



Artigos/Articles

Language teachers' narratives and professional self-making

Narrativas de professores de línguas e construção de identidade profissional

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses language teacher education, considering the relevance of implicit and explicit theories, methodological choices, teacher representations and practices. Specifically, the purpose is to report and discuss studies developed by two researchers who work with narratives and focus on language teacher development, teacher literacy (Kleiman & Matencio, 2005) and identity construction (Barkhuizen, 2017). Thus, a panoramic view of work in progress is offered, and the field for novice and experienced educators in Brazil is problematized. As a result, the authors understand that teacher awareness-raising and transformations have been successfully enabled, which is confirmed by the several deriving publications mentioned.

Keywords: *Narratives; Teacher Development; Literacy; Identity.*

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RESUMO

Este artigo enfoca a formação do professor de línguas, considerando a relevância de teorias implícitas e explícitas, escolhas metodológicas, representações e práticas docentes. Especificamente, o objetivo é relatar e discutir estudos desenvolvidos por duas pesquisadoras que trabalham com narrativas e enfocam desenvolvimento do professor de línguas, letramento docente (Kleiman & Matencio, 2005) e construção identitária (Barkhuizen, 2017). Assim, oferece-se uma visão panorâmica de seus trabalhos em desenvolvimento e problematiza-se o campo de formação inicial e continuada no Brasil. Em resultado, as autoras entendem terem alcançado conscientização e transformações docentes, o que é atestado pelas várias publicações resultantes.

Palavras-chave: *Narrativas; Desenvolvimento Docente; Letramento; Identidade.*

Representing our experience, and that of teachers, in text, is seen to be a challenging, complex and creative endeavor, open to revision and questioning at all times; and, in the process, we not only revise the text but the revised text may create new experience.
(Elbaz-Luwisch, 2005:38).

Introduction

The ever changing paradigms our world has been experimenting over the last decades have had a dramatic impact on the Applied Linguistics research agenda in Brazil, including the field of language teaching, for example, and taking into account new technologies, social interactions, contexts and demands, such as distance learning, social media, affirmative action, and inclusive education, just to name a few challenges. Furthermore, as Elbaz-Luwisch (2007:364) has pointed out, “[s]everal different lines of research have focused direct and careful attention on teachers’ lives, life stories and life histories”, and thus, language teacher education could no longer comply with rationalist models which had previously been the norm in teacher development/training courses, with emphasis on modeling teachers’ actions and the perfect method. As the world has changed, social actors have changed, and Brazilian language teacher educators have reexamined principles

and practices (Cavalcanti, 2006; Moita Lopes, 2006; Kleiman, 2013, amongst others).

As Novoa (2000) observes, teachers themselves, with meanings, theories and practices developed throughout their individual historic paths, could not be controlled and ignored anymore: teachers had to occupy center stage, and therefore teacher research experimented a significant shift. Aligning themselves with the new needs and trends, Brazilian applied linguists have given much attention to language teacher education, taking into account the relevance of implicit and explicit theories, methodological choices, teacher representations, narratives and practices, thus enabling awareness-raising and transformation.

Along these lines, this article aims to share and discuss the different frameworks that sustain studies being carried out by two researchers focusing on language teacher development and narrative work, especially concerned with teacher identity construction. Thus, a panoramic view of work in progress in undergraduate and graduate contexts is offered, as the field for novice and experienced language educators in Brazil is also problematized.

It is relevant to highlight how the authors' own academic paths have crossed – this story goes back to initial conversations in the MA program at PUC-SP, followed by conversations during their doctoral projects later on, conducted in different institutions (PUC-SP and UFSC), as well as further conversations in the ANPOLL research group, Educator Development in Applied Linguistics. The dialogue has also resulted in face-to-face and online defense panels, publications (for example, Dalacorte, Reichmann & Romero, 2016), and the AILA 2017 symposium presentation which has triggered the present article.⁴

All along, the passion for qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2004) grounded on teacher narratives (Freeman, 1996 a, 1996b, 1996c; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, 2007; Burton et al, 2009, amongst others), has been a strong bond between the authors, who have embraced a teacher-researcher perspective by means of narrative work

4. It is important to highlight the groundbreaking work with narrative inquiry in the Applied Linguistics field in Brazil, developed by Telles (2004), and Mello (2005), colleagues and members of the ANPOLL research group.

with autobiographies, reflective blogs and journaling, portfolios and internship reports, for example. Textual production always depends on the learners, contexts, and needs. Writing as social practice is an integral aspect underlying their work, unveiling identity construction, as discussed ahead.

In line with the opening quotation, and discussing narrative and identity, Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001:8) clarify that life narratives “turn into a lab of possibilities for human identity construction”, signaling that human beings are always in the making. Echoing Bakhtin’s theory of narrative discourse, the authors elaborate (2001:7) that bakhtinian theory “(...) has revealed amazing structural analogies between novellistic discourse, life stories and autobiographical memory, which led to new conceptions of the (“multivoiced”) mind and the (“dialogical”) self (...)”. In other words, taking into account bakhtinian theory, that is, that texts continually stem from, and point to other texts, the scholars state that texts can construe

(...) possible stories about potential life, as well as countless combinations of them. As a consequence, life narratives, like most literary texts, can be treated as open, without end. They are, as Bakhtin (1981), put it, “unfinalizable”, for life always opens up more options (“real” and “fictional” ones), includes more meanings, more identities, evokes more interpretations than even the number of all possible stories could express (Brockmeier and Carbaugh, 2001:8).

Along these lines, on discussing life narratives, Bruner (2001:31-32) highlights the potential for rendering new interpretations, new stories – and the relevance of identifying “turning-points”, a concept whereby, through text, narrators can pinpoint life-changing episodes, for example. Bruner (1991, 2001, 2003) proposes the significant idea regarding *narrative self-making*, understood as a negotiable sociodiscursive process, relying on symbolic systems, that is, sociocultural constructions (Brockmeier and Carbaugh, 2001, p.16). Life narratives and self-making can thus be considered as situated processes, triggering identity construction – underlying concepts in Reichmann’s and Romero’s research work.

In sum, the overview starts with a brief description of the professional and research contexts of each of the two authors. The

following section then addresses the theoretical underpinnings of their investigation, methodological approaches, and some examples of supervised studies. In closing, the educators share some ongoing projects, and reflect on current challenges, signaling future research.

Professional Contexts

As mentioned above, this section will be subdivided into two parts, according to each author's experiences.

(i) Romero has been working at a public university for the last ten years, in the southeastern region of the country. At the Federal University of Lavras she teaches both English as an Additional Language, and Methodology and Practice in English Teaching to Letters undergraduates. She is also a professor for the Professional M.A. program in Education, presently in charge of a discipline called Language and Teacher Identity.

Her current research project is *Identity of Language Teachers* (IDOLin), in which the purpose is to investigate and reflect on the process of identity construction of both novice and experienced teachers of different languages such as Portuguese (mother tongue), as well as other additional languages, including Sign Language, through the lens of Applied Linguistics. Thus, the data originates from narratives focusing especially on relevant personal, academic and/or professional experiences and possible social and contextual constraints experienced by future or in-service language teachers which may have impacted on the way they understand, conceptualize and practice their career.

The stepping stone for this project originates from discussions led by Celani (2002), for whom new theories only transform teachers and their practices when they are in dialectical interaction with the meanings these teachers have constructed along their lives. In other words, prior to acquiring new paradigms referring to teaching, learning, and language, it is crucial to understand the principles that underlie human praxis, as well as the social context in which decisions are taken. In this perspective, one must be aware of his/her own representations, understood as

(...) a chain of meanings, constructed in the constant negotiations between participants during an interaction, and the meanings, expectations, intentions, values and beliefs referring to (a) theories of the physical world, (b) norms, value and symbols of the social world, (c) expectations of the agent about her/himself as an actor in a particular context. (Celani & Magalhães, 2002:321)

This perspective draws from previous vygotskian grounding elaborations, whereby the human being is constituted in and through dialectical interaction with her/his cultural and social environment, and this process is mediated above all by language.

In order to bring these meanings to surface, one powerful resource is the narrative approach, advocated by scholars both abroad (such as Bailey et al, 1996; Nóvoa, 2000; Bruner, 1990; Casey, 1995,1996; Dominicé, 1990) and in Brazil (Souza, 2001; Telles, 2004; Paiva, 2005; Barcelos, 2006; Melo, 2010; Romero, 2010). Autobiographical narratives allow the writer to express not only facts about her/his life, but also how they were experienced, how they were felt in living them, with the hopes, challenges, setbacks, efforts, frustrations, excitements, and thrills involved in creating meaning. It is by bringing to surface the meaning-making process of the career construction that (future) teachers actively participate in their own education, and are, therefore, able to engage in relevant dialogue with educators and the field literature. It is by writing (or representing through other forms of expression) about their lives, having as focal point the steps that led them to teaching, that the meanings made along the way by future or experienced teachers may become evident. Based on this experience, coupled with mediation by educator and peers, self-understanding is likely to arise, and the path is set for dialogues with new concepts that may give new directions in terms of being and acting in the profession.

This process carries a high potential for the resignification and reconstruction of teaching principles and classroom practices, and, as should be pointed out, also allows for the portrayal of social historical contexts common to other professionals. Thus, reflective learning through past experiences not only affects the narrator, but their readers and interactants as well.

It is important to add that awareness-raising and transformation is the ultimate goal of studies addressing socio-professional identities. It is timely, then, to briefly discuss some views on teacher identity that have been influential.

Nóvoa (2000) highlights the processual characteristic of identities, since it is primarily dynamic, built through conflicts with oneself and others throughout life. Taking a similar stance, Hall (2005) adds that within the post-modern subject several contradictory identities co-exist, making her/him essentially problematic, fragmented, often incoherent and insecure. Although Hall was not specifically concerned with teachers, we can certainly admit that these are familiar features for educators.

More recently, Barkhuizen (2017) offers an analogous perspective, particularly when referring to identity of teachers dealing with language. Based on his discussion, some additional factors that make the issue even more complex: (a) the technological world, since teachers are expected to adapt to different classrooms and communication resources and, with technology, new media and channels also generate new forms of using language; (b) the emotional tensions that modify relationships with others, and is enacted linguistically; (c) the intimacy with language, together with our awareness of its role in both constructing meanings and shaping the way we see the world and ourselves, the way it creates or perpetuates ideologies, enables or hinders relationships; (d) the fact that language is not only a professional focus, but also a semiotic resource for mediating knowledge, and fostering interaction with learners.

Having addressed the complex nature of language teacher identity itself, it is relevant to consider how identity develops. From the sociocultural point of view, human beings are constantly shaping, reconstructing, and organizing identity through negotiation in social practices through language (Moita Lopes, 2003; Smolka, 2004). And, as Moita Lopes claims, among the main reasons sustaining the recent interest in identity are the shifting cultural, social, economic, political and technological configurations of our world. By understanding these changes and the effects they have on our society, it is possible to reflect

on social identities and contribute to the awareness “about social life, so that human emancipation is possible” (2003:19).

These social practices, however, as Moita Lopes (1998) and Kleiman (1998) indicate, are not independent from relations of power. This means that “identities are not in individuals, but emerge in the interaction between individuals acting in specific discursive practices in which they are positioned” (Moita Lopes, 1998:310). It is argued, therefore, that the meanings constructed by participants in interaction should be the focus of investigation when the purpose is to understand identity. And, as the latter sustains, the use of narratives to trigger reflections in this respect is a relevant methodology.

Considering that meanings are constructed through language, such stance is further ratified by Magalhães (2010), when, in accordance with the vygotskian framework, she states that “language constitutes the consciousness of each human being and is, therefore, essential for transformations in social, cultural, historical, ethical and political circumstances when thinking and acting in our personal life and in the life of schools” (2010:23)

It is important to stress that identity studies not only focus on past influences and former social contexts experienced, but also understand and explore how one envisions her/his world ahead, for, according to Norton (1997:410), it also involves “people’s understandings of their possibilities for the future”. And this is especially important for us educators, since our goal is to enable our students to dream, and, grounded on solid awareness of their cognitive and affective elaborations, be able to deal with the challenges, uncertainties and joys of the imagined teaching career.

(ii) Reichmann has worked in Northeastern Brazil since 2004, at the Universidade Federal da Paraíba. She has been involved with the undergraduate Foreign Letters Department (DLEM), and the graduate program in Linguistics (PROLING). Her umbrella CNPq research project, *Letters and literacies*, is a driving force encompassing her academic activities, in special, focusing on situated writing, language teacher literacy and initial teacher education. In the graduate program in Linguistics, she has been responsible for the Applied Linguistics discipline for over ten years, and has advised MA and PhD projects

involved with supervised internships, language teacher literacy and development.

Having worked with reflective journaling for over two decades, and taking into account language as a sociocultural practice, much of her work has focused on teacher narratives, teachers' work and identity construction (Reichmann, 2015). In dialogue with the CNPq research groups 'GELIT' and 'Letramento do Professor', she has adopted a transdisciplinary approach, drawing on New Literacy Studies (Kleiman, 1995; Kleiman & Machado, 2005; Street, 2008; Kleiman & Assis, 2016), Sociodiscursive interactionism (Bronckart, 1999, 2006, 2008; Machado, 2004), and Labor Sciences (Amigues, 2004; Clot, 1999/2007). Bakhtinian dialogism is a core perspective in her work, and as mentioned previously, Hall (1996, 1992) is an important reference in terms of identity, referring to a shifting, fragmented post-modern self, evolving and situated. Bauman's (2001, 2005) post-modern concept of liquid identity is also an important reference.

The manner in which identity work is inscribed in writing, over time, has been a fascinating research challenge. In her MATESOL program, she first came across journals and the concepts of action and teacher research, and later on, in her Applied Linguistics PhD research project, her work focused on dialogue journaling, grounded on systemic-functional analytical categories. Stemming from these academic experiences, her future work has constantly revolved on language teacher narratives; an academic turning-point was a book review, namely, on Kleiman and Matencio's (2005) *Letramento e Formação do Professor*, soon followed by interactions in the research group GELIT, deepening her interest in dialogism, sociodiscursive interactionism and Labor Sciences. Clot's work ([1999],2010) was also excitingly insightful, leading to new research horizons.⁵

In sum, Kleiman's and Clot's concepts were significant breakthroughs, and language teacher literacy and teachers' work have become core research concerns leading to publications (for example,

5. GELIT is currently focusing on Ricoeur's (2010) thought-provoking work, addressing concepts such as *ipseity/identity* (respectively, identity as project, as opposed to identity as permanence of self), and *narrative identity*, amongst other issues.

Kleiman and Reichmann, 2012; Medrado & Reichmann, 2017; Reichmann & Moraes, 2018; Reichmann & Guedes-Pinto, in press).

In other words...how we do it:

Autobiographies and systemic-functional linguistics: Romero's work

On exploring language teachers' identity, Romero has worked mainly with autobiographical narratives for over twenty years. She has also investigated reflective diaries, interviews, reports, oral reflective sessions, classroom transcripts and other genres dealing with school practices. For the purpose of this article, and respecting space limitations, Romero will dedicate attention to autobiographies. The goal is, then, to recapitulate possible influences, contexts and life events that not only have led future or experienced teachers into the career, but also perceive how values, concepts and current practices develop. The resulting texts may be only written or also include pictures, images or other multimodal resources the narrator believes to be relevant to tell her/his story.

As mentioned in previous publications (Romero, 2003, 2010), and also due to pedagogical reasons, in regards to the need of an instrument that could mediate reflections, some examples will be offered, together with some indications on textual organization and genre characteristics. In addition, some suggestions for writing topics may be: (a) refer to the language learning process and, in the first person, say what contributed or hindered learning; (b) evaluate the role their teachers had in the learning process; (c) describe a teacher that is a reference and what specifically this teacher did or how he/she related to students; (d) observe if what student-teachers do in class resembles what a favorite teacher did; and (e) what events may have led to the professional choice of becoming a teacher.

It has been observed that most narrators go beyond answering the questions posed, and most recently, with the resources provided by technology, the texts produced have become enriched with images, songs, and so on.

Elaborating on the autobiography is powerfully revealing and enlightening, as has been testified by several participants (Liberali, Magalhães & Romero, 2003; Romero, 2015, for instance). It can stir emotions, enables understanding and awareness, in a combination of affection and cognition, which, according to the vygotskian view, prompts development. Nevertheless only preparing and reflecting on recollected events in isolation is not sufficient. For this reason, sharing is part of the approach, for this dialogical and dialectical process with colleagues and educator in the classroom is likely to evoke further memories (Middleton & Brown, 2005), and lead to more reflections. Self-understanding often occurs, but it is potentialized by the informed intervention of experienced peers and the educator, in another reference to the vygotskian perspective, based on the Zone of Proximal Development elaboration (1994).

Further analysis of autobiographies for research purposes are carried out by careful reading of the texts produced in search of meaningful categories which may answer intended research questions. Once relevant categories are identified, excerpts are selected and discussed.

As it is evident from the description above, this educational approach and research methodology is grounded on a qualitative paradigm of interpretative nature, since it deals with intersubjectivity and the understanding of particular social and personal meanings. Hence, ethical procedures are highly observed. Participants are told to share in writing and in class only what they feel to be adequate. Furthermore, studies are previously consented by the narrators who act as collaborators (not informants), the same way as interpretations are previously shared and verified between researchers and collaborators. Following the same line, the collaborators' names are protected, just as any person or institution mentioned in the text under analysis. This means that every care is taken in order to find a balance between the private and the public (Celani, 2005).

The data generated are interpreted in the light of Education or Applied Linguistics literature, but Romero often also makes use of Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) as developed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and other systemicists. This linguistic instrument is

found to be adequate because it enables to interpret social discourse at a deeper level, considering that language is regarded as a social construct, associated to the construction and organization of human experience. For SFL, language produces meanings. In view of having a semantic basis, SFL asserts that the grammatical, lexical or textual choices made by writers or speakers of a given text refer directly to meanings constructed in terms of interpersonal relations and senses construed about their experiences and understandings of the world. Accordingly, since SFL looks at the materiality of specific and socially situated texts, it serves the purpose of bringing a solid basis for the analysis and interpretation of social discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

In short, language teachers' identity has been chiefly investigated by Romero through autobiographical narratives elaborated by (future) teachers undergoing their initial or continuing education process. These narratives are discussed and interpreted through the lens of Education and Applied Linguistics literature, and additionally analyzed with SFL.

The studies advised by Romero that had autobiographies as corpus succeeded in investigating a number of different research specificities. Some brief examples follow.

Reis (2006) looked at her learning process of learning Spanish as an additional language at the same time as she was taking her first steps as a teacher of this language. The curious aspect of her story was that she was graduated as a teacher of Portuguese and had virtually no knowledge of Spanish when she accepted the only job available at the time. She had, consequently, to make every effort to comply with her new assignment and seek education and opportunities to learn the target language. Her study pinpointed turning points of her language and career development path, spotting, linguistically, persons who influenced her and how this influence was perceived.

Unwin (2008), on the other hand, a Chilean living in Brazil, had Spanish as her first language, but could not find a job corresponding to her Geography degree. The only job offered to her was teaching Spanish. The problem faced, then, was how to teach a mother tongue without proper language teaching skills. The thesis shows her learning

process for becoming a language teacher, with the focus on related theories and how they changed along her experience and education.

Melo (2016) analyzed how pre-service teachers of English evaluated their own experience participating in the Institutional Scholarship Program for Teaching Initiation (PIBID). Specifically, she examined how they evaluated their own development, the Program and the contribution of the Program for the school. By examining their reflective reports, she could understand how language teacher identity was being constructed through the meanings being developed. The evaluations were linguistically identified through the Appraisal System, a linguistic framework deriving from SFL.

Emilioreli (2017) was concerned in identifying possible identities transformations of Brazilian teachers of English resulting from their international exchange experiences. In order to study this, she considered her own autobiography focusing her one-year stay in Slovakia and interviewed other former exchange students. She found out that the exchange programs abroad were determinant in their becoming teachers of English, since the experience broadened their language and professional repertoire, and, above all, the interaction with other cultures brought them new understandings of the self and of the world.

Santos (in press) and Vieira (2018), former exchange students during their Letters course, reflected on their process of learning Spanish during the period they were in Colombia and Uruguay, respectively. The purpose of their investigation was to identify strategies that helped them learn the new language, as well as understand the role of cultural aspects both in learning an additional language and see their identity change in result of the exchange program they took part in.

Esparza (2018), a Chilean teacher of English living in Brazil for eighteen years, analyzed the effects of bullying she suffered throughout her early school years in Chile because of her Mapuche heritage. And, in doing so, she could realize how this painful experience reflected on her dealing with students in class nowadays. The Appraisal System was once again the linguistic tool in order to comprehend the types of evaluations constructed in her narrative.

*Dialogue journals, supervised internship reports, dialogism:
Reichmann's work*

On exploring language teacher identity, Reichmann has worked mainly with teacher narratives in journals and supervised internship reports. Various scholars have influenced her work, such as Bakhtin (1981), Bronckart (1999), Clot ([1999], 2007), Kleiman (1985, 2006), Machado & Bronckart (2009). As for the narrative focus, Connelly and Clandinin (1999), and Elbaz (2005) have been influential, amongst others.

In terms of generating narratives, the supervised internship has been her main research context. Whether by means of written reflections, memoirs, journals, field notes or internship reflections, and adopting a qualitative paradigm, she has been able to study language teacher identity construction for over a decade. Main analytical constructs have involved enunciative mechanisms (Bronckart, 1999) such as voice, modalization and other textual traces inscribing the construal of a teacher stance, such as adjectives and personal pronouns, for example, as well as verbs inscribing verbal, cognitive, and affective meanings, signaling stance and positioning. Clot's ([1999]/2007) concepts pertaining to prescribed, accomplished and real work have also proved to be insightful and productive constructs. Drawing on Bakhtin ([1992]/2010), in special, on the concept of discursive genre, Clot (op.cit) sets forth the concept of professional genre, that is, in terms of a collective memory, a 'relatively stable' socioprofessional way things are done, to put it in a nutshell. As an overriding framework, these theories have worked well with the textual production of novice student-teachers, shedding light on teacher development and identity construction.

Some graduate research projects in Applied Linguistics completed under her supervision can be seen below, namely, five PhD and two MA research projects.

Dias (2014) doctoral project discusses how two undergraduate student-teachers in the Letters-English program experienced the supervised internship, over an eight-month period, 2011-2012, at a public university in Campina Grande, Paraíba. Focusing on autobiographical

texts and internship reports, the analysis was conducted by means of narrative inquiry and sociodiscursive interactionism. Voice and modality were productive constructs, signaling the challenges involving identity construction.

Ramos (2015), situated in a Children's Literature course in the Pedagogy program at a public university also in Campina Grande, Paraíba, analysed reading journals produced by undergraduate students. On realizing students needed to actually get in touch with the books, the journals, triggering literacy events, thus focused on identity formation as readers, as well as future teachers. Grounded on sociodiscursive interactionism and New Literacy Studies, Ramos' doctoral study addressed teacher literacy and development, rendering insightful perceptions on teacher identity construction.

Pereira (2016), in her doctoral project, sought to investigate how five professors of English at several Federal Institute of Paraíba campi viewed their work, some belonging to relatively new institutions. In other words, investigating the professional genre was an important research objective. By means of video analysis, specifically, simple self-confrontation (Clot 1999), recurrent themes and evaluations emerged, unveiling instrumental, prescriptive and cultural genre dimensions constituting the professional genre. Influences of the ESP approach could be traced, as well as renewed practices, signaling a transitional phase in relation to professional activity in this context.

Sant'ana (2016) investigated teacher identity (re)construction of an undergraduate student who, during the internship at a public university, in a central city in the Paraíba countryside, had to step in as the regular classroom teacher – in a hostile context. The novice teacher is literally harrassed by her students, and without any support system in place; thus, Sant'ana, initially the internship supervisor, turns out to be the sole person the novice teacher can exchange ideas with, by means of online interaction, over four semesters. On analyzing two reflective reports and a self-confrontation session, conflicts with self and others are unveiled, by means of modalizations and personal pronouns, signaling phases in terms of identity construction.

Bejarano Aragon's (2016) MA research focused on inclusive education, specifically, on the work of three teachers of Spanish learning

to address blind students' needs, in a public school and in a public university extension course in Paraíba's capital city, João Pessoa. In a nutshell, by means of Instruction to a Double (Clot, [1999]2007), that is, having a teacher describe to a partner which procedures and practices would be necessary in order to 'slip in unnoticed' as a substitute teacher, the salient constitutive objects that emerge in teachers' voices suggest the relevance, in decreasing order, of *tools*, *work rules*, *prescriptions* and the *collective*. Her study highlights that the appropriation of new *tools*, in special, are necessary in order to enhance learner agency in the language learning process in this specific context.

Farias (2017), in her doctoral research, analyzed undergraduate Letters-Portuguese supervised internship as a social literacy practice, and the emerging representations in texts/discourses (internship reports and interviews) produced by the novice teacher, teacher educator and schoolteacher supervisor. The case study focused on four internship reports produced by a student-teacher during the two-year internship at public school in a city in the Paraíba countryside, as well as three semistructured interviews with the abovementioned social actors. Results signal the supervised internship as a space of conflict and socioprofessional development; the novice teacher as the main link uniting students, supervising teacher, directors, and teacher educator. Thus the internship seems to enhance teacher literacy and social practices whereby social actors discursively establish spaces for development.

Moraes (2017), in order to comprehend identity construction in his MA research project, examined self-confrontation sessions produced by two PIBID students in the Letters-English program at a public university in Paraíba's capital city. It is relevant to point out that these PIBID students entered UFPB through affirmative action. Themes that surfaced, added to the enunciative mechanism that emerged, such as voices and modalizations, signaled teaching conflicts, surprises and professional genre appropriation. The study also highlighted the importance of the collective aspect enhanced by the strong bond created between the PIBID participants, as well as issues related to disadvantaged social realities.

Ongoing projects

Romero has been developing since 2017, a Project intitled *Museum of Me*, mostly inspired by Kalaja's (2016) and Menezes' (2008) use of visual narratives. Thus, instead of asking her students to limit themselves to writing an autobiography, the instruction now is for them to represent their story through multimodal resources, such as pictures, drawings, documents, songs, poems, and so forth. The results have shown that both undergraduate and graduate students have brought many different ways of expressing themselves, which seems to be even more engaging and meaningful when learners take the plunge and delve to understand their professional identity construction.

When sharing their Museums in class, some of them bring their childhood toys, drawings they made at an early age, school books, show tickets, novels and poems that had a remarkable influence. Learners also prepare videos with sound tracks, scrap books and blogs. One of the graduate students, for example, prepared a fifty-page report in which he showed through images and timelines the news around the world and Brazil and what he was doing on each period. Another one even prepared a performance, with an artistic scenario, a combination of metaphorical images and sayings to illustrate and explain the phases he went through in his personal life that could explain his professional and academic choices.

This shift to multimodal resources has demanded new analytical tools, namely, the Grammar of Visual Design, as discussed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), which is an extension of the SFL framework previously being used.

In turn, Reichmann has been involved with a couple of partnerships, such as the Reflective Journal group (Burton et al, 2009), the Letramento do Professor-CNPq research group (Kleiman & Assis, 2016), as well as her local university GELIT-CNPq Research group (Pereira, Medrado & Reichamn, 2016) and a recently formed partnership with UNICAMP and the University of Johannesburg.

As mentioned previously, her *Letters and Literacies* umbrella CNPq research project, grounded on teacher literacy, identity and initial teacher education has been a driving force in her work. A

recent extension project, *Letra em Transe*, is in the making, focusing on classroom (in)tolerance, and based on movies addressing various sociopolitical issues and dilemmas. Negotiation with a public school has been successful, and discussion activities will be developed in 2019. Another challenge is the focus on inclusive education in the supervised internship, in special, at the Paraíba Institute for the Blind, thus enhancing initial teacher education for social justice. Since 2016, due to colleagues' projects, an institutional agreement was established, enabling the Institute to offer field experiences for our supervised internship. Needless to say, the experience has been amazing, leading to several monographs, student presentations and research projects.⁶

Final remarks

In sum, on researching with these data and theoretical frameworks, it is interesting to realize the endless possibilities and contributions they encompass, in terms of becoming teachers and transforming professional practices.

However, narrative approaches can pose significant challenges. Writing about one's own experience may seem too intimate and private. Narrative choices, therefore, may inhibit the exposure of relevant facts, which, in turn, can potentially impact awareness-raising and identity construction. An educational project focused on narratives, furthermore, requires readiness, in terms of personal and time investment; not everyone is ready for such an enterprise. Another aspect that must be mentioned is that by engaging in a remembrance process involving past events, difficult memories may arise, retrieving problems that have no connection with current professional issues. Thus, educators are then faced with situations beyond the scope of Applied Linguistics and Language Education.

In closing, the sound theory and approaches discussed in this article have sustained Romero's and Reichmann's work with teacher narratives and professional self-making, which have enabled, as both authors understand, relevant language teacher awareness-raising and

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identity transformations. In line with the above mentioned scholarly voices and experiences, researching identity construal by means of narrative work has deemed to be a complex, creative endeavor, open-ended... unfinalizable.

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