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Entrenching heterosexuality through language in South African Life Orientation (LO) textbooks

Abstract

Studies of the representation of sexualities in textbooks have tended to focus on inclusion and coverage of diverse content through thematic analysis. This analysis of a sample of LO textbooks is framed by the systematic linguistic framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA), specifically Fairclough's (2001) theory of discourse as ideological meanings encoded in text. The sections on sex education in three popularly used LO textbooks have been analysed to make explicit the heteronormative meanings conveyed through language used. This article provides insight into how the language in the LO texts function to legitimate the dominant discourse of a particular type of heterosexuality: monogamy for the primary purpose of reproduction. The implications of this bias are raised and recommendations for fair representation of LGBT sexual orientations are made.

Keywords: *Critical discourse analysis, semiosis, heterosexuality, textbook studies*

1. Introduction

Analysis of sexuality in textbooks (Hogben & Waterman, 1997; Whatley 1992, Jennings & Sherwin 2007; Bazzul & Sykes, 2011; Temple, 2005, Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008, Irala *et al.*, 2008, Suarez & Balaji, 2007) has focussed on inclusion and coverage of diverse content through thematic analysis. These studies have pointed out the heteronormative bias (Dalley & Campbell, 2006), the assumption of heterosexual learner identities, the under-representation of LGBT sexualities and the association of LGBT sexualities with negative contexts.

The universal normalisation of heterosexuality and the widespread prevalence of heterosexism have been made explicit by a range of studies (Myerson *et al.*, 2007; Suarez & Balaji 2007; Bazzul & Sykes, 2011). Temple (2005:281) concluded that the texts she studied, "dichotomize heterosexuality and homosexuality, setting the stage to see sexuality in terms of opposites of normal and abnormal". Other studies have shown the inadequacy of sex education in schools on grounds of inaccuracies and lack of comprehensive information about sexualities. For example, a study

in Spain concluded that, “all textbooks were neither appropriate nor sufficiently comprehensive for adolescent education on issues of sexuality” (Irala *et al.*, 2008:1103).

A significant number of studies of textbook content note the underrepresentation and inadequate coverage of LGBT sexuality in school- and university-based sexuality education. Using content analysis, Hogben and Waterman (1997) found that most of the widely prescribed psychology textbooks paid negligible attention to LGBT issues, with typically less than 1% of coverage. By counting the number of lines in each text and then counting the lines that dealt with LGBT content, Macgillivray and Jennings discovered that the highest estimated percentage of coverage given to LGBT content in foundations of education textbooks was 0.70%, while the lowest was 0.08% (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:179). In their investigation of heteronormativity in Biology 12 textbooks widely prescribed in Ontario schools, Bazzul and Sykes (2011) were struck by a general silence regarding issues of same-sex attraction and practices. Temple (2005) found that disregarding same-sex sexuality was the approach taken by many human/biological sciences texts towards alternative sexualities, and that ignoring sexuality is part of the way heterosexual privilege is maintained.

Yet another common attribute of representation of LGBT sexualities in the texts is the association of LGBT sexualities with negative contexts (Simoni, 1996; Temple, 2005). According to Simoni (1996), LGBT issues are usually mentioned in the context of dysfunctionality and sexual disorders (Simoni, 1996:222). Temple (2005) found that LGBT practices and identities were placed in a negative context 80% of the time by being related to sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and prostitution. Furthermore, LGBT people were depicted mainly as victims of social discrimination. They were frequently mentioned in these texts among “other” groups that are perceived to be “at risk” and are pathologised – for example, substance abusers, people living with HIV and AIDS, and students at risk of depression and suicide.

Investigations of sexuality in the LO curriculum in South Africa have tended to focus on HIV- and AIDS-related education (Ngwena, 2003; Chabilall, 2012), sociocultural sensitivities in teaching topics related to sexual practices and safe sex (Beyers, 2011) and heterosexism and homophobia in the educational environment in the preparation of pre-service teaching students (Francis & Msibi, 2011). It also focuses on the transformation of institutions of higher learning (Msibi, 2013) and social discrimination and hate crimes experienced by black youths in the townships of South Africa (Msibi, 2012). Macleod (2009) argued that the dominant metaphor informing the sections on sexuality education in LO manuals was *danger and disease*. Macleod, Moodley and Young (2015:94) found that the main sexual subject positions featured in LO manuals – *the responsible sexual subject* and *the sexual victim* – assumed the heterosexual subject position.

This article analyses how the heterosexual norm is constructed and transmitted through linguistic semiotic means such as the experiential value of the words used; the differential power relations, agency and status accorded LGBT and “straight” individuals in the sentences and the heterosexual identities of learners assumed by the text. The value of linguistic analysis is in providing a “nuanced understanding” of the “less visible workings of texts” that might also be “pernicious” (Sunderland, 2012: 63).

In the South African curriculum, Life Orientation (LO) is a compulsory subject for all learners from grade 1 to 12. Of all the subjects offered in the high school curriculum, LO probably has the most significant impact on the construction and transmission of sexual identities since it deals explicitly with themes of sexuality, relationships, dating, marriage, human rights, values

and beliefs. Three recently released and approved Grade 10 LO textbooks: Oxford Successful LO (Clitheroe *et al.*, 2011) (Textbook A); Focus LO (Rooth *et al.* 2011) (Textbook B); and Top Class LO (Shuter & Shooter, 2011) (Textbook C) were selected for this study. These top publishers, as ranked by South Africa Book Development Council, 2007, produce the texts. The authors had also established through discussions with LO teachers and teacher education lecturers that these texts are used by many LO teachers in schools. Three of the six topics in the LO textbooks: Development of the self in society, Social and environmental responsibility and Democracy and human rights were subjected to detailed analysis. Both the language of the authors and the language of characters (Sunderland, 2012) in the texts were analysed. The use of words was interrogated for their experiential, relational and expressive ideological meanings. The sentence-by-sentence analysis focussed on the representation of LGBT individuals; the ideological function that the grammar serves; the differential power and status relations of participants represented; the authoritative relations represented and the assumptions made of the sexual orientation of the learner. In this analysis, excerpts from the textbooks are cited in detail to enable validation of claims and interpretations of the authors of this article.

2. An analytical framework

Fairclough incorporates in his framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) the notion of semiosis. Semiosis refers to meanings conveyed (Fairclough 2001:123) through the experiential, relational and expressive value of texts (Fairclough, 2001:93–94).

The experiential value of words refers to the meanings they evoke in the reader. These include common sense or ideological meanings. Over-lexicalisation or over-wording takes place when the writer uses a number of words that are synonyms or near synonyms that may indicate that it is a focus of ideological struggle (Fairclough 2001:96). Re-lexicalisation, or rewording, on the other hand may point to a deliberate attempt to contest existing or hegemonic meanings by substituting a dominant mode of expression with a different or alternative form of expression. The relational value of words also project ideological meanings. Here the concern is with how lexical choices imply social relationships between participants. Register, which is reflected in the diction or choice of words as well as phrasing, may be a sign of a differential in terms of status, position and social power between the author and the addressee. The expressive value of words refers to the means by which an author's attitude towards reality is expressed through words.

Grammatical choices that either foreground or conceal agency may be deliberate or unconscious. While simple sentences in the declarative mode are written in the active voice with the subject at the beginning of the sentence, passive voice can be used to screen agency, either by reversing the subject-object positions or by deleting the agent phrase at the beginning of the sentence (Fairclough, 2001:104). A further means for manipulating meaning is nominalisation, which is the device by which an event, action or process is represented as a noun and therefore as a "thing". According to Fairclough, this strips the sentence of much meaning, since elements of agent, patient and timing are evaded, "leaving attributions of causality and responsibility unclear" (Fairclough, 2001:103).

In exploring the experiential values of grammar, Fairclough questions whether the sentence is written in the negative or positive form. When written in the negative form it may presuppose meanings that exist outside the text. The relational value of grammatical features

focuses on how grammatical constructions simultaneously reflect and construct differential relations of power and status. Sentences may be phrased in the declarative, interrogative or imperative mode. The three modes position the addressee differently and may be indicative of asymmetrical relations of power. In the declarative mode, the subject position of the speaker/writer is that of a giver (of information) and the addressee's position is that of a receiver. In the interrogative mode, the author is asking for information, while the addressee is positioned as the provider of information. The imperative mode is a command where the addressee is a compliant actor (Fairclough, 2001:105).

In addition, Fairclough identifies relational and expressive modality as two further features of discourse that serve as markers of ideological construction. Relational modality is an indication of the author's social authority or "the authority of one participant in relation to another" (Fairclough, 2001:105). This is expressed through modal auxiliary words such as "may", "might", "should" and "ought", which indicate the degree of power that the author exercises over the addressee. Expressive modality, on the other hand, refers to the author's standing with respect to "the truth or probability of a representation of reality" (Fairclough, 2001:105).

Pronouns and articles also influence the relational value of the text. Pronouns, for example, will indicate in/out relations using words such as us/we/you/them (Fairclough, 2001:106).

Attention should also be paid to the expressive values of grammatical features. The ideological interests that the text serves are influenced by the author's claims to incontestable knowledge and authenticity, which are evidenced by the use of expressive modalities (Fairclough, 2001:107). Modal auxiliaries such as "may" indicate possibility, "must" certainty as well as obligation and "can't" impossibility or denial. The choice of verb may indicate the author's level of certainty and commitment to the truth imparted. For example, the writer can choose between the emphatic "is" and "are" or the more tentative forms of the verb such as "may" and "maybe". With reference to assumptions underlying the text, Fairclough argues that ideologies are generally implicit assumptions. Logical connectors or conjunctions of various types such as subordinating, additive, causal, adversative and temporal conjunctions might betray underlying ideological assumptions (Fairclough, 2001:109).

Critical discourse analysis equips the researcher with the tools to rigorously investigate how language functions to construct, transmit and reproduce social inequalities. With reference to representation of sexualities in texts, discrimination against alternate sexual orientations is pointed out and suggestions for redress are made.

3. Data analysis and discussion

Analysis of the language in the LO textbooks reveal the experiential, relational and expressive use of language that constructs heterosexuality as the norm. The use of adjectival clauses, pronouns, modal verbs and modifiers point to ideological manipulation that privilege heterosexuality. Typical of this depiction is the following excerpt from Textbook A:

By now you should know that the best method of contraception is to say "no" and to abstain from sex until you are ready for the responsibilities of parenthood (Textbook A: 109).

This extract clearly depicts sex as a fundamentally heterosexual act for the purpose of reproduction. The adjectival clause "by now you should know" enables the balance of the sentence to be perceived as conveying well-known factual information that cannot be disputed. The use of the pronoun "you" communicates that the authors make certain assumptions

about the outlook and nature of the reader, namely that “you” are a heterosexually orientated teenager. It also conveys the impression that the meaning contained in the sentence is a shared view that all “right-thinking” people would hold. The modal verb “should” denotes a moral obligation or duty whereas the superlative “best” constructs the moral meaning of abstinence as the ideal form of contraception.

The repetition of key phrases and words in the text bolsters heteronormativity. For example, the repetition of “opposite sex” in the context of attraction serves to create the sense that opposite sex attraction is the only legitimate form of attraction. This is evident in the informational content, questions and activities in the text. In Textbook A, learners are required to engage in the following group discussion:

... brainstorm ideas about the things that you think:

- a) attract the opposite sex to you
- b) the opposite sex does not like about your gender
- c) the opposite sex finds attractive in you (Textbook A: 105).

The repetition of “opposite sex” reveals the ideological goal of establishing that attraction between male and female is normal and natural. The language in the imperative mode leaves little room for opposition and establishes the author as the authority and the heterosexual assumptions contained in the sentence as universal.

The use of nouns, verbs and subordinating conjunctions serve the ideological goal of heteronormativity. Courtship and dating are depicted as exclusively heterosexual practices. This is most pronounced in the sections of the texts related to social changes arising during adolescence and early adulthood. The authors of Textbook A state in the section on late adolescence:

At this stage groups tend to be loosely mixed gender groups rather than the same sex groups of early adolescence. You may begin to break away from groups and begin going out as couples (Textbook A: 102).

On the following page, the authors assert in a similar vein:

Same-sex friends are a great source of comfort and security. But one of the most important social changes to happen in adolescence is dating (Textbook A: 104).

It is evident that authors view sexuality as a developmental progression from same-sex friendship to heterosexual pairing off. The noun “stage” in the first sentence suggests a progressive development while the verb “tend” implies a natural disposition or inclination towards opposite-sex relations. Again the use of the pronoun “you” not only addresses the reader directly but also implies that the authors make assumptions about their readership, presuming them to be heterosexual in orientation. While the first extract appears to be tentative, using gender-neutral language and the modal verb “may” which allows for exceptions, the paragraph following it makes the heterosexual orientation explicit by employing the more categorical “is”. The authors assert the value of same-sex friendship and then introduce the next sentence with the logical connector “but”, a subordinating conjunction that normalises heterosexual dating as superseding same-sex friendships. A further inference that can be drawn is that opposite-sex attraction represents a sign of maturity while same-sex affinity is associated with immaturity and impaired development.

Several case studies appear in the textbooks, which establish the family as a nuclear heterosexual unit. When the learners, for example, are instructed to investigate power relations in the “De Bruyn family” (Textbook A: 12), the underlying assumption is of a traditional family comprising a father, mother and offspring. Although the learners are encouraged to question Mr De Bruyn’s dictum, “The Bible... says that a man is the head of the home”, they are not required to consider whether there are alternatives to this conventional family unit. In dealing with changing life roles and responsibilities, the authors also write that during the ages of 26-40:

You are likely to have a permanent relationship with someone, be married and a parent. You have big financial responsibilities setting up a home and maintaining a lifestyle. You have many roles at this stage – husband or wife, parent, provider and also a son or daughter... (Textbook A: 95)

The apparently neutral pronoun contained in the phrase “relationship with someone” is undercut by the juxtaposition of text to visuals. The pronoun “you” creates the sense that this is a generalisable principle – that as a rule people in a permanent relationship will be married and will have children. The modal adverb “likely” appears to suggest that there is the possibility of an alternative. However, any discussion of that alternative is curtailed by the next sentence, which with the modal verb “have”, casts aside any ambivalence that might have been suggested by the former sentence and makes a bold assertion, stating the presupposition as an accomplished fact. Similarly, in the discussion of changing roles and responsibilities, the authors describe early adulthood in the following terms:

At this stage in your life you may find a partner and marry. This involves forming relationships with many other people as well. You have to form relationships with parents-in-law and your sisters-/brothers-in-law and other relatives (Textbook A: 103).

While the noun “partner” is gender neutral and the sentence may be interpreted as non-specific in terms of the sexual orientation of the parties, the text is juxtaposed with a photograph of a male-female couple locked in an embrace and the woman in a bridal gown.

In the first activity, which directly addresses the issue of homosexuality, learners are required to discuss a number of discriminatory statements one of which is “Gay teachers are a threat to our children” (Textbook C: 26). While the authors do not appear to endorse this statement, learners might interpret it as an imperative meaning. The statement clearly mimics an oppositional rhetoric that sets gay teachers in opposition to “us” – implied by the possessive pronoun “our” – the heterosexual majority. Through the modal verb “are” it is established as an incontestable fact that gay teachers represent a social danger. The word “threat” has connotations of endangerment and menace and coupled with the indefinite article “a”, which is non-specific, the reader is left to project his or her own concept of what that “threat” might constitute. This allows for any number of different forms of heterosexual anxiety to be expressed.

The picture on the adjacent page reinforces the negative message. A group of protestors opposing the passing of the Civil Union Act, which gave legal recognition to same-sex unions, hold posters with the slogans reading “Homosexual marriage is an act of terrorism” and “Protect traditional marriage”. No context is provided for this photograph except for an accompanying caption: “These people are protesting gay marriages” (Textbook C: 27). The first poster is in the declarative mode, with a subject followed by a complement, which equates gay marriage to terrorism. Thus, the statement clearly establishes heterosexuality as the hegemonic form

of sexuality that is under threat. The text, “protect traditional marriage”, (Textbook C: 27) is written in the imperative mode and is a command to the elliptically constructed subject. The word protect, with its denotation of “shielding from danger” implies a threat to a prevailing notion of marriage. The modifier “traditional”, a customary practice handed down from one generation to the next, reinforces the sense of a hegemonic institution of marriage.

The textbook, however, does not address any concerns raised by these pictures except for a question on the following page: “Should gay people be allowed to marry and have children? Explain your opinion” (Textbook C: 28). The modal auxiliary “should” has a relational and an expressive modality. It implies either “allowing for the possibility” or having the authority to decide on behalf. This is reinforced by the verb “be allowed”, which implies that permission must be sought. This may leave learners with the impression that same-sex marriage and adoption are still legally contested issues. The sentence also sets “gay people” apart as a distinct and separate group from the dominant heterosexual group.

The image of homosexuality as morally and socially transgressive however, is far more pronounced in Textbook A in which the only mention of homosexuality is in the context of molestation and abuse. In the section dealing with sexual abuse, two figures who appear to be young males, describe their sexual assault by older males:

Boy 1: *My uncle told me this monster with a knife would cut my head off if I told anyone. I was only five years old, so I believed him.*

Boy 2: *I wanted to tell my gran but I couldn't find the right words. I was sure he would say it better than I could and so they'd believe him and not me. (Textbook A: 17).*

Later in the text, there is a very similar illustration, in which two boys describe their experiences of sexual assault by males:

Boy 1: *I was raped by my mother's boyfriend. He said he would set his dogs on me if I told anyone. (Textbook A: 117).*

A further instance of sexual violation associated with homosexuality is included in a case study in Textbook A which relates the experiences of a thirteen year-old boy who was molested by a male teacher while on a hiking outing (Textbook A: 112).

According to Textbooks A and C, homosexuals are victims of abuse and discrimination. Textbook A alludes to homophobia in the context of a discussion on gender-based violence:

so-called “corrective” rape where lesbians are raped in the mistaken belief that it will make them change their sexual orientation (Textbook A: 18).

Using the compound adjectival modifier “so-called”, which collocates with the phrase “mistaken belief” and the use of quotation marks, the writers challenge the notion that rape will change a lesbian's sexual orientation. The pronouns “them” and “their”, however, have the effect of distancing the reader from lesbians, setting them apart as a group.

Textbook C engages more extensively with the issue of the victimisation of gay people in a detailed case study accompanied by a comprehensive written activity. The case study is based on a passage written by the mother of a gay teenage boy (Daniel) and recounts the events leading up to his suicide. Initially, before Daniel came out, he appeared to be a “normal”, “well-adjusted” child: “he always joined in when his two older brothers played

soccer in the street. He was always considerate and kind, and made sure he helped with chores in the home” (Textbook C: 27). Therefore, the inference can be drawn that prior to his self-identification as gay he was a healthy, robust and socially well-adjusted boy. However, in the second paragraph, Daniel undergoes a change in temperament following his “coming out”. “After that Daniel seemed to change. He became quiet and moody, and spent a lot of time alone in his room” (Textbook C: 27). The prepositional phrase “after that” is not merely a temporal conjunction but also implies causality, suggesting that Daniel’s moodiness and isolation was brought on by his realisation of his homosexual orientation. The impression that the authors create, therefore, is that emotional disturbance and social detachment are associated with adolescent homosexuality.

After a failed suicide attempt, Daniel goes for counselling. The narrative continues:

After three sessions with the counsellor, Daniel asked me to go with him. During the fourth session, Daniel admitted to me that he was gay. He confessed that he was in love with one of the Grade 12 boys in his school. I was so angry and upset. I shouted at him and told him that what he was saying was shameful (Textbook C: 27).

While both words “admitted” and “confessed” denote acknowledgement, “confess” will also evoke the experiential connotations of sinfulness. This sense of transgression and sinfulness is reinforced by the complement “shameful”. The description of the counselling situation would appear to reinforce the notion that gay identification is associated with emotional disorder and pathology.

In the excerpt below, the experiential value of over-wording functions ideologically to construct heterosexuality as normal and its opposite homosexuality as abnormal:

He [the counsellor] told me that Daniel was an ordinary, healthy boy in need of love and support. Although I found it difficult, I tried my best to accept the way things were (Textbook C: 27).

The words “ordinary” and “healthy”, “love” and “support” have similar connotations. The underlying ideological meaning that the text appears to be transmitting would seem to be the notion of Daniel’s “abnormality” and more broadly the abnormality of homosexuals. This sentence also suggests the possible tension between the notions of affirmation and tolerance. While the counsellor seeks to affirm Daniel’s identity, the mother recalls her effort to tolerate his identity in the phrase “Although I found it difficult”. This is the theme of the sentence (which occupies the topic part of the sentence), while “I tried my best to accept the way things were” is the theme (the elaboration on the topic). According to Fairclough, the information contained in the theme is foregrounded as the most significant. In this instance, therefore, the mother’s personal struggle appears to be of greater importance than the son’s sexual orientation. This may have the effect of causing the reader to identify with the mother’s battle to accept her son’s orientation, an identification based on a shared sense of their common heterosexuality, rather than establishing empathy for the boy’s difficult process of establishing a functioning gay identity.

The narrative proceeds to describe the victimisation that Daniel experiences:

People treated him cruelly. Some of his friends teased him and called him names, but a group of older learners started beating him up during break... Some of the older boys from school attacked him and beat him up so badly that he couldn’t walk (Textbook C: 27)

In this extract, Daniel is depicted as being downtrodden and abused. This is linguistically reinforced by placing him in the object position. In addition, the writers manipulate the experiential value of words with the links being made between: “treated him cruelly”, “teased”, “called him names”, “beating”, “attacked”, “beat” and “couldn’t walk”. This reinforces his abjection and victimisation based on his sexual orientation.

“Four days after a severe assault Daniel commits suicide”. The mother concludes:

I am so angry with the people who were so cruel to Daniel. Why couldn't they just leave him alone if they didn't like what he was? Why did they have to torment him so much?
(Textbook C: 27)

The noun phrase “what he was” can be interpreted as an acknowledgement that homosexuality is more than a sexual act but also an identity – but it can also be seen as a form of periphrasis – avoiding using the term “homosexual”. The effect of this circumlocutory device may be to create the impression that homosexuality is unspeakable and can only be verbalised with discretion and in euphemistic terms. The final two sentences are in the grammatical question mode but are rhetorical in nature. The writer uses the pronoun “they” to refer to Daniel’s tormentors which positions the reader in opposition to them – representing a renunciation of the actions and attitudes of the people who victimised Daniel. At the same time, however, Daniel remains in the object position of the sentences, suggesting that external forces have acted upon him and he lacked personal agency.

Though the authors of the text are evidently sensitive to the social pressures that gay teenagers experience, and through this narrative, to heighten the reader’s awareness, the narrative fails to acknowledge the agency of homosexual people. The questions that accompany this text also appear to objectify gay people by making them the object of discussion and debate:

1. How do you feel about homosexual or gay people?
2. What stereotypical things have you heard about gay people?
3. Do you think gay learners should be allowed to bring a same-sex partner to a school function such as the grade 12 dance? (Textbook C: 28)

Each of these questions appears to indicate an underlying presupposition of gay otherness (as opposed to the heterosexual norm) on the part of the authors. The first question seems to be predicated upon the unspoken assumption that the readers of the text are heterosexual. It also appears to assert the notion that homosexuals are “different” in that they are identified as a separate group, apart from the learners. The diction is also puzzling because it seems to use the words homosexual and gay synonymously, (while the term “homosexual” is defined, the word “gay” is not explained.) The learners are also required to discuss stereotypical social meanings attached to gay people. Question 4 also creates the impression of gay subordination to a hegemonic heterosexual authority. The verb “be allowed” implies that gay people require the consent or licence of heterosexual people in order to enjoy what would appear to be basic social intercourse. At best, this question could direct learners to consider adopting a more tolerant approach to gay people, but it does not go so far as to confer equal social standing on gay people. While the authors appear to have sought to advocate gay equality, it seems that they may have inadvertently intensified the differentiation.

In an accompanying textbox, the authors include the following discussion of homosexuality:

Homosexual feelings are not uncommon amongst teenagers. They usually last only a short time, and are a normal part of growing up. Most people who have homosexual feelings while they are teenagers go on to relationships with the opposite sex. However, some people have to relate sexually to members of their own sex. No one knows why people are homosexual. No one chooses to be homosexual, and people who are homosexual can't change the way they are (Textbook C: 28).

While the writers accurately relate the sexual ambivalence that many teenagers experience, they appear to suggest that the natural progression is from homosexual feelings to relationships with members of the opposite sex. In the sentence, "They usually last only a short time, and are a normal part of growing up" the writers suggest that it is typical for teenagers to outgrow same-sex attraction. The word "normal" may be interpreted in two senses: firstly, the innocuous sense of ordinarily or generally, or in the more problematic sense of well-adjusted and functioning according to accepted social standards of behaviour. The discussion of homosexuality also sets up a distinct dichotomy between "most people" who appear to "outgrow" same-sex attraction and "some people" who continue to be sexually attracted to members of their own sex, and, by inference, are stuck at a certain psychosexual developmental point.

In all the discussions and activities, gay people lack visibility and voice in the texts. This may further advance the notion of gay victimisation and passivity since gay people are not seen to be actors in their own right. The lack of a gay voice in any of these texts indicates its ideological power of constraining gay voice to "assert a hegemonic heterosexual perspective" (Fairclough, 2002: 113).

Generally, the texts assume heterosexual learner identities. Gender and sexual identities are depicted as polar opposites: male/female, masculine/feminine and heterosexual/homosexual. Thus, the prevalent construction is essentially categorical in its differentiation and grouping of people. For example in Textbook C, learners are required to carry out the following activity (Textbook C: 105):

Describe a man and a woman's life roles and responsibilities as s/he changes from when s/he is a:

daughter	son
sister	brother
girlfriend	boyfriend
fiancée	fiancé
wife	husband
mother	father
grandmother	grandfather

In this extract, the authors establish two fundamental binaries: male/female and opposite-sex attraction/same-sex attraction. This dichotomous depiction of human sexuality does not permit any variation. In this regard, it is also noteworthy that none of the textbooks deal with

bisexuality, intersexuality, trans-sexuality, polygamy or casual heterosexual relationships that would show the complex and variable nature of sexuality.

This sense of biological predestination continues in the next paragraph headed emotional changes which states:

As you grow towards adulthood, you also start to think and feel differently. Adolescents... become very interested in the opposite sex (Textbook B: 171).

Thus, the impression is created by the subordinate clause "As you grow toward adulthood", with the pronoun "you" presupposing a general normative sexuality, that there is a single growth path which all adolescents follow: "become interested in the opposite sex". The assumption of opposite sex attraction serves the ideological construction of heterosexuality. This is not, however, an isolated instance in Textbook B. On the next page, under the heading "Social Changes: Relationships with others" the authors assert:

Older adolescents make friends with the opposite sex, start having romantic relationships and start dating (Textbook B: 172).

This sentence is written in the declarative mode, which appears to assert the content as a universal truth. The declarative mode, as Fairclough points out, can be an indicator of asymmetrical relations of power; in this instance, the authors are placed in the position of being the possessors and providers of knowledge while the readers are receivers. The modal verbs "make", "start having" and "start dating" add to the emphatic tone. Again, an affinity for the opposite sex is therefore asserted as the natural outcome of biological development and maturation. This has the effect of reinforcing the previous instances in the text where personal and physical growth is portrayed as a natural progression towards heterosexual identity. This would appear to confirm Fairclough's contention that the hegemonic group legitimates its version of reality by portraying it as natural "fact" or "common sense" to conceal the subjective, arbitrary and constructed nature of this "authorised" account of reality.

In the discussion of reproduction in Textbook C, heterosexual sex is also established as the norm. The authors urge the learners to develop a sound understanding of the male and female reproductive systems because "In this way, we can take responsibility for our behaviour and show understanding towards the opposite sex" (Textbook C: 9). The use of the phrase "opposite sex" implies that the sexual intimacy is heterosexual and the personal pronouns "we" or "our" create a sense of inclusivity, suggesting that the dominant or in-group is heterosexual. The Teacher's Guide makes this even more explicit by directing teachers to:

Begin the lesson by telling the learners that it is important to think about the implications of sexual relationships before becoming too involved with a member of the opposite sex (Textbook C Teacher Guide: 34).

Thus teachers, in their preparations for this lesson, are predisposed to view sexual relationships only in terms of opposite-sex attraction.

4. Conclusion

The texts entrench heterosexuality not only through content and coverage as highlighted by Hogben and Waterman (1997), Whatley (1992), Jennings and Sherwin (2007), Bazzul and Sykes (2011), Temple (2005), Macgillivray and Jennings (2008), Irala., Urdiain and Burgo (2008), Suarez and Balaji (2007), Dalley and Campbell (2006), Macleod (2009) and Macleod

et al. (2015) but also through the experiential, relational and expressive use of language. The language used generally normalise monogamous heterosexuality primarily for marriage and the reproduction of children. The heterosexual discursive formation is achieved through a range of semiotic features such as repetition of specific words that achieve a heterosexual meaning; adversative conjunctions; the subordination of LGBT agency through the use of grammatical structures; stating conventional moral norms as universal facts; the projection of heterosexual images and the assumption of heterosexual learner identities.

The experiential, relational and expressive language of the LO textbooks plays a central role in entrenching heterosexuality, heterosexism and marginalising, inferiorising and excluding LGBT sexualities. In agreement with Sunderland *et al.* (2001) who note the effects of gender bias in texts on learners, the heterosexual bias in the LO textbooks will have an effect on all learners' sexual identities: it affirms heterosexual learners and not homosexual learners. The latter symbolic violence towards LGBT sexual orientations would further marginalise LGBT students.

It is imperative that textbook authors not only exercise sensitivity in their language but also represent the diverse forms of sexualities accurately. The example provided by Macgillivray (2008: 184) shows how this could be done. Briefly this includes portraying LGBT youth in a positive light, as agents and not as hapless victims; disassociating LGBT content from unfortunate occurrences such as suicide, HIV/AIDS, rape and bullying; and depicting LGBT students as having multiple and complex identities. Furthermore, language that acknowledges diverse sexual orientations is imperative to avoid assuming heterosexuality as the norm. This includes being mindful of linguistic choices of words that do not evoke negative experiential meanings in relation to LGBT sexualities; grammar of sentences so that they construct agency of LGBT sexual orientations and not assuming that all students and readers are heterosexuals.

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