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Investigating Teacher Language Using Activity Theoretical Concepts and Critical
Discourse Analysis

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1. Background

Building their argument from Leont'ev's (1971) suggestion that because language developed later than other social activity, it is therefore a category subordinate to activity; and from Mikhailov's (1980) understanding that words accrue to meaning and meaning derives from activity as a whole, Roth and Lee (2007) suggest that, because of the central role that actions (acts) play in both activity theory and speech act theory, the latter 'assists language and literacy to find a proper place' within Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). In their understanding, speech appears to be a routinised operation in which words are selected unconsciously by the speaker: 'speech acts are constituted by components (operations) that conversationalists do not consciously choose: appropriate words emerge in response to the unfolding utterance by means of which the speaker attempts to achieve communicative goals' (Roth, 2005, p. 207). This paper aims to engage with Roth and Lee's (2007) argument and to suggest that, while Conversation Analysis (CA) has its part to play in understanding language in activity, it is limited in its application. Alongside that critique, the paper discusses the relative merits of discourse analysis, and in particular Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1989) as an alternative means to investigate language inactivity. Following an example of how CDA was used in one project, it concludes by suggesting that the choice of analytical tool for language in activity must depend on the type of data to be collected and on what relationships within activity are to be understood.

2. Conversation analysis and discourse analysis: what can they tell the researcher about activity?

In this section, I aim to draw attention to some of the issues to be attended to in selecting a method of language analysis in activity. I begin with a discussion of what the aims and processes of CA and CDA are, and then raise some questions around what each may be able to offer an analysis of activity.

a. The aims and processes of conversation analysis and discourse analysis

CA, suggest Roth and Lee (2007) may be used to investigate the spoken language of participants in activity. Ten Have (2007) points to the purpose of CA as being ‘not to explain *why* people act as they do, but rather to explicate *how* they do it’ (p. 9). It aims to offer this explanation by focusing on the utterance as the smallest unit of analysis and investigating utterances in the immediate context of the conversation, *in situ*. It uses transcriptions of recordings of speech which, unlike those used in CDA, include coding to signal prosodic and paralinguistic features such as length of vowels, length of pauses, emphases and tone of voice in order to understand how participants in conversations use speech to get things done (Wooffitt, 2005). In particular, CA is interested in how the participants organise their conversation, explored through what the management of turn-taking reveals; how sequences of conversation are organised; how repairs – that is, what happens when the conversation runs into difficulties – are organised and finally, how content of turns is managed (ten Have, 2007). The CA analyst begins the process by selecting a sequence of conversation and then characterising the actions contained in it before considering the form or ‘package’ (ten Have, 2007) of the content. The analyst moves on to ‘consider how the timing and taking of turns provide for certain

understandings of the actions and the matters talked about’ and finally ‘to consider how the ways the actions were accomplished implicate certain identities, roles and/or relationships for the interactants’ (ten Have, 2007, pp. 123-124). CA, then, looks at apparently random, decontextualised segments of conversations with the aim of revealing understandings of the subject, subjects or immediate community and their relationships.

CDA, on the other hand, is interested in explaining language in use in written and spoken discourses at word, sentence and text level. CDA might, for example, be more interested in the frequency of appearance of particular words or word types as pointing to particular meanings or concepts: CA, by contrast, is more interested in turn taking and adjacency pairs as pointing to meanings and may not be such a useful tool for identifying concepts in use in activity, since it is less interested in conversations at word level or in their location within discourses, where understandings of concepts in use might be more apparent.

CDA’s focus is on the *why* of language use as much as on the *what* and *how*: it aims to describe, interpret and explain (Fairclough, 1989, p. 26). Where CA confines itself to understanding the chosen data apparently independently of contextualising factors, (Sharrock and Anderson, 1987) CDA focuses not only on the situational context of text production or utterance, but also at the institutional and social contexts which shape the situational context:

Discourse...involves social conditions, which can be specified as *social conditions of production*, and *social conditions of interpretation*. These social conditions, moreover, relate to three different ‘levels’ of social organization: the level of the social situation, or the immediate social

environment in which the discourse occurs; the level of the social institution which constitutes a wider matrix for the discourse; and the level of the society as a whole. What I am suggesting, in summary, is that these social conditions shape the [members' resources] people bring to production and interpretation, which in turn shape the way in which texts are produced and interpreted. [...]

So, in seeing language as discourse and as social practice, one is committing oneself not just to analysing texts, nor just to analysing processes of production and interpretation, but to analysing the relationship between the texts, processes and their social conditions, both the immediate conditions of situational context and the more remote conditions of institutional and social structures. (Fairclough, 1989, pp.25-6)

Such an understanding directs the gaze to more complex interactions between layers of context than perhaps the CA approach is able to offer, pointing to more precise understandings of meanings and how they are negotiated, which in turn might lead to more delicate understandings of the object the participants are working towards.

CA proceeds from transcripts of language-in-action, that is, from transcripts of recordings of 'natural' conversation in everyday situations (there must be questions here around how 'natural' a conversation can be when participants are aware of being recorded for research purposes). It presupposes that participants to the conversation will want to, or are able to, take turns, though it interrogates points at which participants decline to take a turn which is offered (e.g., Wooffitt, 2005; ten Have, 2007). In studies which might include interview data, however, turn-taking is deliberately managed so that the interviewer may consciously ignore several points at which the turn might change in order to encourage

the interviewee to keep talking about the selected topic. Interviews, then, are artificially constructed conversations which bend or ignore the usual rules of turn taking and, while this rule-bending may in itself be of interest to researchers aiming to understand the structure of interviews as a genre, it is unlikely to assist the researcher interested in the conceptual tools and rules which the subject may be drawing on in activity, and may in the end only point to the underlying structure of the interview as genre.

b. What elements of activity might the two approaches reveal?

CA analysts appear to be concerned with the rules which underpin the structures of language, rather than with the content of particular interactions: Billig (1999, p. 547-8) suggests that the programme of CA is 'to find general structures of orderliness' by following 'practices that direct analytic attention to issues which the participants do not overtly talk about'. CDA, on the other hand, is interested in the topic selected by the participants, which may point to the goal or object on which they are working, and in the kinds of language tool used which might point to concepts drawn on in that work.

CDA generally takes a critical stance to its investigation and concerns itself with issues of power by asking how ideologies are embedded in discourses, which makes it a useful tool for investigating power relationships in discourse. It begins from the standpoint that language reflects *a priori* a particular stance, both of the participants and of the analyst: Billig, (1999) for example, suggests that the 'specific tasks of CDA are frequently part of a wider analysis of social inequality' (p. 576). A criticism frequently levelled at CA, however, is that it does not adequately account for power relationships within conversations, though Wooffitt (2005) suggests that this perception is mistaken and offers

examples of how power relationships at the level of smaller interactions might be investigated (Wooffitt, 2005, 186-210).

CA is, according to Wooffitt (2005, p. 3), ‘the best way to understand everyday conversation’ as it emphasises ‘the dynamic and action oriented nature of utterances [and] the highly patterned nature of interactional sequences...’ while for Titscher *et al* (2000, p. 107) CA seeks the ‘generative principles and processes used to produce the structure and order of a situation’. They quote Sacks (1985, p. 13) as suggesting that CA is about ‘finding and naming’ rules and objects pointing to an approach which identifies and describes language use in talk without going on to offer explanations of why particular language features might have been selected in that particular instance, which, together with Roth’s (2005 p. 207, above) suggestion that language selection is in fact not consciously selected but routinised and unconscious points to an understanding of CA as a tool for accessing the rules within operations and actions within activity rather than for accessing language within the wider scope of activity.

c. Can the two methods address the ways that written text is used in activity?

CA focuses on speech and cannot offer understandings of written text in activity, which makes it unsuitable for analyses which seek to discover the interweaving of documents and talk in activity. In investigations which seek to understand how participants may be interacting in operations or actions, this may be irrelevant: to ignore the influence of written documents in activities, however, is perhaps to omit an important piece of contextualising data. For example, in the study outlined in 3 below, it was central to the project to understand how language in written policy documents fed into teachers’ talk about their work which revealed their identities as teachers and teacher mentors.

Without a means to analyse both the relevant policy documents and talk about practice, it would not have been possible to understand how text and talk, policy and practice, were interwoven.

CDA investigates word, sentence and text levels of language in use and investigates discursive practices - in the sense of particular patterns of language use specific to a practice (education discourse, legal discourse etc.) - through exploration of lexical choices, syntax, and genres. In this sense, CDA is concerned with language use at activity level rather than at the level of operations, and language may itself be understood as an activity which blends with practical activity (Boag-Munroe, 2004).

CDA is concerned not only with spoken language but with written and multi-media texts and can therefore direct its lens to investigate language used in a range of situations within activity other than conversation. It offers the scope to explore how language enters activity through written documents as well as through conversations, though it may not always take account of the finer nuances of spoken utterances such as tone, pitch, pausing or emphases. Because it focuses the gaze at a wider level of interaction than conversation, it may offer greater insights into the conceptual tools in use in activity and into the division of labour. It allows for wider exploration of the interactions between subject and community than CA, because it analyses text as well as conversation and can encompass lengthier and wider communications between participants.

d. What understandings are offered of how language is selected?

Roth and Lee's (2007) argument that language is unconsciously selected appears to be in tension with their understanding that it is selected to be used to achieve communicative goals: a communicative goal is conscious and suggests agency in aiming to achieve it,

whereas an unconscious use of language suggests lack of agency. Indeed, the concept of 'selection' itself appears to point to agentive action. Though it may be argued that it is not possible to access a speaker's agency from the transcript of a conversation, it is a reasonable presupposition that, if a speaker is understood as 'selecting' responses, she may equally be understood to be aware of possible choices of responses to an utterance from which she makes that selection, and therefore to be acting agentively and, by definition, consciously. CDA, by contrast, understands language choices as agentive, and deployed in the pursuit of some level of power.

It may be the case that speakers are unconscious of the rules which shape the possibilities available to them in creating their utterances into sequences of conversation which are understood as highly patterned. Nonetheless, they are often aware that they have a range of responses from which they may consciously select the one which is most likely to achieve their goals. For example, a politician in conversation with a television interviewer is likely to be very careful about the choices of response, at both lexical and sentence level, that he makes. He will also be aware that he has the choice to disengage from the pattern which the conversation appears to be following. On the other hand, a speaker may deliberately choose to follow a particular pattern to achieve particular aims: a teacher, for example, (and, perhaps, especially a student teacher) may carefully follow an established Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF) sequence for a particular learning purpose. In both examples, though, I suggest that the speaker is responding agentively and therefore not unconsciously. What may be unconscious are those underlying rules which frame the possibilities for selection.

e. Summary

In summary, then, it may be said that CA's focus on structures might assist understandings of rules, and the ways that rules might mediate between the subject and the community, and in the process, offer understandings of subject and community identities. Because it focuses on conversation between two or more participants, and in particular on their structure, it may be a useful way of understanding how language is used intersubjectively in a narrowly populated interaction at the level of operations or actions (Leont'ev, 1978), though the number of interactions which occur at the level of activity may mean that it is less useful in helping to understand the complexities of language use at that level.

CDA might equally point to rules and identities in use in activity, but in addition, because of its interest in the wider contexts of human interaction, has potential to point to conceptual tools and highlight the relationship between them and language tools in use. Because it is a tool for analysing written as well as spoken text, it can offer ways to understand the interaction of documents and speech within activity, as for example in the research discussed in 3 below, where the ways that a policy document shaped the work of teachers was investigated. Further, CDA can, through its emphasis on critical analysis, suggest ways that power is distributed through the activity, pointing to an understanding of the division of labour. Finally, through the understandings it offers of the other elements of the activity, CDA can help to tease out understandings of the object, as well as the goals, being worked on.

3. Understandings applied to data

As an exemplar of CDA in use, I show in this section of the paper how it was used as one analytical frame in part of one project, to investigate language within the activity of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in order to gain insights into how teachers might construct identities which assist them to work in ITE. In the study, written and interview data collected from policy texts used to shape the activity (*Qualifying to Teach: Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status and Requirements for Initial Teacher Training* (TTA, 2003) and the *Handbook of Guidance*, (TTA, 2004) together referred to as the Standards); and case studies of four teachers and five PGCE Course Tutors working within two ITE partnerships. Data were interrogated using a blend of Activity Theory, the CDA frame at Annex A, and the *Wordsmith* counting and concordancing programme (for details, see references). However, for the purposes of this paper, only data collected within one partnership – Midshires University (participant tutors are Alan and Barbara) and Middlemarch School (two teachers: Celia and James) - are drawn on.

a. Language and Conceptual tools

The main conceptual tools drawn on by policy makers were outlined in the *Introduction to Qualifying to Teach* (TTA, 2003) which drew heavily on a discourse of managerialism. It was anticipated that concepts might be revealed through representational meanings within the text (Fairclough, 2003): that is, through the ways in which the world was represented through agency and space-time. According to Fairclough, (2003) this may be drawn out through an investigation of combinations of processes, participants and circumstances, or statements of who does what to whom (or what), when and where. Such an investigation fits with the activity theoretical focus on

who (subject) does what to whom/what (object) and in what circumstances (rules, community, division of labour).

The choice of lexical fields drawn from a managerialist discourse (e.g., assess, achieve, deliver, effective), constructed the teacher as acting within a managerialist discourse and practice. Because the Standards were the basic operating document within the practice of ITE, it may be that this discourse shaped, or was intended to shape, understandings of possibilities in ITE, though findings from the teacher mentors themselves tended to suggest that this had not happened at the time of the study.

Language use in the Standards document helped construct the model of the teacher particularly by masking agency through the use of nominalization, ('know' becomes 'knowledge'; 'understand' – 'understanding'; 'expect – expectation', for example, which hides the actor and changes the process to an object), passive voices and military metaphor. Being a teacher thus appeared to mean acquiring a toolkit which could be used in a classroom. The presentation of the Standards as a list of skills and values which were possessed or acquired by the teacher contributed to the conception of teaching and teacher training as a mechanical practice rather than a nurturing process.

Five military metaphors were particularly evident in the Standards document: deploy (12 uses), train and its lemmas (trained, training, trainee, trainer) (1029), objective (50), target (28) and hit the ground running (1). Together they suggested a conflictual model, almost of preparation of troops for battle, rather than a co-operative preparation of teachers to assist learning.

In addition, the relationship between business language and military language suggested a masculine and warrior-like approach which may be appropriate for competitive

business but which did not sit comfortably with the more nurturing conceptualisations of teaching and learning evident in teachers' and tutors' discussions of their work.

Managerial discourse incorporates market discourse and presupposes that all work is market-oriented and manageable. Key words within the discourse, drawn from Fairclough (2000), Mahony and Hextall (2000) and Walsh (2006) are clearly identifiable within the Standards document, though a comparison of use of key words by all participants in ITE (Table 1 below), suggested that this discourse was not at the time of the study percolating to teachers.

Marker	Standards	Alan Midshires HEI	Barbara Midshires HEI	Celia Middlemarch School	James Middlemarch School
/Total words	43, 184	12,816	8,395	6,382	11,117
Account*	54	1	0	0	0
Achieve*	104	0	0	0	12
Assess*	255	1	1	0	0
Benchmark*	11	0	0	0	0
Choice*	16	0	0	1	1
Deliver*	15	0	2	1	1
Demonstrate	170	0	0	0	0
Design*	36	6	0	0	0
Effective*	99	2	0	1	0
Efficient	4	0	0	0	0
Goals	8	0	1	0	0
Manage*	70	2	4	1	18
Monitor*	34	0	0	0	0
New	19	4	16	3	7
Outcome*	10	0	1	1	0
Partnership*	73	10	4	0	0
Perform*	34	2	0	0	2
Target*	28	2	5	1	6
Train*	1029	12	29	1	22
Total:	2850	42	63	10	69

Table 1: Occurrences of discourse markers in Standards document and participant interviews

* indicates that the root word and root + inflections have been counted

Teaching – and teacher training – was conceptualised as an activity which was capable of being inspected, managed and quality assured, all of which processes imply measurability, accountability and managerialist approaches. Teaching, then, was seen as an activity to which business or market concepts could be appropriately applied, which may entail that other aspects of the market – competition, for example – were part of the conceptualisation of teaching, though no argument was presented as to why or how these concepts might help pupil achievement.

The teacher constructed by the Standards was ‘optimistic about what [her] pupils can achieve’ (TTA, 2003, p.. 3). She had skills as well as knowledge and understanding of pupils, subject matter, and of how learning was developed, and had ‘high expectations’ of pupils and their achievement. Statements about teachers were mostly expressed as ‘they know/understand/are aware of/demonstrate/can/are able to’ processes drawn from the cognitive domain and acted out within the classroom on pupils who are the object of their actions, suggesting a concept of the teacher as a person whose actions were directed to the object of pupil learning and whose actions drew largely on cognitive tools.

Teachers were constructed as influential in society: they ‘can and do make huge differences to children’s lives’ (TTA, 2003, p.. 3). They were represented as models of ‘behaviour, attitudes, [and] values’ (ibid, p.. 7) for pupils as well as being those responsible for pupils’ understanding of the curriculum. Teachers had the qualities of respect and consideration for pupils and were able ‘to communicate sensitively and effectively with parents and carers’ (TTA, 2003, p.. 7).

Since the Standards were a policy tool for guiding the work of tutors and teachers in developing new entrants to the profession, it might be anticipated that this construct of the model teacher as both concerned for learning and sensitive might be one which all participants in ITE shared. In order to test this, a comparison of cognitive and affective language in Tables 2 and 3, below, was made, and found to suggest that tutors and teacher mentors shared the policy makers' view that teaching was mostly a cognitive activity, with an emphasis on knowing, and, for James, understanding. It is noticeable, though, that Barbara's interview has a lower percentage of words drawn from the cognitive domain than other participants.

Marker	Standards	Alan	Barbara	Celia	James
/Total words	43, 184	12,816	8,395	6,382	11,117
Assess*	255	1	1	0	0
Believe	1	1	2	1	0
Identify*	45	1	1	0	1
Know*	227	60	8	31	78
Organise*	27	1	0	2	2
Reflect*	25	2	0	2	4
Think*	10	112	36	88	113
Understand*	137	10	11	3	18
Total: 8 words	727 (1.7%)	187 (1.5%)	59 (0.7%)	127 (1.9%)	216 (1.9%)

Table 21: Occurrences of *cognitive* markers in Standards document and participant interviews

* indicates that the root word and root + inflections have been counted

Marker	Standards	Alan	Barbara	Celia	James
/Total words	43, 184	12,816	8,395	6,382	11,117
Attention*	6	0	0	0	2
Aware*	55	1	0	2	1
Feel*	5	7	5	8	16
Listen*	1	0	0	2	1
Respect	17	0	4	0	0
Respond*	18	4	2	5	2
Responsible*	58	5	5	2	1
Sensitive*	10	0	0	0	0
Total: 8 words	170 (0.4%)	17 (0.1%)	16 (0.2%)	19 (0.3%)	23 (0.2%)

Table 3 Occurrences of *affective* markers in Standards document and participant interviews

*indicates that the root word and root + inflections have been counted

In discussion of their work with pupils and students, all interviewees use the process ‘think*’ more frequently than any other process. A concordancing of these uses, however, points to its use as signalling a personal opinion more frequently than as a process in which they wish to engage their learners.

Teachers, then, were presented in the Standards as skilled and knowledgeable professionals who used a toolkit of strategies to work with others on the object of pupil achievement. They drew on managerial concepts and were concerned with benchmarking and setting targets for their pupils. Interview data with teacher mentors and tutors, on the other hand, suggested that they did not conceptualise teaching in the same managerial ways.

b. Rules and power distribution within ITE

The rules in use within the activity largely derived from the Standards document, though teacher mentors developed their own local rules which helped them to prioritise the different aspects of their work in teaching and mentoring.

The document began by outlining a model of the teacher through a list of descriptors of skills, qualities and knowledge referred to as ‘Standards’. Ownership of the Standards lay with the Secretary of State rather than with those who would implement it and his power was asserted through the legal status of the document, set out at the beginning of the text on a frontispiece:

The Standards in this document [...] have the same legal standing [as an earlier document] [...] They set out the Secretary of State’s Standards which must be met by trainee teachers...

A comment in the *Introduction* to the first part of the document reinforced the statutory nature of the Standards by stipulating that ‘These Standards are a rigorous set of expectations and set out the minimum legal requirement (TTA, 2003, p. 4)’.

The first part of the document contained the ‘Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status and Requirements for Initial Teacher Training’ (TTA, 2003). The concept of obligation, expressed through ‘Standards’ and ‘Requirements’ was thereby established *ab initio* and pointed to a set of rules intended to be powerful tools in the activity.

Power within the documents was expressed mostly through modality and in particular deontic modality (used to express obligation) through processes such as ‘must’, ‘need to’, or ‘required to’ and to offer the possibility of choice through processes such as ‘might’, ‘may’ or ‘could’. Table 4 shows the occurrence of deontic modal operators within the Standards: generally, those modals suggesting the strongest obligation appeared

more than those offering a weaker obligation. However, ‘may’ is ambiguous: it appears to offer choice, though is often used to express obligation, the implication being that the consequences of not acting in the suggested way would be unwelcome.

Word	Could	May	Might	Must	Need	Should
Occurrences (/43,184 words)	76	170	85	125	213	85

Table 4: Occurrences of deontic modality in the Standards document

Further obligation was pointed to through the use of processes and nominalisations such as such as ‘require/requirement’(196 occurrences); ‘responsible/responsibility’ (58) and ‘ensure’ (111), which obliged participants to act in the activity in particular ways, the key ones of which are discussed below.

The central rule to emerge from the documents was that schools and their ITE providers were to work in partnership to prepare the student teacher for work in the profession (TTA, 2003, p.. 17). From this rule were derived others which allocated responsibilities to providers. The *Requirements* section of the document (TTA, 2003) set out what Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), subsumed as ‘providers’ of Initial Teacher Training, ‘must’ do in relation to working with students before and during their preparation as teachers.

The HEI in ITE was required by the Standards document to organise and administer the courses; assess students and moderate mentors; distribute funding; benchmark, monitor, assess and evaluate the course against local and national provision; provide access to resources; and lead the partnership by initiating the collaboration between school and HEI. In the case of the last requirement, the HEI was additionally responsible for drawing up the contract of partnership. In this way, the HEI was positioned as the rule enforcer, financial manager and administrator of the activity.

All these requirements suggested a tension in the concept of partnership: if the HEI were given the responsibility for the administration, management, organization and assessment of the course, then, it may be argued, it was less a partnership of equals than an alliance of experts with power being distributed unequally. Power on the one hand appeared to reside with the HEI in designing and assessing the course (albeit with the help of mentors), and in the distribution of funds; on the other hand, power might be seen to lie with schools who were not obliged to involve themselves in ITE, and over whose classroom work with students HEIs have only a limited influence. In addition, the consequences of not meeting the requirements were more serious for HEIs than they were for schools, especially in terms of funding.

Both the HEI and the teacher mentors in the study drew on the requirements for QTS in the Standards to guide their work. For example, Alan (Midshires) was concerned to ensure that students were able to teach the whole age range and be independent in the classroom across that range. However, there appeared to be some tension for him here about the effect of the rules on schools, with whom he appeared to identify through his use of 'we':

...the Standards say that the students have to teach the whole age range and because we are so heavily Ofsteded as schools, that's one of the things that they bang on about. You know mentors have actually been confronted with that on a fairly regular basis [...] the new Standards say that you have to be able to teach independently at each key stage, so that's a little more difficult to do now.

Barbara (Midshires) also used as a rule the obligation of mentors to attend twilight meetings, though she acknowledged that there was some tension between her understanding of the rule and the mentors':

The ideal for me would be that if they were a mentor they come to every meeting because there were issues to do with the beginning of the year and what experiences the students have in the first bit of the year which impact on how you interact with them in the second part of the year. And yet there will still be schools who will only come after Christmas because they only ever have students in the second placement. [...] But the way it was done in the twilight sessions here there was an element, even though they get the money, there was an element of 'It was optional for me' in their mindset...

Other rules in the Standards appeared to create some tension for the HEI which understood that it must work with the schools who volunteered to work in partnership for ITE. There was no duty for schools to involve themselves in ITE and HEI tutors were concerned that there was a shortage of schools who would work with them. This became problematic for

the tutors because they needed so many placement schools that they could not afford to turn away any volunteers. This played out as the HEI having to make compromises in what mentors were asked to do with students, and emerged as potential tension for students between what the HEI wanted them to do and what the school wanted them to do. Alan, for example, was aware that:

...we do get schools that tend to constrain significantly [what students can do but that] because we are expanding our numbers we cannot afford to [not use weak mentors]. What we need to do is make weak mentors into proper mentors.

Barbara endorsed this point of view. When asked whether she could move a student from a school where she was not getting the training Barbara hoped for, Barbara responded:

We haven't got enough schools to do it. We certainly haven't got enough placements given. [...] We don't have a surplus of schools so it really is not so much 'How do I select?'. It is 'How do I try to improve ones I wouldn't otherwise have been using?'.

Within the partnership there appeared to be distinct roles for the mentor and for the HEI tutor. Barbara, the Midshires Science tutor, involved the mentors in the writing of handbooks but saw it as her responsibility to take the initiative in writing and producing them:

I decided that we had got to the point where the best way to go back over some of this stuff without the long-serving mentors feeling 'Here we go again' was to involve them in producing some new materials for

a new mentor handbook. So the focus for the mentor meeting this year has been [...] ‘I want us to focus on the issues between this part of the placement, this part of the year, and I have got a few questions to support it, but ultimately I want to take away what you’re telling me and use that to go into a mentor handbook. If you see these as issues, let’s see if we can get the advice and put that into the first section of the handbook’. So we’ve done that on two occasions. And I am putting these together.

Barbara’s pronoun use here may point to rules that appeared to underpin how she viewed the division of labour with mentors. Although on the surface she seemed to be trying to show how she worked in partnership by giving an example of how she and mentors have both (‘we’) contributed to the handbook, her pronoun and process use demonstrated that she saw it to be her job to manage and lead the group working on it. She said ‘I want us...’, suggesting that she was taking the lead in the collaboration; then ‘I want to take away...’ and ‘I am putting these together’, pointing to processes in which she was the only actor. She went on to shift between describing what ‘I’ do and what ‘you’ (mentors) do, suggesting a view of division of labour in which jointly agreed ideas were materialised by Barbara. She then slightly modified this understanding by suggesting that the mentors gave direction to her to do the administrative work in the partnership:

They have been very good, but the first meeting we talked through all the issues and ultimately they said ‘Most of the stuff is in there somewhere. What we want is a two page laminate that says

“Page...Week one...These are the key issues, this is where to find the stuff in the handbook. We don’t want more. We don’t want another handbook to tell us about it. We accept it is there somewhere. We just want the easy user guide, the way in”.

Barbara (Midshires) suggested that as the HEI tutor, she had greater authority in the training relationships than the mentor. Following her discussion of the preparation of the handbook, she went on to say that she felt she needed to remind the mentors of the dual aspect of her own role: being a ‘tough enforcer’ as well as a helper:

Because one is me reminding them of, if you like, the tough end of the contractual obligation and the other is being helpful when the need has arisen from their perspective instead.

This led her on to talk about how she saw the handbook as being a tool for reinforcing authority, and more specifically to be a tool for mentors to use to show that the mentor and tutor were working together:

We say it every year but I felt for the sake of the mentor who ends up with the less sensitive or the less good trainee. I wanted it in writing so that they could use my authority if you like, to say ‘Look. It was in the book. I am not being tough: this was what the course expects of you’. I mean, the mentors were too nice sometimes to invoke it, but I am actually trying to give them a framework that they could invoke to make their life easier if they need.

There appeared, then, to be some tension in the ways that Barbara used the tool of the handbook. Not only was it a memorandum of the agreed roles of the partners, but it was also a rule book to guide mentors' work; a tool through which partnership could be negotiated; and a tool which both tutors and mentors could use to enforce desired behaviour. The handbook became a way of apparently avoiding collaborative construction of work in mentoring and became instead a symbol of division of responsibilities within the partnership: a way of directing how mentors might work on students rather than a memorandum of how student needs might be responded to.

The teacher mentors, however, did not find the handbook particularly helpful on its own. Celia and James both experienced difficulties in attending the mentor meetings held at Midshires, and, because both Celia and Barbara both worked part time, they were unable to meet in school except on rare occasions. Celia had no formal training to be a mentor and appeared not to have knowledge of the policy handbook which Barbara (Course Tutor, Midshires) thought that mentors relied on and which she had compiled as a substitute for a more interactive relationship. Consequently the process for Celia was directed by instinct rather than by any rules developed within the partnership or from other people's experience:

And the first time I did it I literally went on gut feeling and you don't ever know if that's right or wrong. I've never had any feedback if it's right or wrong but I'm doing what I think's best. But you just don't know, do you?

Her comment here suggested that Celia was looking for a more interactive relationship with her tutor and felt frustrated at not having the kind of contact which might foster her development as a mentor. It further pointed to ways the tutor worked and suggested that the tutor's focus was on the student and her own role in developing the student: Celia as mentor seemed to feel invisible to the tutor and as though she were not perceived as participating in the student's learning processes.

c. Object

Within the Standards, the object of activity appeared to be to develop new entrants to teaching who understood the construct of a teacher and the profession of teaching through a managerialist discourse. For Barbara and Alan, the object which emerged was similar: a new entrant to the profession who was able to meet the Standards. However, they did not appear to understand that teacher to be operating in the managerialist discourse of the Standards (see the discussion of language in 3a. (above).

For Celia and James, the object of ITE tended to be aligned with other objects they were working on. For Celia, teaching and mentoring appeared to be undertaken as subordinate to being a mother, at least for the time being, and current work was understood to be part of her personal development. Much of what she did was guided by how she could sustain the image of herself that she believed she needed to maintain her self-esteem

In her teaching, she focused on her relationships with pupils as a guide to how she would work with them: she placed passing on her knowledge of and enthusiasm for Biology as a higher priority than achieving exam results, and was concerned to learn from pupils about teen culture so that she could feel young and not be boring:

I think kids in high school keep you younger in a different way. Fashion. You know what the music is. You just kind of get...And I think that's quite nice actually. You don't feel like you are completely boring. You have to keep up with them in a way.

Her work in mentoring was similarly motivated by a desire to keep her thinking fresh, although she was also nervous of working with adults and in particular with those she thought had greater subject knowledge. In addition she saw part of her personal development to be preparation for future career choices: she committed a lot of her personal time to mentoring students and NQTs so that she could prepare for developing her career once her family had grown up.

In James' case, participation in ITE appeared to be guided by his difficulty in engaging with his pupils: if he was working with students, he could allow them to teach his classes while he completed administrative tasks.

And I am thinking 'Great. They are going to come in and they could do that and that', and I am thinking 'I could get some of this done out of the way while they are teaching'.

4. Conclusions

Space has permitted only a limited discussion of how CDA allowed me to investigate the ways that language used in both documents and interviews pointed to rules, tools and division of labour in use by subjects within the activity of ITE. Nonetheless, I hope to have shown that, because CDA aims to understand language use not only in the

immediate context of its production, but in the wider context of the practice of which it forms part, it has the potential to tease out how other texts – written and spoken – may be contributing to, or playing in to, formation of rules, concepts, identities and understandings of the object. Because CDA directs the gaze to language choices at word, sentence and text level, and because it draws attention to the ways in which it understands language as pointing to concepts, it proved to be a more useful tool for understanding the ways that policy makers, HEI tutors and teacher mentors interacted in their work in ITE. CA analysis, with its apparent focus on the ways that rules mediate communication between subject and community, could not have offered an understanding of the policy documents in use in the activity, nor of interplays between policy documents and subjects which shape or shift the object: it does not recognise documents as contextually relevant and lacks the tools for analysing them. However, CA analysis may have shed light on the operations and actions undertaken by the participants to achieve goals, and on the ways the participants negotiated work on the object. It might usefully have been drawn on, for example, to look in greater depth at the mentors' interactions with their student teachers in ITE to confirm or expand on the findings of the CDA analysis. Such an investigation might reveal the routines which mentors follow with their students in the school placement, and the operations they deploy to induct students into the practice of teaching, although CDA might draw out these routines and operations - perhaps less successfully than CA. A CA approach to understanding how the two mentors in this paper conceptualised and organised their work in ITE might have shed additional light on their interactions with pupils and students by starting from classroom and mentoring transcripts to investigate pedagogical approaches. Such analysis, could, for example, through investigation of turn taking, have

revealed more about how the teacher mentor was oriented to the pupil or student object as might be demonstrated by adjacency pairs and sequence organisations: did they, for example, understand the object as people to whom instructions were given or as agentive learners who needed prompts for their thinking? However, CDA was equally able to do this through an analysis of word choice and sentence structure which showed what was important to the teacher mentors and what their priorities were.

Overall then, I suggest, it may be that those working within activity theory may need to be more flexible in their selection of frames for analysing language in activity than Roth and Lee (2007) suggest. Although this paper has focused on the relative merits of just two methods, there are other frames which might equally be useful, and which need to be considered in the light of the aims of the research.

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Frame adapted from Fairclough (2003)

Level Values	Vocabulary	Grammar
Experiential: asks how the speaker's choice of words express her/his experience of the natural or social world	• What classification schemes were drawn on? • Were there words which were ideologically contested? • Was there rewording or overwording? • What ideologically significant meaning relations were there between words?	• What types of process and participant dominate? • Was agency clear? • Were processes what they seem? • Were nominalizations used? • Were sentences active or passive? • Were sentences negative or positive?
Relational: expressing social relations	• Were there any euphemistic expressions? • Were there markedly formal or informal words?	• What modes were used? • Were there features of relational modality? i.e., does one participant have more authority than the others, as expressed through deontic modality? • If the pronouns <i>we</i> and <i>you</i> were used, how?
Expressive: expressing social identities and evaluation of the reality the text relates to	• What expressive values do words have?	• Were there features of expressive modality? i.e., what was the author's evaluation of truth as expressed through epistemic modality?
General	• What metaphors were used? • What binary oppositions emerge?	• How were sentences linked together? • Were complex sentences characterised by subordination or co-ordination? • How does the author refer inside and outside the text?