

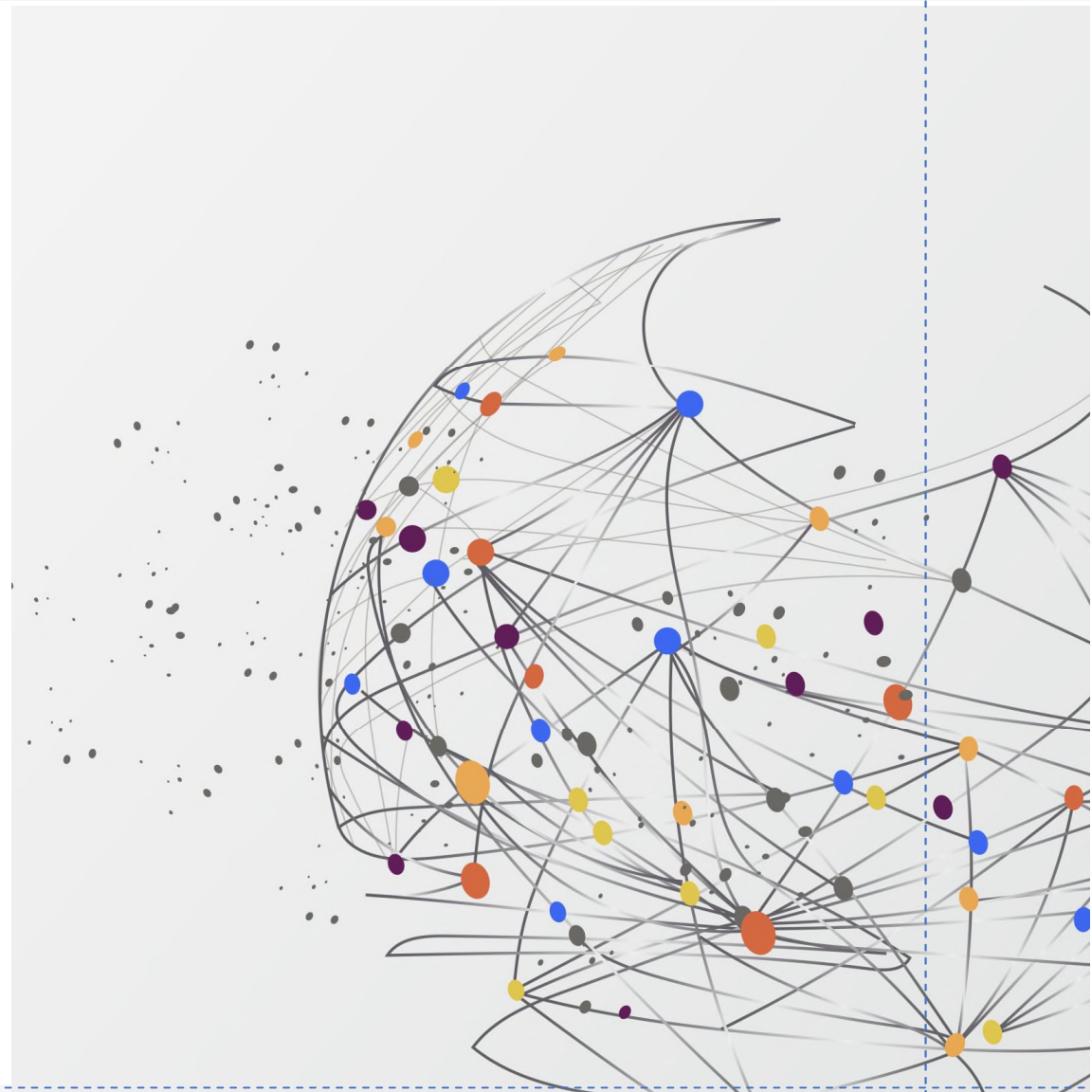
Silo Busting in Academic Language: A Fresh Look at the Elements of Academic Language

Alex Ding

The University of Leeds

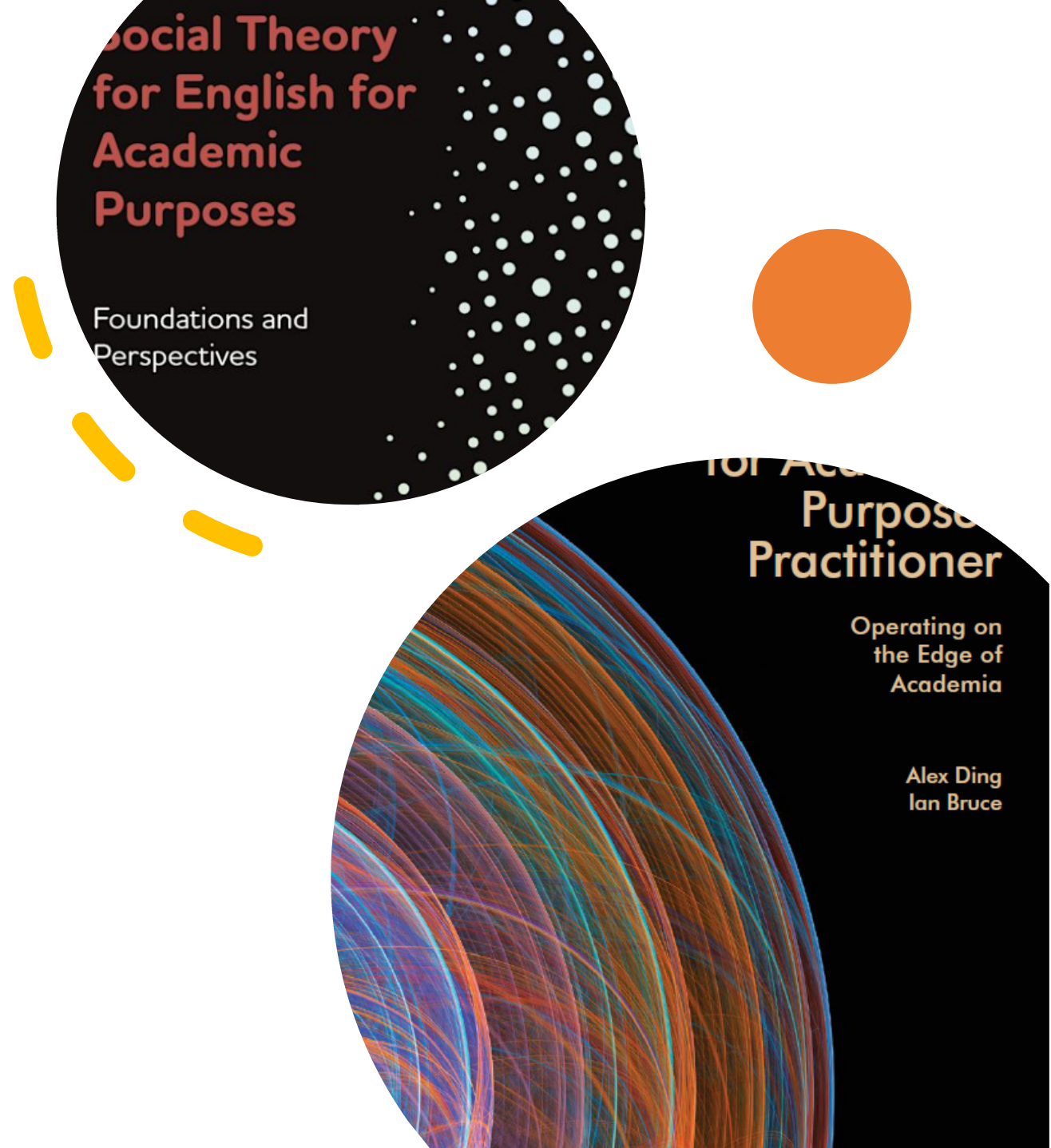
Ian Bruce

The University of Waikato, New Zealand



Joint Book Project: Aim

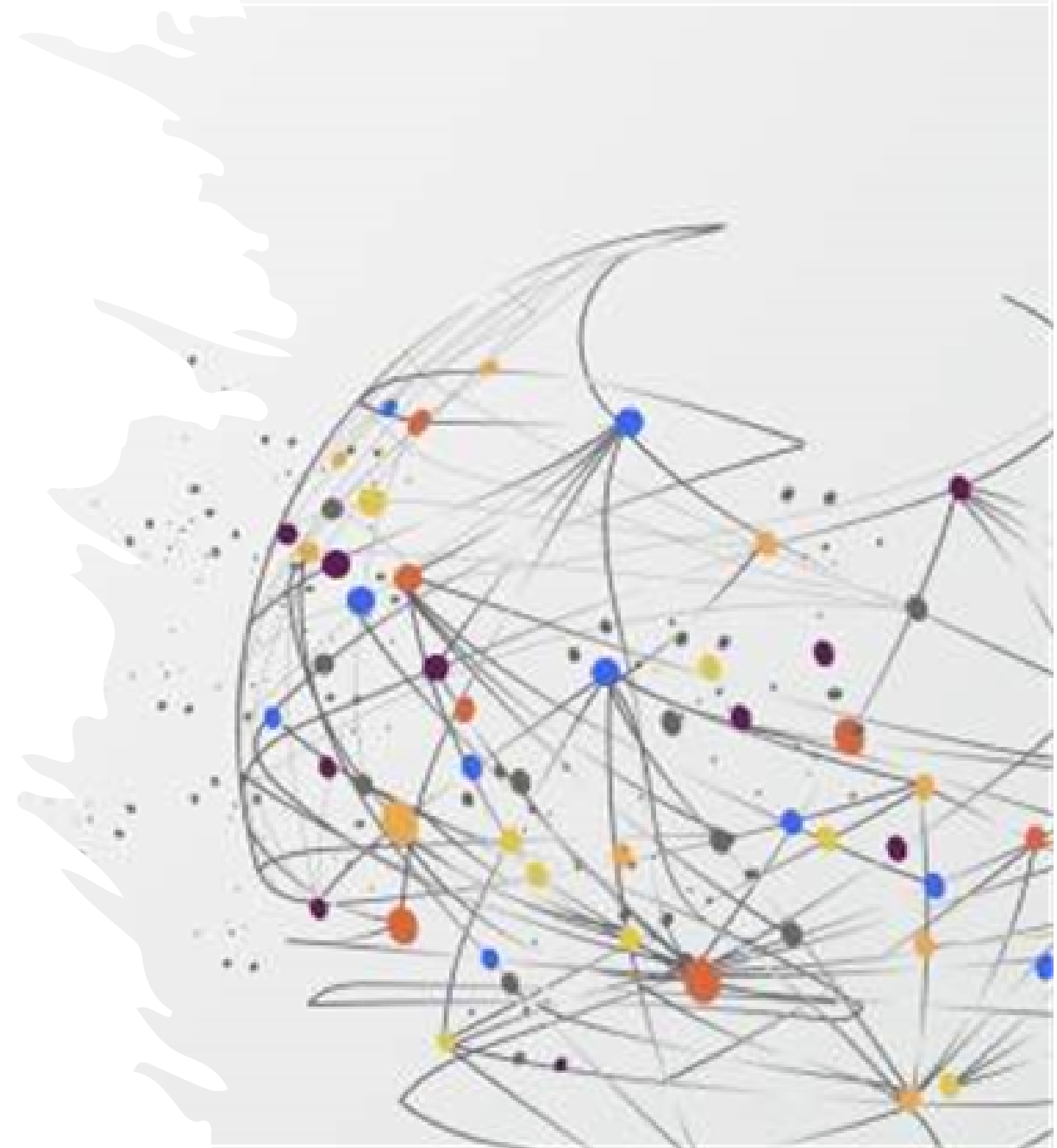
To develop a more comprehensive theoretical framing of the dimensions of academic language based on the categories of Ferguson (1997).
Developments of ideas from (and elsewhere) ...

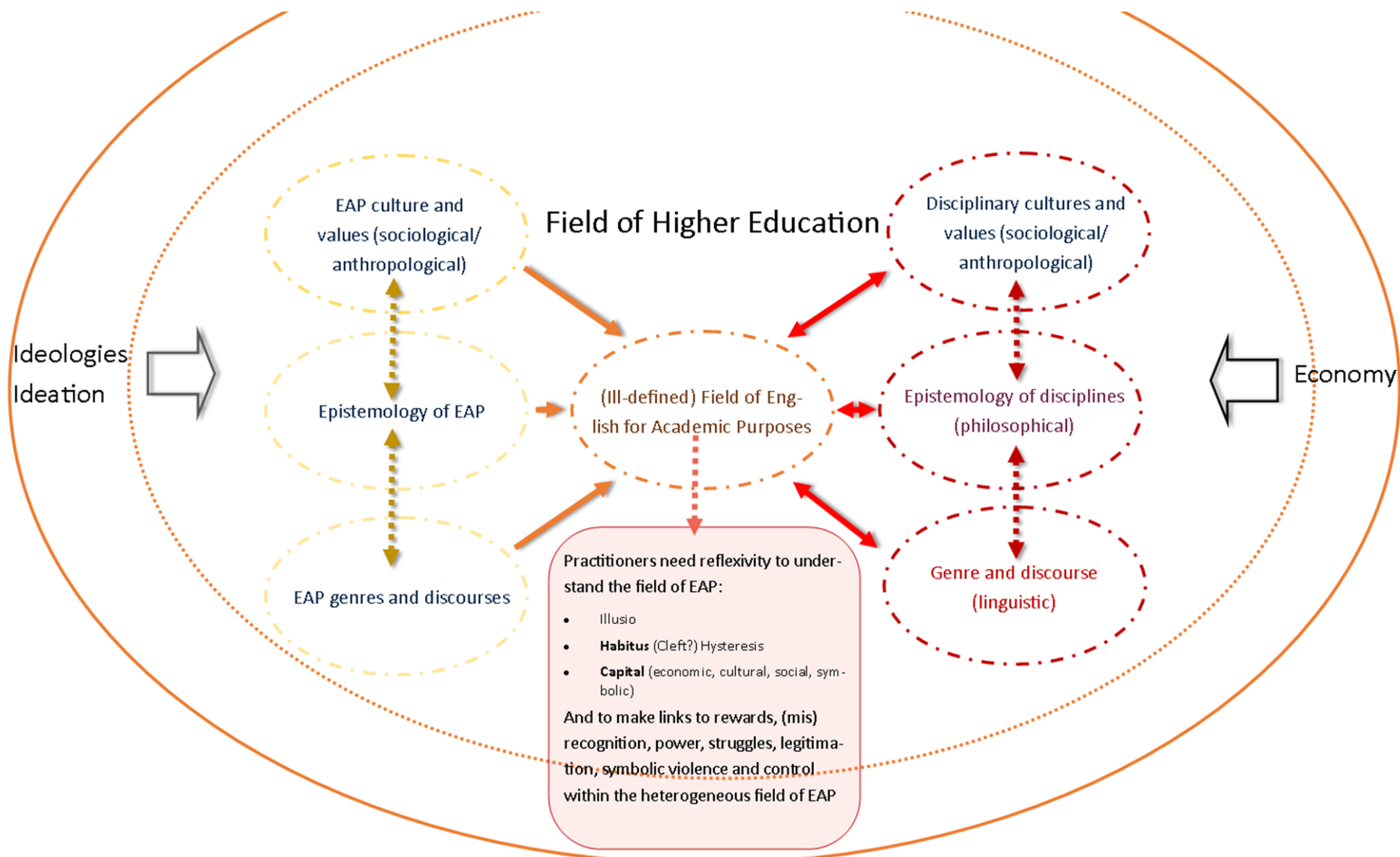


Ferguson's (1997) Dimensions of ESP Teacher Knowledge

a discipline's:

- culture and values
- epistemology
- characteristic discourse and genres





Outline of Talk

- current approaches to academic language in EAP
- constraints on EAP practitioner knowledge and research
- Ferguson's (1997) knowledge domains – broadening the approach
- implications for EAP practitioner knowledge and practice and research

Approaches to Academic Language in EAP

- *diversity of the knowledge base of EAP, yet there is . . .*
- *limited operationalization of the dimensions of academic language **in EAP practice***
- *a 'spiral of narrowing focus' on the range of language elements examined **in EAP research and publication***



EAP Practice: Approaches to academic Language

- often governed by commercial textbook series based on a structural syllabus – TESOL model
- genre – elements of ESP approach drawn upon in writing instruction
- linguistic knowledge - eclectic use of elements of SFL grammar, insights from corpus studies

EAP Research in Key Journals

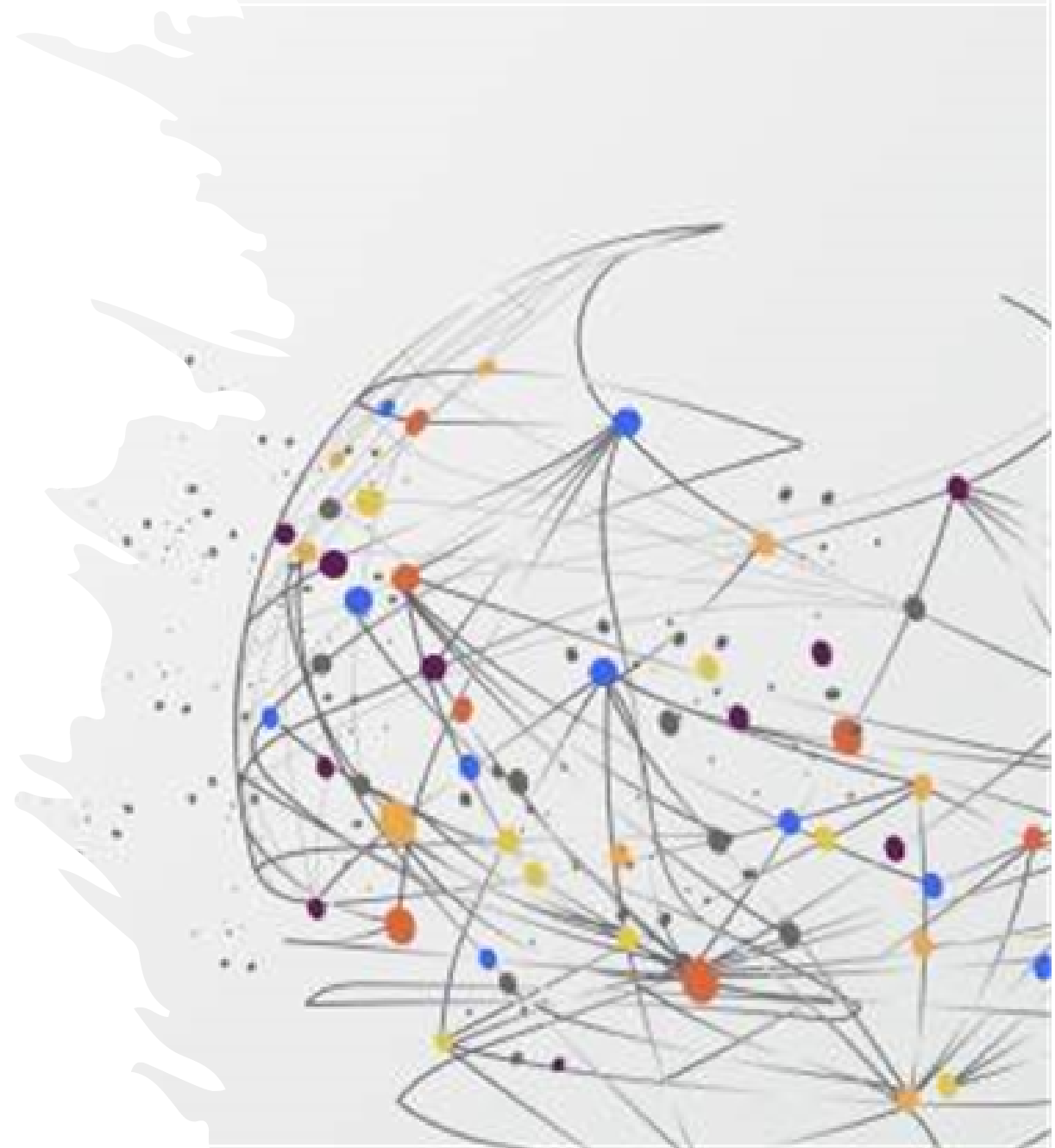
Focus of articles in JEAP and ESPJ: 2018-2023

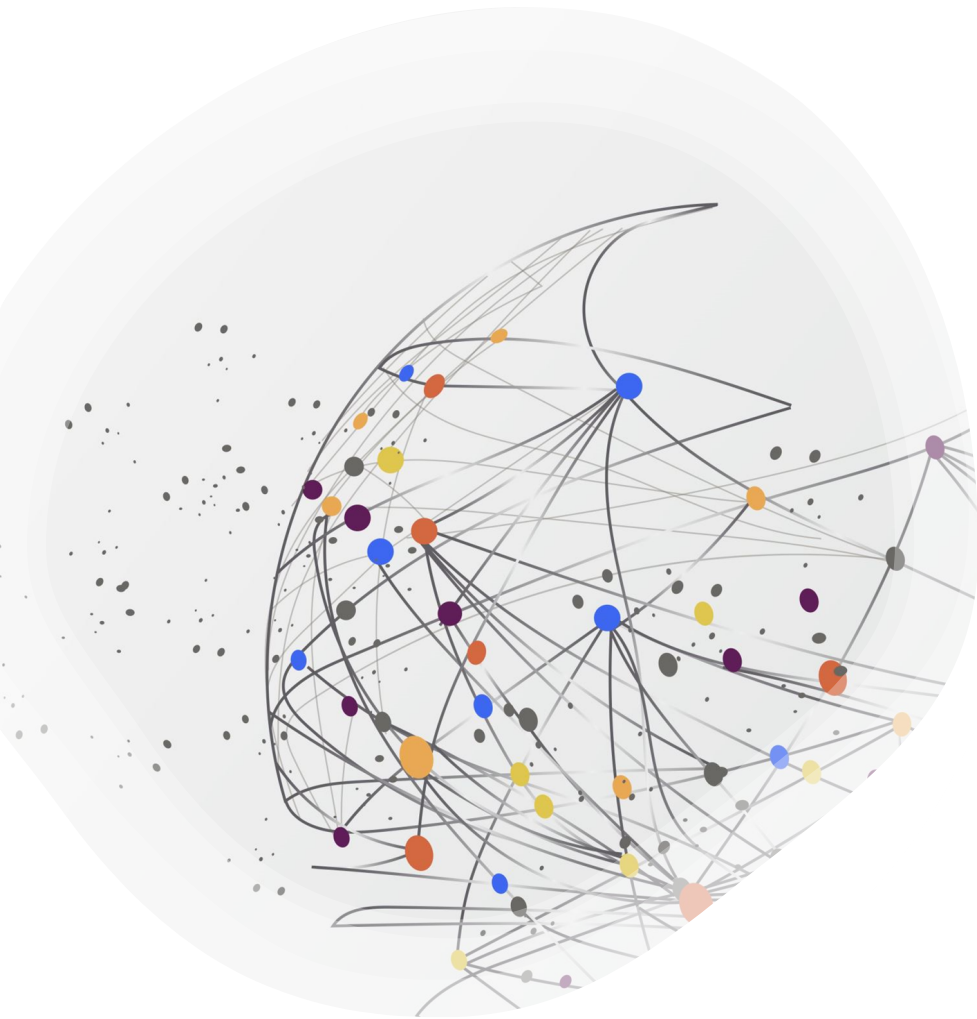
- language issues - 82% of ESPJ articles, 76% of JEAP articles
- social issues* – 16% of ESPJ articles, 24% of JEAP articles
- epistemology - 2% of articles in ESPJ, % in JEAP ??

*
often EAP practitioner- or student-related focus

Understandings of Academic Language: Influences and Constraints in EAP

- practitioner/researcher divide
- (narrowing) research agendas set by journal editorial boards
- recent bibliographic studies and their 'reifying' function
- metrics
- past 'luminary' culture (inherited from TESOL?)
- EAP as a commodifiable service in third spaces (*reliance on commercial materials – no needs analysis*)





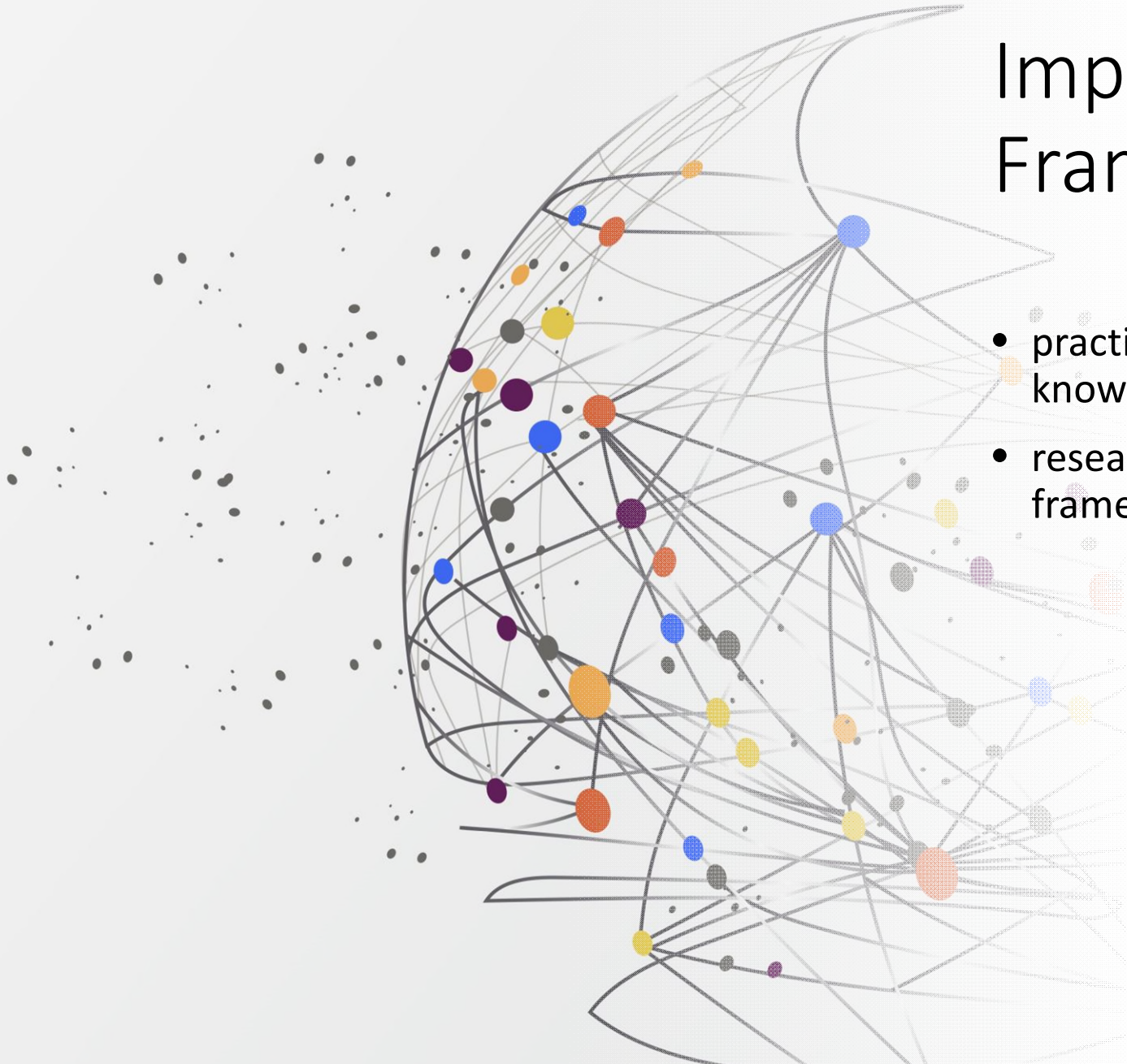
Ferguson's Knowledge Domains as an Approach to Disciplinary Language

*disciplinary communication **integrates** knowledge
of:*

- interactions (sociological & anthropological knowledge)
- epistemology (philosophical knowledge)
- discourse and textual practices and artefacts (discursive & linguistic knowledge)

Implications of Framework

- practitioner formation – knowledge development
- research and practice frameworks



Practitioner Knowledge Development

An EAP practitioner toolkit that includes knowledge of:

- social theory – to understand the social processes and procedures of disciplinary communities
- epistemological theory – to understand how disciplines create and validate their knowledges
- discourse theory – to deconstruct and understand the communicative forms and routines of disciplinary communities



EAP Research Frameworks

- a broader conception of the knowledge elements involved in academic communication
- a refocusing on the 'applied' nature of EAP research



EAP Practice Frameworks

need to account for:

- ethics
- needs analyses
- interrogate relationships between needs and parameters of provision



The Way Forward