinking. The second is the role of the projected code, such as in applying linguistic techniques (PA++) to learn about the content of business ethics (RA-). Doing so would turn what students have acquired in the course into an important learning tool that students can use to accomplish independent learning.

We anticipate that both an orientation to topic and the projected code can be found in the tutorial as well as in other courses, which we will explore in further studies. The tutorial comprises the co-construction stage of the teaching-learning cycle, in which the instructor guides students to construct a new text with their peers using the linguistic techniques that they learned in the lecture, in preparation for applying them in other

courses. On the other hand, language instructors in the school are also attached to the other courses to provide further language support for students with their readings and working with content instructors to help students acquire knowledge about the respective fields, thus completing the autonomy tour.

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