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Events and processes in the discourse of history: Disciplinary History and History classroom interaction

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Abstract

This chapter explores how events and processes are constructed and evaluated in the discourse of History. It explores construals of recent Chilean history written by specialists and the pedagogical recontextualization of disciplinary knowledge in an 11th grade History class. The discourse of History analysed relates to human rights violations committed during Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–1990) and the ways this traumatic past is specialized and recontextualized in classroom interactions. The focus here is specifically on how historical processes and events are evaluated in these discourses, drawing on Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework and Oteíza and Pinuer's (2012) proposals for the semantic domain of APPRECIATION, an elaboration developed to take into account the particularity and complexity of the processual cline (of events, processes and situations) in historical discourses. Our focus is to better understand how the process of human rights violations is transmitted to new generations. In addition we analyse semantic gravity and semantic density from Legitimation Code Theory (Maton 2014), to explore the levels of abstraction that not only build cumulative knowledge but also integrate personal and social memories of the recent past and 'historize memories' of a sensitive period of Chilean history.

Key words: discourse of history, history classroom interaction, transmission of memories, appraisal framework, semantic density, semantic gravity.

1. Introduction¹

The main purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how the construction of events and processes in historical discourses also implies the construction of valorative prosodies ([Martin & White 2005](#)) involving different levels of abstraction and the participation of concrete historical facts and people. We propose that a joint analysis using the APPRAISAL system from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and the dimension of Semantics from Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) helps interpret the transmission of memories of human rights violations in Chile's recent past in classroom interactions focusing on the construction of historical significance regarding this period.

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This work is part of a broader research interest in the valorative reconstruction of historical memories as it unfolds in history discourse and official reports of human rights violations and the transmission of historical memories of these human rights violations to new generations, particularly through its recontextualization in History classrooms. The historical periods contemplated in this research are Allende's Popular Unity government (1970–1973) and Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–1990).

When dealing with the transmission of historical memories of a nation's past to new generations, personal and social memories play a crucial role. Accordingly a valorative approach to history, focusing on how meaning is constructed to build cumulative axiological and epistemological knowledge, including a focus on how semantic gravity (context-dependence of meaning) and semantic density (complexity of meaning) contribute to historical thinking.

We are particularly interested in the interpretations of the past that are constructed in the recent Chilean historical discourse, taking into account the fact that the legitimation of certain memories also contributes to our understanding of present and future societies ([Achugar, 2009](#); [Achugar et al. 2013](#); [Oteiza 2014](#); [Oteiza et al. 2015](#); [Wodak, 2011](#)). In order to better understand how teachers transmit specialized disciplinary knowledge to their students we ask the following questions: How do teachers reproduce or not the official and academic discourses specified in the official curriculum and professional documents? And, to what level are the concrete facts that are part of personal and social memories of human rights violations constructed in History classes? We postulate that it is of particular relevance to pay attention to issues highlighted by the LCT concepts of semantic gravity and semantic density through which classroom interaction enacts explanations of history, explanations that help students integrate social and collective memories of the recent past into the historical thinking of a nation. In some respects, *epistemic–semantic density* (where the meanings being condensed are empirical descriptions or formal definitions) is privileged in the classroom interaction considered in this chapter; nevertheless, as noted in the project overall, this epistemic–semantic density is regularly combined with a highly charged *axiological–semantic density* (where meanings being condensed

are moral, political, affective, aesthetic and political stances) which privileges a moral and ethical approach to the topic (Oteíza *et al.* 2015).

The corpus of this research is composed of classroom interactions and relevant academic publications. The representation of the Popular Unity government of President Salvador Allende (1970–73) is illustrated from the perspective of the sociologist Tomás Moulian (*Chile actual: Anatomía de un mito*, 1997) and historians Correa, Figueroa, Jocelyn-Holt, Rolle and Vicuña (*Historia del siglo XX chileno. Balance paradójico*, 2001). Both books are well known in Chile and have been read by general public and at universities. Moulian's book can be considered a sociology essay, while Correa *et al.* is a historical textbook. Many excerpts of these books are quoted in recently published history textbooks designed for primary and secondary education in the country – the very materials that History teachers use to prepare their classes (including study guides, power point presentations and lectures) (Oteíza *et al.* 2015; Oteíza *et al.* forthcoming).

This chapter is organized in the following manner: the first section is a brief presentation of the appraisal framework developed by [Martin & White \(2005\)](#) and the elaboration of the APPRECIATION system in relation to the construction of events and processes in historical discourses by Oteíza and Pinuer (2012) and Oteíza (2014). To illustrate this complementary APPRECIATION system, we present examples taken from disciplinary discourse written by historians and sociologists regarding recent Chilean history. The following section deals with an extract of an 11th grade classroom interaction, as an example of a recontextualization of History discourse. For this analysis we reconsider the appraisal analysis in relation to the sociological concepts from LCT of semantic gravity and semantic density (Maton 2013, [2014a](#), [2014b](#)). The chapter concludes with some remarks related to the potential of the appraisal framework for doing discourse analysis, and in particular, the use of the revised APPRECIATION system for working with historical discourse, and the use of the categories of semantic density and semantic gravity for dealing with issues of classroom interactions and the transmission of historical memories.

2. The analytical framework of appraisal as a model for discourse analysis

2.1. General presentation of the appraisal framework

The appraisal framework is a model of evaluative discourse semantic systems proposed by Martin and White (White 2003; Martin 2003; [Martin & White 2005](#)). It is a development of the interpersonal metafunction (Halliday 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014) and its role enacting the register variable tenor. As Martin (2014) explains:

as discourse analysts we wanted a system that would generalise across diverse lexicogrammaticalisations, bringing feelings together in relation to one another so that we could describe prosodies of evaluation in relation to genre (and later on in relation to the tenor of face-to-face interaction and the negotiation of identity (Eggins & Slade 1997; Martin 2010c). This meant turning from a grammatical perspective on evaluation to a discourse semantic one.

(Martin 2014: 17–18)

Consequently, as [Martin & White \(2005\)](#) have emphasized, the main objective of the appraisal framework has been to present a comprehensive and systematic discourse semantic perspective on linguistic resources that can be used to value social experience.

This framework allows us to consider how intersubjectivity is built by writers and readers, who interact in every text in a determinate social and cultural space which has shaped the way emotions and opinions are codified through language or by means of other semiotic modes. Evaluation thus plays a constructive role in the social organization, in the sense that it shows how we share feelings in the discourse in order to generate social belonging, a process that at the same time has the potential to naturalize reading positions (Martin 2004).

The appraisal framework considers that every element in a text, whether considered discretely or in tandem with other meanings, is a potential instance of subjectivity; interpersonal meanings are accordingly considered as a prosody that works in a cumulative way to create a radiating pattern of evaluative meaning in discourse. This idea that evaluation tends to unfold throughout the whole text, instead of being limited to one particular part of it, is well recognized by linguists working in this area (Thompson & Hunston, 2000:19). In doing an appraisal analysis,

ideational and textual meanings are also considered because they may contribute to interpersonal meaning or are built simultaneously with interpersonal meaning in the

discourse. Consequently, the ideational choices indicate valuations of ATTITUDE, which are rarely neutral and are not inscribed explicitly, but rather invoked. That is, the selection of ideational meanings could invoke evaluation by means of a metaphorical language, for example, although explicit attitudinal lexis is absent in the text (Oteiza & Pinuer 2013: 48).

APPRAISAL organizes evaluation in three main semantic domains: ENGAGEMENT, ATTITUDE and GRADUATION (Martin & White, 2005). The subsystem of ATTITUDE has three semantic arenas: (a) emotions (AFFECT), which deals with the expression of positive and negative feelings; (b) ethics/morality (JUDGEMENT), which is concerned with attitudes toward character and behaviour of people (to admire or to criticize, to praise or to condemn); and (c) aesthetics/values (APPRECIATION), which involves evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena according to the ways in which they are valued in a given field.

The subsystem of GRADUATION has to do with the fact that the strength of attitudes can be raised or lowered in the discourse. It is possible to intensify or diminish our meanings (FORCE), for example: ‘an unprecedented experience that has generated many hopes, failed’, or we can ‘sharpen’ or ‘soften’ the boundaries of categorical meanings of an experiential phenomenon or attitudinal value (FOCUS) using words like *sort of* or *kind of* among others, for example: ‘It was an experience that effectively had valuable repercussions’.

The semantic system of ENGAGEMENT focuses attention to the source of attitudes, involving either a monoglossic or heteroglossic orientation. Authors may recognize alternative positions, thus adopting a more heteroglossic orientation, or ignore such positions, therefore closing down the dialogic space with a monoglossic stance. Engagement analysis implies adopting a Bakhtinian perspective, which means that every verbal interaction is viewed as dialogic:

This principle echoes the idea that the sign is socially motivated and for that reason, it is impossible to separate it from the social situation. This takes us to the dialectic relationship between language and context that has been emphasized by Halliday (1978), and by many discourse analysts working with SFL, regarding the view that language constitutes social context and that it is also shaped by the social context

(Oteíza, forthcoming).

The general network system of the appraisal framework is presented in Figure 1.

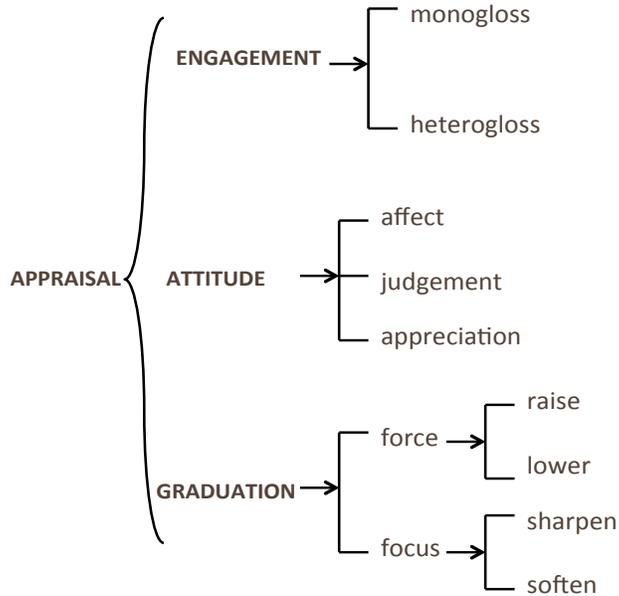


Figure 1: APPRAISAL: basic semantic systems (Martin & White 2005).

2.2. Recontextualising APPRECIATION: A proposal for analysing events and processes

History is a social science that aims to comprehend the complexity of human societies from a diachronic perspective. In history there are three main domains that are critical for constructing historical explanations: causality, time and space, and evidentiality. Causality can be construed in a linear or multifactorial way to present facts, motivations, and conditions, among others, in order to construct historical significance. The temporal-spatial dimension has a fundamental and global role in the interpretation of the discourse of history, which can have a chronological articulation on discourse as phasing, setting in time, segmenting time, sequencing or duration (Coffin 2006) or a more symbolic representation of the time framework as progression (accelerating and deepening) and expectation (Oteíza & Pinuer 2013). A more symbolic representation of time is critical to the construction of argumentation and the evaluative orientation of more complex and explicative discourses of history. The dimension of evidentiality refers to the fact that historians make a selection of the information held in primary and secondary sources with the purpose of elaborating evidence that allows them to construct

historical significance in their historical explanations (see also Oteíza & Pinuer 2012; Oteíza & Pinuer forthcoming; Oteíza 2014 for further explanations).

These three main dimensions are relevant for explaining facts in which individual and collective historical actors are involved, the very material that specialists construct as historical events and processes assigning to them a historical significance. Consequently, in our analysis, the *actoral axis* refers to the individual or collective actors typically involved in historical discourses, for example, individual figures as ‘General Augusto Pinochet’ or ‘Salvador Allende’; and collective social actors as the ‘Military Junta’, ‘left-wing party’, ‘right-wing party’, ‘Chileans’, ‘Chilean society’. The *processual axis* in turn, refers to the events that can be located in a particular time in the past, as a single significant historical fact, as for example ‘the bombing of La Moneda’ or ‘Salvador Allende’s Presidential election’; and the historical processes, which comprise a larger amount of time and a more complex explanation, as for example, ‘a process of human rights violations’ or ‘the escalation of violence’. These events and processes can also be located in temporal and spatial situations, as for example, ‘the first years of Pinochet’s dictatorship’. The use of technicality in historical discourses rests necessarily on other disciplines that help the construction of a historical explanation in a given area of history, for example political science, economy, sociology, among others. The following Figure 2 is an attempt to illustrate the actoral and processual axes:

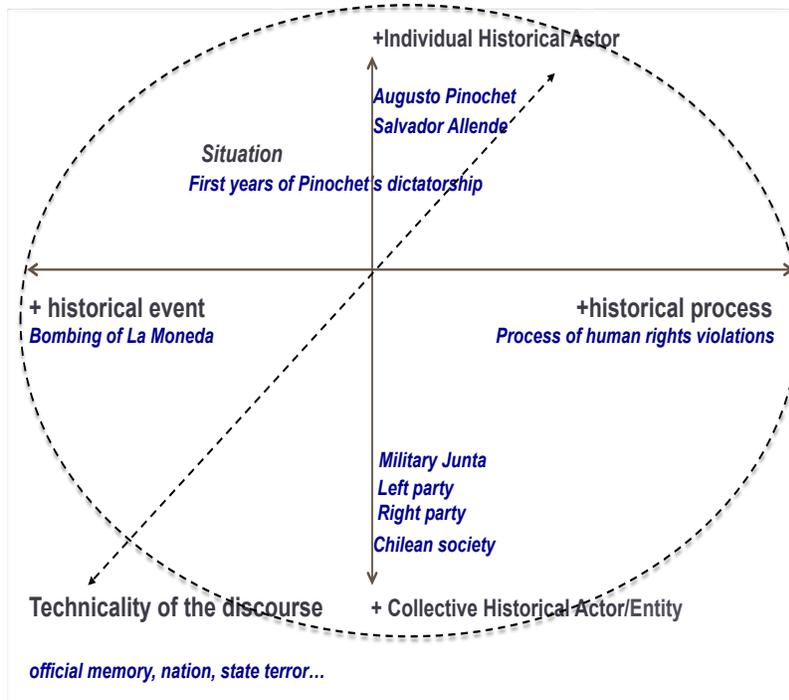


Figure 2: Representation of actors, events, processes and situations in historical discourses (Oteiza & Pinuer 2012, with examples added in italics).

Returning to the system of APPRECIATION as designed by [Martin & White \(2005\)](#), we would like to emphasize that this system was designed to deal with the analysis of semiotic products, performances and natural phenomena; this shaped the categories of reaction, composition, and valuation proposed by these authors (and they noted the sub-category of valuation was especially sensitive to field). When dealing with the discourse of social, historical, cultural, political phenomena among others, we in fact found that different categories were needed to account for the specificity of historical processes and events. Consequently, we proposed the categories of power, conflict, impact and integrity for the semantic domain of APPRECIATION. These categories make it easier to take into account the particularity and complexity of the processual cline (events, processes, situations) of historical discourse, which can be legitimized or delegitimized (Oteiza & Pinuer 2012; [Oteiza 2014](#)).

The category of conflict deals with the characterization of societies in terms of the different forms of social conflict that are constructed in historical discourses – for example tension, opposition, and contradiction among values and social relations. This category involves the

manifestation of a social, political and/or economic tension that can be expressed with different grades of radicalism along a cline.

The category of power, which interacts with the semantic category of conflict and is also a cline, is associated with the action and influence of powerful and dominant groups. Social power can be understood as the control that a group or an organization has over the actions decision-making capacity of other groups, limiting their freedom of action and influencing their knowledge, attitudes or ideologies (Oteíza & Pinuer 2012; [Oteíza 2014](#)).

Integrity refers to moral or legal evaluations; in our formulation, it is a category that applies to historical processes, events and situations. In historical discourse, human agency tends to be codified in an implicit way by means of impersonalizations, or in a incongruent manner through nominalizations. For example the nominalization ‘outbreak of cruelty’ in the context of human rights violations during Pinochet’s dictatorship, although it implies the action of people that can be analysed with a negative social sanction of impropriety, is codified in the discourse as a historical process that ‘happened’ during the first years of the dictatorship, without any mention of human agency (Oteíza & Pinuer 2012). Consequently, in cases like this, we consider that is analytically useful to make the distinction between social sanction of the integrity attributed to the behaviour of people and negative appreciations of integrity targeting a historical process without a specification of human agency.

Finally, the category of impact refers to a semantic dimension that is considered in part under the appreciation sub-category of ‘valuation’ in [Martin & White \(2005\)](#). Impact refers to the importance and social value that authors attribute to historical events, processes or situations in the discourse. These four categories can be inscribed or invoked, and work together to build discourses of historical legitimation or delegitimization. Figure 3 presents the Martin & White categories for analysing the semantic area of APPRECIATION and Figure 4 presents Oteíza & Pinuer’s proposal for the analysis of historical events and processes:

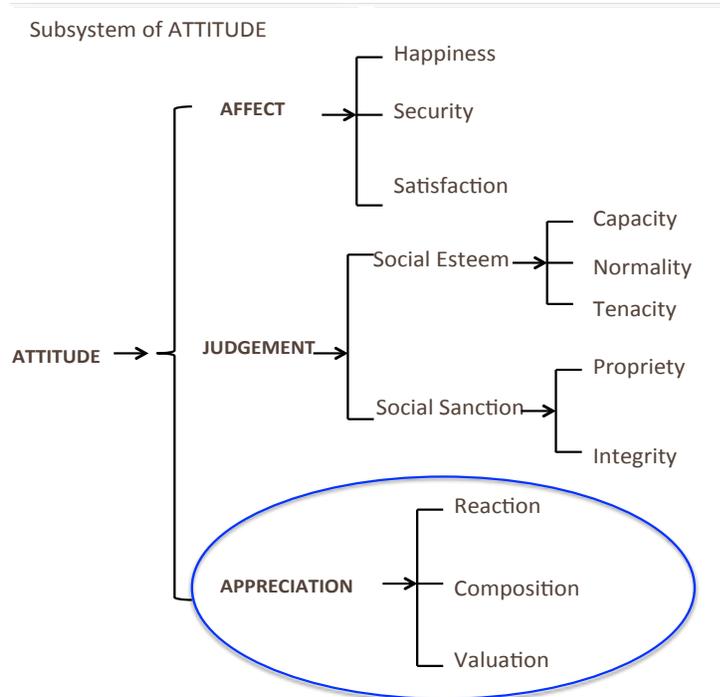


Figure 3: APPRECIATION system (Martin & White 2005)

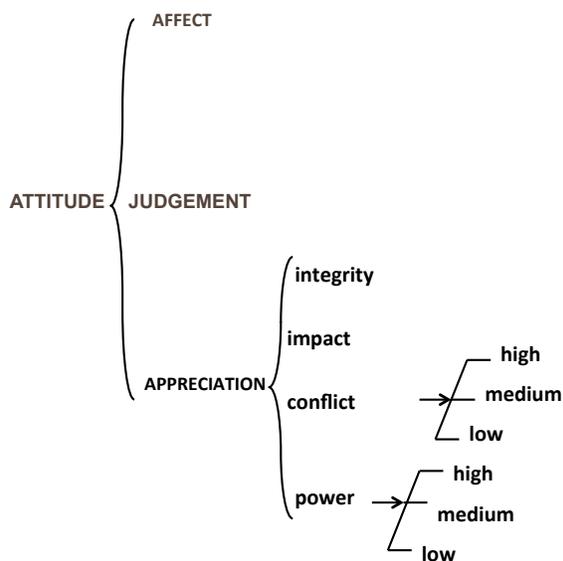


Figure 4: APPRECIATION system for analysing events and processes (Oteiza & Pinuer 2012; Oteiza 2014).

In the following examples, we illustrate the categories of APPRECIATION proposed in Figure 4 for the analysis of events, processes and situations. In addition, we draw on Martin & White's categories of JUDGEMENT for evaluating people and their behaviour, and AFFECT for evaluating emotional reactions. The examples presented are followed by an analysis that includes the

entities that have been appraised (historical actors, situations, events and processes), and the inscribed or evoked appraisals by which they are constructed in the discourse.

The following notation is used in the examples: inscribed evaluations of ATTITUDE are **bold and underlined**; evoked evaluations of ATTITUDE are ***bold, underlined and italicised***; GRADUATION of attitudes as Force or Focus are underlined. Negative evaluations are marked with ‘-ve’, and positive evaluations with ‘+ve’.

Example 1:

A lack of restraint (loss of control) was the distinctive feature of the last years of the 1960s, foreshadowing ***the convulsions*** that would accompany the presidential elections of 1970 and the later development of the popular government (Correa *et al.*, 2001).

El desenfreno fue la marca distintiva de los últimos años de las década de 1960, presagiando las *convulsiones* que acompañarían la elección presidencial de 1970 y al desenvolvimiento posterior del gobierno popular (Correa *et al.*, 2001).

Entity appraised:	Inscription and invocation:	APPRAISAL:
The last years of the 1960s (historical situation)	lack of restraint (loss of control)	-ve APPRECIATION: high Conflict (inscribed) Graduated by high force: <u>distinctive</u>
Presidential elections of 1970 (historical event)	<i>convulsions</i>	-ve APPRECIATION, high Conflict (evoked by the process ‘presaging’ which has a strong meaning of ‘flagging’ what is going to happen in the near future).
Popular government (historical process)	<i>(convulsions)</i>	-ve APPRECIATION, high Conflict (evoked)

In example 1, temporality is expressed in terms of expectation in the historical discourse, ‘foreshadowing’ or ‘presaging’ the failure of Allende’s government and the generalized social chaos that the society is experiencing, thus, explaining and justifying the military coup and constructing Allende’s government (1970–1973) from the delegitimation of a social, political and economical crisis. ‘Convulsions’ and ‘lack of restraint’/‘loss of control’ are infused with force as intensification that reinforces the meaning of a historical explanation of the crisis that ‘led to’ a military coup.

Example 2:

From the second half of the decade of the 1960s, coincident with **the revolutionary wave** triggered in both Europe and in the United States, Chilean society precipitated **a whirl of agitation** (Correa *et al.*, 2001).

Desde la segunda mitad de la década de 1960, coincidente con **la oleada revolucionaria** que se desencadenó tanto en Europa como en los Estados Unidos, la sociedad chilena se precipitó en **un torbellino de agitación** (Correa *et al.*, 2001).

Entity appraised:	Inscription and invocation:	APPRAISAL:
Second half of the 1960s (historical situation)	<u>the revolutionary wave</u>	-ve APPRECIATION: high Conflict (inscribed) Graduated by high force of scope: space: <u>in both Europe and in the United States</u>
Chilean society (social actor)	<u>a whirl of agitation</u>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Normality (inscribed) Graduated by high force: <u>precipitated</u>

In Example 2, ‘triggered’ (‘se desencadenó’) and ‘precipitated’ (‘se precipitó’) are both in middle voice, thus there is no grammaticalization of agency. Chilean society is presented as one which mirrored the social processes that occurred both in Europe and in the United States (‘coincident with’). The causal connection is realized implicitly by the processes ‘precipitated’ and ‘triggered’, which make the nominalization ‘a whirl of agitation’ the effect of another nominalization: ‘the revolutionary wave’. High force as temporal intensification is infused in ‘triggered’ and ‘precipitated’, adding the meaning of movement and acceleration, in this case, one of social, political and economical processes, with an invoked evaluation of high conflict that conveys a negative connotation associated with chaos, crisis and lack of social stability.

In example 3, below, the sociologist Tomás Moulian (1997) is dealing with Allende’s government (1970–73) and is referring to the political agenda of the ‘Chilean path to socialism’ proposed by the leftist Popular Unity coalition government (Unidad Popular). Popular Unity proposed in its platform a ‘peaceful road to socialism’, which had the distinctive characteristic of

not involving an armed struggle (as had other revolutions in Latin America). This process was considered a unique socialist initiative that aroused interest and expectation in many countries; but it was also considered by some as a threat to democracy and a potential path to a ‘Marxist dictatorship’ ([Loveman 2001](#)).

Example 3:

The **aborting** of the ‘peaceful path’ was a **culminative** moment in the history of Chile and of world history of Marxism and of the socialist experience. An **unprecedented** experience that had generated many **hopes failed** (...) It was an experience that **in effect** had **international repercussions**. How was that **abortion** possible? To ‘understand’ this it is **essential** to recreate the conditions that forged an **outbreak of cruelty** and the capability of living in this **cruelty**. It is also **necessary** to ask how the Popular Unity **made possible this transformation from a political culture** to one that gave rise to **killer instincts**. The left wing militants, **many of whom** were immersed in **political romanticism**, **dreamed that they were giving birth to something like a full moon**, the entire process **without the pain of giving birth**: ‘the Chilean path to socialism’, (with its vision of) **egalitarian** freedom, obtained without **killings** or **dictatorships**. But they witnessed with **horror the birth of the leviathan** (Moulian, 1997).

El **aborto** de la ‘vía pacífica’ fue un momento **culminante** de la historia de Chile y de la historia **mundial** del marxismo y de las experiencias socialistas. **Fracasó** una experiencia **inédita**, que había suscitado múltiples **esperanzas** (...) Se trató de una experiencia que efectivamente tuvo una **repercusión internacional** ¿Cómo se llegó a ese **aborto**? Para ‘comprender’ es **indispensable** recrear las condiciones en que se fue forjando **el estallido de la crueldad** y la capacidad de vivir en la **crueldad**. También es **necesario** preguntarse de qué modo *la Unidad Popular hizo posible esa mutación de una cultura política sacando a flote los instintos de muerte*. Los militantes de la izquierda, **una parte importante de ellos** sumidos en el **romanticismo político**, **soñaban en que estaban dando a luz algo parecido a una luna llena**, la **plenitud sin los dolores del parto**: ‘la vía chilena al socialismo’, la liberación **igualitaria**, conseguida sin **matanzas** ni **dictaduras**. Pero presenciaron con **espanto el alumbramiento del leviatán** (Moulian, 1997).

Entity appraised:	Inscription and invocation:	APPRAISAL
‘the Chilean path to socialism’ (historical process)	aborting	-ve APPRECIATION: low Power (evoked by means of a lexical metaphor)
	culminative	+ve APPRECIATION: Impact (inscribed) Graduated by high force, scope: space: <u>world history</u>
	failed	-ve APPRECIATION: low Power (inscribed)
	unprecedented	+ve APPRECIATION: Impact (inscribed)
	hopes	+ve AFFECT, Happiness (inscribed)

		Graduated by high force: <u>many</u>
	<i>repercussions</i>	+ve APPRECIATION: Impact (evoked) Graduated by focus: <u>in effect</u> and by high force, scope:space: <u>international</u>
	<i>abortion</i>	-ve APPRECIATION: low Power (evoked by means of a lexical metaphor)
The recreation of the conditions that forged an 'outbreak of cruelty' (historical situation)	essential	+ve APPRECIATION: Impact (inscribed)
	necessary	+ve APPRECIATION: Impact (inscribed)
Social situation (referring to the period of the dictatorship) (historical situation)	outbreak of cruelty	+ve APPRECIATION: Integrity (inscribed)
	cruelty	+ve APPRECIATION: Integrity (inscribed)
Popular Unity (collective social actors)	<i>made possible this transformation from a political culture</i>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Propriety (evoked)
	killer instincts	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Propriety (inscribed)
left-wing militants (collective social actors)	political romanticism	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) Graduated by high force: <u>many of whom</u>
	<i>dreamed that they were giving birth to something like a full moon</i>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (evoked)
'the Chilean path to socialism' (historical process)	<i>without the pain of giving birth</i>	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity (evoked)
	egalitarian	+ve APPRECIATION: Integrity (inscribed)
	(without) killings	+ve APPRECIATION: Integrity (inscribed)
	(without) dictatorships	+ve APPRECIATION: Integrity (inscribed)
(Military coup/state terror)	horror	-ve AFFECT: Disinclination (Fear) (inscribed)

In example 3, the ‘Chilean path to socialism’, and hence Allende’s government (1970–1973), is constructed in terms of the delegitimation of the historical perspective of a social, political and economical failure. The author first constructs the ‘Chilean path to socialism’ as a positive political project with national and international repercussions; however, from the beginning of the extract, the lexical metaphor ‘abortion’ is constructing a strong negative evaluation which becomes clear in the co-text with the mention of ‘cruelty’ and ‘horror’ that was going to characterize the coup d’état. The left-wing party militants are represented in the discourse with a negative evaluation of social esteem of capacity due to their lack of vision or ‘political romanticism’. The fear and horror felt by left-wing militants is triggered by human rights violations codified metaphorically by ‘the birth of the Leviathan’. Both the Popular Unity and the left-wing militants are going to be constructed indirectly as the cause of the ‘outbreak of cruelty’ of the dictatorship.

In the following section, we briefly explain the concepts of semantic gravity and semantic density from LCT (Maton 2013, [2014a](#), [2014b](#)) in order to integrate them with the appraisal analysis using the elaboration of the APPRECIATION system suggested by Oteíza & Pinuer (2012). Our purpose is to explore the possibilities of a joint analysis of the transmission of memories of the recent past.

3. Historical events and processes viewed from semantic gravity and semantic density

Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) is a sociological approach for analysing and changing social practice ([Maton 2014](#)). The framework comprises a multi-dimensional conceptual toolkit, where each dimension offers concepts for analysing a particular set of organizing principles underlying practices. Here we focus on the dimension of Semantics and in particular on two key concepts: semantic gravity and semantic density (Maton 2013, [2014a](#), [2014b](#); see also chapter 1, this volume).

Semantic gravity (SG) is defined by Maton (2014: 110) as ‘the degree to which meaning relates to its context’. Semantic gravity may be relatively stronger (+) or weaker (–) along a continuum of strengths. The stronger the semantic gravity (SG+), the more meaning is dependent on its context; the weaker the semantic gravity (SG–), the less dependent meaning is on its context. Semantic gravity traces a continuum of strengths and therefore can be used to analyse change over time by describing processes of: weakening semantic gravity, such as moving from the concrete particulars of a specific case towards generalizations; and strengthening semantic gravity, such as moving from abstract or generalized ideas toward concrete and delimited cases. According to Maton (2014: 110), one condition for cumulative knowledge-building and learning may be the capacity to master semantic gravity, in order for knowledge to be decontextualized, transferred and recontextualized into new contexts.

Semantic density is defined by Maton as the condensation of meaning within socio-cultural practices (symbols, terms, concepts, phrases, expressions, gestures, actions, clothing, etc.,) and explores their degree of complexity. Semantic density may be relatively stronger (+) or weaker (–) along a continuum of strengths. The stronger the semantic density (SD+), the more meanings are condensed within practices; the weaker the semantic density (SD–), the fewer meanings are condensed. Strengthening semantic density involves ‘moving from a practice or symbol that denotes a small number of meanings towards one that implicates a greater range’ (Maton 2014: 130). Weakening semantic density involves ‘moving from a highly condensed practice or symbol to one that involves fewer meanings. For example, explaining a technical concept from an academic source in simpler terms typically enacts only a limited number of its meanings’ (Maton 2014: 130). Semantic density may involve *epistemological condensation* of formal definitions of concepts and empirical descriptions or *axiological condensation* of affective, aesthetic, ethical, political and moral stances.

We propose here that the LCT concepts of semantic gravity and semantic density contribute to understanding the transmission of memories in history classroom interactions and the construction of the historical significance of processes and events (Oteíza *et al.* forthcoming). In history classes, teachers and students negotiate their personal and social memories with respect to both the official curriculum of history textbooks alongside alternative resources that create a

space for counter-memories and elaborations that take into consideration the conceptual complexity of discourses on the topic. To do this, teachers and students deploy a range of resources, such as nominalizations, mental, verbal and material processes, and periphrastic structures. These resources construct subjectivity in discourse and help determine levels of abstraction, generalization, interpretation, and description of concrete facts.

In the next section, we present an extract from an 11th grade history class interaction. According to the national history curriculum in Chile, the unit ‘The Military Dictatorship’ has as its general objective the characterisation of the main features of the coup d’état and ensuing military dictatorship in Chile, including treatment of human rights violations, political violence and suppression of the rule of law (‘Estado de derecho’) in the country.

3.1. History class interaction and the transmission of historical memories of human rights violations through the historical conceptualization of violence²

The class interaction that we present below is from a private school, with all male students and a female History teacher. There was less interaction between teacher and students in this class in comparison with what we observed in government subsidized and partially subsidized schools (Oteíza *et al.* 2015; Oteíza *et al.* forthcoming). The teacher here tends to use most of the time for class lecturing and makes little room for student participation. She also tends to focus on historical processes at a high level of conceptualization.

At the beginning of the class, the teacher characterizes human rights violations using concepts such as ‘state of siege’, ‘individual freedom’, ‘political freedom’, ‘press freedom’, ‘restrictions to the citizenship’, ‘citizens’ guaranties’, ‘deportations’, ‘exile’ and ‘neutralization of the enemy’. The teacher exemplifies each concept by relating them to everyday situations that different professionals in the country experienced, using congruent and concrete language for these illustrations. This teacher uses a Power Point presentation throughout the entire class; in this presentation the notions of a ‘restricted citizen’ and of ‘elimination of citizens’ guaranties’, ‘arrest’ and ‘torture’ were emphasized. We reproduce a brief fragment of the lesson, translated

² We acknowledge here our debt to the History teachers and students who generously agreed to participate in this study.

by us (relatively literally, to give the flavour of the classroom discourse) from the Spanish original, as Example 5 below:

Example 5:³

T 1 because of the state of siege (1) the idea of citizenship is restricted (1) it's what is
2 normal for a democratic state is (2) in a democratic state if a citizen is arrested (1) they have
3 the right to know why they are being arrested (1) in a democratic state a citizen cannot
4 be deported (1) cannot be sent to another country or their country of origin unless they
5 have committed a serious crime and they are to be judged in their country of origin (1)
6 all that is suspended (1) therefore citizens' guarantees are eliminated (1) resulting in
7 arbitrary arrests (1) deportation of foreigners (1) they can be sent to their country of
8 origin disappearance of people assassination of people by state agents and tortures by
9 state agents (2) why do I say state agents there? Because the military junta in its
10 process of institutionalization is going to create organisms of

S 11 the DINA

T 12 secret police for example the DINA and the CNI who are going to realize this kind
13 of activity (2) if this were public if they said we're going to torture and disappear
14 people (1) Chile internationally and publicly from the citizens would have been in a
15 situation of a lot of criticism towards the government therefore there are going to be
16 secret police organisms that are going to act (1) with these kinds of examples ((the
17 teacher points to the projected power point)) towards the citizens: arbitrary arrest
18 deportation torture disappearance and assassination (1) not only in Chile (1) because
19 they're going to have an international network and international military operations to
20 assassinate some people that the military government didn't want intervening in the
21 future or trying to destabilize their government (1) what is the objective? (1) that they are
22 always going to use and that they use a euphemism (1) a word that doesn't sound so
23 strong to say we're going to kill everyone that is opposed: neutralization (1) the idea
24 of neutralizing ((the teacher writes neutralize the opposition on the board)) the
25 opposition means for the military government in Chile assassinate (2) it didn't mean
26 exile in most cases because important individuals had the opportunity of exile (1) but
27 those who did not have contacts (1) those who did not have access to embassies and that
28 kind of things stayed in Chile and lived or in hiding⁴ or in ((pointing to the
29 board)) torture or disappearance and assassination or torture and they escaped being
30 assassinated a series of things (2) therefore that neutralizes the opposition (1) that's
31 exemplified (1) yes?

S 32 Yes (1) so (1) but everyone still knew about the existence of the CNI and these polices?

T 33 It's just that they are going to engage in other work (1) the CNI and the DINA

34 officially exist but the CNI and the DINA aren't going to be saying that they are

35 arbitrarily putting people under arrest

S 36 So but internationally (1) the existence of concentration camps in Chile was known

³ Notation for the class interaction: (T): teacher, (S): student. Numbers in parenthesis indicate the length of pauses in seconds; words underlined indicate intonational emphasis/volume. Double parenthesis indicates relevant contextual information. Question marks have been added to facilitate reading the text. The original language of the class interaction was Spanish (included in an Appendix at the end of the chapter). We have made a semi-literal/idiomatic translation into English, trying to maintain as far as possible the kind of lexicogrammatical choices made by teachers and students.

⁴ Literally 'clandestineness'.

T 37 Yes [internationally]

S 38 [So]

T 39 and some sectors of Chilean society as well (1) but there are other sectors that say they
40 had no idea

In this class interaction, the teacher generally uses a high level of technicality including terms such as ‘deportation’, ‘torture’, ‘disappearance’⁵, ‘DINA’, ‘CNI’, ‘citizens’ guarantees’, to refer to the process of human rights violations, with some inclusions of concrete examples; she incorporates social actors involved in material and verbal processes such as ‘they can be sent to their country of origin’ or ‘what the organisms of secret police wouldn’t say and what they did’.

The main evaluation constructed in the interaction is one of inscribed negative APPRECIATION of integrity regarding citizens’ rights that were suppressed in the country during Pinochet’s dictatorship (‘the idea of citizenship is restricted’). The process of institutionalization of the military government is explained basically by means of resources of opposition (lines 1–10), contrasted with a ‘normal’ situation in a democratic state where a person cannot be deported or sent to another country. Therefore, the teacher starts with knowledge characterized by relatively weak semantic gravity and relatively strong semantic density (SG–, SD+) by drawing on complex ideas that cover a wide range of possible instances:

LINES INTERACTION	SEMANTIC GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY	LINGUISTICS RESOURCES	VALORATIVE STANCE	Inscription and invocation	ENTITY APPRAISED HISTORY EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS
T (1-2)	SG–, SD+	Nominalizations: <i>Idea of citizenship, democratic State,</i>	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity (inscribed)	restricted	HISTORICAL PROCESS: Process of human rights violations (the idea of citizenship)
T (3-5)	SG+, SD–	Material and mental processes: rights that a citizen has in a democratic state	+ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Integrity (evoked) -ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed)	(cannot) <i>be deported</i> (unless they have committed) serious crime	SOCIAL ACTOR: Citizen
T (6-7)	SG–, SD+	Nominalizations	-ve APPRECIATION:	eliminated	EVENTS and

⁵ The Spanish term *desaparición* is a technical one in the Chilean context. It refers to a well-known process of forced disappearance of people that were secretly abducted and later killed by state organisms of secret police during Pinochet’s dictatorship (1973-1990).

		<i>Citizen's guarantees; arbitrary arrests, deportation</i>	Integrity, high Power (inscribed) x3	arbitrary (arrests)	PROCESSES of human rights violations
T (7)	SG+, SD-	Material processes: <i>they can be sent to their country of origin</i>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) x2	deportation arbitrary (arrests) deportation	SOCIAL ACTORS: <i>Citizens</i>
			-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (evoked)	<i>they can be sent to their country of origin</i>	(Indirectly: HISTORICAL PROCESS of human rights violations)
			-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (evoked)		
T (8)	SG-, SD+,	Nominalizations: <i>disappearance, assassination, tortures</i>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed) x3	disappearance, assassination, tortures	SOCIAL ACTORS: <i>State agents</i>
			-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (inscribed)		(Indirectly: HISTORICAL PROCESS of human rights violations)
T (9)	SG+, SD-	Verbal process <i>Why do I say state agents here?</i>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Propriety (inscribed)	(by means of context: disappearance, assassination, tortures)	SOCIAL ACTORS: <i>State agents</i>

In line 11, a student tries to participate by mentioning the ‘DINA’ (National Directorate of Intelligence), showing his knowledge of one of the main repressive organisms that operated in that period of Chilean history. This is a more concrete and simpler instantiation, strengthening semantic gravity and weakening semantic density. The teacher however continues referring to the more technical and general ‘organisms of secret police’; using the DINA and the CNI (National Intelligence Central) as examples of how these systematically organized actions of repression had concrete expression through those two institutions. She thus maintains weaker semantic gravity and stronger semantic density, keeping the discussion at a general and somewhat abstract level. She presents these organisms with an evoked negative Judgment of social sanction of propriety (‘this kind of activity’) that refers to the previously mentioned actions of ‘arbitrary arrest’, ‘deportation’, ‘disappearance’, ‘assassination’ and ‘torture’ (lines 1–10), inscribing a negative APPRECIATION of Integrity.

Regarding the level of technicality that the teacher uses to explain the process of human rights violations, it is possible to argue that semantic gravity is strengthened and semantic density is weakened with the inclusion of social actors as the DINA and the CNI. However, those institutions are still part of the technicality of the State process of repression inside the country and in the rest of Latin America ('military international operations'). Consequently, although they constitute a general knowledge that a Chilean secondary school student may have, the teacher incorporates them as key participants in a broader historical explanation. So dealing with these collective actors as part of 'secret police organisms' adds a level of specialization because they were, as institutions, part of the State terror that was responsible for the material actions of 'assassinate', 'intervene', 'destabilize' the government (lines 18–19):

LINES INTERACTION	SEMANTIC GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY	LINGUISTICS RESOURCES	VALORATIVE STANCE	Inscription and invocation	ENTITY APPRAISED HISTORY EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS
T (10)	SG-, SD+	Nominalizations: <i>process of institutionalization</i>	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (evoked)	(to create) <i>organisms of secret police</i>	HISTORICAL PROCESS of institutionalization of the military junta
S (11)	Medium SG, SD	Technicality: <i>DINA</i>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Propriety (inscribed)	(by means of context: disappearance, assassination, tortures)	SOCIAL ACTOR: <i>DINA</i> (more particular: example of organism of secret police)
T (12)	Medium SG, SD	Technicality: <i>Organisms of secret police</i>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Integrity (evoked)	<i>this kind of activity</i>	SOCIAL ACTORS: <i>Organisms of secret police</i> (less particular)
T (12-17)	Medium SG, SD	Technicality: <i>DINA, CNI</i>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Integrity (inscribed) x3 Graduated by force: a lot of criticism	Torture disappear (people) criticism	SOCIAL ACTORS: <i>DINA, CNI</i> (more particular: examples of organisms of secret police)
T (18-19)	SG-, SD+	Nominalizations: arbitrary arrest <i>deportation, torture, disappearance, assassination, international military operations</i>	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Propriety (inscribed) x5	arbitrary arrest deportation torture disappearance	SOCIAL ACTORS 'They' DINA & CNI and International network and international military operations

-ve APPRECIATION:
Integrity, high Power
(inscribed)

assassination

(Indirectly:
HISTORICAL
PROCESS of human
rights violations)

The teacher then strengthens semantic gravity and weakens semantic density by explaining that the planned and State-driven action had the main objective ‘of killing’ the opposition to the military government. With the extra-vocalization of attribution, the teacher makes a negative and inscribed judgment of Social Sanction of Integrity regarding the organisms of secret police: ‘We are going to kill all that are in opposition’, which explains and unpacks the euphemism of ‘neutralization’. In this manner, with the inclusion of what these secret organisms would not be able to say but that they were actually doing (verbal and material processes), the teacher strengthens the semantic gravity and weakens semantic density in line 23:

LINES INTERACTION	SEMANTIC GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY	LINGUISTICS RESOURCES	VALORATIVE STANCES	INSCRIPTIONS AND EVOCATION OF APPRAISAL	ENTITY APPRAISED HISTORY EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS
T (19-23)	SG+, SD-	Verbal and material processes: what the organisms of secret police wouldn't say and what they did.	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Propriety (inscribed)	(we are going) to kill...	SOCIAL ACTORS: <i>organisms of secret police</i>

The political repression of the DINA and CNI against the opposition of the military government that is constructed with the modal deontic verb ‘can’ (‘they can deport’, ‘they can order’), marks the power of these state organisms in opposition with the powerless position of the former (the opposition to the military government). Also relevant in terms of the repressive power of the DINA and the CNI is the use of periphrastic verbs to express the actions of these secret organisms: ‘they are going to be’, ‘they are going to act’, ‘they are going to have’, ‘they are going to use’, and ‘we are going to kill’. This use of periphrastic verbs supports the presentation of events in a basic form of narrative, and forms a more open or potential meaning in the interaction with the use of everyday language. So these passages bring these living organisms into the picture, talking and threatening Chilean society in a very concrete way (SG+, SD-).

It is possible to appreciate, in contrast with the written specialized extracts of specialized discourse of history analysed, a more chronological treatment of time in the teacher's discourse, with the use of past, future and 'present in present' tense selections, for example: 'we are going to torture and disappear people'; 'there are going to be secret police organisms that are going to act'; 'the DINA aren't going to be saying that they are'. This use of time is similar to the mode of 'commentary' founded by [Matruglio *et al.* \(2013\)](#) in their analysis of an ancient History class interaction⁶.

The teacher also uses congruent ways of expressing causality in her discourse, and students also construct causality in a very congruent and colloquial manner using 'so' three times. The teacher utilizes 'therefore' and 'because' three times each to construct this logico-semantic relationship. Only once does she choose a non-congruent resource to express causality: 'resulting' (line 6), in which a non-finite verbal form expresses the effect of a historical process:

Therefore citizens' guarantees are eliminated

Resulting in arbitrary arrests, deportation of foreigners

This highly nominalized clause complex is later unpacked by congruent actions in which State agents are declared responsible for material actions:

disappearance of people by State agents

assassination of people and tortures by State agents

Then the teacher asks:

Why do I say State agents there?

because

⁶ [Matruglio *et al.* \(2013\)](#), in analysing an ancient History class interaction, demonstrated how temporality is implicated in 'semantic waves' or movements between stronger and weaker semantic gravity and semantic density in unpacking and re-packing meanings. For illustrating a 'temporal shifting', they consider four modes of History that 'can be plotted along a continuum representing degrees along a cline between language in action and language as reflection'. These modes, which are organised from a more action oriented to a more reflection oriented, are characterised as commentary, comment, recount and generalization and privilege respectively, present-in-present, simple present, past tense and simple present tense. Temporality regarding recent national past function differently, due to the fact that events are more related to personal and social memories and those memories are 'historized' in History classes, thus they gain weight in terms of historical thinking and meaning.

The military junta in its process of institutionalization is going to create organisms of

Student:

The DINA

Teacher:

Secret police for example the DINA and the CNI

Here, it is possible to appreciate an interesting ‘semantic wave’⁷ in which the teacher makes a connection of social actors (State agents) with a social and political process of ‘institutionalization’. It seems that it is crucial for her to make her students understand that the acts of repression and of human rights violations were made by people that were part of the government institution, which is why she stops talking to ask the rhetorical question, ‘Why do I say State agents there?’ The DINA and the CNI were treated as examples of the process of institutionalization of a military junta that violently arrived to power through a coup d’état.

In the following lines (29–30), the teacher again relies on a chain of contrasting material processes to explain how the important individuals were able to escape repression and death because they had the means to escape being assassinated. They are thus constructed in the discourse with an invoked positive evaluation of judgment of social esteem of capacity, whereas the rest of the opposition that was not able to escape the repression are represented with an inscribed negative evaluation of judgment of social esteem: capacity:

because

important individuals had the opportunity of exile

but

those who did not have contacts those who did not have access to embassies and that kind of things stayed in Chile and lived or in clandestineness or in torture or disappearance and assassination or torture

and

they scaped being assassinated a series of things

therefore

that neutralizes the opposition

⁷ A ‘semantic wave’ refers to recurrent movements between stronger and weaker semantic gravity and semantic density (see chapter 3, this volume)..

Starting in line 30, the teacher reassumes the notion of ‘neutralization of the opposition’, here, semantic gravity is weakened and semantic density is strengthened again because the explanation is related to the more abstract historical process of annihilation of the opposition to the military regime. The teacher at this point checks again for understanding of the historical process, giving in this occasion time for students’ participation:

LINES INTERACTION	SEMANTIC GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY	LINGUISTICS RESOURCES	VALORATIVE STANCES	Inscription and invocation	ENTITY APPRAISED HISTORY EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS
T (23-24)	SG-, SD+	Nominalizations: <i>neutralization, idea of neutralizing.</i>	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (evoked) x2	<i>neutralization</i> <i>idea of neutralizing</i>	HISTORICAL PROCESS of annihilation of the opposition to the military regime (human rights violations)
T (25-30)	SG+, SD-	Material processes: actions taken by the different sectors of the opposition regarding repression	+ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) -ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (evoked) -ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (evoked) x2 -ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed)	well contacted (those who) <i>did not have contacts</i> (those who) <i>did not have access to embassies</i> <i>that kind of things</i> clandestineness	SOCIAL ACTORS: Political actors of the opposition ‘well contacted’ Political actors of the opposition without contacts
T (30)	SG-, SD+	Nominalization partially unpacked: (that) <i>neutralizes the opposition</i>	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (inscribed) x5 -ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (evoked)	torture disappearance dssassination torture assassinated neutralizes the opposition	HISTORICAL PROCESS of annihilation of the opposition to the military regime (human rights violations)
T (31)	SG+, SD-	Check for understanding of the historical process of human rights violations	--	--	--
S (32)	SG+, SD-	Mental process:	+/-ve JUDGEMENT,	(everyone) <i>still knew about the</i>	SOCIAL ACTORS:

Ask for information regarding the knowledge regarding the existence of the ‘CNI and these policies’	Social Esteem: Capacity (inscribed) Graduated by Force: Scope: <u>everyone</u>	<i>existence of the CNI</i>	<i>everyone</i> (knowledge of the existence of concentration camps)
	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (evoked)	<i>these policies</i>	HISTORICAL PROCESS of human rights violations/ existence of concentration camps

The negative evaluation of the integrity of the CNI and the DINA, the organisms that operated concentration camps in Chile, is invoked by the teacher and by the student who asks about the international knowledge of the existence of these centres (line 36). The teacher maintains weaker semantic density when she answers the student with the information that ‘some sectors of the Chilean society also [knew about the existence of concentration camps], but other sectors say that they didn’t have any idea’ (lines 37–40). Student and teacher refer to people that ‘think’ and ‘say’ something, but we need to take into consideration that both of them are bringing political actors to the historical explanations and not just ‘people’ in general, as other history classes observed in this same level (Oteíza *et al.* forthcoming)⁸.

This last opposition, between social sectors who knew about the existence of concentration camps and the social and political sectors that did not have any idea, introduces heteroglossic discourse that the teacher later on emphasizes regarding the long process that the country needed to experience in order to recognize, after the publication of *The National Commission on Torture and Political Prison* (Valech Report 2004, 2011), the massive and systematic practice of torture committed by the state in the country during Pinochet’s dictatorship:

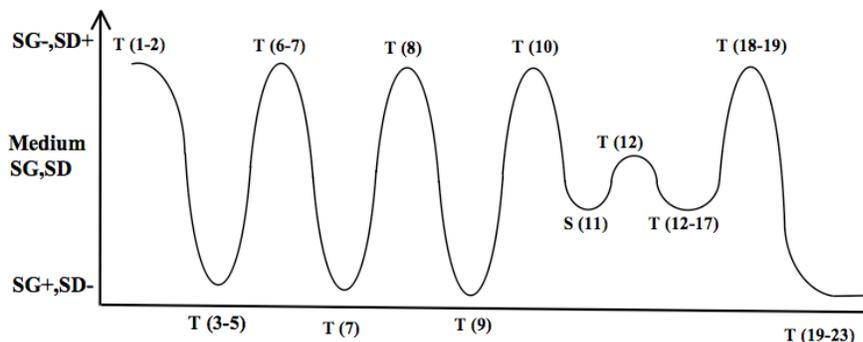
LINES INTERACTION	SEMANTIC GRAVITY AND SEMANTIC DENSITY	LINGUISTICS RESOURCES	VALORATIVE STANCE	Inscription and invocation	ENTITY APPRAISED HISTORY EVENTS, PROCESSES OR ACTORS
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⁸ Extract taken from a History class interaction of 11th grade, filmed in a government-subsidized school (public school) in Santiago, Chile:

((The teacher starts the lesson with the depiction of a video, emotively charged, in which a Chilean TV actress gives her testimony of the torture suffered in two centers of detention during the dictatorship))
T 2 Ok (2) what did you notice regarding the video (2) principally from the part where it
3 says that for a long time the matter of the torture or of the Detained Disappeared was
4 denied, that no (1) they were in Europe that they were here they were there and that even
5 today there are people who have doubts about the torture and those things

T (33-35)	SG+, SD-	Technicality: <i>CNI, DINA</i> + Verbal processes: What the DINA and the CNI aren't going to be saying.	-ve JUDGEMENT, Social Sanction: Propriety (inscribed)	arbitrarily (putting people under arrest)	SOCIAL ACTORS: <i>CNI, DINA</i>
S (36)	SG+, SD-	Mental process: Ask for international knowledge of the existence of concentration camps in Chile.	-ve APPRECIATION: Integrity, high Power (evoked) -ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (evoked) Graduated by Force: Scope: <u>internationally</u>	existence of concentration camps was known	HISTORICAL PROCESS of human rights violations SOCIAL ACTORS: international knowledge of the existence of concentration camps)
T (37-40)	SG+, SD-	Mental and verbal processes: What different social sectors say and know regarding the existence of concentration camps.	+ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (evoked) -ve JUDGEMENT, Social Esteem: Capacity (evoked)	(was known as well) (they had) no idea	SOCIAL ACTORS: those who know and those 'who say' that they don't know' about the existence of concentration camps and human rights violations.

In Figure 5 we present an illustration of the semantic waves constructed by the teacher and two students in this extract of History classroom interaction. When semantic density strengthens (shifting upwards), this in part depends on the use of nominalizations and technicality reflecting a more specialized discourse of the process of human rights violations that goes beyond the common sense of everyday language and constructs a more abstract historical significance and contextualization. This use of a combination of stronger, medium and low semantic gravity and stronger, medium and low semantic density, create semantic waves which build a historical explanation. Figure 5 shows the whole extract, in two semantic profiles (1–23 and 23–40).



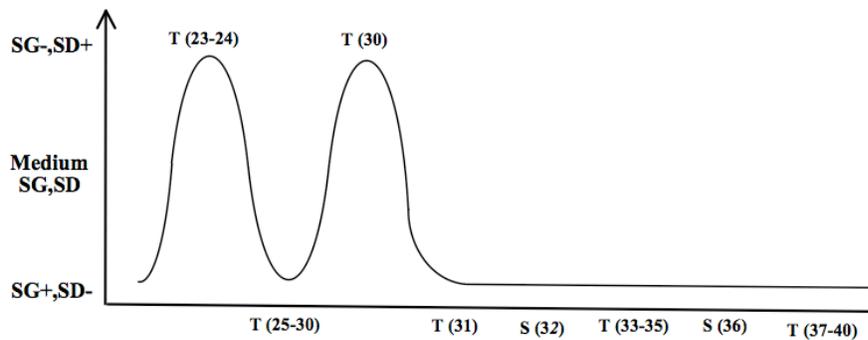


Figure 5: Semantic waves of classroom interaction

4. Final remarks

In the process of ‘historizing memory’ (Jelin 2002; Lechner 2002; Ricouer 2010), the manner by which social actors, events, situations and social processes are constructed in history discourses is crucial. This construction, as all history discourses, implies the selection and privileging of certain aspects and actors of the past: as Jelin argues, this notion of ‘historizing’ memory implies ‘the selection and emphasising of certain dimensions and aspects of the past that different actors rescue and privilege, and of the changing emotional and affective interpretations that this implies’ (Jelin 2002:69).

We postulated at the beginning of this chapter that the construction of events and processes in disciplinary discourses, and also in the pedagogical discourse of class interaction, is crucial for building historical significance. Students need to be able to move from concrete facts and individual and collective social actors (SG+, SD–) to a more complex and general understanding of historical processes (SG–, SD+) and back again: semantic waves. This can be even more central when dealing with a traumatic national past that is still under the dynamics of social and cultural construction of collective memories, counter memories and official memories (Stern 2006, 2013; Lira 2013).

The results of a joint analysis of appraisal resources with linguistic instantiations (in this text) of the concepts of semantic gravity and semantic density has been useful to begin showing how this process can operate in history classroom interactions. In this manner, a specialized and abstract

language can be associated with weaker semantic gravity and stronger semantic density (more context-independent and more complex), as we expected, but also with the elaboration of historical processes, and thus with a more complex explanation of historical thinking that allows historicizing social memories with epistemological condensation of meaning. Social actors and facts tend to be constructed with stronger semantic gravity and weaker semantic density (more concrete and simpler).

It is possible to appreciate in the analysis that, as Maton (2014a, 2014b) states, teachers need to manage both semantic density and semantic gravity in order to produce cumulative knowledge. Reasoning along the same lines, Matruggio *et al* (2013) have suggested regarding students' use of language for understanding historical significance that:

in order to demonstrate mastery of the pedagogic discourse of History, which is more than personal narrative and involves an array of specialized terms, students must display knowledge in assessments that involves weaker semantic gravity (by, for example, discussing events with more 'objective' detachment) and stronger semantic gravity (through, for example, marshalling technicalised terms). Students must reason about the relevance and importance of the source for the study of History. This necessitates moving back up the semantic scale.

(2013: 44).

The stronger semantic gravity that we demonstrated is associated with the construction of the historical process of 'neutralizing the opposition' as part of the 'process of institutionalization' of the military junta in Chile after the coup d'état of 1973. In the particular class interaction analyzed, as shown in Figure 5, it is built in a wave with stronger and medium semantic gravity in which main social actors and specific facts have prominence (what the DINA and the CNI did, said and decided not to say to keep national and an international positive ethical image).

In addition, technicality also plays its role as bridging, in this particular classroom interaction, social memories with the integration of the general knowledge that students have about the recent Chilean past of human rights violations. In this way, the DINA and the CNI are incorporated in the discourse as particular examples of a more general organization of secret

police organisms that operationalise state terror inside the country, and also, as part of an international orchestra of repression against left wing parties in the whole Latin America.

In this chapter we have presented only a brief fragment of History classroom interaction taken from a Chilean private school. However, conclusions from analyses of public schools in the country also show that some teachers do include historical explanations that are ideologically closer to the official discourse about human rights violations committed during Pinochet's dictatorship, and others that are closer to an axiological semantic condensation perspective which emphasizes an ethical and political position of consensus and reconciliation in the country (Oteíza *et al.* 2015, forthcoming). Political violence is transmitted in history classes in part through emotions and personal agency. Intentions and motivations are transmitted with more prominence than historical knowledge about political processes of violence that Chilean society experienced, especially during the first years of Pinochet's dictatorship. Semantic gravity and semantic density here are emotionally charged, emphasizing a personal gaze closer to affective and ethical understandings of the recent past of human rights violations.

According to several historians, sociologists and social psychologists, Chilean society has not fully processed the trauma of human rights violations it experienced from 1973 to 1990. Indeed, there is still a lack of historicity, as the past has not been elaborated. Therefore, Lechner and Güell (1998) state, we are a society that cannot recognize itself in a shared history. Nevertheless, after filming History classes, and interviewing teachers and students in primary and secondary schools (Oteíza *et al.* forthcoming), we believe, optimistically, that the process of constructively 'historizing' the memory of Chilean recent past is taking place in new generations of youth and children, especially thanks to the efforts of many History teachers around the country. It is true that we need to elaborate the delicate and difficult experience of human rights violations and the urgent call for justice from many sectors of Chilean society from an ethical, emotional and political perspective. However, 'the birth of the Leviathan', as sociologist Moulian (1997) referred to the state terrorism that begun with the coup d'état, also needs a historical explanation for us to produce a critical reflection of our recent past as a society, and to overcome personal empathy.

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Appendix. Classroom interaction in Spanish

- P 1 por el estado de sitio (1) la idea de ciudadanía queda restringida (1) ee es lo
2 normal de un estado democrático (2) en un estado democrático un ciudadano si lo arrestan
3 tiene el derecho de saber por qué lo están arrestando (1) en un estado democrático a un ciudadano no
4 lo pueden deportar (1) no lo pueden mandar a otro país o a su país de origen a menos que
5 cometa un delito grave y decidan juzgarlo en su país de origen (1)
6 todo eso queda ee suspendido, por lo tanto, las garantías ciudadanas (1) quedan eliminadas (1) se provoca
7 arresto arbitrario (1) deportación a las personas extranjeras (1) las pueden mandar a su país de
8 origen desaparición de personas, asesinato de personas por agentes del Estado y torturas por
9 agentes del Estado (2) ¿por qué digo ahí agentes del Estado? porque la junta militar en su
10 proceso de institucionalización va a crear organismos de
E 11 la DINA
P 12 policía secreta, por ejemplo la DINA y la CNI, que van a realizar este tipo de
13 acciones (2) si esto era público, si decían vamos a torturar y a desaparecer
14 personas (1) Chile internacionalmente y públicamente para la ciudadanía iba a
15 quedar en una situación de mucha crítica hacia el gobierno, por lo tanto, van a haber
16 organismos policiales secretos que van a actuar (1) con este tipo de ejemplos
17 ((la profesora señalando el power point proyectado)) hacia la ciudadanía: arresto arbitrario
18 deportación tortura desaparición y asesinato. No solo en Chile (1) porque
19 van a tener una red internacional y vamos a tener operaciones internacionales militares para
20 asesinar a algunas personas que el gobierno militar no quería que intervinieran a
21 futuro o que trataran de desestabilizar su gobierno (1) ¿cuál es el objetivo (1) que
22 siempre van a utilizar y que utilizan un eufemismo (1) una palabra que no suene tan
23 fuerte para decir vamos a matar a todos los que estén en contra: neutralización (1) la idea
24 de neutralizar ((la profesora escribe neutralizar la oposición en la pizarra)) la
25 oposición significa para el gobierno militar en Chile, matar (2) no significó
26 en la mayoría de los casos el exilio, porque los altos personeros tuvieron la oportunidad del exilio (1) pero
27 los que no tenían contactos (1) los que no tenían acceso a las embajadas y ese
28 tipo de cosas se quedaron en Chile vivieron o la clandestinidad o la ((señalando a la
29 pizarra)) tortura o la desaparición y el asesinato o la tortura y no alcanzaron a que los
30 asesinaran una serie de cosas (2) por lo tanto eso esta neutralizar la oposición (1) se
31 ejemplifica (1) ¿sí?
E 32 sí (1) entonces (1) ¿pero igual todos saben de la existencia de la CNI y de estas policiaaaa?
P 33 es que van a ocupar distintas labores (1)
34 la CNI y la DINA son oficialmente existen pero la CNI y la DINA no van a estar diciendo que
35 están tomando arbitrariamente presas a las personas
E 36 osea pero internacionalmente (1) sí se sabía la existencia de campos de concentración en Chile
P 37 sí [internacionalmente]
E 38 [entonces]
P 39 y algunos sectores de la sociedad chilena también (1) pero hay otros sectores que dicen que ellos
40 no tenían idea