

From missionary to researcher: professional identification of public school teachers underlying autobiographies within a continuous education program

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Submetido em 08 de novembro de 2014.

Aceito para publicação em 09 de dezembro de 2015.

Cadernos do IL, Porto Alegre, n.º 50, junho de 2015. p. 130-150

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FROM MISSIONARY TO RESEARCHER: PROFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS UNDERLYING AUTOBIOGRAPHIES WITHIN A CONTINUOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

DE MISSIONÁRIA A PESQUISADORA: IDENTIFICAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL DE PROFESSORAS DA ESCOLA PÚBLICA SUBJACENTE A AUTOBIOGRAFIAS PRODUZIDAS EM UM PROGRAMA DE FORMAÇÃO CONTINUADA

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ABSTRACT: *This research study focuses on autobiographies produced by teachers in two distinct moments (beginning and end) of a continuous teacher education program (CTEP) developed in a public school of Santa Maria (RS, Brazil) in order to analyze the identification teachers established with their profession. To analyze the process of identification with the profession, we consider two textual categories: Modality and Evaluation (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003: 159), since these give an indication of the participants' commitment to their texts. The results indicate that most participants recurrently assume, at the beginning of the CTEP, the role of "missionary teacher". At the end of the reflective process, we identified a realignment of the role of "researcher teacher".*

KEYWORDS: *identity; autobiographies; continuous teacher education program; critical discourse analysis.*

RESUMO: *Esta pesquisa centra-se em autobiografias produzidas por professores em dois momentos distintos (início e fim) de um programa de formação continuada desenvolvido em uma escola pública de Santa Maria (RS, Brasil). Para a análise do processo de identificação com a profissão de professor, consideramos duas categorias textuais: a Modalidade e a Avaliação (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003, p. 159), uma vez que estas dão indicação do comprometimento das participantes com seus textos. Os resultados revelam que as participantes assumem mais recorrentemente, no início do programa de formação, o papel de "professora missionária". Ao final do processo reflexivo, identificamos um realinhamento ao papel de "professora pesquisadora".*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *identidade; autobiografias; programa de formação continuada; análise crítica do discurso.*

1. Introduction

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This study is part of the umbrella project “*Atividades colaborativas educacionais em contextos escolares*” – A.C.E.C.E (Educational collaborative activities in school contexts) (TICKS, 2011) which has been developed in a public school of Santa Maria, RS, Brazil, since March 2012. The umbrella project is developing a continuous teacher education program (henceforth CTEP) within a collaborative research which, as a main concern, intends to provide participants with a critical reflective space, with the objective of developing a meta-consciousness on the social representations produced in that context about teaching and learning processes, constructing a reflexive view on multiliteracy. Furthermore, the umbrella project aims at discussing the (re)construction of the social practices of the participants¹, also seeking to develop meta-consciousness on their professional identity. In this sense, this umbrella project, through reflection and interpretation of the pedagogical universe of teaching language, brings an opportunity for collaboration/interaction between university and school contexts.

Within this focus, the investigation of the participants’ discourse and social practices was possible through the development, implementation and analysis of questionnaires, interviews, theoretical discussions, reflective sessions, production of autobiographies, and pedagogical activities.

This work pays specific attention to the autobiographies produced by the participants in two distinct moments – beginning and end – of a CTEP developed in the public school community investigated by researchers from the umbrella project A.C.E.C.E. The autobiography production in teacher education is a socio-historically contextualized manner of investigating the educational experiences in an attempt to reflect on the understanding that professionals have of their teaching (actions) and learning (knowledge) processes, as well as how they position themselves as professionals.

Therefore, the autobiography production, in the umbrella research project context, might help to understand how teachers identify themselves with the teaching profession through the analysis of their discourses.

In this sense, the **main objective** of this study is **to analyze** the identification teachers established with their profession, underlying the autobiographies produced in two distinct moments – beginning and end – of a CTEP. Within the main objective of this investigation, we set up three *specific objectives* that will direct the analysis of this research:

- 1) To identify semantic images related to the roles the participants assume as teachers;
- 2) To describe how these roles are constituted in the lexical grammatical level;
- 3) To explain the identification process the participants established with the profession during the CTEP.

Through these texts, we might shed a light on the participants’ concepts of teaching and learning, and also analyze to what extent the nine months of a continuous teacher education process contributed to maintain or change their identity as teachers.

2. Theoretical framework

In this section we present the theoretical background which will sustain this analysis. First, we explore the concept of identification (Section 2.1). Second, we review

¹The participants are teachers of different disciplines and also the school supervisor.

the use of autobiographies, which constitutes the *corpus* of analysis, in identity research studies (Section 2.2). At last, we discuss some considerations on Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) theory, which will be used to analyze the data (Section 2.3).

2.1 Identification

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008), 'identity' is "a set of own and unique characteristics of a person and/or a group of people". This definition suggests a sort of uniqueness in relation to what is meant as identity. This uniqueness is related to the concept of identity, used/adopted during the prior period of modernity, as an attribution: you were something and that it was. There was no option or even an effort that could change this fact. That is the essentialist mold of identity that comprises individuals as cohesive, homogeneous, and linear. These individuals are personally and professionally complete. However, in the current days of post-modernity, different authors (BAUMAN, 2005; HALL, 2005; RAJAGOPALAN, 2002) question this concept of identity.

Bauman (2005: 17-19) argues that identity, during modernity, were a matter of individual effort and construction. However, identities become, in our modern-liquid world, more ambivalent and liquid. In this sense, they are a social and historical construct, and, therefore, they carry the trait of heterogeneity and the fickleness of a constant transformation. In other words, identities are, in the postmodern world, always in process of changing. Thereby, identity can be understood as:

[...] construction, as a process never completed – as something always "in process". It is not, never, fully determined – in the sense that one can always have it or lose it in the sense that it can be consistently sustained or abandoned.² (HALL, 2005: 106)

This process, according to Rajagopalan (2002: 344), is constituted in and through language, which, similarly to the individuals, is constantly changing and evolving.

In turn, Hall (2005: 111) defines identity as a positioning concept, once it constitutes social positions that individuals need to assume in different social discursive situations. Thus, identities are points of temporary attachment to the subject position built by discursive practices (HALL, 2005: 112). In this sense, what enables identity formation is the fact that each subject is, above all, a social being who uses language to interact with the environment around. Identity formation, then, is based on linguistic construction, and it is through it that individuals are socially inserted and conscious of their individuality. So, if identity formation is inside and not outside the discourse (HALL, 2005: 113), it initially occurs by the recognition that individuals are socially and historically constituted; and, as such, they can and should interfere with the reality around them. In other words, individuals transform reality and, at the same time, are transformed by it.

Fairclough (2003: 160) discusses how individuals position themselves within their texts. The author advocates the use of the term 'identification' rather than 'identity' because the former gives the idea of "process of identifying, how people identify themselves and are identified by others" (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003: 159). Therefore, for this

² Our version of the original "[...] construção, como um processo nunca completado – como algo sempre 'em processo' [grifo do autor]. Ela não é, nunca, completamente determinada – no sentido de que se pode sempre, ganhá-la ou perdê-la no sentido de que ela pode ser, sempre, sustentada ou abandonada."

author, when we research into the identification process through textual analysis, we will be focusing on the dialectic between personal and social identities, and on how individuals position themselves textually. In this sense, the way people are committed to their texts contributes to the process of identifying themselves, i.e., for the process of identity texturing³ (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003: 161).

Fairclough (2003: 03) argues that textual analysis is essential to understand the social effects of discourse. Based on Halliday (1994), the author highlights the Modalization and Evaluation as two relevant textual categories to investigate the identification process. These textual evidences indicate the participants' commitment (to truth, moral, obligations and values) in their texts that, ultimately, contributes to the construction of their social identities (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003: 164) as teachers. In other words, everything to which one commits in discourse says a lot about who he/she is.

According to Fairclough (2003: 171-173), the **Evaluation** category highlights the commitment the participants affirm to their discourses and assumed values. In other words, it is, in a general sense and considering this analysis, any explicit or implicit affirmation which commits participants to their discourse and their assumed values related to the teaching profession. In this sense, evaluation can be inferred, through the personal definition of desirable or undesirable, what is good or what is bad.

The second textual category discussed by Fairclough (2003: 164-171), based on Halliday (1994), is **Modality**. According to Halliday (1994), modality means the speaker's judgment of the probabilities and obligations underlying ones' discourse. It is authors' commitment to what is true and necessary for them. Fairclough (2003) argues that there are different ways of commitment depending on how the person understands that 'truth' must be told in each situation. Then, the **epistemic modality** is used to exchange knowledge/information through statements and/or questions that can be affirmative or negative, modalized or not, expressing differences in terms of frequency and probability. The **deontic modality**, on the other hand, involves the exchange of services expressing offers and/or purposes (for someone to do something) and obligation or necessity (an order for someone to do something).

In this sense, identity is understood in this work as more than an attribution: it is understood as a social construct, constituted by discursive practices experienced by human beings. Therefore, identity is not an intrinsic part of a person or a matter of an individual effort and construction. Identity is not definitive, solid; but negotiable, liquid, flexible (BAUMAN, 2005): everything depends on the decisions that individuals make to live and on the positions they take within discourse. In other words, identities are, in the postmodern world, fractured and, thus, always in process of changing (HALL, 2005).

Thus, identity is not fixed, but a relational phenomenon. According to Reichmann (2010: 49), social identity is dual, once it implies an identity negotiation – marked by a process of socialization that involves disruptions and transformations – among “biographic processes (how you see yourself) and relational processes (how others see you)” (REICHMANN, 2010: 49). This identity negotiation involves a process of socialization in the different social institutions in which one is involved, such as family, school, work.

Professional identity, in turn, is the resulting construction of this socialization process. Thus, being a teacher means being seen for oneself and, also, by others as a teacher. In other words, being a teacher entails the process of acquiring and acting

³ In Portuguese, “processo de texturização indentityária”.

subsequently redefining an identity that is socially legitimated (COLDRON & SMITH, 1999: 712).

Within this perspective, professional identity is not something that a teacher has intrinsically, but rather a process of identification, that is, a socially situated process of construction and reconstruction of positioning. In other words, professional identity, in the particular teaching context, is constituted by social experiences, whether positive or negative ones, which guide and influence teaching practice. Furthermore, the constitution of a teacher's professional identity often involves taking positions in the social context in which the pedagogical practice is developed (COLDRON & SMITH, 1999: 713).

In the next section, we discuss the concept of autobiographies, which are the object of this study.

2.2 The autobiography in identity research studies

The education of teachers as critical, reflexive and creative professionals has been strongly discussed as a possible beginning to transform the current educational context. One way of discussing and promoting critical reflexive thinking could be triggered by textual production of autobiographies. Magalhães (2010) claims that autobiography, in particular, is a possibility of, through a textual production, accessing the producer's experiences, once he/she has the opportunity to, perhaps, (re)constructs them.

In turn, Bailey (1996: 16) points out the need to break the vicious cycle of eternal tendency to imitate the actions of others through a conscious look of our past experiences. This position is also advocated by Celani & Magalhães (2002), who emphasizes the need to create specific contexts for discussing professional representations, which would lead to the achievement of changes in pedagogical practice. According to Celani & Magalhães (2002: 334), by perceiving through reflective practice how professional representations were constructed, teachers might replace old understandings of their identity, thus realizing the need for transformation. The autobiography mediates the process of critical reflection and can thus be defined as a "powerful tool for reflection" (BAILEY, 1996: 27) that promotes a "sense of ownership" (BAILEY, 1996: 12) in teachers' professional identification development. Also, that is a simple procedure that helps teachers to recall, examine and deconstruct their own learning and teaching experiences.

In continuous teacher education, the autobiography production allows to generate a context where the producers can organize the manner they think, speak and act (MAGALHÃES, 2010: 23), and this entails the possibility of reflection about their professional identity. Thus, autobiography is a way of empowerment, inasmuch as its production allows the author to see, judge, and justify positions by reflecting about him/her thoughts, conceptions and actions. That means autobiographies are an instrument of self-reflection, a process that transcends institutionalized bounds and acts besides rules, and by which teachers might be agents (TELLES, 2002) of their own professional development.

Reichmann (2010: 48) reinforces the importance of the autobiography production initiative in educational contexts, considering that autobiography production comprehends an activity in which the authors have the opportunity to recall essential moments of their personal and professional development, thus allowing own "problematization of trajectory, memory and socio-professional identity"⁴.

⁴ Our version of the original "problematização de trajetória, memória e identidade social e profissional".

However, the self-critical-reflection moment the autobiography production might promote is not a natural and peaceful transformation of the pedagogical practice or identity, once the process of reflection creates a tension, a period of confusion, a feeling of being lost, “ungrounded” (COLLINS, 2003: 141). What occurs is that the producer abandons “images” he/she had of him/herself as a teacher having not yet managed to develop “new images”, once sufficiently significant professional and personal experience was not yet developed for this construction. Coracini (2007: 158) argues that all reflective process offers “experiences of strangeness”⁵, a perception of “pulling the rug out from under my feet”⁶ (CELANI, 2000⁷ *apud* COLLINS, 2003: 141) that leads participants not to recognize themselves, and could avoid taking positioning and, hence, prevent the development of professional identity.

We also take into account that, in being a genre, autobiography is

a recurrent communicative event in which a given human activity, encompassing social roles and social relations, is mediated by language. In this sense, it presupposes an interaction between textual (language) and contextual features (the set of social relations involved). (MOTTA-ROTH, 2001: 29)

In this sense, autobiography is a genre that enables to perceive, through language, experiences that constitute teachers’ professional identities, aiming at the (re)construction of images they have of themselves. Therefore, autobiography can be a possibility of changing teaching practice and so the current educational context through awareness of beliefs and actions.

Finally, in the next section, we discuss the concept of CDA, the perspective that will guide the analysis and interpretation of the participants’ discourses.

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse from the point of view of CDA is a form of **social action** in which “people may act upon the world and specially upon each other” (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992: 63). Thus, discourse regulates social life of a particular society, both shaping and restricting, for instance, identities, relations and rules. In this sense, discourse is a **social practice** rather than a purely individual activity (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992: 63). Describing discourse as a social practice implies that language and society bear a kind of dialectical relationship. In other words, the relationship between language and society is two-way: on one hand, language is influenced by society; on the other hand, society is shaped by language. This means that discourse constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the identities of people; and, at the same time, is shaped by them.

Fairclough (1992: 91-92) distinguishes these constitutive aspects of discourse mentioned above (situations, objects of knowledge, and identities) based on Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (SFL), claiming that these three aspects are always present simultaneously, and that one may take precedence over the others. Thus, following Halliday (1994), the ideational metafunction of language constitutes systems of knowledge and beliefs; the interpersonal metafunction materializes identities and the

⁵ Our version of the original “experiências de estranhamento”.

⁶ Our version of the original “puxar o tapete de debaixo dos meus pés”.

⁷ CELANI, M. A. A. O ensino de língua estrangeira no Império: o que mudou? In: BRAIT, B. & N. Bastos. **Imagens do Brasil**: 500 anos. EDUC, p. 223-252.

relationship between them; and the textual metafunction organizes situations creating discourse.

In this sense, CDA, a branch of discourse analysis that has its roots within critical linguistics, contributes to see language as a social practice, tied to a specific socio-historical context, through which social relations are constituted and reproduced.

Gee (2011: 09) defines discourse analysis as “the study of **language-in-use** in the world”. This study varies according to the relationship between participants in interaction, the type of social event, the social goals people are pursuing, and so forth (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992: 63). According to Al-Ali (2006: 696), CDA focuses on “social practices, values and beliefs” which shape the organization of specific genres (social events). Thus, CDA has an important role in the analysis of texts because it goes beyond identifying and describing genre linguistic components. CDA contributes to expose and deconstruct social practices, values and beliefs that shape the arrangement and the selection made in the production of a particular text. In other words, CDA is a theory which helps people to see and to understand the meaning constructed in texts by raising awareness that helps to constitute a particular perspective on social world by denaturalizing common sense assumptions. Therefore, CDA aims to make available, through the analysis of language as a social practice, a critique of discourse that might lead to consciousness raising, emancipation and empowerment.

This theoretical contribution will enable the discussion of the identity texturing process (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003) of teachers who produced the autobiographies that constitute the *corpus* of this work.

3 Methodology

In this section, first we briefly introduce the context of investigation and the participants which produced the autobiographies (Section 3.1). Second, we outline the *corpus* that composes this analysis and the procedures to collect the data (Section 3.2). Finally, we discuss the procedures to analyze the data highlighting the categories of analysis (Section 3.3)

3.1 Context of investigation and participants

This study was conducted with nine teachers from a public elementary school of Santa Maria, RS, Brazil. Among them, the participants are the school supervisor, a special educator, a mathematics teacher from EJA (*Ensino de Jovens e Adultos* – teaching young people and adults) and six teachers of elementary school – four from primary school and two from final series of elementary school. Through the analysis, the participants were identified as T1, T2... T9.

The school where the umbrella project was conducted provided the facilities for holding fortnightly meetings. Approximately twenty teachers were involved in the project; however, only nine of them were engaged from the beginning up to the end of the CTEP. Therefore, these nine educators produced the autobiography.

3.2 Corpus and procedures for data collection

The *corpus* of this work is comprised by sixteen autobiographies produced by in-service teachers. These autobiographies were produced in two different moments: beginning and end of a CTEP.

At the beginning of the CTEP (May, 2012), one of the activities proposed by our project was to ask the teachers to write an autobiography containing their conceptions of being an educator. The text production was guided by the prompt question “*O que é ser professor para ti? Conte um pouco a respeito de suas experiências com o ensino.*” (What is to be a teacher to you? Tell us about your experiences with teaching). This activity began to be produced with the nine teachers engaged in May 9th program meeting. However, as they did not finish the text in that moment, they delivered the textual production in the following meetings. Altogether, we received seven autobiographies from this first moment. At the end of the CTEP (November, 2012), the production of another autobiography was proposed in order for the participants to make a critical overview of their first text production, making changes when they felt necessary. Ultimately, we tried to identify to what extent the continuous teacher education process influenced their identity as teachers. The idea was for the participants to read and rewrite the first textual production evaluating critically their concepts of what it is to be a teacher, and possibly (re)designing their professional identity. All participants (nine) produced the second autobiography, and thus the data extended to a total of sixteen autobiographies which became the *corpus* of this work.

3.3 Procedures to analyze data and categories of analysis

Two metaphorical categories emerged from the *corpus* in a preliminary analysis. More specifically, these categories (Table 1) are related to two images which constitute the roles the participants assume as teachers. Those roles guided the semantic analysis.

Table 1 - Metaphorical categories emerged from the *corpus*

Categories	Samples from the <i>corpus</i>
The Researcher	“Ser professor exige um constante aperfeiçoamento... ”
The Missionary	“O que é ser professor? [...] É vocação, sacerdócio, doação... ”

In order to describe how these images of ‘Researcher’ and ‘Missionary’ are constituted in the lexical grammatical level configuring the participants’ identification process with their profession, a second analysis was done considering the categories of **Modality** and **Evaluation** (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003). These categories are suggested by Fairclough (2003: 164 - 173) based on Halliday (1994), who claim that such categories are materialized in the interpersonal metafunction within which language is analyzed as interaction and, through this interaction, it is possible to establish identities and also social roles.

The categories of **Evaluation** are highlighted in Table 2 (with examples from our *corpus*), according to what is proposed by Fairclough (2003: 170-173), based on Halliday (1994).

Table 2 - Categories of evaluation (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003: 171-173)

Categories	Samples
Evaluative adjectives	“Hoje me sinto feliz e realizada , vou levar grandes lembranças onde nem esse sistema falho mexeu com minhas aspirações e motivação.”
Affective evaluations through relational processes	“Para mim, ser professor é algo especial .”
Evaluative adverbs	“Quando fazemos o que gostamos tudo flui naturalmente .”
Evaluative verbs	“ amo o que faço, sempre amei por isso já tenho 28 anos de profissão.”
Statements with deontic modality	“Curto poder entrar nas salas de aula.”
Authors explicit marks	“ Para mim ser professor mais que profissão é uma missão.”
Affective evaluative nouns	“[...] a cada novo ano a paixão de educar se renova. São alunos novos, situações desafiadoras e, é aí que reside o encantamento de ser professor .”

To analyze the participants' process of identification with the profession, the categories of **Modality** presented in Table 3 were considered (with examples from the *corpus*).

Table 3 - Categories of modality (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003: 170-173)

Categories	Samples
Modal verbs	“Escolhi essa carreira por opção, poderia ter ido para outras áreas onde o financeiro seria mais compensatório...”
Frequency adverbs	“ Sempre amei, por isso já tenho 28 anos de profissão.”
Affective/cognitive mental processes	“ Curto poder entrar nas salas de aula.”
Indirect discourse	“E quando o senhor chegou na sala disse que pensava que eu fosse uma aluna.”
Participle acting as adjective	“Hoje me sinto feliz e realizada .”

4. Analysis and discussion of results

In this section, we discuss the results found in this work in the light of the studies discussed along the theoretical framework (Section 2). In an attempt of describing and explaining the identification process teachers established with their profession, we explore the two metaphorical images that emerged from the *corpus*: The Researcher and

The Missionary. These images of ‘Researcher’ and ‘Missionary’ can be seen both along the autobiographies produced in the **beginning** (Section 4.1) and along those produced in the **end** (Section 4.2) of the CTEP, but with different recurrence. ‘The Missionary’ image is most recurrent in the initial autobiographies, while ‘The Researcher’ image covers the majority of the final autobiographies. These metaphorical images constitute the roles participants assume as teachers. Therefore, a comparative analysis is done along the discussion sighting to shed a light on to what extent the nine-month CTEP contributed to maintain or to change the participants’ identity as teachers.

4.1 Initial autobiographies: teacher as researcher and teacher as missionary in balance

Regarding the metaphorical images which materialize the roles participants assume as teachers, we firstly identified the recurrence of two different images in the autobiographies produced in the beginning of the CTEP (Table 4).

Table 4 – Recurrence of metaphorical images in the Initial autobiographies

Metaphorical image	Beginning of the continuous teacher education program (May, 2012)	
	Number	%
The Missionary	4	57.15%
The Researcher	3	42.86%

According to the total percentage (Table 4), more than a half of the participants (57.15%) demonstrate, discursively, being identified with the images of ‘The Missionary’, while 42.85% of the participants assumed ‘The Researcher’ identification.

The Missionary image is constituted by two aspects. The first one is a strong emotional affinity with the profession of teaching (Excerpt#1). The participants recognize the difficulties they have been living through, as pointed out in T1, T2 and T3; however, the satisfaction the profession provides for them is also clearly revealed in the texts.

Excerpt #1	T1 - “Ser professora para mim, foi uma opção pessoal que me traz muito prazer [...] curto poder entrar nas salas de aula [...]”
	T2 - “[...] amo o que faço, sempre amei por isso já tenho 28 anos de profissão [...] pessoas como eu que acredita na educação de qualidade [...] basta que hoje alguém dê continuidade a esse <u>trabalho</u> que tanto amo [...] quando fazemos o que gostamos tudo flui naturalmente [...] Hoje me sinto feliz e realizada .”
	T3 - “Ser professor é acreditar .”
	T2 - “[...] vou levar grandes lembranças onde nem esse sistema falho mexeu com minhas aspirações a motivações .”
	T1 - “[...] são alunos novos, situações desafiadoras .”
	T3 - “[...] ser professor é ser ré e vítima num sistema educacional vulnerável e fragmentado .”

This emotional affinity with their profession can be identified by the use of mental processes (“*amo*”, T2; “*gosto*”, T2; “*curto*”, T1), sometimes intensified by adverbs (“*tanto*”, “*sempre*”, T2), and also circumstances of purpose (“*por opção*”, T1) and affective nouns (“*prazer*”, T1). Moreover, evaluative adjectives (“*feliz*”, T2), participles acting as adjectives (“*realizada*”, T2) and cognitive mental processes (“*acredita*”, T2; “*acreditar*”, T3) support this personal satisfaction with the profession. Furthermore, the use of the first person (although the subject is elliptical as in (eu) “*curto*”; T1) shows their commitment to the professional choice made.

The strong emotional affection teachers have for their profession reinforces the fact that teaching is not just a profession but a loved one (Excerpt#2), that is, teachers are professionals who work for love. In this sense, the teachers’ strong emotional affective connection with their professional role seems to be what reinforces motivation for teaching, as clearly pointed in T1: every New Year means new situated contexts, challenges and “passion”.

Excerpt #2	T1 - “<u>Trabalhar fazendo educação</u> mais que profissão é um ato de amor [...] a cada novo ano a paixão de educar se renova. São alunos novos, situações desafiadoras e, é aí que reside o encantamento de ser professora.” T2 - “[...] <u>ensinar</u> é um ato de amor e dedicação incondicional.”
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Lexicogrammatically, the emotional affection teachers have for their profession is revealed by the use of relational attributive processes (mainly by the attributes “*um ato de amor*”, T1, T2; “*dedicação*”, T2), sometimes intensified by evaluative adjective (“*incondicional*”, T2). Also, the idea of teaching for love is reinforced by the use of affective nouns (“*paixão*”, “*encantamento*”, T1). This role of teachers working for love can be historically explained considering the government civilizing mission that has its origin in the 19th century, when education is sanctioned to every Brazilian. According to Melninkoff and Silva (2011: 06), the government needed to expand the educational program for everyone without much cost. Then, a convenient solution was to hire women, since the government assumed they would work for much less money than men. It is important to consider that men would not accept low salaries once they were “family providers” (MELNIKOFF & SILVA, 2011: 06). Associated to this, the authors discuss the belief that women could assume the profession for their “natural ability” to teach, a belief that was reinforced along the decades and continues to be seen in teachers’ discourses nowadays, as evidenced by the data of this study.

The second aspect that constitutes the Missionary image (CORACINI, 2000: 152) is the assumption that the teaching profession seems to be related to something divine (Excerpt#3). In other words, being a teacher seems to be related to a calling, a mission, and a talent, that is, something that involves aspects which are outside the academic experience.

Excerpt #3	T1 - “Para mim <u>ser professora</u> mais que profissão é uma missão.” T3 - “O que é ser professor? [...] é vocação, sacerdócio, desafio, persistência, abnegação, frustração, esperança, conquista, vitórias.....!” T2 - “Para mim <u>ser professor</u> é algo especial.”
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	T4 - “Ser professor <u>é</u> um SER <u>sujeito a</u> provações das mais diversas [...]. Mesmo assim, <u>esta é</u> a minha missão [...] Para mim, <u>ser professor é</u> estar em constante doação, resignação [...] Creio <u>ser esta</u> a minha missão , a qual Deus designou para que eu, um grão de areia neste mundo, possa revelá-lo através do meu trabalho.”
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This identification is almost completely structured by the use of relational identifying processes and relational attributive processes, focusing on the values “doação”, “resignação” (T4); “vocaç  o”, “sacerd  cio”, “abnega  o” (T3); and on the attributes “especial” (T2); “uma miss  o” (T1, T4). It is important to mention that relational identifying processes, in Systemic Functional Grammar, relate a participant (token) to its identity (value). In other words, they identify an entity in relation to another, as in T3 “[...] *ser professor* [token] *  * **voca  o, sacerd  cio, desafio, persist  ncia, abnega  o, frustra  o, esperan  a, conquista, vit  rias...**” [value].

In this sense, the participants’ identification as professionals who work for love reveals a view which legitimizes teachers as heroes (“*Hoje, ser professor    ser o maior dos her  is!!! Eu sou sim PROFESSORA!!*” - T3), someone that is defending a “cause”, has a mission and therefore is involved, devoted to his/her profession. According to Coracini (2000: 152), the view of teachers as heroes suggests the traditional image of teacher as a Missionary: again someone devoted to the cause of teaching and educating.

Although the participants’ discourse emphasizes that teaching does not represent a valued profession which faces difficulties, they do not mention the activity negatively. In contrast, there is a positive reference to the profession reinforcing the idea of a feeling of affective fulfillment in teaching (“[...] *o encantamento de ser professora.*” - T1). This feeling of fulfillment, on one hand, overlaps the current difficulties teachers are facing (“[...] *vou levar grandes lembran  as onde nem esse sistema falho mexeu com minhas aspira  es a motiva  es.*” - T2, Excerpt#1), and also identifies the participants as Missionaries. Consequently, teaching profession is identified as a mission for life.

The Missionary image, on the other hand, should be denaturalized because, besides (and much more than) giving the idea of sacrifice, devotion, abnegation for the sake of a “bigger mission” within education, it might suggest a passive position: a professional resigned to his/her poor working conditions (as heavy workload and few hours for planning) and low remuneration. This passive image might be reflected on his/her classroom practice.

Regarding **the Researcher image**, three participants (42.85%) assumed this identification (Table 4). In their autobiographies (T5, T6, T7), the recurrence of the Missionary discourse is not explicitly marked, although elements of the emotional affinity with the teaching profession⁸ still occur (Excerpt#4). That is identified by the satisfaction with the profession which is evidenced through evaluative adjectives (“*feliz*”, T5, T6) and participles acting as adjectives (“*realizada*”, T5).

Excerpt #4	T5 - “Me sinto feliz no ambiente escolar, me sinto realizada frente aos alunos [...].” T6 - “Tenho sido feliz [...].”
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⁸This is one of the aspects that constitute the metaphorical image of the missionary.

In this sense, the Researcher image is constituted by one main aspect: the teacher explores in class students' previous knowledge. In excerpt#5, participants show an attempt to transpose students' reality (students' previous knowledge) into pedagogical practice trying to connect practice and research. In this way, they assume the responsibility of building knowledge and improving it throughout research. Thus, the example suggests that research is part of the teaching practice of those teachers. As Researchers, they would be able to identify real enquires from their context of teaching, trying to answer questions by transforming them into pedagogical activities.

Excerpt #5	T5 - “[...] Nesse trimestre os alunos pediram para falar sobre por que o senhor estava colocando o óleo que tiravam dos carros e jogava no rio (córrego).” T6 - “[...] Sempre que inicio minhas aulas começo do que meu aluno <u>conhece</u> e parto para o assunto que determinei.” T4 - “[...] <u>trabalho com projeto</u>. A cada etapa desenvolvida tenho um tema gerador. Devido as necessidades que aparece preparo em cima desse tema.”
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This aspect is almost completely structured and clearly revealed by the use of indirect discourse (“*pediram*”, T5), which introduces the voice of someone else, in this case the students'. Thus, the use of indirect discourse marks the students' active participation in the process of teaching and learning, and also evidence how the teacher builds her/his pedagogical practice from students' real enquires. Additionally, the researcher image is significantly intensified by the use of nouns (“*projeto*”, T4; “*temagerador*”, T4; “*necessidades*”, T4) and by the cognitive mental process (“*conhece*”, T6) that are part of the research semantic field and indicate the starting point is the students' previous knowledge.

Being a teacher means being a professional who guides and equips students to pursue and build knowledge. Thus, the teacher that builds his/her pedagogical practice from the students' reality and then, from this, builds a pedagogical project to work with needs to be in a constant seeking of information on a particular subject, analyzing and questioning to achieve established goals as best as possible. All this reflects what Freire (1970) always discussed as critical teaching: to transpose students' background knowledge and experiences into a pedagogical project of work – in that particular case, it was an ecological project.

In this sense, critical pedagogy (FREIRE, 1970) proposes the end of commodified educational model, that is, an educational model that is based on rationality and focuses on the preparation of student to work. In other words, instead of only preparing students to work, critical pedagogy proposes an education aimed at promoting the development of citizenship, as well as the creation of an independent sphere of public debate, which is not controlled by the market or by the state. It considers the integration of theory and practice and learning process as an essentially social activity. To accomplish that, researching is the basis for critical classroom practice, once it allows the students' active participation in the pedagogical practice, also having their previous knowledge valued.

4.2 Final autobiographies: The researcher image stands up

Regarding the autobiographies produced in the end of the CTEP, the recurrence of ‘The Missionary’ and ‘The Researcher’ has suffered some changes (Table 5).

Table 5 – Recurrence of metaphorical images in the Final autobiographies

Metaphorical image	End of the continuous teacher education program (Nov, 2012)	
	Number	%
The Researcher	7	77.8
The Missionary	2	22.2

According to the total percentage (Table 5), we identified a significant growth to 77.8% (at the beginning of the program, the percentage was 42.86%) of the participants assuming now the role of Researcher, against a decline to 22% on the Missionary image (57% in the first autobiographies).

The **Researcher image** is constituted by two aspects. The first one is the need of being in constant learning process (Excerpt#6). Other investigations have identified the same characteristics (FONSECA, 2011; MELLO & DUTRA, 2011; CELANI & MAGALHÃES, 2002).

In our investigation, T3, T5, T7, T8 and T9 recognize that their occupation carries the eternal seek for qualification (“[...] *Ser professor é [...] estar numa eterna busca de qualificação [...]*” - T3, Excerpt#6). According to Celani and Magalhães (2002: 328), professional development has a vital importance for teachers. As one of the participants (T9) pointed out, it is a singularity of the teaching profession (“[...] **estudar e procurar aprender faz parte da singularidade da profissão de Professor.**” - T9, Excerpt#6). In other words, an academic degree would be just an initial qualification (T3, Excerpt#6). But this singularity is not a factor that distinguishes the teaching profession from other professions. In post-modern capitalist societies, there is a social-economical pressure for being the best, so that one can keep its position in the workplace (BAUMAN, 2007: 35). Although public teachers have stability in the profession, they are also “haunted” by this eternal/constant need for qualification.

Despite this capitalist pressure for being the best professional, every good professional normally feels compelled to be in constant process of learning. Regarding the teaching profession, Freire (1996) already referred to teaching education as a permanent doing that is constantly remade in the pedagogical action. This aspect can be identified in our analysis, as T7 and T8 pointed out that to be a teacher is to be in “**constante atualização**” (T7, Excerpt#6) and “**constante transformação**” (T8, Excerpt#6). In this sense, not looking for improvement when you are a teacher consequently devalues the profession (NÓVOA, 1999: 30), as teaching education is not confined to the initial formation, but is extended throughout the teacher’s career.

Excerpt #6	T3 - “[...] Ser professor é formar, educar, ensinar, mas também aprender. É estar numa eterna busca de qualificação para não parar no tempo. [...] requer muito estudo e pesquisa.” T7 - “[...] Com certeza, a constante atualização em termos de metodologias, o entendimento dos avanços tecnológicos que podem servir como instrumentos favoráveis
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	nas salas de aula [...] contribuindo para que consigamos o êxito desejado aos nossos alunos.” T8 - “[...] <u>ser professor</u>, também é estar em constante transformação, implica em estarmos dispostos à mudanças e ir em busca dela.” T9 - “[...] em 1999 [...] desenvolvi um projeto voluntário no Instituto [...] onde dava aula de leitura e produção textual para alunos internos da 5ª série. Nesse ano também [...] participei como pesquisadora voluntária em um grupo da FAGED-PUCRS. [...] Ainda, ingressei no curso de Especialização em Psicopedagogia Institucional e Clínica. [...] Foram três anos de muito aprendizado. [...] entendo que estudar e procurar aprender faz parte da singularidade da profissão de Professor.”
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The awareness of being in constant learning process is completely structured by the use of relational identifying processes, focusing on the values “*eterna busca de qualificação*” (T3); “*transformação*” (T8). The evaluative adjective “*constante*” (T7, T8) points out that this updating process is important and never finished. Additionally, the cognitive mental processes “*aprender*” (T3, T9), “*estudar*” (T9); and the nouns “*estudo*”, “*pesquisa*” (T3); “*atualização*” (T7); “*pesquisadora*” (T9); “*projeto*” (T9), intensified by “*muito*”, significantly increase the understanding teachers have about this professional requirement of being in process of learning and then well-prepared, identifying them as researchers.

As in the first data collection, the second aspect that constitutes the Researcher image is the fact that teachers consider the students’ context and background knowledge to design their practice (Excerpt#7). In Excerpt#7, teachers show that they organize their pedagogical practice from their context of teaching trying to contextualize particular topics to achieve their goals, as best as possible. This presupposes that research is part of their teaching practice, as those teachers have to be constantly investigating their group of students as well as better ways to approach a particular theme in that particular context, as already discussed in Section 4.1.

Excerpt #7	T1 - “[...] O importante é saber situá-la [a leitura] e contextualizá-la [a leitura] no processo ensino e aprendizagem. [...] Sempre mostrei com exemplos a importância da leitura para o aprimoramento da escrita.” T5 - “[...] <u>ser professora</u> para mim, é <u>ensinar o meu aluno dentro da realidade no qual ele está inserido</u>.” T7 - “[...] estar no ambiente escolar e poder contribuir com a construção de conhecimento dos alunos é tarefa complexa e de grande responsabilidade.” T6 - “<u>Ser professor</u> para mim é <u>poder despertar o desejo de busca de conhecimento</u> nos meus alunos [...] <u>este é o meu papel</u> para torná-los cidadãos mais conscientes de seu mundo e do seu poder político [...] a minha intenção como professora é <u>tentar fazer com que meus alunos se apropriem do conhecimento</u>.” T8 - “Acredito que ser professor é <u>ter um olhar para cada aluno, lembrar e considerar que cada um traz seus próprios conhecimentos, conceitos</u> e a partir desse pressuposto traçar os objetivos que se deseja alcançar.”
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This aspect can be identified by the use of cognitive mental processes (“*situar*”, T1; “*contextualizar*”, T1; “*traçar*”, T8; “*ensinar*”, T5) which imply the contextualization process. Also, the Researcher image is revealed by relational identifying processes, mainly by the values “*ter um olhar para cada aluno*” (T8), “*(é) lembrar e considerar que cada um traz seus próprios conhecimentos, conceitos*” (T8),

“(é) ensinar o meu aluno dentro da realidade no qual ele está inserido” (T5), which indicate that the starting point is the students’ background knowledge; and by the values “poder despertar o desejo de busca de conhecimento nos meus alunos” (T6), “tentar fazer com que meus alunos se apropriem do conhecimento” (T6). These examples suggest that the pedagogical purpose is to promote citizenship, one of the goals of critical pedagogy (FREIRE, 1970) as well as the role of teacher as researcher: to build ways for students to develop autonomy in the learning process.

This growth of the Researcher image was accomplished in nine months of the CTEP. Thus, some considerations are relevant to be state here. The identification, in this investigation, is taken from a socio-historical point of view (VYGOTSKY, [1934] 2003), in which we understand human beings as social beings that interact with others through language, thus constituting and developing themselves as individuals and professionals. In this sense, the concept of identity is not something fixed and immutable, but something that is constantly changing (HALL, 2005: 106).

Coracini (1998: 03) argues that changes experienced by teachers are not simply the result of individual choices, since their beliefs and identifications are socio-historical constructs which are socio-historically situated and, therefore, require a constant reflective process to be explained and questioned. For Celani and Magalhães (2002: 323), this reflective perspective means understanding teachers’ identification with the teaching profession, as well as the school culture, under a new paradigm, which implies constant (de)construction that is different from individual to individual.

Furthermore, Collins (2003: 141) argues that the process of abandoning self-images is long and painful. According to the author, the reason for this fact is that abandoning “images” without having managed to develop “new images”, since sufficiently significant professional and personal experience was not yet developed for this construction, may leave a feeling of being lost, a perception of “pulling the rug out from under my feet” (COLLINS, 2003: 141), which makes even more difficult the development of “new images”.

Therefore, although the Researcher image is constituted in most autobiographies produced during the second moment (end) of the CTEP, echoes of emotional affinity – one of the aspects which constitute the metaphorical image of the Missionary – were still observed along 55.57% of the 77.8% of the Researcher autobiographies (Excerpt#8).

Excerpt#8	T1 - “[...] Sempre gostei muito da arte de ensinar a ler e a escrever [...]. <u>Ser professora é uma opção pessoal</u> e que me traz muita alegria.” T2 - “[...] depois de 29 anos na profissão não me vejo fazendo outra coisa.” T3 - “[...] <u>apesar de todos os contratemplos</u> enfrentados pelo magistério, eu amo ser professora!!!” T6 - “[...] Tenho sido feliz na minha <u>profissão de ensinar</u> mesmo com tanto problemas de ordem social e econômica.” T7 - “[...] Considero o <u>exercício docente</u> imensamente gratificante [...] <u>ser professora</u> para mim, continua sendo um exercício fascinante.”
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Elements of emotional affinity with the teaching profession are explicitly marked along the discourse of T1, T3, T6, T7, and some of the most meaningful lexical choices employed in this aspect were evaluative verbs (“gostei”, T1; “amo”, T3), sometimes intensified by adverbs (“muito”, “muita”, “sempre”, T1; “imensamente”, T7) and also affective nouns (“alegria”, T1); evaluative adjectives (“feliz”, T6); as well as relational

attributive processes, mainly by the attributes “*uma opção pessoal*”, T1; “*fascinante*”, T7; “*gratificante*”, T7.

The recurrence emotional affinity elements seems to reinforce the motivation for teaching (T3, Excerpt#8). This affective connection with the professional role is a point of equilibrium that attaches teachers to the role of teaching (T3, T6, Excerpt#8) and might be helping them not giving it up (T2, Excerpt#8).

In other words, teachers, as any other professional, should feel fulfilled, complete and happy in their teaching role, so that their practice is not overshadowed by feelings of failure, incompetence and impotence. According to Freire (2004: 40-42), no teaching performance can be competent if the individual is not fulfilled in the context where he/she works, with his/her workmates. Thus, it is necessary that teachers assume themselves as social beings, as thinking beings, transformers and creators, capable of not only dream the other's dreams but also their own ones, and recognize that “the assumption of us does not mean the exclusion of others. It is the 'otherness' of not me, or you, which makes possible to take on the radicalism of myself”⁹ (FREIRE, 2004: 41).

Although emotional affinity with the teaching profession is a motivation, it is also an expectation from the women as teachers. This feature can be explained by the historically established view of teaching as a female career due to “maternal” characteristics of women such as donation for others and absolute love (MELNIKOFF & SILVA, 2011).

Regarding the fact that identity is a relational phenomenon and so implies negotiation between how one see oneself and how others see oneself (REICHMANN, 2010: 49), being a teacher means being seen as a teacher by oneself and also by others. In this sense, considering the historical roots of teachers for love, if a teacher suggests being unmotivated in their teaching role, it will be shocking, since love is a feeling that society expects them to have. Therefore, this affective feature expected from female teachers (MELNIKOFF & SILVA, 2011) could also be considered as an “imposed” feature.

Regarding **the Missionary image**, we have still identified two (22%) teachers assuming this role. The autobiographies of these two participants (T2, T4) constitute the Missionary image also through affective connection and the assumption that teaching profession seems to be related to something divine, as evidenced in the initial autobiographies, too.

Excerpt #9	T2 - Ensinar para mim é um ato de prazer, objetivo de vida, realização. Amo o que faço, depois de 29 anos na profissão não me vejo fazendo outra coisa [...]. Sempre aprendi como cristã que vocação é um chamado de Deus, uma resposta positiva a seu chamado, por isso minha resposta foi um sim consciente e realizado para o ato de ensinar.” T4 - “[...] não ensinamos tudo, não conseguimos estatísticas numéricas para satisfazer outrem, mas plantamos uma semente, e tal como uma planta o resultado é a longo prazo, mas com certeza no final o resultado é positivo.”
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⁹ Our version of the original “a assunção de nós mesmos não significa a exclusão dos outros. É a ‘outredade’ do não eu, ou do tu, que faz assumir a radicalidade de meu eu.”

Considering the affective connection aspect, this identification is revealed by the use of relational attributive processes (mainly by the attributes “*ato de prazer*”, “*realização*”, T2) and reinforced by the use of an evaluative verb (“*amo*”, T2). Also, this Missionary image is intensified by the use of nouns that are part of a religious semantic field (“*vocação*”, “*chamado*”, T2), suggesting the idea of divinity; and this reinforces the fact that being a teacher seems to be related to a mission in life, a calling, as discussed in Section 4.1.

During the CTEP, reflective sessions were conducted to help teachers (re)define their identities, beliefs, as well as roles as professionals. The production of autobiographies is therefore a research process that might help their reconfiguration, redefinition, repositioning, reconstruction. This deconstruction, according to Collins (2003), is a long process; so, it was not surprising to find echoes of the Missionary image in the final autobiographies.

5. Final considerations

This study had as main objective to analyze the identification teachers established with their profession, underlying the autobiographies produced in two distinct moments (beginning and end) of a continuous teacher education program (CTEP). Within that main objective, three *specific objectives* directed our analysis: 1) to identify semantic images related to the roles the participants assume as teachers; 2) to describe how these roles are constituted in the lexical grammatical level; 3) to explain the identification process the participants established with the profession during the CTEP.

The analysis revealed **two metaphorical images** that materialize the roles the participants assumed as teachers, which change significantly from the first to the second collection of the *corpus*. Regarding the recurrent metaphorical images in the autobiographies produced in the **beginning** of the CTEP, there was a balance between teachers as Missionaries and teachers as Researchers. On the other hand, the recurrence of the metaphorical images in the autobiographies produced in the **end** of the CTEP demonstrated a change in the participants’ professional identification, which might also indicate a change in the roles they assume as teachers. Only two participants (22.2%), among a total of nine autobiographies, continued identifying themselves with the Missionary image, while 77.8% assumed the Researcher role.

Although the Researcher image stands up along 77.8% of the autobiographies produced during the second moment (end) of the CTEP, we have still found two (22%) teachers identifying themselves with the Missionary image. Furthermore, echoes of emotional affinity – one of the aspects which constituted the missionary metaphorical image in this study – were observed along 55.57% of the 77.8% researcher autobiographies.

During the CTEP, reflective sessions were conducted to help teachers (re)define their identities, beliefs, as well as roles as professionals. The production of autobiographies is an example of this attempt. However, the context of discussion for the deconstruction and reconstruction of the constitution of teaching professionals through a CTEP is complex, a principle that has been discussed since the nineties (MAGALHÃES, 1990). Considering that, producing autobiographies, in this study, marks the beginning of a deconstruction that has no end in itself. Being that deconstruction a long process (COLLINS, 2003), it is not surprising to find echoes of the Missionary image in the final

autobiographies. This result, somehow, might be the reflections of the legitimated belief that women could assume the professional role of teaching for their “natural ability” for this activity (MELNIKOFF & SILVA, 2011).

In this sense, the production of the autobiographies was a process of self-reflection that allowed participants to perceive, through language, experiences that constituted their professional identities as teachers. As a result, that activity helped them also in the process of (re)construction of images.

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