

## Identity in narrative: constitution of identity and the female teacher's aesthetic in the interaction with students<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT** - The identity's construction happens in the interaction with the other and in the activities developed in an aesthetical configuration of the self. In this article, we introduce a theoretical proposal for the study about a teacher's identity from the description and analysis of the dynamic narratives of an intern master of the higher education. The focus of the proposed study bolsters on the historical-cultural and in the dialogism proposed by Bakhtin. In view of this, the interviews were conducted with a teacher in a public Brazilian university. From the analysis of the narratives, we identified the teacher's identity construction going on in the intersubjectivity with students in a complex movement that the construction of the self happens as a dialogical and aesthetical process.

**Keywords:** teacher, student, identity, socio historical, dialogism

## Identidade na narrativa: a constituição identitária e estética da professora na interação com o aluno

**RESUMO** - A constituição da identidade acontece na interação com o outro e nas atividades que são desenvolvidas em uma configuração estética de si. Neste artigo, apresentamos uma proposta teórica para o estudo sobre identidade docente a partir da descrição e da análise das dinâmicas narrativas de uma mestrandia estagiária de docência do ensino superior. O foco do estudo proposto ampara-se na psicologia histórico-cultural e no dialogismo proposto por Bakhtin. Diante disso, as entrevistas foram realizadas com uma professora em uma universidade pública do Centro-Oeste. A partir das análises das narrativas, identificamos a construção da identidade da professora acontecendo na intersubjetividade com os alunos em um movimento complexo em que a constituição de si acontece como processo dialógico e estético.

**Palavras-chave:** professor, aluno, identidade, histórico-cultural, dialogismo

Some studies (Borges, Almeida & Mozzer, 2014; Borges, Linhares & Caixeta, 2011) have shown that identity and the teachers' position - regardless if in fundamental, secondary or higher education - support one another and are constituted mainly from their interaction with the student. This study reflects the results of surveys we have made since 2007 approaching teaching identity in different educational stages.

Throughout these years we have used the narrative interview of life histories and professional paths to identify and analyze the self-construction process in teaching identity. Among the aspects disclosed in most interviews we could observe the relationship with students, professional practice and training of teachers as markers of teaching identities.

We hereby present a technical proposal to study teaching identity based on the description and analysis of the narrative dynamics of an M.A. student in a supervised practice in higher education teaching. The focus of the proposed study is anchored in the historical-cultural psychology, based on the perspectives of *self* positioning (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003; Harré, 1999; Davies & Harré, 1990), dialogism and the concept of aesthetic proposed by Bakhtin (2014; 2015),

in an ethical and aesthetic view of the constitution of the self and of the identity (Borges, Versuti & Piovesan, 2012; Blasi, 1984; 1980; 1993).

To Harré & Langenhove (1999), positioning refers to the process of elaborating a discursive practice when building narrative histories that have implications on personal and social actions. The constructing of narratives and the theory of positioning are tied regarding the individual's constitution in relation to the self and to the others. According to the authors, the nature of positioning is discursive and socially built in the individual-group relationship and developed activities. Considering this, the individual positions himself/herself by belonging to the group that develops a dynamic interactive and dialogical relationship with the interlocutor. In this sense, positioning bears an ideology that can be found when the individual, interacting with the other, moves by places of power established in the alternation of the use of the word - therefore, of verbal interaction. The individual then has to think over his/her new situation and perform an ideological repertoire of expressions and behaviors required to genuinely stage his/her everyday life (Goffman, 1985). That is also what happens with teachers in their profession, stemming from a set of pedagogical contexts, situations, activities, competences and praxis.

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We understand the different ideology of a hegemonic perspective of control of a class over the other through the concealment of truth. However, we deal with the concept of everyday ideology. This concept refers to everything that is meaningful and refers to something outside of itself. This outward displacement (alterity) is addressed to the other in the encounters, for the image of the other is built in our imagination, and guides how we will relate with this other (Bakhtin, 2015).

The relevance of this paper lays on the fact that it tries to describe, based on the decentralized interactive process of the individual, that teachers' identity is constituted in the dialogic relationship with the student. Therefore, we adopt a new view to study the teaching identity. This way, the speeches of teachers during interviews and the dialogical relations are referenced from the teacher-student dyad experienced in the didactic-methodological praxis.

The situations lived with students trigger the interlocution bridge when the teacher regulates their actions, leading and negotiating meanings in the intersubjective exchanges (Bruner, 1990), enabling the building of the self under an aesthetical-moral perspective. Aesthetical because it refers to a regulation of the self in face of an image of what the individual understands he/she should be before the socially elaborated expectations (Bakhtin, 2015).

Regarding our vision about our outer image, Bakhtin (2015), says we do not see ourselves immediately, because we remain within ourselves and what we see is our reflection, which is not immediate. Therefore, we see the reflection of our outer image, since we do not see ourselves in the image. To explain this he resorts to the mirror metaphor and says we stand before the mirror but not within it. This Bakhtinian issue approaches the self-other relationship, where the other - and not myself - sees me. This other elaborates a finish of the self as a contextual summary of the characteristics from which it identifies it (Bakhtin, 2015).

### Teaching identity as aesthetic of the self

The concept of teaching identity as aesthetic of the self is firstly introduced by us (Borges, Versuti & Piovesan, 2012) based on a case study with a distance education professor from a private HEI. We have conceived his identity constitution based on the work he developed with moving poems. The concept that "identity refers to a set of positions semiotically organized as a aesthetic of the self that is signified by the interaction with the other" (p.342) is investigated, developed and expanded through other studies with teachers both in face-to-face education and in other stages of education - kindergarten, high school and higher education. In this sense, we conceived the teachers' constitution of identity in a dialogical and aesthetical light, based on Bakhtin's concepts about these theoretical assumptions.

According to Bakhtin (2000), all speech is addressed to the other in self-to-self, other-to-self and self-to-other relationship in a verbal interaction. Thus, the dialogical process implies verbal interaction; summons voices (of oneself and others) in a polyphonic proposal involving interlocutors, based on the enunciation and responsiveness. The dialogical

is then in opposition to the monological, where speakers do not interact (Bakhtin, 1984). Regarding "being a teacher", the following are part of their identity constitution: (a) activities performed; (b) relations in dialogical processes; (c) didactic and methodology applied in classrooms; and, (d) contexts experienced. Participations happen in a dialogical process semiotically mediated by meanings produced in the daily meetings between teacher and student. Teachers have an external image of students and consider them totally gathered and contained in this image. Likewise, students also recognize teachers in the context of their relationship (Bakhtin, 2015).

When interacting with students, teachers participate in a mutual displacement through an imagination process that constitutes both aesthetically, in an image before which they are positioned. Therefore, only the other can perceive the aesthetical in ourselves (Bakhtin, 2010) because they organize us in a construction of images. The other is outside and is the one who can provide a finished image of myself. Finishing is a sort of gift of the artist to his portrayed by preaching it morally (Amorim, 2006). The aesthetical is then constituted by the narratives, values and morality that integrate and gather a group.

This morality can be found in the positioning, where social actions are fulfilled in a moral order. This action has a discursive nature and implies positioning before the person to whom the speech is addressed. In this context, there are three types of positioning in conversation: (a) where people position themselves; (b) when the others position themselves; and, (c) the moment when people are positioned by others (Harré & Langenhove, 1999).

Considering this, the "good teacher" (Borges, Marinho & Lago, 2009) can be perceived in the light of evaluative and moral characteristics configured in the interaction with students and culturally circulated. The moral aspect of interlocutors' actions and attitudes, teachers-students, provides the constitution of identity with an evaluative and ideological - thus aesthetic - aspect, as the image from which they try to regulate their behaviors. This way we also perceive the dynamic of constituting a teacher through a game of identities where the student is one actor of the play in the classroom (Rosa & Blanco, 2007).

Here we have the aesthetical education with the main task of raising everyday experiences to the creativity level (Smagorinsky, 2011), passing by the emotional contemplation of the artistic object, and assuming the overcoming of immediate perceptions resulting from the object to, later, organize behaviors and thoughts. "The aesthetic experience organizes our behavior" (Vigotski, 2001b, p. 343).

Then, we highlight the concept of aesthetic of the self as movement of identity development taking place in the dialogical interaction of everyday practices, in a concept that identities are built in the inter-group games, in a social and cultural context. Rosa & Blanco (2007) sustain that identity derives from identification acts that can be either personal or social.

The idea of identity as a social game is a trait of the personality (Self) dynamic that attaches and detaches depending on similarity and difference. Blasi (1980) and Rosa & Blanco (2007) argue that in such games we are oriented by

ethical and evaluative perspectives, and that psychological processes involved in the constructions of the self appear in drama games in the interaction with the others and in the self-positioning.

Therefore, identity as any psychological and social process bears an ideological component that involves the self-positioning, mediated by language. Blasi (1984) emphasizes that moral construction involves an *ideal self*, where the concepts about the self are guided by values idealized in the socio-cultural dynamic. Furthermore, we believe there is an additional imaginative and aesthetic component active in the self and identity regulations. To Bakhtin (2000), the dialogical interaction is the stage for identity, where the “self” *versus* “non-self” dynamic is taking place on a dialogical and semiotic frontier of the relationship with the other, involving aspects of ethics and aesthetic in intersubjectivity (Garcia, 2006). Then, we can infer that:

*(...) identity can be conceived as a specific aestheticization of the being, as it is about bringing into play at least two visions, two perceptions, of the self and of the other. Social identities, just like the aesthetic creation, are frontier phenomena that occur on the border between the self and the other. (Garcia, 2006, p.*

*57).*<sup>3</sup> (Free translation)

To Lotman (2003) the idea of frontier is also in the perspective of language as semiotic systems that culturally meet. These are meetings of different consciousnesses, where the other’s need ensures the self’s originality. An individuality composing other individualities. In this sense, the frontier is the place of attachment but also of detachment. It is in this gap of the semiotic systems, in a negotiation of feelings and meanings, that identities are constructed. In thinking system a person inserted in a semiotic system always needs another person. Considering that semiotic systems are never stable and unchanging, that is how we conceive identity (Lotman, 2003).

To Vigotski (2001b, p.342), far from being just an emotional contagion, “a lived masterpiece can effectively expand our conception of some field of phenomena, brings us a new view on this field, generalizing and unifying facts that are often totally dispersed”. Aesthetic education passes by the emotional contemplation of the art object, assuming the overcoming of immediate perceptions stemming from the object to further organize behaviors and thoughts. “The aesthetic experience organizes our behavior” (Vigotski, 2001b, p. 343). So, by adopting the construction of identity as an aesthetic configuration of the self, we assume that the impact of interlocutors’ changes behaviors towards organizing actions and attitudes resulting from different experiences between teachers and students. As such, these serve to expand; in this case, the understanding about the experience lived by participants and the psychological mechanisms perceived by the researchers.

## Configuration of the aesthetic of the self, of the act and of the act experience

Following we present a theoretical proposal (Figure 1) to understand how the teaching identity is configured, in a dialogical and aesthetic perspective.

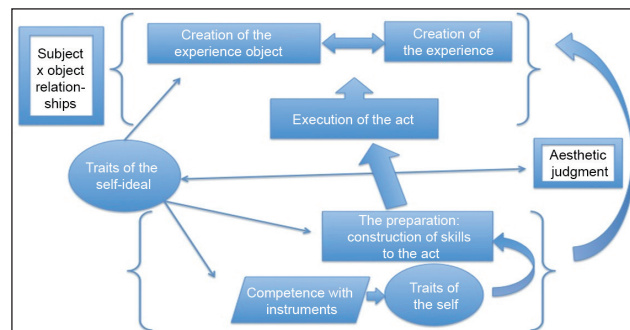


Figure 1. Configuration of the aesthetic of the self, the act and the experience of act.<sup>4</sup>

Based on the figure above we have identified some elements for analysis: (a) aesthetical configuration of the self; (b) configuration of the act; and, (c) experience of the act. These elements of analysis are composed by sub-elements that configure a dynamic process to explain the teacher’s configuration of identity, object of our survey. These are: a) preparation, which is the construction of skills to the act, involving traits of the self, traits of self ideal and competence with instruments; b) aesthetical judgment; c) execution of the act; d) creation of the experience object; and, e) creation of the experience.

Preparation involves the whole knowledge construction process developed in a culture that allows people to build competences and skills to perform a particular act (Bruner, 2006; Leontiev, 1980). This assumption can be applied to develop any act of experience, always in a semiotic perspective of the world, in which the meanings acquired and the instruments used take into consideration their social and cultural histories in the society or in the group.

The world is built on a cultural and ideological ground coordinated with the systems of instruments and technologies so we can interact and mediate knowledge from the social groups with which we relate and organize ourselves (Vigotski, 1989, 2001; Leontiev, 1980). We can refer to this preparation as an educational process but, above all, as the human development itself (Bruner, 2001). Tied to education, human development partners with formal education to inform its senses and meanings, as well as its order and logic of thinking, to the interlocutors (Luria, 2010). As the focus here is on teachers and their identities, in the light of teaching training, we perceive that teaching training courses, like degree, sequential courses and teaching supervised practices, are a turning point to show aspirant teachers that their training can skill them to work as a teacher in the classroom.

3 “(...) la identidad puede concebirse como una particular estetización del ser, en la medida en que se trata de una puesta en juego de al menos dos visiones, dos percepciones, la propia y la ajena. La identidad social, al igual que la creación estética, son *fenómenos de frontera*, ocurridos en el umbral entre yo y el otro” (Garcia, 2006, p.57).

4 This figure and the proposal of analysis to study the teaching identities were prepared during the post-doctoral internship (Capes Fellowship) in 2013 - 2014 - at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM), under the supervision of Prof. PhD Alberto Rivero Rosa.

However, we know that building teachers' identity is a broad and complex task. It starts in the early years of formal education or in the early manifestations of schooling culture as part of the human culture. Therefore, it involves the phylogenetic and ontogenetic processes of human development. The school, teachers, students and all elements that make it up are seen as characters of a dramatic game that we call education. In this paper our focus is on the teacher-student interaction as the key interactive nucleus of the constitution of the teacher's identity, although we know that other characters and situations in the education context also participate in this construction.

More than the capacity of executing something, skills play with the cultural construction of a group's semiotic systems, implying dialogical relationships between the self and the other (Bakhtin, 1981). In this sense, they involve motivation, emotions, identities, the ideal self and traits, in addition to cultural aspects related with handling instruments and the symbolic systems of a given culture.

Having acquired the skill to perform a given act, or believing it is possible, such skills are appraised in the aesthetic perspective that we call aesthetic judgment. What is the best way to execute it? How can we add value to this act to qualify it as valid and worth of being admired and contemplated? Moreover, how will these actions be regulated by this aesthetic judgment?

Prior to the act itself, that we consider to be the teacher's action, there is a psychological organization. This preparation involves a set of cognitive processes that organize and qualify us to execute an activity. Motivation, emotion, memory, attention and imagination are some of these processes. In this sense, we can observe a previous organization of the self to act or, more specifically, to execute an activity (Leontiev, 1978).

The object configuration is a perspective of the thinking over the memory and over an anticipation of the future, provided by imagination and by living temporality as a cognitive and therefore semiotic function. It builds a sense for action based on the set of meanings experienced in the life histories and in the collectivity (Leontiev, 2005; Engestrom, 1999). We recognize this experience of acts lived as the senses built by executing an activity.

We further present, for illustration purposes, the narrative analysis with a teacher that, at the moment of the interview, was taking teaching internship in a public HEI. Based on this teaching experience, we investigate the constitution of her identity.

### Helena – “being” a higher education professor

In this study we have used the qualitative methodology to build data, based on the theoretical assumptions of cultural psychology and dialogism. As data we got the processes of teachers' identity construction, life histories, narratives, relation of thinking and language, and use of interviews.

An MA student teacher and higher education trainee, who delivered a face-to-face subject in undergraduate course at a public HEI, participated in the survey. This teacher was selected because she was on the frontier between kindergarten and higher education.

Data were constructed from two narrative interviews with the teacher about the histories of her academic and personal life. Each interview lasted 50 minutes on average, depending on the respondent's availability. The professional narrative interviews are of open nature, with free expression of the participant that, encouraged by the interviewer, starts dialoguing. Narrative started with the following sentence: “Tell me how you became a teacher...” During the interviews, coordinated with a purposeful talk between researcher and participant, interlocutors establish ways to construct an argument that engineers a history, sensitive to the speeches and mnemonic resources in a dialogic proposal.

All interviews were recorded and further fully transcribed for the analysis of results. The psychic dynamics of the interviews were subject to microanalyses, perceived through the verbal interactions and polyphonic games found in the participant's enunciations addressed to the researcher. All interviews followed the same analysis methodology that used thematic analysis through the dialogic analysis of the talk adjusted to psychology (Barbato & Caixeta, 2011; Linell, 1995; Linell, 1999; Myers, 2000; Rosa, Gonzalez & Barbato, 2009). Firstly, the interviews were literally transcribed. Based on the transcriptions, we have identified the topics developed during the talking shifts and the sub-topics that better characterize each stage of the discourse, enabling the microanalyses of interviews.

The semiotic map (Figure 2) was prepared from the topics identified in the literal transcription of interviews, with the respective sub-topics. We recognize that the graphic organization of the map is limited to present the complex dynamic of the processes of constitution of identity that it shows. The square shows the topics as “teachers' models”, “being a higher education professor”, “undergraduate course” and “being a teacher”, each with four directly related sub-topics.

Next, we will perform the analyses of Helena's narratives supported on the semiotic map (Figure 2). The semiotic map intends to understand the narrative as a set of meanings coordinated by language and by the game of constitution of senses experienced by the dialogic processes of the polyphonies of participant and interviewer.

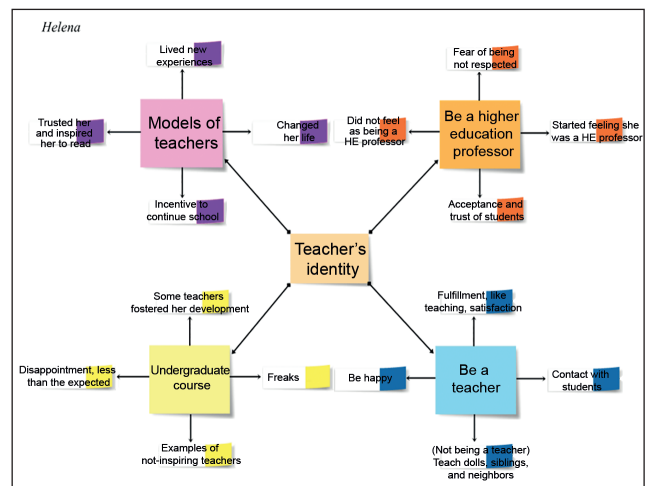


Figure 2. Semiotic map of Helena's narrative interview.



## Helena's narrative

In her narrative, Helena says she was born in a poor and violent region. Her teachers presented her a chance of changing, by believing in her and encouraging her to move on and go beyond, despite all the barriers. In elementary school she had some remarkable teachers that made a difference in her life, encouraging her to read, have a different view on the world, and progress to higher education. The school was emancipated from a comfortable world. This way, she felt capable of growing, and the strength learned from her teachers changed her life. The relation of being a teacher is supported by Helena's life history, starting in her early years with direct influence of other teachers either at school or within the family. The sometimes-heroic view of students about teachers serves as cultural models to follow the careers. This way, it builds sound grounds to the profession, whilst participating in the construction of ideas about the self.

Helena has a degree in Pedagogy. There is an intensive influence of teachers, even on the selection of the working area. Since she felt close to her first teachers in elementary school, Helena praised more early childhood education and elementary education. According to Pontecorvo, Ajello & Zucchermaglio (2006) students appropriate a cultural instrument in culturally organized activities, where a new member of the culture using it can change the instrument itself. At the same time, teachers appropriate what students do and/or say, leading them to the level required by activity and, to some extent, changes it by incorporating the students' actions in their system of activities. This way, teachers and students appropriate mutual actions and interpretations, with further negotiation and sharing of objectives, where incorporation to inner life is manifested as a construction process that builds new structures and produces changes to the individual inner plan. The interviewee was influenced by her teachers. Therefore, when deciding on the undergraduate course she started manifesting the identity of being a teacher.

## Undergraduate course - preparing skills

In her interview, Helena tells us how she became an early childhood education teacher and her experience in the Pedagogy undergraduate course. Her university education is related to the construction of her identity as a teacher. It is through the undergraduate course that she recognizes herself as a teacher. The respondent tells us about her disappointment when she entered university, meeting professors that believed themselves to be demigods. They were examples not to be followed. Despite her negative narrative about higher education, she also refers to exceptions and says she met wonderful professors that encouraged her to think.

Here we can notice the powerful influence of teachers on their students' lives, either positive or negative. Higher psychic functions inherent to human beings come into life when the individual incorporates social processes of experience and behavior to their inner beings (Vigotski, 1989). Both the positive and the negative models are important to Helena's configuration as a teacher. Her negative experience with higher education influenced her decision to work with

children. This deconstruction can be further noticed in her narrative. Since then we observe identity being constructed by examples to be followed or not, providing senses and meanings to what she wants to be or not as a teacher.

*(...) so, my God, I didn't even know what it was! And my teachers helped making it clear, you see? It somehow \*unwinds\*. And that was it! And then, I concluded it, entered the Education Secretariat contest, was approved, and **then I took the UnB vestibular contest; my only option was to enter UnB, because I had no money to afford another university.** I took the vestibular contest and failed; then, I got a job, started working, I was even called to take office at the Education Secretariat. **Then I took the second vestibular contest and I passed! Then, I started at the Secretariat and at the university at the same time, you know? And this university... it was somehow disappointing to me. It was, hum... less than the expected.** Because, you see, everybody advertised it a lot, and I had some professors that, sincerely speaking, I don't know what they are doing there, you know?*

Just like in any process of change, higher education demands negotiations in the teacher-student relationship. There is some stress about these new meanings. After all, the student has more autonomy and, therefore, the professor positions him/herself in this dialogic interaction. To Luria (2010) these processes of change take place not only in childhood, but occur all over the human life, as well as in the history of their evolution and cultural - therefore, social - development. Nonetheless, sometimes the impact of entering the university mainly occurs through a context where new ideologies are presented as a way of inserting individuals in a new positioning of being a student and also being a teacher (Borges, Tavares & Gois, 2011).

## Model of teachers - ideal self

Schooling is one of the earliest socializations of children when we imagine this "social being" mediated by institutionalization. Generally speaking, in our society schools appears in a child's life after the family and, therefore, it is a place to join a social works different from interactions and affections initially built by the parental relations. Here, kindergarten teachers are the ones to present the school world and the entry rite - literacy. Bruner (1990) highlights this when he characterizes writing and reading skills as specific to the world of education. Helena, when talking about her models at school, recalls her first teacher.

In the narrative of teachers in other surveys we made (Borges, Almeida & Mozzer, 2014) we have observed that this memory (of the first teacher) is very usual among teachers, just like the memories of "playing school". We attribute this frequency to the impact of early interactions and school models on the life history of a literate society. However, understanding memory as something selective and updatable (Rosa & Blanco, 2007, January) we believe that most people that passed by schooling has this strong relationship (positive or negative) with the first teachers, and not only those individuals who decide for teaching as a profession.

We perceive that teachers use this memory in a more constant and active way in their narratives, as it also becomes

a place to construct their models, regardless if ideal ones or not. Then, to teachers these memories change the focus and serve not only as a moment of school experience, but also as regulators of the senses and meanings of their identity as teachers.

*(...) I recall my early childhood education teacher, Nazaré, I was 5 when she was my teacher; I loved her, she was my first teacher and I have great memories about her; see? So much that when someone asks me if I recall when I was 5 or 4, one of my remotest memories, my teacher Nazaré, is there. Right? And, well, I had some memorable teachers... hum... in elementary school I and, then, some teachers that made great difference in my life (long break - starts crying). Because... (break) I grew up in a very poor region (break) and we didn't have much access to information, to cultural means, and at school I had this access (break). I had teachers that believed in me.*

*I recall my Portuguese teacher, my Geography teacher, who were individuals that saw beyond the student, beyond the content, they saw the person. Do you understand? And that's it... and then they encourage me to follow the teaching profession, well, I have always been an open person. I used to participate in class, I have always been an excellent student.*

In the speeches above Helena recognizes the role of those teachers also as articulators of affection and incentive to her educational process. To her, education was and is the way she had to move away from a "very poor" world towards access to information and to the cultural means. This way, we understand that school and the "becoming a teacher" have contributed to constitute Helena ideals from the models she met in her school experiences both as a student and as a teacher.

## Being a teacher in Higher Education: The Aesthetic Configuration of the Self

Regarding Helena, the semiotic map, of meanings and senses, shows that interaction between teachers and students is clearer in topics and sub-topics. The topics "models of teachers" and "undergraduate course" highlight the incentives and inspiration teachers have provided her. This leads us to recognize this relation as meaningful to her constitution as a teacher.

*In fact, I'm not a professor... (break). I'm a trainee in a higher education class, but I'm not... I'm not a professor, right? I am being a professor; let's put it this way... because in fact I have no academic career. I have no career as a professor. My career as teacher is as a children's teacher. This career started a long time ago, more specifically 20 years ago, when I concluded the teacher training school, I studied at Ceilândia, then concluded the teaching training, that's when I officially started my career as a teacher. But, well, this being a teacher without effectively being a teacher, this is not the first time, because before completing teaching training I was already teaching... my neighbors, my siblings, my dolls... I loved teaching, so... I always believed I would be happy if I were a teacher so, since very young, since I was a child, I liked teaching, right?*

Helena, in her speech, highlights that she "is" not a professor; she "is being" a professor. Therefore, she refers to a place, a position that is fluid and instable, and also transitory at the

same time. It transits through two places: of adults' teacher and of children's teacher. It passes by the specific relationships she already has with her students that are sometimes adults, other times children.

*... I will tell you my experience as temporarily being a higher education teacher. In the beginning I could hardly... (break) **imagine the students' reaction.** Mainly because they are at the Universidade de Brasília, which is very well regarded, at least here in the Federal District, and their expectations are high... so, I was afraid, **as a trainee**, that students **would not respect me... not paying attention to my class, not reading the texts...** ask me questions just to show I didn't know **it because I was not a professor...***

Helena's speech shows that her relation of "temporally being a professor" is established from a process of imagining her relationship with students. This "imagining" highlights the students' reaction, i.e., the interactional dynamic (and we also consider it a dialogical one) between teacher-student; the perspective of a context mediated by cultural values (a "very well regarded" university) and the positioning students grant her ("of showing I didn't know it because I was not a professor"). A place that is also managed by the condition of being a trainee and, therefore, about becoming a teacher, but not yet. Therefore it is on this place, of time and space (chronotope) organized by the relationships taking place that Helena aesthetically constitutes herself as a teacher.

Understanding that the constitution of the self as a teacher finds room to take place in the models of teachers, in the activities she performs in the Master's course, and also in the students' designation about her condition of "being a teacher", there is an implicit agreement established by Helena's speech about the confirmation of being a teacher, assigned by her students.

*... from the third class on my lack of confidence disappeared, because I guess you fell, you... (break) it's like as if you were established, you establish an order in the self, understand? I can't explain it clearly. I didn't feel like a professor. I started feeling it when I got in touch with them and they gave me a feedback that they trusted me, they were with me in this relationship, they were not playing in the opposing team, they were in my team, and that they were, they wanted to play in the same team, understand? (Helena's speech).*

*It's... (break). Specifically in this experience I'm living, it would be by the time of the relationship with them, it was when I felt they had accepted me as a professor... right? (break). (Helena's speech).*

In the speech above we notice that Helena elaborates, through breaks and the rhetoric of her narrative, the moment when she recognizes herself as a professor. These movements may suggest a re-elaboration of the self-based on the narrative process, but with a place of transit between what she feels and how she defines herself verbally. "I can't explain it clearly" (Helena's speech). This moment is anchored in her trust-based interaction with students and of perceiving they were on the same place and, this way, together. This is the place where teacher and students meet: she takes on the place that students assign to her in a dialogic way. In this sense we can perceive that the positioning of the self as teacher is established grounded on an aesthetic judgment on how she perceives herself in her relationship with students, both in an

imagined relationship (creation of the experience object) and on the encounter with them (experience creation). In other words, in the execution of the act.

*So, many [of my students] have awoken and I believe it makes a great difference in the class profile; they are very participatory, they dialogue a lot and are very critical; but this has been very good because this way I have studied a lot, right? And we debate! We debate together, listen to different viewpoints, right? It is a high-level debate. It is very interesting. So, it's being a very interesting experience.*

Helena highlights that, to feel herself as a teacher, she must also be in the classroom. However, her very narrative deconstructs this concept, because she says she started teaching in her childhood (even if to her dolls, siblings and neighbors), which makes her a teacher. It means saying that, in her view, being a teacher is also related to a formal concept of job, professional training and experience in the classroom. To her, being a teacher is a fulfillment, a pleasure, and she likes teaching. She states that being in touch with students makes her happy.

### Final Remarks

This study approached how the teacher's identity is constituted. The theoretical perspectives in this survey were the theory of positioning (Harré & Langenhove, 1999), the everyday ideology (Bakhtin, 2014) and the concept of identity as something that can only entail from an action as a result of a semiotic process in an ecological and cultural environment (Rosa & Blanco, 2007) that here we consider to be the classroom. That is so because we believe that the teacher is an individual in permanent construction semiotically mediated in the relationship with the student, ruled by socially elaborated images to meet what is understood as being a teacher, which brings a demand of values to be followed.

As methodological procedures, we have applied microanalyses to the topics in the dialogic process of the narratives. When we study the teacher's identity we see a dialogic movement where the teacher, to be differentiated from students, must be included in the relationship with students, even if it is an imaginary relationship like in Distance Education -where they are not face-to-face- or in the planning of teaching activities - where students are "present" in the interlocutor teachers' intentions. In this aspect, the activities performed are addressed to the other (student). The alterity of teachers in their relationship with students is the point of dialogue and, at the same time, provides the construction of the self as a teacher and of the other as student in a dialogical process (Bakhtin, 2000). Therefore, the notion of teacher identity studied herein is supported by the constitutions of the self from the perception of the other - here, the student.

In this paper, the positioning under investigation is ethical and aesthetical, analyzed in the narrative of the respondent teacher in the sense of identifying how she constitutes her identity in the interaction with the teachers she's had. Considering the different positioning found along the history is crucial, showing the ideologies and cultural aspects that cross the aesthetical constitution of the self, as well as their everyday experiences and practices.

We can consider that what the other says about the self is an imaginary experience that guides the experience (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2015) between them. Experiences never are homogeneous. These always produce tensions and are incorporated to the inner through semiotic mediations of the mental processes (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2015). Considering this image that is built in the interaction with the other, we have an ideological position about the self and the other (Bakhtin, 2005).

In this theoretical light, identity refers to the belonging and to the organization of the self as a way of construction based on the dialogical relations in an interlocution game, where the other participates in positions that organize the way of being and acting, the way how we get organized to ourselves, to the others, and how the other works to the self (Bakhtin, 2014). Differently from the traditional concept of identity where it is expressed by a set of roles, here we have adopted the perspective based on Harré's & Langenhove's (1999) theory of positioning. As such, identity refers to the set of positioning that is semiotically organized in the individual's narrative, like aesthetic of the self-meant by the interaction with the other.

Therefore, here we coordinate identity and ideological positions built from verbal interactions, and understood based on the concept of dialogy proposed by Bakhtin (2005). In this sense, we have adopted some concepts that delimit identity not as fixed places, but as mobile rooms established in the interlocution with groups and histories to which we belong (Harré, 1999; Bakhtin, 2005). As such, identity can be conceived as a frontier; but a frontier established by language through the relationships' dialogic, as proposed by Bakhtin.

In this concept, the flow of the self's and the other's positioning is configured as dialogical constructions in the contemporary transits of space and time (chronotope). Language is the room for ideological fights (Bhabha, 2005; Bakhtin, 2000) arising out of the outsideness tensions. It is the self and the other that in their interactions and tensions produce the configuration of identity - here, of teachers in their activity in higher education.

Therefore, in higher education the values and actions have different movements from those of secondary education. This way, new identification performances such as actions connected in a purposed scheme with semiotic mediation of meanings and production of identity (Rosa & Blanco, 2007) are elaborated. These performances are organized between teachers and students involving meanings, ideologies and imageries that permeate the way of being and constituting the self as student and teacher. Images about students and teachers that have social and cultural character and influence on the nurturing of future teachers (Chong, Ling & Chuan, 2011). This individual differentiation regards the capacities, interests and traits of personality of each one, which qualifies them to develop a given occupation (Tupinambá, 2015).

The aforementioned authors express concern about the student in the sense of providing the incentives to keep them in the classroom. Contact is consistently mentioned in the interview. That is so because a concern about students in their individual studies may come about. However, the presence of a moral relationship of the teacher that feels responsible for the student's participation and engagement is outstanding. That is what the semiotic map shows us.



Therefore, in this paper we considered that data present the constitution of the teacher's identity in the relation mediated semiotically with students. We recognize this mediation as a process of occupations and interactions in which teachers have participated during their formation in the university, with emphasis on their professors.

Therefore, this analysis on the teacher's identity matches conceptual and methodological elements so that teachers, aware of the process of constitution of their identities, can regulate the self to maximize their teaching-related skills, perceiving that their relationships with students are the stage for their professional development. This will enable the individual to coordinate meaningful interaction, in the sense of providing responses to the demands produced in their professional activities.

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