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Unraveling high school English literature pedagogic practices: a Legitimation Code Theory analysis

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ABSTRACT

Mapping the knowledge formations of language teachers within their pedagogic practices is underresearched, particularly for subject English, a multi-faceted, elusively defined discipline. Deeper knowledge of the pedagogy of subject English teachers is critical, especially within South African education, given the socio-economic power of English in a complexly multilingual and highly unequal society. This detailed, qualitative analysis of two KwaZulu-Natal Grade Ten English literature lessons, one Home Language (EHL) and one Additional Language (EAL), utilizing the Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) concepts of Specialization and Semantics, accounts for differences between two lessons that I previously analyzed, using Bernsteinian notions of classification and framing, in which they were very similarly categorized. This analysis reveals the value of LCT in illuminating significant points of similarity and difference across the lessons in terms of the types of literary gaze promoted and variations in the ranges and forms of abstraction and particularity across the lessons. Aspects of these are illustrated through semantic profile graphs, plotting changes of semantic gravity and semantic density. It also points to potential unearthing of some of the reasons for the alarming gap in literacy levels attained between the most and least economically advantaged sectors of the South African school system. LCT analysis reveals the potential for cumulative research into knowledge practices in language education and interventions to assist teachers in modeling and utilizing valued knowledge formations.

Introduction

The 'black box' of formal education is pedagogy: the complex, co-ordinated practices of teachers in relationship with learners, in pursuit of the holy grail of mastery of uncommon knowledge. Opening up and understanding the structure and operations of that 'black box' is a challenging, intricate and vital task. Perhaps because it is so demanding, it remains underresearched, particularly in developing countries. Westbrook et al. (2013, 69) concluded their research 'revealed how little attention is often paid … to the details of how pedagogy is implemented in practice.' Research attention within this field has fallen

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dominantly upon building understanding of learners, teachers and models of teaching and learning (Hallam and Ireson 1999). Notably absent, within an already relatively slender field, is a focus upon the nature and impact of formations of knowledge upon the pedagogic process. This article explores the contribution that a sociology of knowledge lens, Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) (Maton 2014b), can bring to the task of analyzing pedagogic practice within subject English, a discipline with an elusive, contested content (Macken-Horarik 2014) and often tacit legitimation criteria (Maton 2014b). This is demonstrated via close analysis of teachers' observable practices within two Grade Ten subject English lessons from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Contextualization: subject English within South African education

South African education continues within a state of chronic crisis, carrying the scars of both its apartheid legacy and well intentioned, but failed post-1994 policies. The net effect is that South Africa de facto sits with two separate public education systems − a functional minority sector serving the economically most advantaged 20%−25% of learners, and a dysfunctional system serving the remaining bulk, comprising mostly black learners. Within this deep inequality, only 50% of learners entering Grade One reach Grade Twelve, generating an actual exit pass rate of 40% (Spaull 2013). In the 2006 PIRLS[1] assessments, South Africa scored the lowest of 45 participating nations (Van Staden and Howie 2010). The learning gap between the achievements of the most economically advantaged 25% and the majority 75% grows incrementally, culminating in a deficit of a minimum of two, and maximum of four years (Spaull 2013; Chisholm 2012). For example, Horne (2002) found 95% of matriculants who gained admission to a teacher training program, arrived with Grade Eight English literacy levels, with some at Grade Four levels. Within this context, knowledge of South African teacher pedagogic practices is urgently needed but is thin and fragmented (Taylor 2008, 25). A fundamental concern is that of the development of high level literacy skills in learners. The 2007 SACMEQII[2] assessments found 27% of Grade Six learners to be functionally illiterate. Policy and practice issues of medium of instruction, and the dearth of enabling pedagogies implemented in a complexly multilingual context, are a critical and vexed component of this toxic situation (Pluddeman 2015; Heugh 2015; Alexander 2005). However, the details of this debate are beyond the scope of this paper. The current reality is that for the majority of South African schools English remains the medium of instruction, and subject English the majority first additional language studied. Subject English is thus a key means for the development of learners' analytic literacy competencies, providing the base for engagement with abstracted forms of knowledge across the curriculum.

Establishing systematic, cumulative, comparative understanding of knowledge practices within South African subject English classrooms is important yet tricky. Both as home and additional language, in South African (and other) classrooms, Subject English remains ideologically charged, implicated in issues of nation building, identities and relations to post-colonial power. Characterized with a 'problematic nature' (Green 2003, 135) and an 'unstable knowledge structure', the 'what' of subject English remains elusive (Macken-Horarik 2014). Thus both its curriculum content and pedagogical processes are ongoing sites of contestation (Prinsloo 2003; Marshall 2003). Much subject English classroom research comprises localized case studies working with normative views of

pedagogic best practice, rather than broader pedagogic theory (Ensor and Hoadley 2004; Shaalukeni 2000 in Weideman, Tesfamariam and Shaalukeni 2003). While such research may produce valuable empirical descriptions of specific pedagogic practices, it is often in forms that do not contribute to the building of cumulative explanations for the wider field. (Maton 2014b). Additionally, while considerable attention has been given to issues of relations to power (such as class and race bias in literature studied), questions of the nature of the knowledge being taught in English classrooms, and its effects, remain underresearched. A key purpose of schooling is the development of learners' abilities to procure, process and produce text in ways that grow the 'habits of mind and skills required for the symbolic manipulation of knowledge' (Taylor 2008, 25). Subject English has a vital role to play in this task.

The goal of this article is to demonstrate the insights that LCT[3], a sociological theory of social practices, offering a flexible, multidimensional set of conceptual tools for educational analysis, can bring to the task of better analyzing and tracing the knowledge practices of subject English teachers (Maton 2014b). LCT builds on and extends the framework of Code Theory developed by Basil Bernstein (2000), giving particular attention to the task of developing a nuanced sociology of knowledge practices. I focus here on the multilensed insights that the Specialization and Semantics dimensions of LCT can contribute to mapping subject English teachers' pedagogic practice. Identifying the varying formations of knowledge practices in high school English teachers' pedagogy, in contrasting classroom contexts, may provide useful contributions to the strenuous task of developing the pedagogic competencies teachers need to contribute to the resolution of the acute literacy problems within South African education.

Theoretical framework: Legitimation Code Theory − Specialization and Semantics

The Specialization dimension identifies the organizing principles of the epistemic relation (between practices and their objects, thus knowledge focused) and the social relation (between practices and their subjects, thus knower focused.) These can co-vary infinitely along continua of relative strengths and weaknesses, producing four different specialization codes: knower, knowledge, elite and relativist. Where epistemic relations are weaker and social relations are stronger, a knower code exists. What counts strongly are the dispositions and values of the knower, and the resulting form of the 'gaze' they bring to the knowledge practices. (Maton identifies born, social, cultivated and trained gazes.) Who you are, and the form of your gaze, are emphasized more than the nature of the knowledge attended to (Maton 2014b). Literary studies in school subject English usually falls within a knower code, with a focus on socializing specific, valued dispositions through the study of literary texts, thus usually, a cultivated gaze. The nature of such dispositions is seldom explicated. With its focus upon continua of organizing principles, LCT has useful potential to identify and explain varying gazes within the knower code.

Through the Semantics dimension, LCT explains fields of practice as 'semantic structures' with organizing principles understood as 'semantic codes comprising semantic gravity and semantic density' (Maton 2014a, A-36). Semantic gravity (SG) encapsulates the extent to which a meaning relates to its context. Relatively stronger (+) or weaker (−) strengths can be plotted along an infinite continuum (Maton 2014b).The stronger the

semantic gravity, the more contingent its meaning is upon its context. Semantic gravity may thus operate relatively more strongly or weakly along a spectrum. So, for example, in English literature studies, a particular novel, say, *Pride and Prejudice,* encapsulates stronger semantic gravity than that of 'the oeuvre of Jane Austen', which in turn has stronger semantic gravity than the genres of literature the author's work is often classified under: comedy of manners, romantic fiction. Maton further argues

> By dynamising this continuum [of strengths] to analyse change over time, one can also describe processes of: *weakening* semantic gravity (↓), such as moving from the concrete particulars of a specific case towards generalisations and abstractions, and *strengthening* semantic gravity (SG↑), such as moving from abstract or generalised ideas towards concrete and delimited cases (Maton 2014b, 37).

Semantic density captures the extent to which meaning is condensed within socio-cultural practices such as concepts, symbols, phrases and gestures. The degrees of condensation can also vary infinitely. These variations can also be represented along a continuum showing weaker and stronger forms. The notation SD+ captures relatively stronger semantic density, referring to practices exhibiting greater condensation of meaning within them. Conversely, SD− refers to practices showing less condensation of meaning (Maton 2014b, 129). Working with continua of semantic gravity and semantic density enables the tracking of variations through time, via the mapping of *semantic profiles* of unfolding practices. The profile presented below in Figure 1 shows simultaneous inverse plotting of both semantic gravity and semantic density.[4]

A1 represents continuous operation of meanings at a very abstract, generalized level, while A2 points to operation at a very concrete, particular level. B shows movement from an abstract starting point, down to concrete particularities and up again to an abstract level of meaning. These are idealized, simplified profiles but useful for illustrative purposes.

Macnaught et al. (2013) argue that much of teachers' work is to unpack abstractions and densities, rendering them accessible to learners. Equally important, but less frequently explicitly done, is assisting learners with the process of 'repacking' knowledge into weakening semantic gravity and strengthening semantic density so as to attain greater academic mastery, especially in their writing. Weaker semantic gravity and stronger semantic density is associated with transfer of knowledge across contexts and time, and thereby with cumulative learning (Maton 2014a, 107). However, different social practices will have different functional demands with respect to semantic codings. That is, there will be contexts where semantic flatlines are appropriately functional, and where entry and exit points into semantic waves will differ extensively. Macken-Horarik (2006) and Maton's (2014b) analysis of Australian high school English essays illuminate features that are
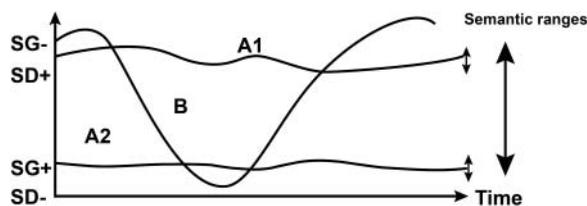

Figure 1. Illustrative examples of semantic profiles.

more and less valued by the assessors. Coherent semantic flow, that is, linked movements between stronger and weaker forms of semantic gravity and semantic density, emerged as highly valued by the examiners. Identifying the nature of semantic profiles within literature classroom discourse can increase the understanding of discourse-specific pedagogies and the spectrum of ways teachers engage with literary texts. The link between teachers' classroom practices and the processes and extent of learner mastery of written genres within subject English can then be investigated. Such insights could contribute to the building of more effective pedagogies.

Methodology

The lessons analyzed here come from South African schools purposively selected from economically divergent ends of the state education system. The *Shades* school serves a largely middle class, urban, racially mixed community, and is well resourced, having been established pre-1994 to serve the white community. The *Jungle Love* school serves a rural, Black working class/semi-subsistence farming community. A minimum of five lessons of each Grade Ten class was observed and video recorded in 2005/6 and 2008. I transcribed these lessons and analyzed them multiple times, beginning with immersion in the data and an intuitive grounded theory analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Glaser 1999). Thereafter I moved on to analysis using categories from Code Theory (Bernstein 2000) and, finally, LCT (Maton 2014a). In this paper, I focus upon a literature lesson from each dataset centered on the teaching of a novel. In my initial analysis using the Code Theory concepts of classification and framing, both lessons received an overall categorization of strong framing and relatively strong classification. That is, both teachers strongly controlled the sequencing and pacing of the lesson. There was some difference in the strengths of the classification of the lessons, with the *Jungle Love* lesson showing somewhat weaker classification than the *Shades* lesson. Yet my grounded analysis suggested there were larger differences in the practices of the teachers that were not captured and accounted for in the Code Theory analysis. The lessons were thus selected for this LCT analysis on the basis of sharing a genre focus (teaching a novel) and relatively similar Code Theory categorizations, along with variations in the handling of knowledge formations inside the lesson. The intention is to explore the analytic capacity of LCT concepts to uncover the nature of such variations, not to generalize patterns identified here as necessarily 'typical' in any fixed way of the teachers' practices.[5] Through subsequent extended engagement with the concept of semantic gravity, and Macken-Horarik's analysis of Grade Ten examination literary essay answers (2006) I developed the 'translation device' detailed in Figure 2, providing an initial explication of varying strengths of semantic gravity in English literature high school lessons. It is important to remember that the levels represent gradations upon a continuum rather than absolute fixed points. The lessons were then qualitatively re-analyzed using the translation device.

Applying LCT to high school literature pedagogy

The *Shades* class follows the national English Home Language syllabus.[6] The lesson occurred roughly mid-point in the teaching of the South African novel *Shades*, by Marguerite Poland (1994). The teacher was white, female, middle aged, English mother tongue and experienced; the learners, ethnically African, European, Indian, mixed-race. Most learners

SG-

Level	Characteristics

One	Symbolic, figurative orientation:
	        Symbolic constructs highlighted
	        Analogical parallels identified
	Paradigmatic:
	        Text re-organized + re-presented into abstract concepts + oppositions
	Extrapolative:
	        inferences beyond literal specifics of text
	Narrative <u>significance</u> focus:
	        Awareness of constructed stance/ viewpoint of author + its effects on reader
	
	Dominantly moral/ aesthetic judgments as well as ethical judgments
	Global orientation to text
	Frequent use of literary terminology + reference to nominal groups

Two	Realist/life message orientation:
	        Life reflective qualities highlighted
	        Life lessons identified
	Syntagmatic:
	        Tied to original narrative structure + event sequence
	Commonsensical:
	        interpersonal, psychological, emotional focus on characters
	Global narrative engagement:
	        message focused
	        retelling of events, character interactions
	Dominantly ethical judgements
	Empirical orientation to text:
	        Focus on text as an end in itself
	        Reference to specific nouns
	Occasional use of literary terminology

Three	Personalised orientation:
	        Personal experience projected,
	        Subjective likes/dislikes identified
	 Aggregative:
	        Atomistically additive focus independent of narrative logic
	Concrete:
	        localized detail focus
	 Itemization focus on isolated details
	Dominantly affective, subjective judgments
	Fragmented orientation to text:
	        Absence of teacher focus
	Use of everyday terminology

SG+

Figure 2. Semantic gravity levels in high school English literature levels.

were either English or isiZulu home language speakers. The teacher described *Shades* as a complex novel that most of her learners found challenging. Set in nineteenth century South Africa, around an Eastern Cape Anglican mission station, the novel explores tensions between the worldviews of the British missionary settlers, and the indigenous isiXhosa community. Another key theme concerns the relationships between Frances, barely adult daughter of the head priest, her cousin, Victor, and Walter, a middle-aged priest.

The lesson falls into six phases:

1. teacher review of prior coverage of the novel,
2. learner reading from the novel and teacher commentary,
3. learner completion of a short worksheet on Emily's expectations of her daughter, Frances,
4. plenary teacher led discussion arising from the worksheet,
5. teacher reading of the text and
6. teacher commentary and learner contributions.

In Code Theory terms (Bernstein 2000), it is largely a strongly classified and framed lesson. It is strongly classified due to the exclusive focus on the literature text, strongly insulated from both the everyday world and other areas of the English syllabus. The high teacher control of the discussion and the sequencing and pacing of the events of the lesson signals strong framing.

In these respects, it shares many features with the *Jungle Love* lesson, which occurred in a rural, all-black school[7]. The black female teacher was also experienced. Her home language, and that of the vast majority of her learners, was isiZulu. This 45-minute literature lesson focused on the novel, *Jungle Love*, by Margaret Johnson (2002), custom written for intermediate, English additional language learners. Set in Belize, South America, on a holiday tour for young adults, the plot centers mainly around two young women, Jennifer and Lisa, and their relationships with each other and a number of men in their lives. The novel explores romantic relationships and the various factors young adults juggle in this area of their lives.

This lesson falls into two phases:

1. the first is a very short opening phase (58 seconds), where the teacher sets the scene by reprising the key issue in Chapter Three, an argument between two characters.
2. the second phase is signaled through foregrounding of the regulative register with the teacher's inclusive 'Let's go on now −Chapter Four.'

This lesson is relatively more weakly classified than the *Shades* lesson in that there is less insulation from everyday life, due to the teacher linking issues in the book to right behavior in life. The content focus of the lesson is, however, strongly insulated from other aspects of the English syllabus, and so is strongly classified in that respect. In terms of framing this is also a strongly teacher-led lesson, with activities alternating between teacher-directed question and answer sessions, and teacher-nominated, but self-selected, individual learner reading aloud of sections of the chapter to the whole class.

Analysis using Code Theory concepts of classification and framing alone did not sufficiently account for the differences between these lessons. Applying LCT dimensions of Specialization and Semantics offers the means to illuminate how literature teachers work with differing forms of literary gazes and varying ranges and strengths of semantic gravity.

Specialization analysis of Shades *lesson*

In Specialization terms the teacher models, and intermittently explicates aspects of the practices of a particular type of knower code a cultivated literary gaze. She does this

through signaling certain requirements of the gaze, such as understanding specific elements in relation to the broader whole and overarching themes, as in (my emphasis):

- 'I'm going to *introduce this* very generally, by *placing it in the context of the novel as a whole* because it is very important to *see the novel holistically* as you go along', and

'the other thing I would like to put up for you is *the main theme* of this chapter';

- She focuses learner attention beyond simply knowing the events and relations of the novel as plot sequence and interpersonal relationships. That is, she draws attention to understanding how such elements inter-connect, synoptically as well as sequentially, setting up thematic and cultural patterns of relationship beyond only sequential narrative. Examples of such focus include:

'…you'll remember Frances' letter being *a turning point in the* lives of several characters in the novel… .That letter has affected *the destinies of people*', and

'If you think about the rindepest epidemic and what happened with the inoculation of those cattle, where do *the Shades come in to this*? The title is *Shades*[8] so we have to be acutely *aware of their role*.'

Through such means she fosters refined knowing of the text as a parallel world, of which the learners need omniscient knowledge. Her language constructs them as 'seers', 'rememberers', 'knowers', 'explorers' − with the focus seeming to be on a cognitively oriented literary gaze. But they are also people 'acutely aware' −with elements of a gaze requiring literary keenness. The learners must master moving from particular textual moments, to reviewing those moments against 'backdrops', 'contexts' and wholes. In this lesson, the textual world exists within the real world, but seems to operate in parallel to it − no overt connections are drawn between the issues of the textual world and issues in the real world.

Consequently, although the overall focus of her pedagogic practice is the cultivation of a literary gaze, her means of promoting this reveals relatively stronger epistemic relations. She emphasizes the literary element of 'themes', how these are played out within the textual universe, and learner ability to provide accurate examples of these. The emphasized gaze here is consistent with aspects of the Cultural Heritage model of English privileging 'immersion and close study' of texts (Macken-Horarik 2014, 10). Broadly, this form of gaze suggests this pedagogy falls within the level one zone of the semantic gravity continuum presented in Figure 2. More detailed analysis of a typical extract will illuminate how the teacher construes elements of the novel in more abstract terms and relates these to more concrete details.

Semantic gravity analysis of Shades lesson

Applying a semantic gravity analysis builds a sharper picture of the teacher's discipline-specific forms of abstraction and particularity. This facilitates the identification of varying semantic ranges, semantic flatlines and partial semantic waves. These may occur at any

point along the semantic gravity and semantic density continua. I shall now explore the semantic variations within the extract, from the beginning of the lesson, provided below.[9]

Extract from *Shades* lesson

T: I just wanted you to see some sort of context. The other thing I would like to put up for you is the main theme of this chapter. (Puts on another OHT) It's really concerned with tension and conflict. Let's focus this, it's not really clear, but we can see enough. You see the many areas of life where this theme applies in Shades. I've ticked off the ones that are really important for our chapter. Look here at the top left, for example. There's developing tension and conflict between Frances and Victor. Patrick, could you explain that to me?

L: M'am, Frances does not love Victor, or she's bouncing around between Walter or Victor…

T: Or Victor, well done.

L: And Victor is now wanting to marry

T: Yes, that is precisely what the tension is, well done. She's beginning to realize that she actually doesn't love him. There's also tension between Frances and Walter. Jason, what kind of tension is there there?

L: [Shakes his head]

T: You're not sure? Anybody?

L: They want, they have feelings for each other but there's no way, they're both too scared to say anything.

T: Well done. They actually cannot share their feelings openly and we've explored the reasons for that. We know that there's also conflict over here between the traditional way of life and the modern way of life and that's going to be very important in chapter 17. Can you think of any example you've come across so far of the clash of two cultures, the traditional culture and the more modern British sort of culture? Jason?

L: Well I think it's ((Victor??)) who always wants to do it the British way and never wants to care, forgets about the traditional way.

T: Well done, he doesn't acknowledge the Xhosa cultural customs at all and tries to impose his own culture on them. Anybody want to say anything else about that, Tim?

L: And the inoculation.

T: And the inoculation and how that was actually misinterpreted as a plot by the British authorities to take away the Black man's source of wealth, so that's very important. And then we're going to look at Christian and heathen, how those two things clash …

The teacher here intermittently works at a relatively weakening level of semantic gravity. An early example occurs through her use of a table itemizing the instantiations of themes of tension and conflict throughout the novel. The table reorganizes the novel paradigmatically around two abstract concepts. She also intermittently adopts a global orientation to the text, such as when she says 'We know that there's also conflict over here between the traditional way of life and the modern way of life and that's going to be very important in Chapter 17.' In highlighting symbolic constructs such as 'the role of the Shades', she also moves towards relatively weaker semantic gravity.

The extract further provides examples of processes of weakening and strengthening of semantic gravity. The teacher's assertion that 'There's developing tension and conflict between Frances and Victor' shows a move from relatively weaker semantic gravity, with the thematic generalization about 'tension and conflict', to relatively stronger semantic gravity with the specific instantiation of these concepts 'between Frances and Victor.' Her question to a learner, asking for an explanation of this situation, triggers further movement downward toward stronger semantic gravity, which is effected through the learner's responses specifying the difficulties the character Frances faces regarding her feelings for two men. The learner concludes this downward shift with a specific example of relational tension: 'and Victor is now wishing to marry.' The teacher immediately thereafter slightly weakens semantic gravity by reformulating this character's wish as a realization of the more abstract notion of 'tension.'

She then further weakens semantic gravity and strengthens semantic density when she says 'We know that there's also conflict over here between the traditional way of life and the modern way of life.' The nominalizations 'the traditional way of life' and 'the modern way of life' invoke clusters of associations from within the novel, such as the role of the Shades; isiXhosa practices of lobola[10], umetsho[11] and polygamy, for the former, and inoculation, monogamy, baptism and labor contracts, for the latter. The nominalizations are distillations of a range of other concepts, practices, beliefs and happenings, strengthening semantic density. The teacher then sets in motion a downward shift along a potential wave by asking learners to provide an example of cultural clash between these two ways of living. A learner answers: 'And the inoculation.' In accepting this response, the teacher weakens semantic gravity slightly by linking the inoculation to 'a plot by the British authorities to take away the Black man's source of wealth.' She does not use the more concrete options 'cattle' or 'cows', but instead a nominalization, 'the Black man's source of wealth', with its implicatures of economic systems, rather than simply objects owned.

The extract concludes with the teacher signaling the prospective focus for the rest of the lesson, Chapter 17, and the means to be used, the text itself. In further indicating the provision of subheadings for the learners to use for their note making, she implicitly models forms of weakening semantic gravity, through providing synoptic 'hooks' from which the learners can hang specific plot details. The teacher thus operates with some repeated weakening of semantic gravity, and fair semantic range, with
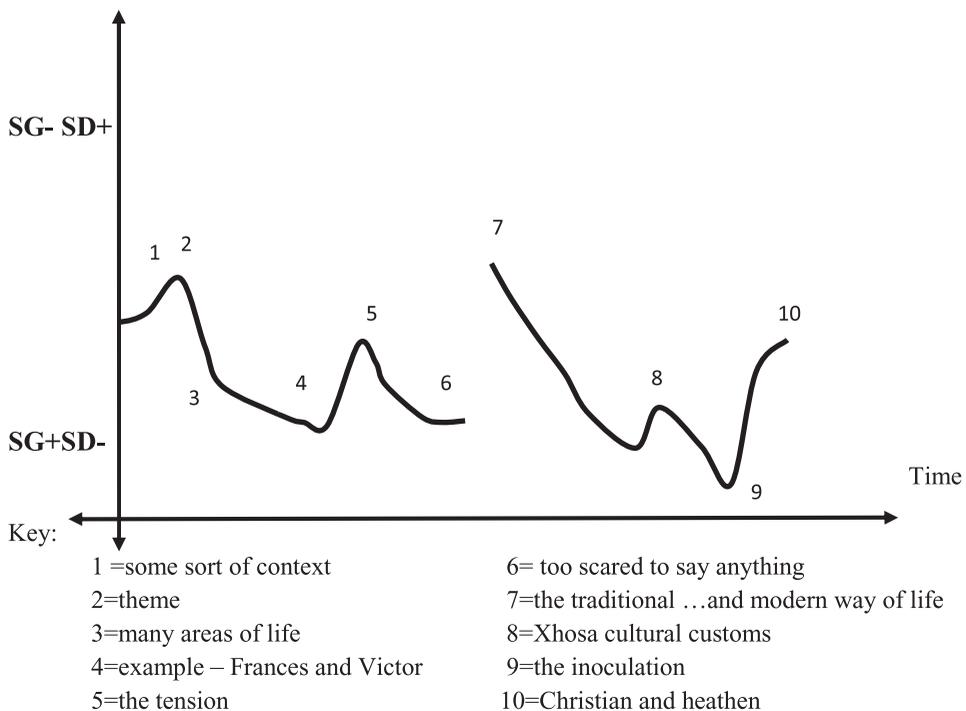

Figure 3. Semantic profile for shades lesson extract.

regular movements of semantic waving. There is more unpacking than repacking, but the movement is not purely downward toward strengthening semantic gravity. These shifts of semantic gravity and density within the extract can be represented as a semantic profile (see Figure 3), capturing variations occurring over time. The break in the semantic profile shows where downward unpacking of one issue/topic has occurred without upward repacking of that concept into more abstract forms.

A Specialization and Semantic analysis of the *Jungle Love* lesson reveals differences in this teacher's pedagogic practices from that of the *Shades* teacher. Although both lessons are dominantly teacher centered, an LCT analysis reveals how the teachers' engagement with the novels draws on differing orientations to literature texts and their role in developing learners' literacy competencies. While both lessons comprise mostly of teacher-led engagement, and make extensive use of teacher-initiated questions to learners, application of LCT concepts facilitates clearer identification of the differences in the teachers' knowledge practices.

Specialization analysis of Jungle Love *lesson*

In the *Jungle Love* lesson, the type of gaze being cultivated is somewhat different than in the *Shades* lesson. For much of the lesson, the teacher's work is focused on ensuring the learners stay with her in the decoding of the text, leading to a relatively stronger emphasis on epistemic relations in this process. That is, she asks questions that require learners to display that they are following the text and can correctly identify and display the particular, localized knowledge of elements of the text required by the teacher, as in, for example, 'What was the argument?' and 'Who was embarrassed?' Mostly she directs learner attention syntagmatically, focusing on narrative structure and event sequences within the chapter being read, such as:

- the argument between two key characters (Ian and Caroline),
- the location of the action in the current chapter being studied (the bar), and
- the actions of a character there (Ian, drinking beer).

She draws learner attention to motivating forces of characters, mostly in terms of localized interpersonal emotional drivers of people's actions. For example, she asks 'What caused Ian to feel miserable?' and accepts the answer 'Was because of the argument' as is, without any extension or elaboration.

There are a few occasions when social relations become relatively stronger. A key example of this occurs in relation to the description of Ian's walk: 'Ian walks like one of the jungle cats Mary told us about when she was speaking about the wild animals of Belize: a jaguar.' The teacher asks for volunteers to demonstrate a 'jungle cat walk'. A few boys comply, amidst much laughter from their peers. While this demonstration comprises an embodied 'definition' of the meaning of 'jungle cat walk' for learners who may not have known, thus carrying an epistemic function, its relatively stronger function is one of entertainment and stress relief for both teachers and learners.

Jungle Love *Extracts*

Extract 1:
T: It appeared there in the — first paragraph, he was looking very miserable, what was the cause of that?
G: (general answers, inaudible)
T: Why was he feeling miserable? As Jennifer finds Ian at the bar, she noticed that he was looking miserable. Why was that? Answer me that.
L: It was because of the argument.
L: Was because of the argument.
T: Was because of the argument. What was the argument?
L: Because he was embarrassed
T: He, she - Who was embarrassed? He?
L: Because he was embarrassed
T: Ian?
G: He? She? He was — she -
T: Who was embarrassed? Ian was embarrassed.
G: He is, he was —
T: I — Ian - as in he - Is that what he said? What you say? Ian was embarrassed.

Extract 2:
T: Why was Jennifer feeling nervous? (Class very quiet) What caused her to feel very nervous? Was anything wrong with her to be sitting with Ian outside in a romantic place? Was there any reason to cause her to feel nervous?
L: She was wanting to go with Ian.
T: She was having a soft spot for Ian, and then why that makes her feel nervous?
L: She knows she was not a good girl.
T: She knows she was not a good girl. What makes you say she was not a good girl? How come you say she's not a good girl?
L: She's weak. She knows that.
T: She knows that she's not weak? It"s not that she's weak.
L: (inaudible)
T: How do you know that she's weak?
L: She can't hide her feelings for him (group noise)
T: She can't hide her feelings for him. My problem is - was anything wrong with that?
G: (general noisy responses) Yes's, No's
T: My problem is - why is that wrong?
L: (reads her book and then stands to answer) (inaudible) Ocean - and now she's in love with him, Ian.
T: Is anything wrong with that?
G: (mumbling)
L: Because (inaudible) two (men?) at the same time.
G: (laughter)
L: (inaudible) because she is engaged to Pete.
T: Yes, that's the answer - because she is engaged to Pete.
G: Oh!
T: So she has to control herself
G: (inaudible)
T: because she is engaged to Pete. So she has to control herself. She is engaged to Pete - that is the main thing. She can meet as many men as she can but she mustn't forget that she is engaged to Pete.

In terms of the cultivation of a literary gaze, she focuses on ethical judgments, with conflation of the criteria for the evaluation of behavior of both the fictional characters and people in the real world. This is especially evident in how she leads the learners through their responses to her questions: 'Finding that Jennifer feeling a bit nervous as they were sitting outside and drinking some beer; why was Jennifer feeling nervous? Was anything wrong

with her to be sitting with Ian outside in a romantic place?' She partially accepts numerous answers offered from a normative moral framework – Jennifer 'knows she was not a good girl', that 'she's weak', 'she loves everybody', 'when it's time to say "no" she can't say "no", while pushing them for other reasons.' These answers are very slight reworkings of self-characterizations Jennifer expresses. The learners articulate them in the present tense, implying they see them as timeless truths, not as constructs within a textual universe. (However, it is also possible that the use of present tense reflects the syntax they have mastery over, rather than their full semantic understandings.) When a learner finally proffers 'because she is engaged to Pete' she accepts and expands their answer, with intensified charging in terms of conservative gender relations norms: 'because she is engaged to Pete, so she has to control herself. She can meet as many men as she can, but she mustn't forget that she is engaged to Pete.' This orientation is particularly strongly in evidence towards the end of the lesson. A few moves after drawing attention to Jennifer's views that "men are too much trouble", the teacher inserts her own moral judgments and injunctions: 'You know men are trouble sometimes. And watch out, girls! Watch out! That's why you must make use of the word "no". Don't say "yes" all the time'. Through her direct exhortations to the girls she stresses a life message orientation to the text, suggesting an emphasized gaze aligned with a 'Moral Guidance' model of literary study, with texts providing material for cautionary tales. It is significant that the moves to establish links between the text and the real world are controlled and initiated by the teacher. There are no spontaneous moves from the learners to do this, nor does the teacher invite the learners to identify and explore any links they might make between their lives and the issues of the novel. This displays residual traces of the impact of the fundamental pedagogics philosophy of Christian National Education, promulgated by the education authorities in apartheid South Africa. This worldview holds that the teacher must assert her position as the authoritative moulder of impressionable souls, inculcating deference to appropriate moral values and directing them to principles of right living (Prinsloo and Janks 2002, 28).

Semantic gravity analysis

The above Specialization analysis intersects with a Semantics analysis in placing the form of gaze emphasized here largely within the level two zone of my semantic gravity continuum. This placement is indicated through the teacher's emphasis on the life messages to be drawn from the text, her syntagmatic focus on localized narrative sequence, and accurate knowledge of concrete, localized textual details. It is also indicated through the absence of use of any literary terminology throughout the lesson, and almost no use of nominalizations. That is, everyday language predominates. Consequently, the semantic range of this lesson is narrower in comparison with that of the *Shades* lesson. In addition, there are numerous instances where truncated downward escalators are evident (Maton 2013). Downward escalators indicate movement from relatively weaker semantic gravity towards relatively stronger semantic gravity, typically where a teacher unpacks specialist terminology into everyday language, without any subsequent movements of repacking upward into more abstracted forms. In this lesson, these usually occur where the teacher initiates the defining of vocabulary from the text. She requests potential definitions from the learners, only partially endorses offered answers, seeks further definitions and then
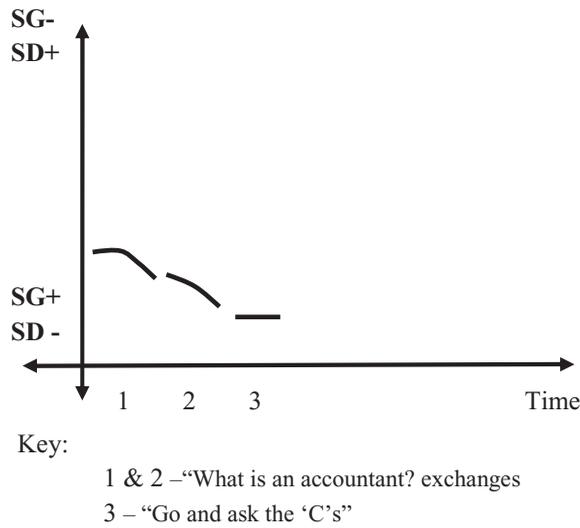
Key:

1 & 2 –"What is an accountant? exchanges

3 – "Go and ask the 'C's"

Figure 4. Semantic profile for jungle love lesson extract.

refs the learners to another source and/or moves on. One example of such a situation is provided in Extract 3 below.

Extract 3: What is an Accountant?

T: So they are having a conversation - they are talking about the paintings then at the same time they teasing Pete about being an accountant. What is an accountant? What is an accountant? What is an accountant? If a person says he is an accountant, what does that mean? A person who does what? Do you know what is an accountant?

S: Yes

T: Then tell me, then (laughing behind her book) Yes - what is an accountant? Yes?

S: (inaudible)

T: I know you are Science class but - Yes? I know you are Science class but what is an accountant? Yes?

S: It is a person who checks other people's money

T: (softly) Who checks?

Ss: (expressions of disagreement)

T: Yes, but at least he has some idea. What is an accountant, please?
       (inaudible) What is an accountant? (inaudible)

G: (laughing)

T: There is your homework. Go and talk to the 'C's. Go and ask them what an accountant is. Oh they must (get it?)

S: A person who take care of (inaudible) other's money

G: (Laughing)

T: Ok — Let's continue. We are wasting time. Anybody. [Indication for a learner to read].

This extract opens at a relatively stronger level of semantic gravity with the teacher paraphrasing what is happening then in the story. In asking for a definition of the word 'accountant' she then initiates a potential downward movement towards even stronger semantic gravity and weaker semantic density. The learner response '… a person who takes care of other people's money' strengthens semantic gravity further but elicits disagreement from other learners and partial validation from the teacher who asks for further answers. Finally she tells the learners to seek the definition from the Commerce stream of learners, another class. The original definition is proffered again, with no

acknowledgement from the teacher who ends this exchange with instruction to return to reading of the text. The unpacking of this word is thus left incomplete within the class. It seems entirely up to individual learners to establish a clearer definition. The plotting of this profile is presented in Figure 4 above.

Implications and conclusions

Applying the LCT dimensions of Specialization and Semantics to these lessons opens up nuanced insights into salient distinctions between the kind of knower code and literary gaze, along with variations in the relationship to everyday and more abstract modes of communicating, enacted by each teacher. Clear differences are evident in the forms of orientation to literary text with respect to the specialization and semantic coding of these lessons. The *Shades* lesson displays alignment with aspects of a cultural heritage gaze and location further towards the weaker end of the semantic gravity continuum. The *Jungle Love* lesson orients towards a moral guidance gaze and location closer towards the stronger end of the semantic gravity continuum. These orientations raise the question as to how pervasive the distinct value orientations exhibited by these teachers, in these lessons, are amongst their own and their peers' pedagogies. What is the spectrum of gazes operating more widely in the teaching of literature in subject English classrooms across South African high schools? Are the orientations found here clustered differentially across schools originally located within formerly racially separated education departments? And if yes, what are the implications of such patternings? What current factors maintain such distinctions? To what extent do subject English teachers have familiarity and facility with a wide range of gazes? What factors encourage/inhibit them from drawing purposively from this range?

The LCT tools evidently can usefully illuminate distinctions between lessons with similar classification and framing profiles. It is clear that the *Shades* teacher's practices, in this lesson, exhibit a wider spectrum of movement along the semantic gravity and semantic density continua, than those of the *Jungle Love* teacher. If these patterns were found to be typical of most of these teachers' practices, it would be suggestive of the *Jungle Love* teacher's learners being schooled predominantly into more every day, commonsense forms of literacy, than learners taught by the *Shades* teacher. Such patterns seem potentially congruent with the macro-level differences in South African learners' literacy attainments exhibited in the SACMEQ and PIRLS studies referenced earlier, pointing to the acute need for wider scale research into the relationship between forms of knowledge practices enacted through teacher pedagogy and levels of learner attainment. However, these will need to be carefully contextualized in relation to the ongoing impact of a range of macro- and meso-level factors affecting teachers and learners differentially in South Africa, such as economic inequalities of resource provision, the burdensome impact of the HIV epidemic on both teachers and learners, disproportionately felt more greatly in Black and working class communities (Louw et al. 2009) and the nature of local school cultures (Jacklin 2004).

It is also important to emphasize that the point here is not to reductively equate one set of knowledge practices as inherently superior and another as inherently inferior but to establish the kinds of insights LCT can add to the task of systematic knowledge building about knowledge practices in subject English pedagogy. There are educational contexts

where foregrounding more everyday understanding and localized moral values are as appropriate and functional as foregrounding more decontextualized, literarily aestheticized values. Additionally, my point is not to conflate naively the goals or pedagogic processes of Home Language versus Additional Language subject English. It is unreasonable to expect identical forms of knowledge practices in the pedagogic literary discourses of Home Language and Additional Language classrooms. So a key question that my current data-set leaves unanswered is whether the reduced semantic range exhibited in the *Jungle Love* teacher's lesson reflects her total range, or her contextually specific response to localized features, including the abilities of her learners. This is an issue clearly requiring further research. Additionally, research utilizing LCT is suggested for comparative studies of classroom pedagogies across all subject Home Languages in South Africa. However, given the role English continues to play as medium of instruction for so many South African learners with African home languages, it may be the case that subject English teachers with a limited mobility range along the semantic gravity and semantic density continua potentially offer learners few or no opportunities to extend their own semantic repertoires and master the specialized forms of literacies receiving highest validation by key social gatekeepers, beyond subject English itself. In the wake of Horne's findings (2002) of the below Grade level literacies of a group of trainee teachers, wider research establishing the semantic mobility range of South African foundation phase teachers, as well as subject English teachers in secondary schools, in both their classroom discourse, and their own writings, could be instructive.

This paper has only been able to examine one morsel of each teacher's practice. Additionally, space constraints have precluded contextualized examination of each teacher's pedagogy in relation to the specific curriculum goals for the respective syllabi for English as home language and English as additional language, and the social ecology of teachers and learners within their schools and life histories. Tracing the form of semantic profiles enacted over complete teaching units of extended literary texts would be an important next step. Relating these profiles to those the learners enact in their writing about literary texts in order to investigate what forms of knowledge practices of teachers help or hinder the successful development of learners' schooled literary competencies is also important. Given the complexity and diversity of the content of subject English, investigation of English teachers' pedagogy beyond literature is called for. As Macken-Horarik (2014) demonstrates, expert teachers may embrace aspects of different models of English depending on the specific configurations of their purposes and the nature and needs of their learners. LCT provides an elegant means for comparative tracing of potential shifts in specialization and semantic coding both within individual teachers' pedagogies and for comparison between teachers operating in diverse contexts. Increased knowledge in these areas can then inform interventions to assist teachers and learners in maximizing learner capacities to master and deploy valued forms of Specialization and Semantic knowledge formations effectively in diverse educational contexts (Macnaught et al. 2013).

Notes

1. PIRLS= Progress in International Reading and Literacy studies
2. SACMEQ = Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitory Educational Quality

3. For more information on the theoretical roots and framework of LCT and studies utilizing LCT concepts, refer to www.legitimationcodetheory.com
4. Each can be plotted independently. Variations in strengths of semantic gravity and semantic density can occur without direct inverse relation to each other.
5. This paper presents work in progress from a larger study. Full analysis of all the lessons observed has not been completed. However, broadly similar patterns for each teacher have been found in analysis of one poetry lesson of each (see Jackson 2015).
6. Video recorded in 2005.
7. Video recorded in 2006.
8. Traditional isiXhosa belief of deceased relatives occupying a spiritual realm, protecting and guiding those living descendants who honour them through ritual practices.
9. Key: T = teacher, L = learner, G = group learner response, ('word') = best guess at word from unclear recording
10. Lobola – bride price paid by groom to his bride's family, to bind the families, respect the bride and compensate her family for her loss.
11. Umetsho − mock intercourse, without penetration, traditionally permitted for disciplined, unmarried couples; banned by the missionaries for Christian converts.

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