



# Language resources to negotiate historical thinking in history classroom interactions

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## ABSTRACT

This article examines different patterns of language resources that both teacher and students use to incorporate other voices in history secondary-level classroom interactions. The study particularly centers on the analysis of interpersonal and ideational linguistic resources used by teachers and students that contribute to the inclusion of historical evidence in the discourse, in combination with the building of *semantic waves* (Maton, 2014, 2016) through the variation of *semantic density* and *semantic gravity*. The analysis shows that when teachers and students use a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+), they also have a tendency of employing a more heteroglossic-oriented discourse, whereas when teachers and students use a strong *semantic density* (SD+), their discourse tends to be oriented to more monoglossic choices in language (Martin & White, 2005). The language resources chosen by teachers and students in their pedagogical interactions impact how historical thinking is constructed in the classroom; particularly regarding the space, these more or less specialized and nonspecialized language resources provide for the incorporation of epistemic and axiological sources, which are necessary to build history as an interpretative social science through different levels of abstraction.

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## 1. Introduction

The main purpose of this article is to explore the patterns of language resources that teachers and students employ to include other voices in history classroom interactions to build historical meanings. The incorporation of different positions in history discourse is key to the construction of evidence, which is a fundamental dimension for building historical reasoning. We argue that the different levels of history complexity and abstraction, which are necessary to construct historical thinking at the secondary school level, are elaborated with language resources that combine specialized and nonspecialized language along with the selection of monoglossic and heteroglossic orientations (Martin & White, 2005); these resources in turn collaborate to create *semantic waves* by means of variation in *semantic density* as the levels of condensation of meaning and *semantic gravity* as the levels of meaning dependence to its context in a certain social practice (Maton, 2014, 2016).

The selection of a more monoglossic or a more heteroglossic orientation, which refers to the inclusion or noninclusion of other voices in the discourse (Martin & White, 2005), is deployed in

classroom interactions mainly with the use of a specialized and nonspecialized language by teachers and students. We propose that a joint analysis from a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspective, which considers the interpersonal meanings that organize at the discursive semantic level the ENGAGEMENT subsystem of the APPRAISAL system (White, 2003; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2010) and the ideational meanings, both experiential and logical, that allow the realization of specialized and nonspecialized languages (Martin, 1992, 1993; Halliday, 2014), in combination with the dimension of Semantic from the sociological Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) (Maton, 2014, 2016), collaborates with our understanding of classroom interactions in terms of the learning opportunities for students regarding the incorporation of historical evidence in their discourse.

The complexity of history as an interpretative social science relies on the construction of a historical argument that is based on primary and secondary sources that can be epistemically and axiologically charged. Therefore, it is relevant to understand how different patterns of language resources play a role in building these interpretative history explanations and their pedagogical recontextualizations at a secondary level in written history textbooks (cf. Achugar & Schleppegrell, 2005; Coffin, 2006; Martin, 2002; Myskow, 2018; Oteíza, 2006, 2014; Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Oteíza, 2004), students' writing (cf. Miller, Mitchell, & Pessoa, 2014; Oteíza, Dalla Porta, & Garrido, 2014; Matruggio, 2018), and

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also history classroom interactions (cf. Manghi, 2013; Matruglio, Maton, & Martin, 2013; Maton, Martin, & Matruglio, 2016; Oteiza, Henríquez, & Pinuer, 2015; Oteiza, 2018), the field in which this article is situated.

Our particular focus is on the identification of the language resources instantiated in history classroom interactions that teachers and students build together to explain historical events, situations and processes, and the role played by the inclusion of other voices as historical evidence in the pedagogical discourse. These more open or constrained heteroglossic and monoglossic orientations are entwined with the selection of language resources used for building a familiar or nonspecialized language or a specialized language in the discourse. We postulate that when the classroom interaction is characterized by a more monoglossic orientation, or with a dialogic contraction orientation, the historical explanation is characterized by the use of a stronger *semantic density* (SD+), which is mainly codified by nominalizations and technical language, whereas when the classroom interaction is characterized by a more heteroglossic orientation, or with a dialogic expansion orientation, the historical explanation is portrayed with the use of a stronger *semantic gravity* (SG+), that is, students and teachers privilege the use of a more familiar and nonspecialized language to include what individual or social historical actors have done, thought, or felt as sources of evidentiality in the historical explanation. In addition, when teachers and students make *semantic waves* (Maton, 2014), namely, when they vary their pedagogical discourse using a combination of strong and weak *semantic density* and *semantic gravity*, they are also varying their discourse by combining monoglossic and heteroglossic choices. This is of particular relevance for history classes as well as for building a historical significance and an understanding of historical explanations because the use of a more specialized and abstract language in combination with the possible inclusion of other perspectives and points of view in history, as the constitutive intertextuality of the discipline (Marwick, 2001), is key to the construction of causality and evidentiality (Achugar & Schleppegrell, 2005; Coffin, 2006; Oteiza, 2006; Oteiza & Pinuer, 2016).

Classroom discourse analysis is an important place of connections between linguistics and educational perspectives as many educational linguists and educational sociologists have highlighted in the last decades (Christie, 2002; Manghi, 2013; Maton et al., 2016; Matruglio et al., 2013; Rose & Martin, 2012; Schleppegrell, 2004; Vidal, 2017). Particularly, in the field of history and social sciences, the analysis and typology of history teachers' explanations has been a predominant line of study as it is shown in one of the first studies in this field carried out by Leinhardt (1993, 1997). In recent studies conducted in Latin American countries, Achugar (2013, 2016) analyzes classroom interactions produced in history classes regarding the military dictatorship in Uruguay. In her studies, Achugar characterizes the language resources that allow the construction of meaning of history, in which she specifically focuses on how the interaction of teachers and students generates links between social and analytical memory. In the Chilean context, Oteiza et al. (2015) and Oteiza (2018) demonstrate that, in the classroom, teachers legitimize and delegitimize certain historical memories of epistemological and axiological positions that are in line with the official versions of history. In one study conducted outside of Latin America, Matruglio et al. (2013) analyzed ancient history class interactions in Australia, in which they demonstrated how temporality is implicated in the creation of *semantic waves* (Maton, 2014), as teachers build "temporal shifting" through the combination of different degrees of language in action and language as reflection. In history classes, verbal language is crucial because of its ability to encode social and political experience; therefore, it plays an important role in the students' production,

understanding, and development of historical arguments and historical significance.

The capacity to develop historical thinking is one of the most universal curricular goals in history teaching worldwide. The LCT and SFL model permit the identification of the discursive and educational resources used to develop historical thinking in the pedagogical dialog of classroom interactions.

This article is organized in the following manner: the next three sections present the analytical framework in which this work is based: The Semantic dimension of LCT and the resources to build interpersonal meanings organized into the APPRAISAL system and ENGAGEMENT subsystem, as well as the resources to construct ideational meanings, experiential and logical, from the perspective of the SFL theory. In the fourth section, we present the methodology used, and in the fifth section, we present analysis and discussion; the final section provides conclusions and remarks.

## 2. The semantic dimension and the linguistic resources for building abstraction in history

In this study, we rely on two concepts from the Semantic dimension of LCT, the notion of *semantic gravity* and the notion of *semantic density* (Maton, 2014, 2016). LCT is a sociological theory used to analyze socio-cultural practices. The Semantic dimension of LCT offers tools for characterizing semantic structures in social practices whose organizing principles are conceptualized as semantic codes based on *semantic gravity* and *semantic density*.

The notion of *semantic density* is defined by Maton (2014) as a condensation of meaning in a given socio-cultural practice. This condensation can be expressed in symbols, terms, concepts, phrases, expressions, gestures, actions, or others with higher or lower levels of abstraction, which can also be charged either epistemologically or axiologically. Thus, *semantic density* will move in a continuum between stronger *semantic density* (SD+) and weaker *semantic density* (SD-) depending on the way in which the meanings are condensed. The condensation of meaning, from a language resource perspective in the social practice of a historical pedagogical discourse, can be expressed by the use of specialized language. This unfamiliar use of language, which is necessary to construct a historical meaning in secondary history classrooms, is generally instantiated by technical words, for example, "state of siege," "Cold war," and "socialist party"; by nominalizations, which can be charged axiologically, such as "the level of violence" and "the escalade of violence"; and also, as we will explain further on, by incongruent expressions of logico-semantic relations of causality in the discourse. Therefore, *semantic gravity* should be explored in relation to ideational and interpersonal meanings, or in SFL terms, in relation to the systems of IDEATION and APPRAISAL (Martin & Matruglio, 2013).

*Semantic gravity* refers to the different levels of meaning dependence to its context in a particular social practice. The movement from a weak *semantic gravity* (SG-) to a stronger *semantic gravity* (SG+) is understood by Maton (2014) as a displacement from abstract and general ideas, such as the ones previously mentioned, to concrete ideas and examples of everyday life that can be expressed by a familiar language, for example, when history teachers refer to what people were doing, feeling, or thinking in the past: "in the time when we have curfew the people who lived the curfew said that they had the parties from curfew to curfew. . .". In this example, though, the teacher is moving from a strong *semantic gravity* to a weaker *semantic gravity* with the inclusion of the technical word "curfew," thereby creating some level of *semantic wave*; thus, the common language is actually used by the teacher to explain what people did in recent Chilean past by means of concrete material facts, which in turn allows her to explain to her students the

notion of a “curfew” and how it impacted everyday life in Chilean society.

Throughout this article, we explore some of the linguistic resources that construct these notions within the discourse of classroom interaction, and by extension, we also explore the notion of *semantic wave*, which implies the making of recurrent movements between stronger and weaker *semantic gravity* and *semantic density* by means of unpacking and repacking meanings (Matruglio et al., 2013; Maton, 2014), as we briefly showed in the previous example. According to Martin and Maton (2013) and Maton and Doran (2017), it is possible to link the sociological LCT theory with the linguistics SFL theory, despite the complexities of interdisciplinary research, because scholars of both disciplines have been working together to position the two analytical frameworks side by side, while taking into account that “LCT concepts were generated from and for studies of social practice rather than designed for analyzing language” (Maton et al., 2016: 108). We will attempt to further explain this connection in the following paragraphs, as we deal with language resources that can be used to construct both specialized and nonspecialized meaning, in a greater detail.

The specialized language and the everyday language provide a common base for the organization and classification of the experience and the world of things; that is, they both share the presence of nominal groups. However, the common language is based on direct observation through the senses (Martin, 1993: 205), and the technical discourse organizes the world differently from common sense, namely, through grammatical resources to achieve abstraction and thus a stronger condensation of meaning. This specialized language is what constitutes the meaning of disciplines such as history and science.

According to Martin (1993), the specialized language in science allows this discipline to rebuild or recreate the world. Nevertheless, in the case of history, this specialized language is expressed through the use of the following: (a) the technicality, which frequently consists of concepts of history and social sciences that are used in oral and written speech, for example, “curfew,” “socialism,” “capitalism,” “communism,” or other situated historical events as “tancazo” (Oteiza & Pinuer, 2012; Matruglio et al., 2013)<sup>1</sup> and (b) the use of ideational grammatical metaphors that construct more complex historical nominalization, which allow to transform a thing into a process, for example, “polarization,” “the escalate of political violence,” or “the level of violence” that we mentioned before. As Maton and Doran (2017) state, when referring to Martin’s claims regarding the language resources that can build a more or less stronger *semantic density* or *semantic gravity*, “linguistic theorization of context-dependence condensation of meaning is not as well defined or clear as many SFL scholars might assume and varies widely among studies (Martin & Matruglio, 2013)” (Maton & Doran, 2017: 614).<sup>2</sup>

Along the same line, and as it will be demonstrated in more detail in the Analysis and Discussion section of this article, we

have identified in our corpus congruent and incongruent realizations, or logico-grammatical metaphors, for constructing causality (Halliday, 2014). The congruent forms for building logico-semantic relationships of causality rest on more commonly used and “direct” grammatical forms for expressing these connections, such as conjunctions. Some instances of this congruent use of language are, for example, when a teacher explains to his or her students that “you cannot leave your house after certain hour pm at night **therefore** you cannot be circulating in the streets during the night”; or when a student is asking the teacher about the purpose of having a secret police during Pinochet’s dictatorship: “**then** it had no. . . what is still the objective of having a secret police?” Nevertheless, teachers and students can also employ noncongruent forms for building causality without using conjunctions such as “therefore,” “then,” and “because,” among many others, but rather by means of verbal groups or nominal groups, for example: “Manuel Contreras (Director of the National Intelligence Directory) had as a mission to obtain information to disarticulate the organizational cells at any costs they said (. . .) until the last consequences that **translated** later on in a series of institutional actions.” Here, the verbal group “translated” is used by the teacher as a logico-semantic resource for constructing causality as consequence.

Up to this point, we have presented some experiential and logico-semantic ideational language resources that have the potential to instantiate strong or weak *semantic gravity* or *semantic density* in the pedagogical discourse of history. In the following section, we will explore, from an interpersonal meaning perspective, how building of *semantic gravity* and *semantic density* is related to the space that teachers and students give to other voices in their interactions during history lessons, thus opening the space in a more expansive or contractive manner to sources that construct historical evidence from a heteroglossic orientation, or closing this space to an authorial voice, without the inclusion of other voices in the discourse, therefore adopting a more monoglossic orientation.

### 3. The appraisal framework and the analytical potential of the ENGAGEMENT subsystem: constructing monoglossic and heteroglossic discourse orientations

The APPRAISAL system constitutes an expansion of the interpersonal metafunction developed under the SFL theory by Halliday (2014). As it was mentioned at the beginning of this article, for the analysis of history classroom interactions, we relied on the analytical potential of this APPRAISAL system (White, 2003, 2010; Martin & White, 2005) and, more specifically, on the language resources of the ENGAGEMENT subsystem. Martin and White (2005) state that the main purpose of the APPRAISAL framework has been to present a comprehensive and systematic reorganization of the linguistic resources across diverse lexicogrammaticalizations that people can use to express values regarding the social experience, thus creating processes of alignment or misalignment with others; therefore, working with this analytical tool implies taking a dialogic perspective on language. In this sense, the APPRAISAL framework constitutes a system of interpersonal meanings situated at the level of discourse semantics in language, thus allowing lexicogrammatical meanings to disperse in this stratum of language by deploying an ample variety of language structures. These resources, which can be of different nature, may be realized in part by either inscribed (explicit) or evoked (implicit) codifications of attitude that create intersubjectivity in the form of valorative prosodies across discourses. The APPRAISAL framework thus considers that every element in a text, whether considered discretely or in tandem with other meanings, is a potential instance of subjectivity.

The APPRAISAL system organizes evaluation in three main semantic subsystems: ATTITUDE, GRADUATION, and ENGAGEMENT. The

<sup>1</sup> Historical concepts are units of meaning comprising temporality, facts, processes, historical agency, and intertextuality (Marwick, 2001). Scholars who work on history education have suggested that these historical concepts should be classified as either substantive concepts or meta-concepts (Van Boxtel and Van Drie, 2008) or between first-order substantive concepts and second-order underlying concepts (Lee, Dickinson, & Ashby, 2001). Both researchers’ classifications have in mind that historical learning depends on the understanding of students’ abstraction of historical concepts.

<sup>2</sup> Martin proposes the overarching or “portal concepts” (Maton and Doran, 2017) of *presence* and *mass* as linguistics analogs of *semantic gravity* and *semantic density*. According to Maton and Doran, the former concept is to “enable inter-theory movement without theoretical pidginization or elision” (2017: 616). Both concepts are explored by Martin in relation to the coupling of meaning across metafunctions and thus of the interplay of different systems and as a dimension of instantiation rather than realization (Maton et al., 2016; Martin and Matruglio, 2013).

subsystems of ATTITUDE and GRADUATION are key dimensions of the APPRAISAL system; although they play a fundamental role in the construction of intersubjectivity, they are not the focus of this article, and hence, we will make only collateral mentions of these resources in the Analysis and Discussion section.

The semantic subsystem of ENGAGEMENT allows us to analyze the interpersonal negotiation of the source of origin of attitudes, thereby identifying discourse with a more monoglossic or heteroglossic orientation (Martin & White, 2005). This analysis follows Bakhtin's proposals, which consider that every verbal interaction is dialogic and that what varies is the extent to which authors actually recognize alternative positions in the discourse in relation to specific evaluations. In sum, "this system theorizes the degrees of heteroglossic space of a proposition that are more or less open in the discourse (opening up alternatives or expanding or shutting them down or contracting), thus making it possible to determine the speaker's degree of commitment in relation to the appraisal that has been expressed (White, 2003; Martin & White, 2005)" (Oteiza, 2017: 464).

A monoglossic orientation ("single voiced") can be codified in the discourse through the use of bare assertions, along with the use of material and relational processes that help the author avoid the inclusion of alternative voices in the discourse, therefore presenting the monoglossic assertions as taken-for-granted and thus closing down the dialogic space. The heteroglossic orientation, or the recognition of alternative positions in the discourse, can be expressed by the author in a more expansive or contractive way, as a dialogic expansion or a dialogic contraction (Martin & White, 2005). These alternatives can be understood as a continuum, in which the dialogic contraction option could be of Disclaim (as Deny or Counter) or Proclaim (as Concur, Pronounce, or Endorse), and if we move to a more dialogic expansion, authors can choose to Entertain different alternatives or to Attribute other voices by including them as Acknowledge or as Distance in the discourse. In Fig. 1, we present the general network of ENGAGEMENT proposed by Martin and White (2005), in which we have included examples of each resource to better illustrate how they can expand or contract the dialogic space in a classroom interaction:

As mentioned in the Introduction section of this article, we specifically focus the discourse analysis on the potential of the ENGAGEMENT subsystem of the APPRAISAL system along with

ideational resources to explore the connection between the more or less monoglossic and heteroglossic orientations and the use of a stronger and weaker semantic gravity and semantic density in the pedagogical discourses constructed by teachers and students in secondary-level history classroom interactions. We postulate that the ENGAGEMENT resources that teachers and students use in classroom interactions relate to the use of a stronger or weaker semantic gravity and semantic density. We have observed, while analyzing secondary-level history class interactions, that when teachers and students deploy a more heteroglossic orientation, they tend to use a stronger semantic gravity (SG+), and conversely, when they build a more monoglossic orientation in their discourse, they have a tendency of using a stronger semantic density (SD+).

We would like to finalize this section by restating the purpose that has guided our research and that was emphasized in the Introduction section of this article; the purpose is key to pay close attention to the language resources used by teachers and students to build historical evidence in their pedagogical discourse because this is a crucial component of every historical explanation in a more general sense, considering that history is an interpretative and social science that aims to comprehend the complexity of human societies from a diachronic perspective.

### 4. Methodology

#### 4.1. Research design

We conducted a discourse analysis of teacher–student interactions considering the lexicogrammatical resources that participants use to negotiate interpersonal and ideational meanings in the classroom. We paid special attention to the interpersonal resources used by teachers and students who make heteroglossic or monoglossic choices, that is, when they include other voices in the discourse or when they maintain primarily their own voice without allowing other stand points. From an ideational point of view, we analyzed the occurrences of nonspecialized and specialized uses of language that deal with historical processes, events, and participants in the pedagogical discourse. In this manner, the inclusion of grammatical metaphors as nominalizations; mental, verbal, and material processes; and periphrastic structures; among other lexicogrammatical resources, helps us determine the levels

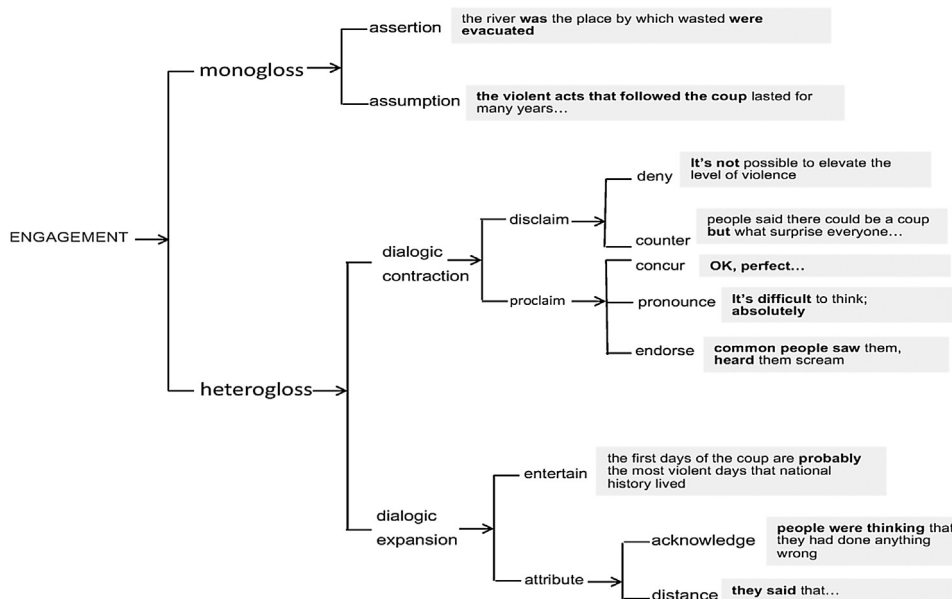


Fig. 1. Network of ENGAGEMENT resources (Martin & White, 2005) with the addition of history classroom interaction examples.

of abstraction, generalization, interpretation, and description of the analyzed discourse.

Therefore, this study presents a qualitative discourse analysis of history classroom interactions. It works with the specific concepts of *semantic gravity* (SG) and *semantic density* (SD) from the sociological approach of the LCT, with the ENGAGEMENT subsystem of the APPRAISAL system, and some experiential and logico-semantic ideational resources from the linguistic theoretical framework of SFL. The proposed joint analysis, consisting in the exploration of the linguistic resources that build more or less monoglossic and heteroglossic orientations, in combination with the sociological notions of *semantic density* and *semantic gravity*, is used to identify the different patterns of secondary-level history classroom interactions between teachers and students. These interactions offer different pedagogical opportunities to construct historical meaning and history explanations.

#### 4.2. Context and corpora

This work is part of a broader research on the transmission and co-construction of historical memories of the recent past of human rights violations to new generations. The historical periods contemplated in this research are Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government (1970–1973) and Augusto Pinochet's civic-military dictatorship (1973–1990).

The corpus of this research is composed of three fragments of 11th-grade history classroom interactions, with each fragment representing one of the three types of schools that co-exist in Chilean educational system: government subsidized, partially government subsidized, and private schools. These schools were chosen because, as they represent a complete scope of the Chilean educational system, they can more or less illustrate prototypical examples of the use of language resources that allow the inclusion of other voices as historical evidence by teachers and students in history classroom interactions. The extracts presented in this article were selected from a total of more than 80 h of filmed history classroom interactions. Each class was transcribed according to the notation presented in an appendix at the end of the main text.

Although the three teachers were recorded based their lessons on the same curricular objectives, each teacher planned his or her lesson according to his or her pedagogical criteria without the intervention of the researchers. The three teachers used pedagogical materials that are often incorporated in Chilean history classes of recent national past (i.e., testimonies of political detainees and biographical documentaries, among others). In Chilean classroom interactions, as studies have shown (Martinic, 2015), teachers tend to lecture almost the whole lesson, therefore giving students scarce opportunities to actively participate in classroom interaction.

The selected fragments were part of the history unit entitled "The breakdown of democracy and the military dictatorship." The proposed general learning outcome stated in the Chilean curricula establishes the development of the following two necessary skills for analyzing and valuing different points of view regarding the recent national past: (a) to critically analyze and compare different political views and historiographical interpretations of the past that led to the crisis of 1973 and the democratic breakdown and (b) to characterize the main features of the coup and the military dictatorship in Chile, including the systematic violation of human rights, the political violence, and the suppression of the rule of law (MINEDUC, 2015: 38).

The selection criteria and the segmentation of the fragments were based on three criteria: (a) the specific treatment of critical issues of political and State violence during Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–1990) and their impact on the historical understanding of new generations regarding the severe human rights violations

committed by the dictatorship (Oteiza et al., 2015; Oteiza, 2018); (b) from the extracts that complied with the first criterion, we selected two kinds of fragments: those in which there was a dialog between teacher and students and those in which only the teacher speaks; and, finally, (c) we considered the type of interaction patterns that teachers solely produced, as well as the patterns that teachers and students jointly produced, based on the presence or absence of *semantic waves* in combination with a monoglossic or heteroglossic orientation.

Therefore, the data are organized in the Analysis and Discussion section below into two kinds of texts: (i) monologue extracts ("the teacher speaks. . .") and (ii) dialogue extracts ("the teacher and the students speak. . ."). Each fragment represents an illustration of the use of different strengths of *semantic gravity* or *semantic density*, or *semantic waves*, which are created by the recurrent movement between the two in the discourse.

### 5. Analysis and discussion

In this section, we present a selection of three classroom interactions to illustrate the different language patterns that teachers and students maintain in Chilean 11th-grade history classes.

In the next section, we present examples of classroom interactions. The whole version of the selected classroom interactions is presented first in English and is immediately followed by their version in the original Spanish language. Subsequently, we include the analysis of each fragment of classroom interactions in tables, thus showing the language resources that teachers and students use to build a historical meaning. In the first example, we present an extract of history classroom interaction in which the teacher is the only one who speaks, and in which she creates a high level of *semantic waves*. With this example, we would also like to explain and illustrate that a teacher can choose to maintain a stronger *semantic gravity* or a stronger *semantic density* without making *semantic waves* at all. In the analysis of the latter two examples, we attempt to illustrate cases in which teachers and students are involved in a dialogic interaction with different types of orientations regarding the use of *semantic waves*.

#### 5.1. The teacher speaks. . .

In *Example 1* given below, the teacher deals with the historical event of the violent coup d'état of September 11, 1973, in Chile. The teacher makes use of a wide range of linguistic resources to explain the historical significance of the violence that Chilean society lived, especially during the first days of the coup d'état led by Augusto Pinochet.

*Example 1* (English translation)

- T. 1 In these public spaces was where torture and repression first began in Chile  
(2) ehh the first  
2 days in which the coup was initiated are probably some of the most violent  
days that national  
3 history has lived (2) ((The teacher projects a Swedish documentary))  
4 imposed close to 6 in the afternoon during the first days of the coup it cost you  
your life (2)  
5 going to shop at the grocery store was a trip from which you did not know if  
you  
6 would return (3) and hopefully they would find you (2)  
7 the river like all the life in our country (1) and in the history of Santiago (1) the  
river was the place by which  
8 wastes were evacuated (2) in the city (2) there is where all the sewer systems  
of Santiago meet  
9 (2) there is where all the corpses of the assassinated Marxists during  
10 curfews end up (2) without name (1) without identification (1) with no one  
to recognize  
11 them (3) like waste (2) and the common people saw it (1) saw them (2) heard  
them  
12 scream (1) saw how the corpses fell unto the water (1) heard the blow (2) of  
the corpse  
13 against the bottom (3) they saw them piled up on the banks (1) the next day

- 14 family fathers (1) sons (1) brothers (2) leaving orphans (2) but they were cells of this Marxist cancer  
 15 that had to be exterminated (2) that had to be eliminated (1) like waste through the river (3)  
 16 it is difficult to think and to measure to what point we could come to dehumanize someone (2) to take  
 17 everything from him (2) its life (3) but how it was proved later on (1) when one thinks that  
 18 it's not possible to elevate the level of violence (2) when they've already taken from you  
 19 everything that is life (2) one can (2) continue forward in the escalade of political violence  
 20 (3) the person what he or she has is not only life (2) also has other things (2) has his or her  
 21 identity (3) but that was also taken from them at some point (2) in 1973 (1) the National  
 22 Intelligence Directory is created with Manuel Contreras in charge, probably one of the  
 23 most disastrous subjects in the history of Chile (1) in charge of the political repression (1)  
 24 directed toward certain groups of society (2) fundamentally the political  
 25 parties: the MIR (1) the Communist Party (1) the Socialist Party (2) and to the liberation of the  
 26 leaders and the organizational cells within this process (1) fall in his hands and pass through his hands  
 27 thousands of people (2) Manuel Contreras was the leader of this group that had  
 28 as a mission (1) obtain information to disarticulate these organizational cells at  
 29 any costs they said around there (3) until the last consequences (2) That translated later on (1)  
 30 in a series of institutional actions (1) permanently dedicated (1) planned (1) technified in the political  
 31 repression (1) in the denigration of the people (2) in the disappearance of the people

Example 1 (original Spanish language)

- T. 1. En estos espacios públicos fue donde primero se inicia la represión y la tortura en Chile (2) eeh los  
 2. primeros días en que se inicia el golpe son probablemente algunos de los más violentos que ha vivido  
 3. la historia nacional (2) ((El profesor proyecta un documental sueco))  
 4. impuesto cerca de las 6 de la tarde durante los primeros días del golpe costaba la vida (2)  
 5. ir a comprar al almacén era un viaje del que no sabías si volvías (3)  
 6. y ojalá te encontrarán  
 7. el río como toda la vida en nuestro país (1) y en la historia de Santiago (1) el río era el lugar por el que  
 8. se evacuaban los desechos (2) en la ciudad (2) ahí van a dar todos los alcantarillados de Santiago  
 9. (2) ahí van a dar todos los cuerpos de los marxistas asesinados durante  
 10. los toques de queda (2) sin nombre (1) sin identificación (1) sin nadie que los reconociera  
 11. (3) como desechos(2) y la gente común y corriente lo veía (1) los veía (2) los escuchaba gritar (1)  
 12. veían como caían los cuerpos al agua (1) escuchaban el golpe (2) del cuerpo  
 13. contra el fondo (3) los veían amontonados en las orillas (1) al día siguiente  
 14. padres de familia (1) hijos hermanos (4) dejando guachos (4) pero eran células de este cáncer marxista  
 15. que había que exterminar (2) que había que eliminar (1) como desechos por el río (3)  
 16. es difícil pensar y dimensionar a qué punto podemos llegar a deshumanizar a alguien (2)  
 17. de quitarle todo (2) la vida (3) pero como se pudo comprobar más adelante (1) cuando uno  
 18. cree que no es posible elevar el nivel de violencia (2) cuando ya te han quitado  
 19. todo que es la vida (4) se puede (2) seguir adelante en la escalada de la violencia política  
 20. (3) la persona lo que tiene no es sólo la vida (2) también tiene otras cosas (2) tiene su  
 21. identidad (3) pero eso también se les quitaron en algún momento (2)  
 22. en 1973 se crea la Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia a cargo de Manuel Contreras, probablemente  
 23. uno de los sujetos más nefastos de la historia de Chile (1) encargado de la represión política (1)  
 24. dirigida a ciertos grupos específicos de la sociedad (2) fundamentalmente los partidos políticos  
 25. el MIR (1) el Partido Comunista (1) el Partido Socialista (2) y a la liberación  
 26. de las cúpulas y las células organizativa dentro de este proceso (1) caen en sus manos y pasan por sus

27. manos miles de personas (2) Manuel Contreras era el jefe de este grupo que tenía  
 28. como misión (1) conseguir información para desarticular estas células a  
 29. cualquier costo lo dijeron por ahí (3) hasta las últimas consecuencias (2) eso se tradujo posteriormente  
 30. en una serie de acciones institucionales (1) permanentes dedicadas (1) planificadas (1) tecnificadas  
 31. en la represión política (1) en la denigración de las personas (2) en la desaparición de las personas

The teacher starts explaining how the repression was conducted by the military by relying on a strong *semantic density* (SD+), as it is observed in lines 1–3 in which we can appreciate the use of a specialized language mainly through the use of historical technicality (“the coup,” “repression,” and “torture”) and the codification of incongruent forms or logical grammatical metaphors for constructing causality of purpose through verbal groups (“was initiated” and “has lived”) (Table 1):

Once she has projected the Swedish documentary, which deals with the ways in which the violence of the State was operating in Chile, she begins to use a stronger *semantic gravity* (SG+) to explain with a nonspecialized language very concrete facts that could have happened to anyone who did not respect the 6:00 p.m. curfew that was imposed by the military. The teacher then selects a monoglossic orientation to make a recount of facts, mainly by the use of material processes (“going to,” “return,” and “find”), although she also deploys a high use of a heteroglossic orientation as a *dialogic expansion* of Entertain when she asks her students to imagine how an ordinary activity such as “going to shop at the grocery store” could have ended up during that period. For this purpose, the teacher employs several resources of modalization (“could,” “would,” and “would”) and very little technicality (“the coup”), as it is shown in Table 2:

In lines 7–14, as it is shown in the following analysis (Table 3), the teacher continues to use a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+) and maintains a historical recount genre to narrate what was happening to the people who opposed to the military regime (or who were known for being part of Allende’s government). For this historical recount (Coffin, 2006), the teacher references very concrete facts, such as how people were being assassinated and drawn into the Mapocho River (“where all the corpses of the assassinated Marxists during the curfew end up.” Here, the teacher mentions a couple of technical words (“Marxists” and “curfew”), but she does not include that technicality into a more complex or abstract historical explanation. Although it is possible to observe a narration and description of the facts codified in the discourse through the use of relational and material processes as well as from a monoglossic orientation, the teacher privileges the use of heteroglossic resources of *dialogic contraction*, particularly of Proclaim: Endorse through the use of mental processes of perception to explain to her students the testimonies of the people (“people saw,” “saw them,” “heard them,” “saw how,” and “saw them”) and as a way of building historical evidentiality in her argument. People are therefore constructed as witnesses of the acts of violence:

In the next lines of the teacher’s historical recount (14–21), she inscribes a negative evaluation of integrity with regard to the violence made by the State (“cells of this Marxist cancer that had to be exterminated and that had to be eliminated like waste”), which was evoked in the previous lines by the brutality of the acts of violence that people “saw” and “heard.” The mention of families and family relations (“sons” and “brothers”) collaborates in maintaining the discourse in a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+), although the inclusion of technicality (“Marxist cancer”) and nominalizations or ideational grammatical metaphors (“the level of violence” and “the escalade of political violence”) contribute in building these acts of severe repression into a wider historical process of State terror that Chilean society lived, especially during the first year of the dictatorship. Here, the teacher resorts to resources that build a

**Table 1**  
Analysis of Example 1a.<sup>a</sup>

History classroom interaction	Monoglossic orientation	Heteroglossic orientation (dialogic contraction and expansion)	Specialized and nonspecialized language	Semantic gravity and semantic density
<b>T 1</b> In these public spaces was where torture and repression first began in Chile (2) ehh the first 2 days in which the coup was initiated are probably some of the most <u>violent</u> days that national 3 history has lived (2) (The teacher projects a Swedish documentary))	Monogloss Facts situated in time: relational processes in the past, impersonal forms:  <i>torture and repression first began was initiated; has lived</i>	Heterogloss dialogic expansion: Entertain  <i>probably (some of the most violent)</i>	Technicality: <i>the coup, torture, repression</i>  Incongruent causality: Purpose <i>was initiated has lived</i>	SD+

<sup>a</sup> The tables of analysis are organized into five columns in which we present the following: (1) the fragment of history classroom interaction analyzed; (2) categories and instantiations of a monoglossic orientation; (3) categories and instantiations of a heteroglossic orientation; (4) instantiations of specialized and nonspecialized language by means of technical words, nominalizations, and congruent and incongruent logico-semantic resources for constructing causality; and (5) strong (+) or medium (+/–) *semantic gravity* and *semantic density*.

**Table 2**  
Analysis of Example 1b.

4 imposed close to 6 in the afternoon during the first days of the coup it cost you your life (2) 5 going to shop at the grocery store was a trip from which you did not know if you 6 would return (3) and hopefully they would find you (3)	Monogloss Recount of historical facts: material processes <i>imposed; cost; return; find</i>	Heterogloss Expression of desire situated in the past  <i>you; hopefully</i>  dialogic expansion, Entertain Modalization and mental processes:  <i>would; would; did not know</i>	Technicality: <i>the coup</i>  nonspecialized language; familiar language (material and mental affective clauses – <i>hopefully</i> )	SG+
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**Table 3**  
Analysis of Example 1c.

7 the river like all the life in our country (1) and in the history of Santiago (1) the river was the 8 place by which wastes were evacuated (2) in the city (2) there is where all the sewer systems of Santiago meet 9 (2) there is where all the corpses of the assassinated Marxists during 10 curfews end up (2) without name (1) without identification (1) with no one to recognize 11 them (3) like <u>waste</u> (2) and the common people saw it (1) saw them (2) heard them 12 scream (1) saw how the corpses fell onto the water (1) heard the blow (2) of the corpse 13 against the bottom (3) they saw them piled up on the banks (1) the next day 14 family fathers (1) sons (1) brothers (4) leaving orphans (4)	Monogloss Recount of historical facts: relational and material processes <i>was; were; is; meet; there is; end up</i>	Heterogloss Expression of national empathy with students <i>(our country)</i>  Heterogloss  dialogic contraction, Proclaim: Endorse  <i>people saw saw them heard them saw how saw them</i>	Technicality: – nonspecialized language; familiar language (material clauses)  Technicality: <i>Marxists, curfew</i>	SG+  SG+/- SG+
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heteroglossic orientation of *dialogic contraction* as Disclaim: Counter and Disclaim: Deny to portray both her own disbelief and the surprise that Chilean people felt back in the 70s regarding the brutality and the “level of violence” that the military were capable of (“it is hard to think and to measure as to what point we could dehumanize someone”). In this extract, the heteroglossic orientation of *dialogic contraction* of Proclaim: Pronounce has a prominent role in building the strong *semantic gravity* (SG+). In lines 16 and 18, the teacher expresses, in an inscribed manner, her social sanction of propriety regarding the acts of the military Junta, and later, in lines 18–19, she incorporates the others (students in this case) asking for solidarity and empathy (“when they’ve already taken from you everything”). The term “People” is not treated in the technical way as the term “Marxists” is but rather in a pejorative manner through the term “Marxist cancer,” which

was commonly used by the extreme right-wing supporters during the dictatorship, as shown in Table 4:

In the last lines (21–31) of this fragment of classroom interaction (21–31) (Table 5), the teacher starts to strengthen the *semantic density* in her discourse (SD+) through the inclusion of more technical items (“National Intelligence Directory,” “MIR,”<sup>3</sup> “Communist Party,” “Socialist Party,” “organizational cells”), nominalizations or ideational grammatical metaphors (“institutional actions,” “political repression,” “the denigration of the people,” and “the disappearance of the people”), and logical grammatical metaphors to build historical causality by means of a verbal

<sup>3</sup> MIR: Movement of Revolutionary Left (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria).

**Table 4**  
Analysis of Example 1d.

14 family fathers (1) sons, brothers (2) leaving orphans (2) but they were cells of this Marxist cancer 15 that had to be exterminated (2) that had to be eliminated (1) like waste through the river (3) 16 it is difficult to think and to measure to what point we could come to dehumanize someone (2) to take 17 everything from him (2) its life (3) but how it was proved later on (1) when one thinks that 18 it's not possible to elevate the level of violence (2)	Heterogloss dialogic contraction, Disclaim: Counter and Deny <i>but; but; it's not possible</i> Use of deontic meanings: <i>had to; had to</i> dialogic contraction, Proclaim: Pronounce Impersonal verbal processes: <i>it is difficult to think; one thinks that it's not possible</i> dialogic contraction, Proclaim: Endorse <i>it was proved later on</i> Heterogloss	Technicality: 'Marxist cancer' Nominalization: <i>the level of violence</i>	SD+/- SG+ SD+
18 when they've already taken from you 19 everything that is life (2) one can (2) continue forward in the escalade of political violence 20 (3) the person what he or she has is not only life (2) also has other things (2) has his or her 21 identity (3) but that was also taken from them at some point (2)	dialogic contraction, Disclaim: Counter  <i>but</i> (as a resource of Force) Expression of empathy with students  <i>you; one</i>	nonspecialized language; familiar language  Nominalization <i>the escalade of political violence</i>  nonspecialized language; familiar language	SG+ SD+ SG+

**Table 5**  
Analysis of Example 1e.

21 in 1973 (1) the National 22 Intelligence Directory is created with Manuel Contreras in charge, probably one of the 23 most disastrous subjects in the history of Chile (1) in charge of the political repression (1) 24 directed toward certain groups of society (2) fundamentally the political 25 parties: the MIR (1) the Communist Party (1) the Socialist Party (2) and to the liberation of the 26 leaders and the organizational cells	Monogloss Recount of historical facts. material and impersonal processes <i>the National Intelligence Directory is created</i>	Heterogloss dialogic expansion: Entertain <i>probably</i>	Technicality: <i>National Intelligence Directory, MIR, Communist Party, Socialist Party, organizational cells</i> Incongruent causality: Purpose <i>is created</i>	SD+
26 within this process (1) fall in his hands and pass through his hands 27 thousands of people (2) Manuel Contreras was the leader of this group that had 28 as a mission (1) obtain information to disarticulate these organizational cells at 29 any costs they said around there (3) until the last consequences (2) that translated later on (1) 30 in a series of institutional actions (1) permanently dedicated (1) planned (1) technified in the political 31 repression (1) in the denigration of the people (2) in the disappearance of the people	Monogloss Recount of historical facts. material and relational processes	Heterogloss dialogic expansion: Attribute <i>they said</i>	Technicality: <i>organizational cells</i> Nominalizations: <i>Institutional actions, political repression, the denigration of the people, the disappearance of the people</i> Congruent causality: Purpose <i>to</i> Incongruent causality: elaboration <i>translated</i>	SD+ SG+ SD+

group or a sequence of nominal groups (“was created” and “translated”). Here, the monoglossic orientation is prominent, especially by the recount of facts through material and impersonal processes. However, in one occasion, the teacher also uses a heteroglossic resource of *dialogic expansion* as Entertain when she inserts the modal adjunct “probably” to present the actions of Manuel Contreras, the director of the DINA, with a strong negative evaluation of social sanction of integrity, which is graduated by high force emphasized by the volume of teacher’s voice: “one of the most *disastrous*”. This “probably” works as a conclusion of the teacher’s historical recount, which started in line 2 with the claim that the first days after the coup d’état were “probably some of the most *violent* days that the national history has lived”; in other words, the repression is built in the discourse as a historical process.

In this fragment of the interaction (21–31), the teacher maintains a strong *semantic density* (SD+) by using a nonspecialized language to refer to this historical process of repression during the first months of the dictatorship. The inclusion of common people in the teacher’s discourse is replaced, in this occasion, by military and political institutions, as she starts to construct the historical explanation of how the repression was systematic and how it became part of a policy of State terror (“planned” and “technified”).

Therefore, “people” are not only passive recipients of the military actions of repression but also play a secondary grammatical role in the nominalizations (“the denigration of the people” and “the disappearance of the people”), thus assigning a prominent role to the State process of repression (“the denigration” and “the disappearance”):

In sum, in this extract of classroom interaction, the teacher privileges a more heteroglossic orientation of dialogic expansion and contraction that goes along with a stronger *semantic gravity* (SG+) besides the use of other linguistics resources that construct a nonspecialized language to elaborate her historical recount. Conversely, when the teacher strengthens a *semantic density* (SD+) in her discourse, she tends to build her discourse in a more monoglossic manner with the inclusion of only certain resources of dialogic contraction. The heteroglossic orientation of dialogic contraction contributes to reinforce the negative appraisals of integrity of the events and historical process of repression (“but, but, but; it’s not possible; it is; it’s not possible; had to, had to”). This *semantic density* is also achieved by the inclusion of technical words and nominalizations that collaborate to build a more complex and abstract explanation of a historical process.

As we would like to stress, teachers can also maintain their discourse with the use of only a strong *semantic density* (SD+) or only



**Table 6**  
Analysis of Example 2a.

History classroom interaction	Monoglossic orientation	Heteroglossic orientation (dialogic contraction and expansion)	Specialized and non-specialized language	Semantic gravity and semantic density
<p><b>T:1.</b> (2) well (1) the political and social context of this period you already know it and the 2. context of 1973 around the time of the coup ehh (1) we mentioned a few things a couple of minutes 3. before what things you remember from the context of the coup d'etat? What was happening in 4. Chile and in international terms toward the period (1) the date excuse me (2) Once again, raise your hand 5. because I do not know who is talking to me</p>	<p>Monogloss Historical facts regarding the past that students need to remember: <i>What was happening?</i></p>	<p>Heterogloss Addressing his students through questions: <i>What things you remember?</i></p>	<p>Technicality: <i>the coup; the coup d'état</i> Nominalizations: <i>political and social context</i> familiar and nonspecialized language: <i>things; things</i></p>	<p>SD+ SG+</p>

a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+), without creating a *semantic wave* in their own speech.

## 5.2. Teacher and students take turns to speak. . .

In the following examples, we present instances in which teachers and students co-construct the pedagogical historical dialog in the classroom. Therefore, the use of a stronger or weaker *semantic gravity* (SG) or *semantic density* (SD) is jointly built by both teacher and students.

In *Example 2*, we present a more dialogical classroom interaction, in which students actively participate by taking turns with the teacher, thus constructing together a *semantic wave* in their interaction.

*Example 2* (English translation)

- T:1.** (2) well (1) the political and social context of this period you already know it and the  
2. context of 1973 around the time of the coup ehh (1) we mentioned a few things a couple of minutes  
3. before what things you remember from the context of the coup d'etat? What was happening in  
4. Chile and in international terms toward the period (1) the date excuse me (2) Once again, raise your hand  
5. because I do not know who is talking to me  
**S: 6.** Cold War ((the teacher now uses the blackboard to write down the elements provided by the students))  
**T:7.** Cold War (1) ok (1) perfect (1) who else? Maestro  
**S: 8.** shortage and economic crisis  
**T: 9.** economic crisis in general (1) there is an economic crisis (1) ok what else? Maestro  
**S:10.** a polarization  
**T:11.** the polarization (1) ok (1) the polarization to what did it reference?  
**S:12.** to the factions  
**T:13.** loud that not even I can hear you  
**S:14.** to the factions that joined the (-) settlers  
**T:15.** ok (1) to the possibility of taking sides with some discourse (1) with a political discourse that is very  
16. important (2) the polarization has to do with a political discourse and with an ideology that is  
17. fundamental to always have this present (2) Ángelo and then Seba  
**S:18.** the politicization  
**T:19.** absolutely (2) maximum politicization of the civil society (that is) all the people want to participate  
20. within the public sphere

*Example 2* (original Spanish language)

- T: 1.** (2) Bueno, el contexto político y social de este período ustedes ya lo manejan y el  
2. contexto de 1973 alrededor del golpe ehh (1) mencionamos algunas cosas yaa hace un par de minutos  
3. ¿qué cosas se acuerdan ustedes del contexto del golpe de estado? ¿qué estaba pasando en  
4. Chile y en términos internacionales hacia el período, la fecha perdón (2) De nuevo, levanten la mano  
5. porque no sé quién me está hablando  
**S: 6.** Guerra Fría.

- ((el profesor ahora utiliza la pizarra para anotar en ella los elementos que proporcionan los estudiantes))  
**T: 7.** Guerra Fría (1) ya (1) perfecto (1) quién más? Maestro  
**S: 8.** desabastecimiento y crisis económica  
**T: 9.** crisis económica en general (1) hay una crisis económica (1) ya qué más? Maestro  
**S: 10.** una polarización  
**T: 11.** la polarización (1) ya (1) ¿la polarización a qué hacía referencia?  
**S: 12.** a los bandos  
**T: 13.** fuerte que ni yo le escucho  
**S: 14.** los bandos que se unían los (-) pobladores  
**T: 15.** ya (1) a la posibilidad de abanderarse con algún discurso (1) con algún discurso político eso es  
16. súper importante (2) la polarización tiene que ver con un discurso político y con una ideología eso es 17. fundamental tenerlo presente siempre (2) Ángelo y después Seba  
**S: 18.** la politicización  
**T: 19.** absolutamente (2) máxima politicización de la sociedad civil (es decir) todas las personas tienen  
20. ganas de participar dentro del ámbito público

As shown in lines 1–5, the teacher is the one who creates the pedagogical space for the students' participation. In this invitation, the teacher uses some technicality ("the coup" and "the coup d'état") and one nominalization ("political and social context"), but only with the purpose of referring to a particular historical event, and without pretending to make an elaboration of it. The teacher uses a very familiar and nonspecialized language to ask his students for a review of previous lessons ("you already know" and "what things do you remember from the context of the coup d'état?"), as it is possible to appreciate in [Table 6](#):

When students begin to reply with a few answers, in lines 6 through 13, we can postulate that the *semantic density* is of medium strength (SD+/-) and that it is moving toward a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+) present in line 14. In their answers, students use technical words such as "cold war," "economic crisis," "shortage," and nominalizations like "polarization," but they do not elaborate those concepts into a more complex historical argument; they are rather treated just as "historical elements," as shown in [Table 7](#) below:

In line 15, the teacher takes the student's words to elaborate on the notion of "polarization," which one student has briefly explained, using a nonspecialized wording to state that the polarization refers to "the factions to which the settlers joined." The teacher acknowledges the student's response and expands it with the use of nominalizations such as "political discourse," "polarization," and "ideology", thus strengthening the *semantic density* (SD+) while emphasizing, with inscribed appraisals – some of them graduated ("very important" and "fundamental") – that the process of polarization has a close connection with a political discourse. This strong *semantic density* is maintained later on by both the student and the teacher, mainly with a monoglossic orientation and

**Table 7**  
Analysis of Example 2b.

S. 6. Cold War (the teacher now uses the blackboard to write down the elements provided by the students))	Monogloss Mentioning of nominalized characteristic of the social and political context of 1973		Technicality: <i>Cold war</i>	SD+/-
T.7. Cold War (1) ok (1) perfect (1) who else? Maestro		Heterogloss dialogic contraction: Proclaim: Concur <i>Ok perfect</i> Acknowledging the student's response	Technicality: <i>Cold war</i>	SD+/-
S. 8. shortage and economic crisis	Monogloss Mentioning of nominalized characteristics of the social and political context of 1973		Nominalizations: <i>shortage; economic crisis</i>	SD+/-
T. 9. economic crisis in general (1) there is an economic crisis (1) ok what else? Maestro	Monogloss Relational process to add more information <i>there is</i>	Heterogloss dialogic contraction: Proclaim: Concur <i>ok</i> Acknowledging the student's response	Nominalizations: <i>economic crisis; economic crisis</i>	SD+/-
S.10. a polarization	monogloss Mentioning of nominalized characteristic of the social and political context of 1973		Nominalizations: <i>polarization</i>	SD+/-
T.11. the polarization (1) ok (1) the polarization to what did it reference?	Monogloss	Heterogloss Acknowledging the student's response <i>ok</i> Addressing his students through a question: <i>the polarization to what did it reference?</i>	Nominalizations: <i>polarization; polarization</i> Congruent Causality: Elaboration (it) <i>reference</i>	SD+/-
S.12. to the factions	Monogloss Mentioning of nominalized characteristic of the social and political context of 1973		Technicality: – familiar and non-specialized language	SG+
T.13. loud that not even I can hear you S.14. to the factions that joined the (-) settlers	Regulatory discourse monogloss Answering teacher's response without a complete sentence		Technicality: – familiar and nonspecialized language	SG+

**Table 8**  
Analysis of Example 2c.

T.15. ok (1) to the possibility of taking sides with some discourse (1) with a political discourse that is very 16. important (2) the polarization has to do with a political discourse and with an ideology that is 17. fundamental to always have this present (2) Ángelo and then Seba	Monogloss use of relational processes: <i>has to do</i> <i>that is</i> <i>have</i>	Heterogloss dialogic contraction: Proclaim: Pronounce <i>very important</i> <i>fundamental</i>	Nominalizations: <i>political discourse;</i> <i>polarization;</i> <i>political discourse</i> <i>ideology</i>	SD+
S.18. the politicization	Monogloss Mentioning of nominalized characteristic of the social and political context of 1973		Nominalizations: <i>politicization</i>	SD+/-
T.19. absolutely (2) maximum politicization of the civil society (that is) all the people want to participate 20. within the public sphere		Heterogloss dialogic contraction: Proclaim: Pronounce <i>absolutely</i> (acknowledging the student's response and expanding it)	Nominalizations: <i>maximum politicization of the civil society</i> <i>public sphere</i>	SD+/-

a heteroglossic orientation of dialogic contraction as Pronounce (Table 8).

In the last example of this article, Example 3 given below, we present an illustration of how students' questions influence the making of a *semantic wave* by the teacher, or in other words that the *semantic wave*, which is the combination of strong and soft *semantic gravity* with *semantic density*, is jointly constructed by students and the teacher in the history classroom interaction. Before the interaction in this example, the teacher was explaining to the students the role of the "Vicariate of Solidarity," which was created by the Catholic Church, with the purpose of denouncing and

defending human rights violations in the country during Pinochet's dictatorship.

*Example 3* (English translation)

T: 1. then the UN can intervene (1) but can intervene with those types of gestures (1) with humanitarian

2. help (1) but cannot intervene the sovereignty of a State

S: 3. that is outside of Chile (2) the fact was not known of the existence of torture?

T: 4. it's just that if they torture a person and then that person leaves from prison and then goes to the

5. Vicariate and that testimony is registered in the Vicariate (1) that testimony is also sent internationally

- S: 6. then Chile still looks bad [internationally]  
 T: 7. [yes]  
 S: 8. then it had nooo (2) what is still the objective of having a secret police?  
 T: 9. is that (1) what is the purpose of having a secret police? to end with the internal opposition (1)  
 10. to which, what principally interests the military junta in that moment is to end with the internal  
 11. opponents (1) then they then go to the international (2) and the international will be greatly  
 12. demonstrated in the economic treaties in Chile (2) Chile doesn't generate economic treaties with  
 13. important countries in that period (1) in all the military government (2) with the countries that  
 14. it generates treaties are those that have dictatorships (1) just like him.  
*Example 3 (original Spanish language)*  
 T: 1. entonces la ONU puede intervenir (1) pero puede intervenir con ese tipo de gestos (1) con  
 2. ayuda humanitaria (1) pero no puede intervenir la soberanía de un Estado  
 S: 3. osea fuera de Chile (2) ¿no se sabía el hecho de la existencia de tortura?  
 T: 4. es que si a una persona la torturan y luego sale de la cárcel y va a la Vicaría  
 5. y ese testimonio queda registrado en la Vicaría (1) ese testimonio es también mandado internacionalmente (1)  
 S: 6. entonces Chile igual queda mal [internacionalmente]  
 T: 7. [Sí]  
 S: 8. entonces no tenía niunaaa (2) ¿cuál sigue siendo el objetivo de tener una policía secreta?  
 T: 9. es que (1) ¿cuál es el sentido de tener una policía secreta? terminar con la oposición  
 10. interna, al que, lo que le interesa principalmente a la junta militar en ese momento es  
 11. terminar con los opositores internos (1) después van a lo internacional (1) y lo internacional  
 12. se va demostrar mucho en los tratados económicos en Chile (2) Chile no genera tratados  
 13. económicos con países importantes en esa época (1) en todo el gobierno militar (2) con los 14. países que genera tratados son los que tienen dictaduras, igual que él.

In this brief extract (Table 9), it is possible to appreciate that the teacher is using a stronger *semantic density* (SD+) than the one that was illustrated in Example 2. This is due in part to the use of technicality, as well as the highly compacted and abstract nominalization “the sovereignty of a State.” In line 2, the teacher is talking about the degree of intervention that an international institution such as the UN can have in a sovereign State and is interrupted by the student’s intervention in line 3, which focuses on what was happening outside the country and on what other countries knew regarding the practice of torture in Chile. The teacher’s strong *semantic density* changes with the student’s question, while her answer weakens the *semantic density* and uses a stronger *semantic gravity* (SG+) maybe because the student is asking for a collective historical actor (the UN) and the international image that Chile has (also a collective historical actor):

The teacher’s answer, as it is shown in lines 4 and 5 (Table 10), is characterized by the use of a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+), especially because she tells a recount of what happened to a person if she or he suffered torture and denounced it to the “Vicariate of Solidarity.” This historical recount is signaled by the use of relational and material processes, in a very concrete manner, to refer to what “common” people did in those circumstances (“leaves,” “goes,” “is registered,” and “sent”), whereas the only technicality used in the recount is the term “Vicariate.” The student’s question maintains a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+) because he is asking for the image that Chile has abroad, that is, he is asking of what people think about Chile with the use of a familiar and nonspecialized language. In the following question in line 8, the same student asks regarding the militaries’ motivations to continue having a secret police, despite the international perception of Chile as a “bad” country, as it is shown in Table 11.

In Example 3c above, we would like to highlight that it is the student’s intervention that builds the *semantic wave* in the discourse and influences the teacher to build a stronger *semantic density* in her answer. One example of the way the teacher uses this more

specialized language is how she refers to historical actors of that period as the “internal opposition,” instead of referring, as before, to a “person” who suffered torture. This use of “internal opposition” also refers to the way the Military Junta had constructed a false argument of an “internal war,” which was in turn used as part of a justification for the systematic torture practiced by the State.<sup>4</sup> The teacher, nevertheless, answers from the point of view of the historical actors’ motivations, thus weakening the *semantic density* in her answer (what the military junta “thought”).

In our analysis, we have identified three main patterns of history classroom interactions that were previously illustrated with examples in this article and have been organized into two main groups: (1) when only the teacher speaks and (2) when teachers and students take turns to speak.

The teacher can create *semantic waves* using a combination of a strong *semantic density* (SD+) or a strong *semantic gravity* (SG+), as it is shown in Example 1. In this case, although students do not speak in the analyzed fragment, the teacher builds a rich and productive learning space by using both specialized and nonspecialized languages that collaborate with the students’ understanding of the State repression during Pinochet’s dictatorship and the historical impact of the military violence in Chile during this period. In this example, the specialized language tends to be accompanied by a monoglossic orientation, whereas the nonspecialized language tends to be combined with a heteroglossic orientation of dialogic contraction or expansion that allows the inclusion of different point of views within the historical explanation. The construction of evidentiality, which, in the history lesson fragments analyzed here, is codified mainly by means of direct testimonies (what people “saw,” “heard,” “said,” and “felt”) and is a key aspect for explaining historical meaning and for achieving a general history curriculum goal in Chile. This also requires working with different sources, which implies elaborating historical thinking by considering different interpretations of historical events and processes. This orientation is commonly codified by grammatical structures through both congruent and incongruent expressions of causality such as “was created,” “was translated,” and nominalizations such as “the level of violence,” “political repression,” and “the disappearance of the people.”

When teachers and students take turns to speak, as Examples 2 and 3 show, both teacher and students can co-construct *semantic waves* in their interaction through the use of a combination of *semantic gravity* and *semantic density*. The use of strong *semantic density* (SD+) or strong *semantic gravity* (SG+) allows a historical contextualization of facts and processes in a temporal frame. Students usually ask teachers to give more concrete details about what happened regarding historical actors’ motivations for having a better understanding of historical processes, thus favoring a stronger *semantic gravity* (SG+). Teachers can follow this strong *semantic gravity* to give students the necessary concrete historical facts. Nevertheless, after satisfying the students’ curiosity, the teacher can return to a more complex and abstract historical explanation with the use of an ample repertoire of nominalizations of historical processes, and the use of technicality in combination with congruent and incongruent resources for expressing causality, thus strengthening the *semantic density* (SD+).

On the other hand, this co-constructed *semantic wave* may also be built in a different manner, that is, in which students provide some levels of technicality that the teacher can then strengthen,

<sup>4</sup> This false argument constructed by the Military Junta was completely destroyed with the publication of the official document of “National Report of Torture and Political Prison” (known as the Valech Report, 2004, 2011). This official document is included by the teacher as strong historical evidence, and it is also a key primary source in the official History Textbook used by students.

**Table 9**  
Analysis of Example 3a.

History classroom interaction	Monoglossic orientation	Heteroglossic orientation (dialogic contraction and expansion)	Specialized and nonspecialized language	Semantic gravity and semantic density
T. 1. then the UN can intervene (1) but can intervene with those types of gestures (1) with humanitarian 2. help (1) but cannot intervene the sovereignty of a State		Heterogloss dialogic contraction: Counter and Deny <i>but; but; cannot</i>	Technicality: <i>UN; State</i> Nominalizations: <i>the sovereignty of a State</i> Congruent Causality: Explanation <i>then</i>	SD+
S. 3. that is outside of Chile (2) the fact was not known of the existence of torture?		Heterogloss dialogic contraction: Deny <i>the fact was not known</i>	Nominalizations: <i>the existence of torture</i> Congruent Causality: Explanation <i>that is</i>	SD+/-

**Table 10**  
Analysis of Example 3b.

T. 4. it's just that if they torture a person and then that person leaves from prison and then goes to the 5. Vicariate and that testimony is registered in the Vicariate (1) that testimony is also sent internationally (1) S. 6. then Chile still looks bad [internationally]	Monogloss Facts situated in time: relational and material processes in the past: <i>torture; leaves; is registered; sent</i>		Technicality: <i>Vicariate</i> familiar and nonspecialized language <i>(a person) leaves, goes, is registered, sent</i>	SG+/-
T. 7. [yes]		Heterogloss dialogic expansion: Entertain [how Chile is seen from abroad] <i>Chile still looks bad</i>	Technicality: – familiar and nonspecialized language Congruent Causality: Explanation <i>then</i>	SG+

**Table 11**  
Analysis of Example 3c.

S. 8. then it had nooo (2) what is still the objective of having a secret police?		Heterogloss dialogic expansion: Entertain [how Chile is seen from abroad]	Technicality: <i>secret police</i> Congruent Causality: Explanation <i>then</i>	SD+/-
T. 9. is that (1) what is the purpose of having a secret police? to end with the internal opposition (1) 10. to which, what principally interests the military junta in that moment is to end with the internal 11. opponents (1) then they then go to the international (2) and the international will be greatly 12. demonstrated in the economic treaties in Chile (2) Chile doesn't generate economic treaties with 13. important countries in that period (1) in all the military government (2) with the countries that 14. it generates treaties are those that have dictatorships (1) just like him.	monogloss Recount of historical facts: relational and material processes in the past: <i>having; is; go; will be greatly demonstrated; doesn't generate; generates; are; have</i>	Heterogloss dialogic expansion: Entertain mental processes <i>what is the purpose...?</i> <i>what principally interests the military junta</i> dialogic contraction: Deny <i>Chile doesn't</i>	Technicality: <i>secret police</i> <i>economic treaties</i> <i>military government</i> <i>dictatorships</i> Nominalizations: <i>internal opposition</i>	SD+ SD+/- SD+

from medium *semantic density* to a stronger one, as shown in Examples 2 and 3. This meaning and language orientation influences the teacher, who shifts his or her pedagogical discourse from a stronger *semantic density* to a stronger *semantic gravity*, while maintaining or following the student's use of a nonspecialized language.

The main findings of this article can be summarized in three aspects: (a) we have tried to describe history classroom interactions repertoires that teachers and students deploy in a historical pedagogical practice and to illustrate some of the linguistics resources that codify them; (b) in describing how history recounts are codified in history classes, we also offer a description of congruent and incongruent types of causality that both teacher and students use to

build historical meaning as consequence, elaboration, purpose, and evidentiality. Accordingly, we have identified four ways of building causality in our classroom interaction analysis: (i) as an elaboration ("this is. . ."), (ii) as evidentiality ("according to. . ."), (iii) as a purpose ("in order to. . ."), and (iv) as a consequence (when the speaker offers a consequence of a previous idea, fact, or argument); and (c) taking into account our hypothesis that the monoglossic or heteroglossic orientations that students and teachers adopt in their classes have a connection with the use of a stronger or weaker *semantic gravity* (SG) and *semantic density* (SD), we have provided some examples that illustrate, at least preliminarily, that the strong *semantic density* (SD+) tends to be built with a more monoglossic

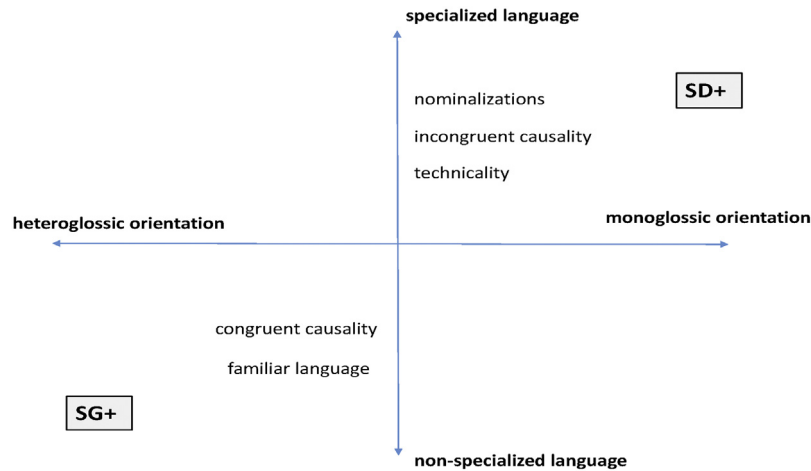


Fig. 2. Strong semantic density (SD+) and strong semantic gravity (SG+) constructed by ideational and interpersonal language resources in history classroom interactions.

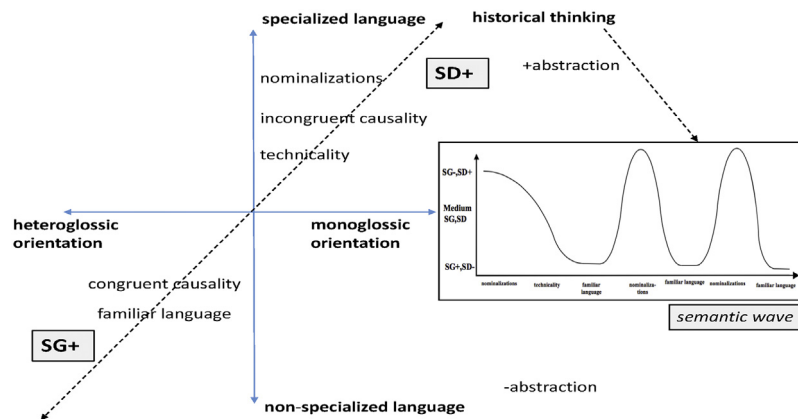


Fig. 3. Creating historical thinking through semantic waves by means of interpersonal and ideational language resources.

orientation and a dialogic contraction in the discourse and, conversely, that a strong semantic gravity (SG+) tends to appear in the history classroom discourse with more heteroglossic language resources of dialogic expansion.

Therefore, we can postulate that there is a prototypical relationship between semantic density and a more monoglossic orientation, as well as between semantic gravity and a more heteroglossic orientation, as we illustrate in Fig. 2:

In Fig. 3, we illustrate how the building of historical thinking in history classroom interactions needs different language resources – specialized and nonspecialized – combined with a monoglossic or an heteroglossic orientation to create semantic waves that can in turn collaborate with students’ learning process:

## 6. Conclusions

In the history classroom interactions we have analyzed, teachers and students have recontextualized recent national Chilean history marked by severe human rights violations through an ample repertoire of recurrent patterns of classroom interactions. In this article, we claimed that the inclusion of historical evidence is a key component for building historical meaning in secondary-level history classes. In this manner, the use of language resources that construct different levels of abstraction, in combination with language resources that allow the inclusion of other voices by means of dialogic expansion or dialogic contraction is fundamental to historical explanations realized by students and teachers.

To systematize our analysis, we divided the examples into two categories: those in which only “the teacher speaks” and those in which both “the teacher and students take turns to speak.” We analyzed these two main types of history classroom interactions while also considering the level of semantic density or semantic gravity used by the teacher and students because these are two notions involved in the creation of semantic waves. These notions of semantic density and semantic gravity were explored through the codification of more or less specialized and nonspecialized languages, which are realized in combination with choices of more or less monoglossic or heteroglossic orientations by teachers and students in their pedagogical discourse of history. In both cases, we can argue that students have an opportunity to build a historical significance in the classroom. Therefore, we do not argue that one type of classroom interaction is better than the other, but rather, we sought to characterize both ways of pedagogical interaction with the purpose of illustrating the learning possibilities that each type might offer with regard to the incorporation of different positioning, that is, the possibilities of meaning making of historical thinking that can contribute to students’ learning experiences.

The analysis consequently shows that when teachers and students make semantic waves, namely, when they vary their pedagogical discourse using both strong and weak semantic density and semantic gravity, they are also varying their discourse by combining monoglossic and heteroglossic choices. This is of particular significance for history classes as well as for building a historical reasoning and understanding in the field of history because the use of a more specialized language, along with the possible inclusion

of other perspectives and points of view, is crucial to the construction of causality and historical evidentiality, which are the main dimensions of every historical explanation. In this way, the combined analysis proposed, based on the sociological and linguistics notions from LCT, and on the SFL theory, enables the description of how determinate linguistic resources function to build a more or less specialized language in combination with more monoglossic or heteroglossic orientations in the pedagogical discourse of history, which in turn give us a better account of the actual realization of the notion of historical thinking (Van Boxtel & Van Drie, 2008; Monte-Sano, 2010; Reisman, 2015).

As Wineburg (1991) and Paxton (2002) have argued, the historical thinking is achieved when students are able to include different points of view in their historical discourse. This procedure can be achieved partly by the use of engagement resources, and these resources can also contribute to evaluate the quality of the points of view included in the historical discourse (Miller et al., 2014). However, as Myskow (2018) has argued, with regard to the different engagement resources included in history textbooks for secondary and university levels, there is a need for more explicit disciplinary engagement points that can contribute to the instruction of argumentative writing in history at both levels.

As shown in our analysis, there are few inclusions of specialists' voices in history classroom interactions analyzed. Moreover, if they are actually present, they are implicitly incorporated by the use of the technicality and abstraction, which come from secondary sources or history textbooks, constructed from a monoglossic discursive orientation and with a strong or medium *semantic density* (SD+/-). Teachers may want to bring history closer to the students, and to achieve this purpose, they have the tendency to recreate what people felt, did, and thought in the past including social actors as primary testimonial sources in the pedagogical discourse, thus maintaining a nonspecialized and familiar register that allows them to generate an ethical solidarity and empathy with students as we observed in *Example 1*. However, we need to take into consideration that this might be related to the fact that teachers in this study are dealing with a very sensitive and traumatic Chilean national past of human rights violations that is still open to controversy (Lira, 2013; Stern, 2013); therefore, this phenomenon may be different in other periods of national and world history subjects. In spite of what is "at stake" in our particular study, we believe that teachers can expand the linguistic resources for the inclusion of other voices by incorporating, as Myskow (2018) would point out, explicit references of secondary sources written by specialists. Consequently, we believe that, although the creation of *semantic waves* can help students to better understand historical meanings, historical evidence can also be included with a higher level of abstraction and complexity, by moving from a strong *semantic gravity* to a strong *semantic density* in combination with a heteroglossic orientation, that is, a possibility that we did not observe in the extracts of history classroom interactions analyzed.

We sustain that it is relevant to carefully observe the microinteractions that construct a *semantic wave* to explore them not only as discourse analysts but as teacher trainers of both future students and in-service teachers. This discursive analysis allows us to explore the history learning possibilities that the use of language offers to create specific meanings in the interactions and to achieve the historical skills that are required of students by the secondary education History curriculum in Chile. Hence, we propose that these findings have educational implications because of the fact that they might help in the design of history teaching and learning strategies. This can be achieved by focusing on the language resources that may be used in the classroom and by paying attention to the possibilities of meaning construction that these resources provide in learning how to incorporate primary and secondary sources in an axiologically and/or epistemologically

charged historical discourse. In particular, this analysis could be useful in demonstrating teacher trainers and in-service teachers how to promote good decisions in the teaching practices of historical explanations, in the selection of historical sources and in the development of classroom discussions, therefore encouraging a transition from concrete experiences to a more abstract and general historical language and more complex historical explanations.

## 7. Notation for the class interaction

(T): teacher, (S): student. Numbers in parenthesis indicate the length of pauses in seconds; words underlined indicate intonational emphasis or volume. Double parentheses indicate relevant contextual information. Question marks have been added to facilitate reading of the text. We have made a semi-literal/idiomatic translation into English to maintain the kind of lexicogrammatical choices made by teachers and students as far as possible.

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