Epistemological access in Marketing - a demonstration of the use of Legitimation Code Theory in Higher Education

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Abstract

Having epistemological access to an academic discipline means that one is able to participate effectively in its 'Discourse'. However, understanding what such participation entails and putting this into practice is complicated as much about it is tacit and contested. This article argues that a more explicit understanding of what legitimate participation in a disciplinary Discourse involves is facilitated by using an analytical toolkit provided by Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) to bring to the surface the discipline's underlying principles and 'rules of the game'. To support this argument and demonstrate the efficacy of this toolkit, the article foregrounds one discipline (Marketing) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Using the LCT analytical tools to explore the 'languages of legitimation' in interview data, documents and the discipline's scholarly literature, insight is gained into what constitutes legitimate participation and achievement in Marketing.

Introduction

Epistemological access may be described as the ability to 'own' both the knowledge and the characteristic ways of knowing, and ways of being associated with particular academic disciplines (Morrow, 2003; Gee, 2005). Having full epistemological access means, therefore, that students are able to 'pull off' the appropriate disciplinary identity and participate effectively in the discipline's 'Discourse', that is the "socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting and interacting, in the 'right' places and at the 'right' times with the 'right' objects (associations that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or social network)" (Gee, 2005, p.26). Gee (2005) draws a distinction between "discourse" and "Discourse". By "discourse" (with a lower case 'd'), Gee refers to "language-in-use" (2005, p.7) or "stretches of language" (2005, p.26). When this language-in-use is integrated with "non-language stuff" (Gee, 2005, p.7) in enacting particular activities and identities, the term

"Discourse" (with an uppercase 'D') is used to signal these "ways of being in the world" (Gee, 2005, p.7).

The ability of lecturers to afford students complete access to the knowledge and ways of knowing and being in a discipline, means that lecturers themselves should enjoy an in-depth understanding of how best to do this. However, acquiring this understanding and putting it into practice is not always easy as much about it is tacit (Jacobs, 2007) and contested; unsurprisingly, therefore, such issues are under-researched in South Africa (Boughey, 2005). This article argues that the use of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) (Maton, 2005a, 2005b, 2010, 2011, 2013) as an analytical 'toolkit', is a very effective point of departure for acquiring this understanding. Drawing on a doctoral study, which had the discipline of Marketing as its central concern (Arbee, 2012), the article shows how the use of LCT facilitates a level of understanding and insight into this discipline that made many of the complexities surrounding the teaching and learning of it in higher education institutions accessible.

The article proceeds by providing a brief background to the academic discipline of Marketing, highlighting the need for exploring epistemological access in this discipline as well as the challenges inherent in undertaking such exploration. Thereafter, the relevance of LCT for addressing such challenges and enabling insight into epistemological access in Marketing, by making explicit the discipline's underlying structuring principles and rules, is outlined. Drawing on an empirical study of Marketing involving students and lecturers at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the contribution that LCT is able to make in this regard is illustrated. The article concludes by considering the implications of the findings for Marketing pedagogy and assessing the value of LCT in facilitating understandings of epistemological access. The article tries to cover all the major dimensions of LCT in a clear and simple manner, necessarily resulting in the findings and implications being brief and illustrative, but we hope readers will get an overall scan of what LCT can do.

Marketing

The academic discipline of Marketing is just over a century old and in this time, it has gained immense popularity as an area of study at universities across the world. Yet, issues relating to epistemological access in Marketing and other business and management disciplines are under-researched (Pearse and Amos, 2000). It is said that Marketing is "reflexively impoverished in terms of disciplinary self-understanding" (Ferguson, 2008, p.10) and that attention should be given to exploring the practices that bind those in Marketing together as a discipline (Brownlie, 2007).

However, in addition to the often tacit nature of such practices as referred to earlier, there is much about Marketing itself that makes such understanding difficult to acquire. Marketing amalgamates concepts, theories and methods from various other disciplines such as Economics, Anthropology and Psychology (Rust, 2006), each of which may have quite different ideas about what legitimate participation and achievement entails. In addition, the relationship between the academic discipline of Marketing and its associated field of practice further complicates understanding of what constitutes legitimacy in the discipline. Indeed, the debate as to whether Marketing should be an academic or vocational degree (in other words, whether it should be 'about' or 'for' business) continues in the discipline (Tregear, Dobson, Brennan and Kuznesof, 2010). Taken together, all of this points to contesting viewpoints on what the legitimate ways of knowing and being in Marketing are and lends credence to the assertion that "'discipline' brings with it tricky questions about access and boundaries. . . about who can be said [to be] practicing the discipline" (Parker, 2002, p.374). As noted earlier, the view adopted in this article is that LCT has much to offer in attempting to address such questions.

Legitimation Code Theory (LCT)

Karl Maton's LCT is a social realist approach (Maton, 2010) to the study of knowledge and education that provides a framework for conceptualising the underlying principles or 'rules of the game' that structure particular fields. In relation to the focus of this article, these principles and rules give insight into what constitutes legitimate participation and achievement in Marketing and therefore what students need to aim to achieve in order to gain epistemological access.

Fields

LCT is a field approach (after Bourdieu, 1985, 1994). For Bourdieu (1985), society is a field containing a number of other overlapping and dynamic fields and sub-fields. These constitute "relatively autonomous worlds" (Bourdieu, 1994, p.73), each operating according to its own logic. Accordingly, each field has its own orthodoxy or doxa, its own legitimate ways of doing things, which denotes what is acceptable and valued in the field and which therefore has structuring effects on the dispositions, beliefs and practices of its members (Maton, 2005a). This orthodoxy or legitimacy is largely tacit, with "many of the rules and principles of the game [going] on in a way that is not consciously held in the heads of those playing it" (Grenfell and James, 1998, p.21). Also adding complexity to understanding legitimacy in any field is that members of the field try to maximise their position in the field hierarchy by engaging in contestation over the definition and ownership of types of capital that confer status and authority, thereby impacting on what constitutes legitimate participation and achievement. Included among the wide range of things that may be studied as fields are academic disciplines, which may be understood as 'social fields of practice comprising both relatively formal structures of knowledge and practices, and actors who share interests and norms (whether explicit or tacit) of knowledge production and communication' (Freebody, Maton and Martin, 2008, p.191).

Tools

Maton (2005a) asserts that the viewpoints and practices of participants within a field constitute 'languages of legitimation', which embody messages as to what should be considered legitimate in that field. Analysing languages of legitimation thus enables insight into the legitimate bases for success, status and achievement in a field, thereby providing its underlying structuring principles and 'rules of the game'. Accordingly, LCT is of relevance to a study of what constitutes epistemological access – that is, what constitutes legitimate participation and achievement – in the discipline of Marketing.

Maton (2013, p.11) describes LCT as "a multi-dimensional conceptual toolkit; each dimension offers concepts for analysing a particular set of organising principles (or legitimation codes) underlying practice". The dimensions referred to are Autonomy, Density, Specialisation, Temporality and Semantics. These dimensions allow for exploration of how fields are differentiated from one another – and this differentiation is what sets a field apart from other fields and contributes to particular understandings of what legitimacy in that field entails. As all five dimensions will be drawn on in the analysis of data, each dimension is explained below.

Autonomy

A basic aspect on which fields vary is their degree of separation or insulation from other fields, which mediates the extent to which external forces impact on legitimacy in the field. Disciplines with relatively weak external boundaries are susceptible to outside influence and control, and can be said to have less academic freedom and independence to set their own agendas and ways of working than disciplines with relatively strong external boundaries. For example, Accounting curricula in South Africa must meet the criteria laid down by the field's professional practice body in order to gain accreditation. This close relationship with the domain of practice has implications for value systems and performance criteria, and therefore for understandings of legitimacy, in the academic discipline of Accounting.

The dimension of Autonomy addresses a field's external relations and specifically its capacity for self-rule, with regard to who runs the field (positional autonomy, PA) and how the field is run (relational autonomy, RA). With regard to positional autonomy, an academic discipline may be run primarily by those within the discipline (university academics) or by those external to the discipline (such as the state, business or professional practice bodies). Similarly, relational autonomy considers whether the discipline's 'ways of working, practices, aims, measures of achievement' (Maton, 2005a, p.87) are derived from within or outside the field. The codes for Autonomy are reflected in Figure 1 (adopted from Maton, 2005a)

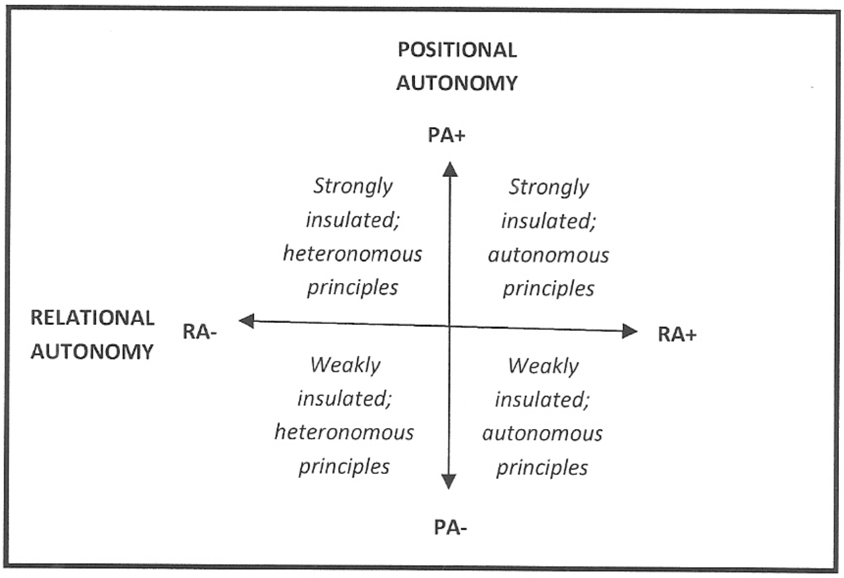

Figure 1: Autonomy codes
Source: Maton (2005b, 698)

For both of these aspects, stronger autonomy (PA+ and RA+) indicates stronger external boundaries and therefore greater control from within the field; weaker autonomy (PA- and RA-) indicates weaker external boundaries and greater control from outside the field.

Specialisation

Fields differ in terms of what they consider to be the legitimate bases for membership, authority, achievement and status. In many academic disciplines, such as those of the natural sciences, legitimacy relates to proficiency in the discipline's specialist knowledge and techniques (that is, one must be well versed in the distinctive knowledge base of the discipline and its accepted procedures for generating and working with knowledge in order to be considered a legitimate participant in the discipline). Personal attributes are not considered important, as long as one is proficient in the discipline's knowledge and ways of knowing. In other disciplines, however, legitimacy is based quite strongly on the personal attributes and disposition of its members. Some social science disciplines consider the possession of a particular perspective or standpoint, from which phenomena of interest to the researcher can be viewed, as giving legitimacy. For example, in Cultural Studies, 'the emphasis is on "giving voice to" the primary experience of specific knowers' (Maton, 2010, 44) and legitimacy is accordingly restricted to the specific 'voice' which is said to have 'unique and privileged insight by virtue of who the speaker is' (Maton, 2010, 44).

Maton (2005a) posits that intellectual fields can be specialised in terms of both knowledge and knowers. The dimension of Specialisation relates to the bases for differentiating a field from other fields in terms of *what* one may legitimately pursue knowledge of and *how* this may be done (its epistemic relations, ER), as well as *who* may be considered to be a legitimate knower (its social relations, SR). Specialisation can therefore be said to describe the legitimate ways of knowing and being that characterise a field, and is accordingly of great relevance to the question of what constitutes epistemological access in Marketing. Each of these two types of relations may be relatively stronger (+) or weaker (-), giving rise to four possible Specialisation codes (see Figure 2): a *knowledge code* (ER+, SR-), which emphasises the possession of specialist knowledge and techniques over knower dispositions; a *knower code* (ER-, SR+), which emphasises knower dispositions and attitudes over specialist knowledge and skills; an *elite code* (ER+, SR+), which places equal emphasis on both aspects; and a *relativist code* (ER-, SR-), where legitimacy is based on neither aspect (adapted from Maton 2005a).

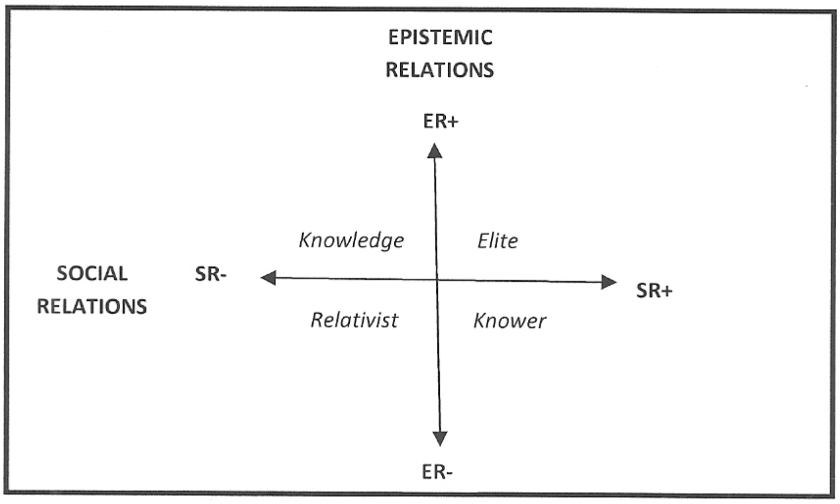

Figure 2: Specialisation codes
Source: Maton (2010,45)

These settings (+/-) represent *relative* strength (stronger/weaker) of each aspect along a continuum, rather than fixed binary positions (strong/weak). This applies to all five dimensions. With regard to Specialisation, this means that while “there are always both knowledges and knowers” (Carvalho, Dong and Maton, 2009, p.488), LCT considers which of these aspects is emphasised in knowledge claims and practices and is therefore dominant.

Semantics

Fields also differ in terms of how they advance knowledge. Some disciplines progress vertically by integrating and building on existing knowledge to arrive at increasingly general theory, with greater explanatory power, while others advance laterally by adding new segments of knowledge alongside existing ones, with each segment representing a different perspective (Bernstein, 1999). As an example of vertical progression, physicists are working towards “the ultimate law that explains the universe” (Bertram, 2008, p.52). Lateral progression is evident in Sociology, where new theories and perspectives about phenomena are added alongside existing ones. Additionally, disciplines differ in terms of the extent to which their concepts and theories can be empirically operationalised, tested and corroborated (Bernstein, 1999), indicating whether they tend to be applied (for example, Engineering) or theoretical (for example, Philosophy) in nature. The above has repercussions in terms of the types of knowledge and knowledge-building that are valued and considered legitimate in particular disciplines.

The dimension of Semantics allows for more fine-grained exploration of knowledge and meaning in fields, and specifically the capacity of fields to build cumulative knowledge, through two concepts, namely semantic gravity and semantic density. Semantic gravity (SG) relates to the degree to which meaning is bound to context, where stronger semantic gravity (SG+) signifies greater context-dependence and weaker semantic gravity (SG-) signifies less context-dependence (that is, greater abstraction). Where meaning is strongly tied to context, segmented knowledge-building results; cumulative knowledge-building depends on weaker sematic gravity (Maton, 2014). Semantic density (SD) relates to the degree to which meaning is condensed within socio-cultural practices (such as symbols, concepts, terms, phrases, expressions, clothing and gestures), with stronger semantic density (SD+) signifying greater condensation of meanings within practices and weaker semantic density (SD-) signifying that practices condense less meaning

(Maton, 2014). Figure 3, adapted from Maton (2005a) shows the possible Semantic codes.

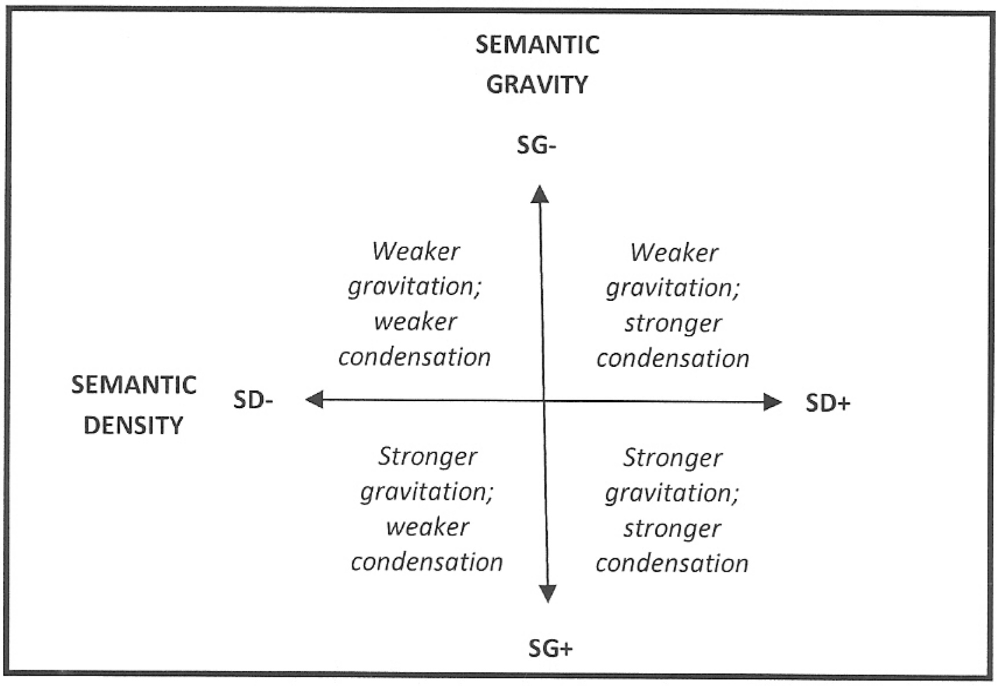

Figure 3: Semantic codes
Source: based on Maton (2011, 66)

Maton (2011, p.66) states that "SG- is heuristically positioned at the top of the compass (where a '+' sign might be expected) to reflect the tendency to picture such notions as 'abstract' or 'decontextualised' as higher than 'concrete' or 'contextualised'. Positioning here is not a statement of value".

Density

Fields also vary in terms of how differentiated they are internally. Where there is internal consensus and coherence as to what constitutes the disciplinary knowledge domain, focus and methods, and a common culture, there is likely to be agreement on what constitute the discipline's legitimate 'rules of the game', thus facilitating epistemological access. The opposite is likely to be true of a fragmented discipline, in which there is contestation about what constitutes legitimacy. As noted earlier, Marketing draws on a variety of other disciplines. This is likely to lead to contested understandings of legitimacy in Marketing. Describing another such discipline, Nursing, McNamara (2010, p.255) notes:

> promiscuous use of theories and methodologies from diverse disciplines . . . results in unrelated, small-scale and short-term research activity engaged in by relatively few academics. This contributes little to the infrastructure necessary to support and sustain a cohesive community of arguers, enquirers, and critics who share a common language, values, norms, thought systems, and knowledge structures.

The dimension of Density addresses a field's internal relations and has to do with the degree of diversity within a field, with regard to its contents (material density, MaD) and beliefs (moral density, MoD). These concepts can be thought of as the number of units and the number of structuring principles respectively within a context (Maton, 2005a). In an academic discipline, material density could refer to the size of the disciplinary community and the breadth of its knowledge base while moral density could refer to the number of belief systems or 'schools of thought' in the discipline. Figure 4 (adopted from Maton, 2005a) shows the Density codes.

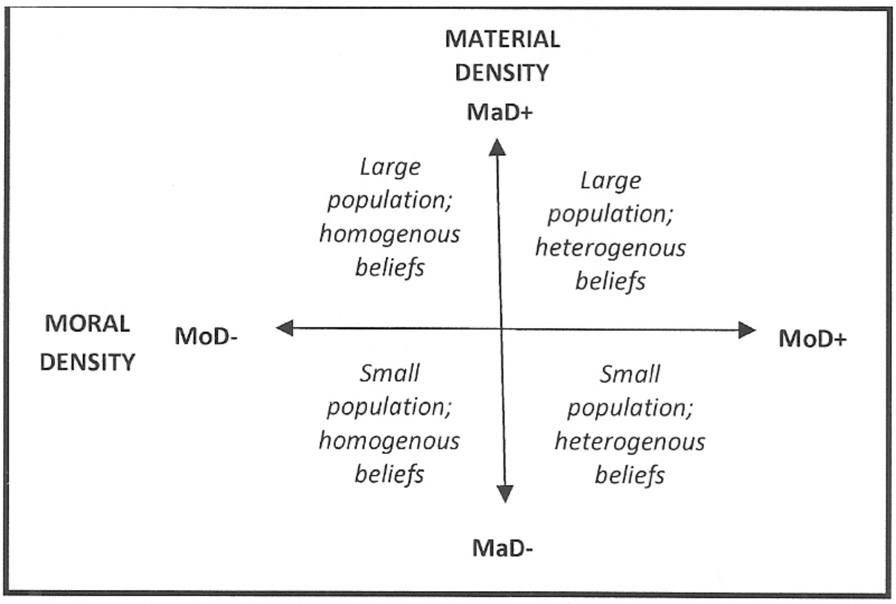

Figure 4: Density codes
Source: based on Maton (2005a, 90)

In each case, higher density (MaD+ and MoD+) signifies relatively high diversity while lower density (MaD- and MoD-) signifies relatively low diversity. Material and moral density in combination impact on differentiation (the relation between the units in a field).

Temporality

A further point of differentiation between disciplines relates to their temporal profiles. Some well-established disciplines are strongly influenced by long-standing disciplinary traditions, the upholding of which is likely to feature strongly in understandings of what constitutes legitimacy in such disciplines. Other disciplines, by contrast, place emphasis on 'keeping up with the times' and adapting in line with contemporary developments. Again, there are implications here for how legitimacy is understood in such disciplines.

In the dimension of Temporality, the last of Maton's legitimation 'tools', a field is considered in terms of whether it is long-established or recently formed (its age or temporal positioning, TP) and whether it is backward-looking or forward-looking (its temporal orientation, TO). There are four possible temporal codes (see Figure 5): *archeo-retrospective* (old and backward-looking; TP+, TO+), *archeo-prospective* (old and forward-looking; TP+, TO-), *neo-retrospective* (young and backward-looking; TP-, TO+) and *neo-prospective* (young and forward-looking; TP-, TO-). Together, temporal positioning and orientation give the rate of change in the field (adapted from Maton, 2005a).

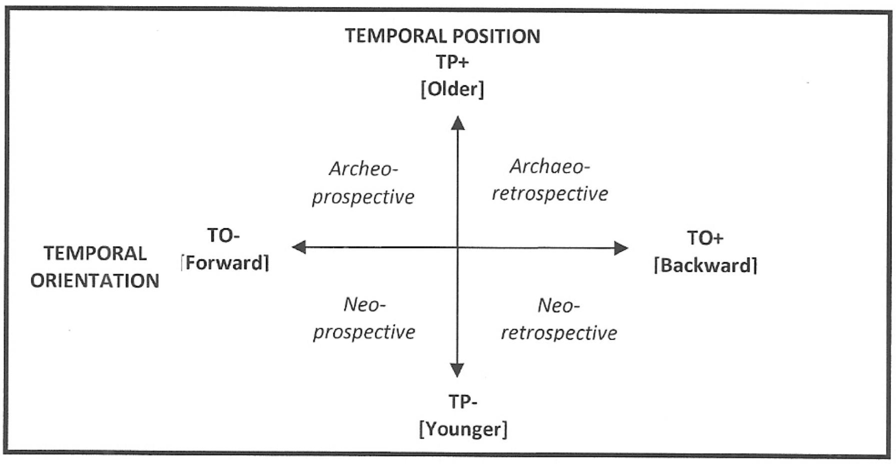

Figure 5: Temporality codes
Source: based on Maton (2005a, 94; www.legitimationcodetheory.com)

From the above, it should be becoming clearer now how, in providing a framework that can be used to analyse how knowledge and practices are structured in academic disciplines, LCT enables conceptualisation of the 'rules of the game' of particular disciplines by "making explicit what is already known, at least implicitly, by members of the field" (Carvalho, Dong and Maton, 2009, p.501). This is crucial because, as previously stated, it is often the tacit nature of disciplinary practices, norms, values and knowledge that makes it difficult for lecturers to facilitate students' participation in the disciplinary Discourse, thereby impacting on students' ability to gain epistemological access. The next section shows how the LCT framework was operationalised in an empirical study in order to reveal the 'rules of the game' of the Marketing discipline.

The research

The research upon which this article is based was located in the discipline of Marketing on the Westville and Howard College campuses of UKZN and aimed to address the question of what constitutes epistemological access in Marketing.

Methodology

To gain insight into the legitimate ways of knowing and being in Marketing, an LCT analysis of the languages of legitimation of those in the discipline was undertaken. Although a field in itself, Marketing at UKZN is also a sub-field of the wider discipline of Marketing. With regard to the discipline in general, the discipline's scholarly literature was viewed as embodying languages of legitimation. These were analysed using the analytical tools of LCT outlined in the previous section. In the specific context of UKZN, viewpoints arising during semi-structured interviews with three Marketing lecturers and nine Marketing students in their final year of undergraduate studies, as well viewpoints and practices embodied in course documents and assessment tasks were similarly conceptualised and analysed as languages of legitimation. In effect, both a top down analytical framework using existing LCT concepts and a bottom up approach using grounded theory were employed together to develop a flexible framework that both had structuring concepts as a guide and an openness to emergent issues.

Findings

For each of the five dimensions of the LCT framework, findings are presented, firstly for the discipline in general and then for Marketing at UKZN.

Autonomy

Positional and relational autonomy are relatively high (PA+, RA+) for Marketing, indicating a relatively high degree of insulation from outside control in terms of who runs the discipline and how it is run.

Marketing graduates do not require certification by a professional body, giving academics complete control over curricula. Unsurprisingly, therefore, a recurring theme in Marketing education literature is the need for academics to address the gap between Marketing education and practice (see, for example, Wellman, 2010a). For Marketing lecturers, however, achievement and status in the discipline are linked to academic indicators such as research output and teaching evaluations, contributing to the "inward-looking mind-set" of academic Marketing (Reibstein, Day and Wind, 2009, p.2).

At UKZN too, Marketing academics have full control over the discipline. Practitioners from the business world had no input as curriculum advisors or guest lecturers. Academic principles and practices also drove the ways of working in the discipline. For example, academic genre types (such as essays) were more prevalent and more heavily weighted in assessment tasks compared to business genre types (such as reports and plans). Recruitment criteria for academics emphasise teaching experience and research output. Only one of the three lecturer participants had any industry experience. Many students indicated that the way things happened in the discipline was disconnected from 'the outside world', pointing to the insularity of the discipline's practices. Nothando, for example, felt that *It all has to do with theory. It's just everything theory, theory. And then I just wonder, if in the outside world, will they be asking us about the theory?* Sihle agreed that *we do 100% theory. . .there's no practical. So if you get there* [the workplace]*, they're not going to ask you 'Discuss for us marketing mix and all those things'. . .but you'll have to put that into practice.*

The relatively high autonomy of the discipline may make it difficult to achieve some of the aspects linked to legitimate participation and achievement outlined earlier. Sihle and Nothando's comments above indicate a perceived lack of application in their Marketing courses, even though the findings presented under Semantics make a claim for the discipline as being application-based. Insulation from the business world (represented by a lack of practitioner involvement in the design and offering of courses) is likely to impact on the extent to which students gain familiarity not only with the contexts in which they are expected to be able to apply Marketing knowledge (as highlighted under Semantics), but also with the knower attributes and dispositions considered important for legitimate participation and success in the discipline, as embodied in such practitioners (and outlined under Specialisation).

Specialisation

Analysis reveals that a knower code (ER-, SR+) underpins the discipline of Marketing, indicating that personal attributes and dispositions are relatively important to legitimate participation and achievement while the possession of specialist knowledge and skills is downplayed.

Literature points to the "vital role played by personal traits and attitudes" (Wellman, 2010a, p.125), as well as the "personal attributes" and "dispositions" (Ng, 2006) of students in contributing to their competence and success in Marketing. Specialist knowledge, by comparison, is downplayed. For example, a Marketing qualification is widely considered not to be a prerequisite for employment or success in the field of practice (Wellman, 2010b; Glenn, 2011).

Similarly, at UKZN, the importance of Marketing students' personal attitudes and dispositions was stressed by all participants. Many students indicated that they had chosen to major in Marketing because of the perceived fit with their personalities. By contrast, only two students mentioned that having a good knowledge of Marketing concepts was important. According to Nothando, what was more important in Marketing was *the creativity, coming up with concepts, making like a brand*. . . you *make the brand alive*. It was clear that personal dispositions were considered more important than specialist knowledge, with Kamini (a lecturer) also asserting that employers *don't look for that technical stuff; they look for people that are different*. (Indeed, literature – for example, Melaia, Abratt and Bick (2008) – seems to support this assertion). Elaborating on the nature of this difference, Kamini noted that: *The successful Marketing students, I've normally found . . .they have a . . .well, from the ones* I've *dealt with – a lot of them have a, er . . .they have* some *endearing quality about them, they. . .they have something, um, which is not the same as the standard person. Um, like one guy I know, he's, um, he's a bit, you know, he dresses a bit . . . funky and he's got a . . . he wears funky hats and things like that. But he's the kind of people that you . . . the kind of person that you . . . you will get attracted to because you wanna listen to what he says. Because as much as he looks funky and whatever, he's got a certain style about him and the way he speaks . . . so when* he *speaks about marketing, or something about marketing, it's* believable, *so . . . he's engaging.*

Among the many attributes that participants considered important for success in Marketing were creativity, resourcefulness, 'street smarts' (Kamini, lecturer), extroversion, open-mindedness, as well as the abilities to communicate confidently, think logically and intuitively, and quickly identify opportunities and capitalise on them.

The implication of a knower code in Marketing is that educational practices in the discipline should give greater attention to specialising students' Marketing identities in ways that are appropriate to the disciplinary Discourse, rather than to transmitting Marketing knowledge. Yet traditional pedagogy in Marketing is transmission-based (Baron and Harris, 2006; Glenn, 2011).

Semantics

Marketing is characterised by stronger semantic gravity (SG+) and weaker semantic density (SD-), a combination that indicates a lack of capacity to build cumulative knowledge because there is greater focus on context-bound meanings rather than on context-independent meanings and also not a great degree of condensation of meaning in concepts.

What one finds in the Marketing literature is a picture of a context-driven discipline, embodied in a call for "the whole marketing academic community to work on relevant business problems" (Reibstein, Day and Wind, 2009, p.3). The relative lack of attention given to the development of theory is evident in the description of Marketing as the "least-theorised" business discipline (Burton, 2005, p.16). Marketing pedagogy draws heavily on case studies and examples, emphasising the application of knowledge in ‘context-relevant’ ways (Walker, Tsarenko, Wagstaff, Powel, Steel and Brace-Govan, 2009). The lack of condensation of meaning in Marketing concepts is reflected in Brown’s (1997) description of the academic content of business disciplines as ‘superficial’ and Hunt’s (2002) reference to the ‘dumbing down’ of contemporary Marketing textbooks. Marketing also has an explicit and unambiguous rhetorical style (Crosling, 2005).

At UKZN, participants made frequent reference to the importance of application, practicality and the usefulness of Marketing knowledge in relation to specific settings. Kiara (a student) felt that success as a Marketing student comes from *being well rounded in what’s going on in the real world . . . as well as knowing theory, er, and knowing how to* apply *the theory. It’s not just reading to get through the reading; it’s reading to understand, reading to apply and look at it in context of, you know, what’s going on – and that’s what makes you successful*. Course documents, prescribed textbooks, pedagogic practices (such as a reliance on the use of examples and case studies) and assessment practices (such as the setting of application-based assignments and the expectation that students provide ‘practical examples’ and ‘real-life applications’ in tests and exams) further highlighted this focus. There was also an indication from participants that the degree of condensation of meaning in Marketing concepts is not high as this comment from Michael (a lecturer) indicates: *I don’t think Marketing is . . . conceptually challenging, really*. Similarly, Ben (a student) felt that Marketing was *not that intense in terms of, er, demanding . . . your thinking*.

The Semantics code for Marketing (SG+, SD-) signifies that applied, rather than theoretical, knowledge is valued in the discipline. Emphasis is placed on generating useful knowledge that practically addresses business problems in specific contexts, rather than on building a body of abstract theoretical knowledge. This implies that students need to gain familiarity with the business contexts that serve as the site of application so as to be able to apply Marketing knowledge to such contexts.

Density

The Marketing discipline in general reflects a Density code of (MaD+, MoD+), signifying relatively high material and moral density. High student to staff ratios (Glenn, 2011) and the breadth of the traditional ‘overloaded’ syllabus (Wellman, 2010a) are both indicators of higher material density.

Relatively high moral density is apparent in references to “a number of debates and contentions” (Ferguson, 2008, p.21) and a “plethora of competing academic theories” (Wellman, 2010a, p.121), indicating a divergent disciplinary community. Methodologically, the discipline is divided into ‘camps’ (Bolton, 2005), which “often view one another as irrelevant or even adversarial” (MacInnis, 2005, p.15).

According to Kiara (a student), *now you notice everyone’s doing Marketing*. The UKZN data contained several other references to large class sizes and the large volume of content in the curriculum (both indicative of higher material density). The picture was mixed with regard to moral density. While in practice a managerial perspective and a positivist approach dominated what was taught, the lecturers often expressed quite different ideas about what the curriculum should encompass, as well as what their roles as lecturers should entail. For example, while Michael thought that the curriculum *needs to be pulled together* and condensed, Kamini felt that *it is a bit sad that . . . our focus is only on, um, quantitative research. So we lack fundamentally in the whole spectrum of what is research methodology*. And while Michael saw Marketing lecturers as subject content experts, and not as ‘educationists’, and thus as having no role to play in helping students to acquire the academic literacies important to participation in the disciplinary Discourse (such as writing skills), Kamini felt that it was important for those within the discipline to take on this role.

Relatively high material density (MaD+), represented by large classes and a tightly packed syllabus, may contribute to pedagogic practices not best suited to facilitating student participation in the disciplinary Discourse. For example, in an effort to manage high student numbers easily, Marketing pedagogy typically takes the form of traditional large-group textbook-based lectures in which “students are generally passive recipients of lecture/tutorial materials” (Baron and Harris, 2006, p.294), whereas quite different pedagogic approaches are likely to be better suited to helping students practice and take on the disciplinary Discourse. Relatively high moral density (MoD+), which indicates a possible lack of consensus over what should be taught in the discipline (and how), also has implications here as there may be lack of agreement among lecturers as to what constitutes the disciplinary Discourse, how this Discourse is best taken on and who should be responsible for facilitating students’ taking on of the Discourse of Marketing. Indeed, in Marketing there is a lack of consensus as to what students should learn and how they should learn it (Glenn, 2011). Clearly, such lack of consensus has repercussions for students' chances of gaining epistemological access to the discipline of Marketing.

Temporality

Marketing reflects a neo-prospective code (TP-, TO-), denoting a young, forward-looking and rapidly changing discipline.

Marketing as an academic discipline only emerged in the early twentieth century, and has had a forward-looking orientation since its earliest days (Witkowski, 2010). This may be because marketers operate in a fast-changing environment, thus requiring a "visionary strategic thinking orientation" (Melaia, Abratt and Bick, 2008, p.243). Accordingly, Marketing students need to be able to "critically analyse the position of a firm and envision where *future value* can be created for customers" (Ackerman, Gross and Perner, 2003, p.46; emphasis in original). Marketing is "particularly prone to transitory knowledge" (Macfarlane, 1997, p.52) and may be the business discipline "most influenced by changing fads and fashions" (Zinkhan and Hirschheim, 1992, p.83).

At UKZN, a neo-prospective code was evident in the way that participants spoke about the discipline. In terms of temporal positioning, Marketing was seen to be a young discipline. Nisha (a lecturer in her early thirties) related how, when she was a student at one of the universities that had merged to form UKZN, Marketing was not offered as a major in its own right but only as a small sub-section of a Business Management course. In terms of temporal orientation, a forward-looking orientation was represented in assessment tasks and the way participants spoke about the discipline. For example, Nothando (a student) stated, *you need to do a whole lot of reading, 'cos you need to be up to date with everything that's happening. Like trends and stuff*. When discussing an assessment task with students, Michael said he *wanted three things covered in their* [assignments] . . . *and the third thing is the recommendations going forward – and that's what I really looked at the most*. This, he felt, was appropriate because, in Marketing, *you've got to change things; things have to be different*. Evidence of the rapid change that characterises Marketing was apparent in the offering of modules such as Special Topics in Marketing, designed to allow for the quick inclusion of contemporary issues and developments in the curriculum.

A neo-prospective Temporality code means that Marketing is a young, forward-looking and rapidly changing discipline. Accordingly, it is important for students to be able to keep up to date with current issues and developments in the discipline, and to be able to have an appreciation of the significance of these for future marketing practice.

Discussion and conclusion

To understand what constitutes epistemological access in Marketing, it is necessary to explore the knowledge and ways of knowing, as well as the ways of being, that are valued in the discipline but that often remain tacit.

LCT enables tacit knowledge within fields (such as academic disciplines) to be unlocked (Carvalho, Dong and Maton, 2009), making explicit their bases for legitimate participation, success and achievement. An LCT analysis of Marketing reveals its 'rules of the game' and gives insight into what students (and lecturers) need to aim to achieve and 'own' in order to be considered legitimate participants in the disciplinary Discourse – thereby addressing, as noted earlier, an under-researched area in Marketing (Brownlie, 2007). LCT does this by providing a framework that can be used to analyse viewpoints and practices in a field along five dimensions, which provide the organising principles that underlie practices and their contexts. This allows for a more guided entry into empirical data and for a process of analysis that is less 'messy' than more grounded approaches. This is not to say that LCT itself has not emerged from messy and grounded processes that seriously engage with data, only that the systematic analytical tools that have emerged from the engagement between theory and data become useful. The 'toolkit' and language that LCT provides for analysing phenomena, also facilitates comparisons across phenomena and contexts. Thus, what LCT allows, within its predetermined parameters, is a high-level, internal focus on the educational logics that structure Marketing as a discipline, revealing how the discipline works, what it values and what it does not, and the possibilities and constraints associated with it.

To summarise, the LCT analysis of Marketing at UKZN revealed that legitimate participation and achievement in the discipline is based on the possession of appropriate personal attributes and dispositions rather than on the possession of specialist disciplinary knowledge and skills. Accordingly, Marketing pedagogy should give greater attention to specialising students' identities in appropriate ways instead of focusing on the transmission of knowledge. This raises the question of exactly how this can be achieved, especially in a discipline where traditional pedagogy is transmission-based (Baron and Harris, 2006) – a possible avenue for future research. The emphasis placed on applied rather than theoretical knowledge in the discipline implies that students need to gain familiarity with the contexts that serve as the sites of application so as to facilitate the application of Marketing knowledge to such contexts. Because Marketing is a young, forward-looking and rapidly changing discipline, it is also important for students to be able to keep up to date with contemporary developments in the discipline and in the marketplace, and to be able to have an appreciation of the significance of such developments for future marketing practice. However, the relatively high autonomy of the discipline, in terms of its insulation from the business world, is unlikely to facilitate students' becoming familiar with either the business contexts in which they are expected to be able to apply Marketing knowledge or the knower attributes and dispositions (as embodied in marketing practitioners) that are considered important for legitimate participation and success in the discipline. The lack of consensus among lecturers over what should be taught in the discipline and how this should be done also has implications for students' ability to gain epistemological access to the discipline of Marketing.

The LCT analysis therefore gives insight into what is considered legitimate in Marketing, and also begins to address the question of why what is espoused in languages of legitimation is not always actualised in practice

Note

1. A capital letter is used when referring to the academic discipline of Marketing; lower case is used when referring to the practice of marketing.

2. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants. All quotes from data are presented verbatim and unedited.

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