

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNTRY UNDER TEACHER'S HANDS:
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF A BRAZILIAN
GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN THROUGH SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL
LINGUISTICS**

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Resumo: Este trabalho analisa uma campanha televisiva de 2009/2010 do governo brasileiro para encorajar as pessoas a se tornarem professores. Enfoca-se na linguagem verbal usada no vídeo com base na Linguística-Sistêmica Funcional (HALLIDAY, 1994) e na Análise Crítica do Discurso (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003). Esta abordagem combinada é usada para mostrar como os professores são representados no texto analisado. Os resultados mostram os professores como provedores da educação, e que o governo brasileiro vê os professores como os únicos responsáveis pelo desenvolvimento do país, isentando a si mesmo e também outros profissionais desta responsabilidade.

Palavras-chave: Educação. Campanha governamental. Linguística sistêmico-funcional.

Abstract: *This paper analyzes a 2009/2010 television campaign by the Brazilian government to encourage people to become teachers. It focuses on the verbal language used in the video and is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (HALLIDAY, 1994) and on Critical Discourse Analysis (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003). This combined approach is used in order to show how teachers are represented in the analyzed text. Results show teachers as the providers of education, and that the Brazilian government sees teachers as the sole responsible professionals for the development of the country, exempting other professionals, and itself, from the same responsibility.*

Keywords: *Education. Government campaign. Systemic-functional linguistics.*

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Introduction

In 2009, Gatti and Barreto published the results of a survey containing a panorama of the teaching profession in Brazil. The authors state that in the XX century, the teaching profession had received more relevance in developed countries, as well as in the emergent eastern countries. According to the authors, in Brazil teacher education started to receive more attention only in the mid of the XX century and is still in expansion.

This can be perceived through several projects offered by the Brazilian government aiming at improving the teaching profession, which are reported by Gatti and Barreto (2009). One of the projects by the Brazilian government to increase the significance attributed to the teaching profession was a campaign vehiculated in September and October, 2009, both on free-to-air television stations and in a website, and then in 2010 on free-to-air television stations again.

This campaign can be considered an institutional one, since, as Decandio and Nascimento (2007) argue, in institutional campaigns, the advertisement is produced and distributed by the government, and they aim at informing the general audience about the institutions and their policies. Moreover, as Fairclough (2003, p.141) claims, such campaign can be considered a genre of governance which is “associated with networks of social practices which are specialized for regulating and controlling (‘governing’) other (network) social practices”. This study deals with the analysis of one video which was part of this campaign, taken from the website¹⁷.

The analysis focuses on the verbal language used in the video and is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (HALLIDAY, 1994), as well as on Critical Discourse Analysis (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003). This combined approach was used in order to show how teachers are represented in the analyzed text.

The article is divided into ten sections. The next sections review the literature concerning Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), more specifically the systems of Transitivity and Mood (HALLIDAY, 1994), and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), based on Fairclough’s (2003) representations of social events. In the fourth section, the text analyzed is described, followed by the context of culture and the context of

situation (HALLIDAY, 1994) in which the text was produced. In the sixth section, the procedures for text analysis are explained, and subsequently the transitivity and modality elements, as well as the representations of social events in the text are discussed. To conclude, the final remarks with suggestions for further research are presented.

Principles of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

SFL sees language in use as functional, and gives sense to meaning, not to form alone. Linguists state that the function of language is to make meaning; these meanings are based on the social and cultural context in which the language is inserted; and the use of language is a process in which people make meanings through choices (HALLIDAY, 1994).

For Halliday (1994), the functional components of meaning are: ideational, which uses language to represent experience; interpersonal, which uses language to put interaction into a code; and textual, which is related to the way information is organized in a text.

The interpersonal metafunctions refer to interaction and the roles taken by the participants and are realized by the system of Mood (declarative, imperative and interrogative clauses) and Modality (modulation and modalization).

In the ideational metafunctions, language is used to represent experiences and is determined by the system of Transitivity, which analyses the clauses taking into account the kinds of Processes, Participants and Circumstances. The Processes are classified into six types: material (verbs of doing), relational (verbs of being), verbal (verbs of saying), mental (verbs of sensing), behavioral (verbs of behaving) and existential (verbs of existing).

According to Jorge and Heberle (2002), SFL provides linguistic tools to analyze discourse critically, since it aids textual analysis within a certain context, exploring the functions and meanings construed by speakers/writers and listeners/readers in their interactions.

¹⁷ <http://sejaumprofessor.mec.gov.br/index.php>

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and representational meanings

According to Heberle (2000b), CDA connects language and society, considering the social, political and cultural features of discourse. Rogers (2004, p. 3) complements this view by stating that CDA deals with “a critical theory of the social world, the relationship of language and discourse and the construction and representation of this social world”.

Representations are constructed in a dialectical process in which people represent and interpret themselves and the others through language/discourse (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001). Such representations can be realized in clauses that include the physical, the mental and the social world (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003). In this way, discourse includes “representations of how things are and have been, as well as imaginaries – representations of how things might or could or should be” (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001, p.3).

The representations of social events are comprised in texts. Thus, in order to understand how things are represented in the text, Fairclough (2003) states that it is necessary to focus attention on the elements of social events, which include forms of activity, social actors and relations, times and places, objects and means, and language and other types of semiosis. All these elements, as well as grammatical forms and genre, construe a text; which is used in different demonstrations and manipulations of power. However, “language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful people make of it” (WODAK, 2002, p.10).

Information about the analyzed text

The text¹⁸ used for this analysis is a video which was downloaded from a website created by the Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), as part of a campaign for encouraging people to become teachers (www.sejaumprofessor.mec.gov.br). The website was launched on October 15th, 2009, when it is celebrated the teachers’ day in Brazil. In the website, there is a substantial

amount of information about the teaching career. In the top of the main page, there are the two videos which were produced, stimulating people to become teachers. These two videos were also shown on free-to-air television stations in Brazil, from September to October, 2009, and then in the end of 2010. From these two videos, the second one on the website was chosen for this analysis, as it deals with the representations of teachers as professionals in Brazil.

The video starts with images from some countries (England, Finland, Germany, South Korea, Spain, the Netherlands, and France), while a male narrator explains that these countries have shown a great capacity to develop socially and economically in the past 30 years (*“alguns países mostraram uma grande capacidade de se desenvolver social e economicamente nos últimos 30 anos”*).

After that, the male narrator states that people from these countries were asked about the professional who is responsible for the development of the countries (*“nós perguntamos a pessoas desses países: qual é, na sua opinião, o profissional responsável pelo desenvolvimento?”*).

Then, the video shows images of people from the countries previously mentioned, saying the words ‘the teacher’ (*“o professor”*) in their own mother languages.

Next, a woman, performing the role of a teacher, appears walking towards a school and inviting the audience to help to make Brazil a more developed country, by becoming a teacher (*“Venha construir um Brasil mais desenvolvido, mais justo, com oportunidades para todos. Seja um professor”*).

When the teacher reaches the front of the school, it is possible to see about twenty children/students sitting on the stairs. The teacher greets the children, saying good morning (*“bom dia”*) and the children reply (*“bom dia”*). She then invites the students to go to class, by asking ‘shall we go?’ (*“vamos lá?”*), and the students reply ‘yes’ (*“vamos”*).

After this, a female narrator addresses the audience, suggesting that people can have more information in the MEC website (*“informe-se no portal do MEC”*). Then, the website address appears on the video, and the female narrator finishes the message by

¹⁸ Since the campaign was addressed to Brazilian people, all the text is in Portuguese. The entire text, as well as a translated version done by the authors, is in the appendix. To facilitate the analysis, the lines of the text in were numbered.

saying ‘Ministry of Education. Brazil, a country for all’ (“*Ministério da Educação. Brasil, um país de todos*”).

Procedures for text analysis

In this study, the text was analyzed in a qualitative way and followed some steps. First, the narration of the video was transcribed, using standard typing conventions. The words that appeared in the video were also transcribed and used in the analysis. Thus, for the analysis, only the verbal language used in the video was considered.

Secondly, the text was analyzed following Halliday’s (1994) SFL, mainly focusing on the systems of Transitivity and Mood; the system of Theme was left out due to time and space constraints. Finally, a CDA was conducted, concentrating on the representations discussed by Fairclough (2003).

The context

Since this study concerns the analysis of discourse in a social event, it is necessary to take into consideration the situation in which language is used. In other words, according to Halliday (1994), it is important to identify the context of culture, related to the broader sociocultural environment, and the context of situation, related to the specific situations in the social event.

In terms of context of culture, the text analyzed for this study is part of a Brazilian federal government campaign for stimulating people to become teachers.

In relation to the context of situation, three features can be identified, following Halliday (1994): the nature of the social activity, or field; the roles and relationships of the participants, or tenor; and the channel or medium of communication, or mode.

The field, or the social activity involved in the analyzed text, refers to the campaign stimulating people to become teachers so that Brazil can be a more developed country. There is an emphasis on the fact that teachers are responsible for the development of some countries.

The tenor, or the participants and the relationships they establish, includes teachers, Brazilian people, MEC, people from developed countries (England, Finland, Germany, South Korea, Spain, the Netherlands, France), Brazil, a male and a female

narrators, a Brazilian teacher, Brazilian children/students, and the MEC website. The campaign suggests, through the voice of the narrators, that the countries mentioned are developed because of their teachers, but Brazil is not among them. Thus, for Brazil to become a developed country, teachers are necessary, and the MEC website can offer Brazilian people more information on how to become teachers.

In terms of mode, or channel of communication, the text has characteristics of multimodal discourse, that is, it contains oral language and images, besides using informal language (interrogatives, for example).

Transitivity elements

After categorizing the processes and the participants of the text, it was possible to observe that there were eleven processes and six participants. The participants 'Brazilians' (including Brazilian people in general, Brazilian teachers and students) are responsible for most of the processes (material and relational), while the male narrator, who represents MEC/the Brazilian government, is responsible for one process (verbal). Moreover, other countries are also related to two material processes (Table 1).

The processes associated to the people (whether Brazilians or not) are mostly material ones, indicating actions to be performed. On the other hand, the process connected with the Brazilian government/MEC is verbal, suggesting that it does not need to do, but say what needs to be done. These findings, regarding participants and processes, are summarized in Table 1.

PARTICIPANTS	PROCESSES		
	Relational	Verbal	Material
<i>alguns países</i> (some countries)			<i>mostraram</i> (have shown, line 4) <i>desenvolver</i> (to develop, line 6)
<i>nós</i> (MEC/Brazilian government)		<i>perguntamos</i> (asked, line 10)	
<i>O professor/profissional</i> (the teacher/professional)	<i>é</i> (is, line 12)		
Brazilians (elliptical)	<i>seja</i> (become, line 28)		<i>venha</i> (do come, line 27) <i>construir</i> (make, line 27) <i>informe-se</i> (for more information, line 33) ¹⁹
Teacher and students (elliptical)			<i>Vamos?</i> (shall we go?, line 31) <i>vamos</i> (yes, line 32)
Brazil	<i>é</i> (is/elliptical, line 36)		

Table 1: participants and processes in the text

According to Halliday (1994), different kinds of processes are realized by different kinds of participants. In the analyzed text, the developed countries (lines, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11), as well as the Brazilian people (elliptical, lines 27, 33), the Brazilian teacher (line 31), the Brazilian children/students (line 32) are considered actors of the material processes. Moreover, Brazil (line 27) undergoes the action of being made more developed, and is considered the goal of a material process.

Regarding the verbal processes (line 10), three kinds of participants were identified: the sayer, the receiver and the verbiage. The male narrator ('we', representing MEC/Brazilian government) is the sayer, because it is responsible for the process "*perguntamos*" ('we asked'). People from developed countries are the receivers, to whom the process is directed. The verbiage in this case occurs as a projected clause (line 12), in the form of a quotation (EGGINS, 2004).

The verbiage previously mentioned contains a relational identifying process, in which the participant is "*o profissional responsável*" ('the professional who is responsible for something', line 12), who takes the role of token. According to Martin,

¹⁹ Although the originals in Portuguese contain Processes ("*informe-se*" and "*vamos*"), the translated version, following the English language system, excludes the Processes.

Matthiessen and Painter (1997), the token is a symbol of something else, the value. The value of this process is symbolized in the response to the question, given by people from the developed countries, that is, “*o professor*” (‘the teacher’, lines 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25). Furthermore, the teacher was also identified as a value in the sentence “*seja um professor*” (‘become a teacher’, line 28). The token in this case is the elliptical ‘you’, referring to Brazilian people.

The last relational process identified in the text is also elliptical, but concerns the participants Brazil and “*um país de todos*” (‘a country for all’, line 36). Here Brazil takes the role of token, while “*um país de todos*” (‘a country for all’, line 36) represents the value.

Modality elements

As Halliday (1994) explains, modality refers to the way people express themselves in terms of their judgments, commitments and obligations. As described by Fairclough (2003), obligations are related to deontic modality, in which the imperative clauses of the text realize prescribed activity exchanges. In the analyzed text, the imperative clauses “*venha construir um Brasil...*” (‘come to make Brazil...’, line 27), “*seja um professor*” (‘become a teacher’, line 28), “*informe-se no portal*” (‘for more information’, line 33) indicate the actions prescribed by the Brazilian government to be followed by the Brazilian people. All these prescriptions are produced by the narrators, on the behalf of MEC/the Brazilian government. This might indicate the level of commitment of the Brazilian government, who demands actions on the part of the Brazilian people, but does not seem to commit itself to help building a more developed country.

While modality refers to what is true and necessary, evaluation refers to what is desirable or undesirable (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003). In the analyzed text, there are three instances of evaluation: “*alguns países mostraram uma grande capacidade de desenvolver social e economicamente...*” (‘some countries have shown a great capacity of developing socially and economically...’, lines 4, 6), “*venha construir um Brasil mais desenvolvido, mais justo...*” (‘come to make Brazil more developed, fairer...’, line 27). This indicates that the Brazilian government considers it desirable that Brazil becomes developed, as well as the other countries mentioned in the text. As Fairclough

(2003) argues, sometimes evaluative statements are explicit marks of positive evaluation, as in the examples above (“*grande*”, ‘great’; “*mais*”, ‘more developed’, ‘fairer’). However, it is also possible to use evaluative elements in more implicit ways, such as the sentence “...o profissional responsável pelo desenvolvimento?” (‘...the professional who is responsible for the development?’, line 12). Here the teachers, as professionals, are evaluated as being responsible for the development of a country, for making Brazil more developed and fairer.

Representations of social events

Concerning the representations of social actors (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003), there is the inclusion of some countries (England, Finland, Germany, South Korea, Spain, the Netherlands, and France) which are referred to as being developed ones. However, other developed countries are not mentioned, characterizing an exclusion of these social actors, as opposed to the developed countries included in the text. Moreover, Brazil was also identified as a social actor in the text, but it is a case of backgrounding. According to Fairclough (2003, p. 149), backgrounding can be used as a form of “delicacy, euphemism, avoidance of calling a spade a spade”. In other words, the male narrator, who represents MEC/the Brazilian government, avoids saying that Brazil is not a completely developed country yet.

The main social actor represented in the analyzed text is the teacher, since s/he is depicted as being “the professional who is responsible for the development” of a country. Again, there is the exclusion of other professionals who can also foster development. As Fairclough (2003, p.149) argues, this happens due to many reasons, such as irrelevance, political or social significance. That suggests the Brazilian government sees teachers as the sole responsible professionals for the development of the country, exempting other professionals, and itself, from the same responsibility.

As already mentioned, one of the participants in text is MEC/the Brazilian government, which is represented in the text by the pronoun “*nós*” (‘we’) in the sentence “*nós perguntamos a pessoas desses países*” (‘we asked people from these countries’, line 10). This pronoun can be considered as an exclusive ‘we’ (Fairclough, 2003), since it includes only the Brazilian government, but excludes the audience, that is, the Brazilian people. Nevertheless, the Brazilian people are included in another pronoun in

the text, as the elliptical and inclusive ‘you’ in the sentences “*venha construir um Brasil mais desenvolvido...*” (‘come to make Brazil more developed’, line 27), “*seja um professor*” (‘become a teacher’, line 28), “*informe-se no portal do MEC*” (‘for more information, visit the MEC website’, line 33). This may indicate that the Brazilian people are not allowed to have opinions regarding what needs to be done to help the country to develop, since MEC/The Brazilian government asked people from foreign countries (lines 10, 12) to name the professionals who are responsible for the development of a country. Based on the answers given by these people, the Brazilian government decided to invite Brazilian people to become teachers. This seems to corroborate the findings by Carmagnani (2009), who identified in media discourses that foreign people seem to have authority to decide what is considered adequate for education, although they educational realities are different in different countries. The author also states that such discourse implies that “our authorities are not capable of providing directions for our education” (CARMAGNANI, 2009, p.502, our translation).

Another example of exclusive ‘we’ in the text can be seen in the sentences “*vamos lá?*” (‘shall we go?’, line 31) and “*vamos*” (‘yes’, line 32), in which the pronoun ‘we’ includes only the teacher and her students, but excludes the Brazilian people, who are the target of the campaign. On the other hand, the teacher’s invitation to the students may indicate that, by following the Brazilian government suggestion, she is making Brazil a more developed country with the help of her students, and this might suggest that other Brazilians should do the same.

Regarding the representation of space-time, Fairclough (2003, p. 151) claims that “constructions of space and constructions of time are closely interconnected, and it is difficult to separate them”. In the analyzed text, it is possible to notice a relation established between the developed countries and Brazil, as a country which is not completely developed yet. Moreover, the verb used to refer to the developed countries (“*mostraram*”, ‘have shown’, line 4) is in the past tense, followed by the time expression “*nos últimos 30 anos*” (‘in the past 30 years’, line 8), reinforcing the idea that these countries are developed. On the other hand, the only verb referring to Brazil (elliptical ‘is’, line 36) is in the present tense, as well as the verbs in lines 27, 28, 33, which invite Brazilian people to take action, to make the country more developed, suggesting that the country is still under developed.

Final remarks

In this paper, SFL and CDA were used to show how teachers as professionals are represented in one video which is part of a Brazilian government campaign. The analysis, which focused on the verbal language used in the video, showed that the professionals who are responsible for the development of the country are the teachers. Moreover, it also showed that in the analyzed text, Brazil is not considered completely developed yet, thus, more teachers are necessary.

There is a predominance of material processes in the text, and they are associated with the following participants: the developed countries, Brazilians, teachers and students. This indicates actions to be taken by the participants in order to make Brazil more developed. Furthermore, through the use of relational processes in the text, it was possible to realize that teachers are represented as the providers of education, and consequently, responsible for the development of the country.

In general, the government is in power to tell Brazilian people what to do, controlling the discourse in this text, essentially giving commands (through imperative clauses) and asking questions (through interrogative clauses). The use of modality to exert control is a common discursive strategy in advertisements and creates a certain degree of engagement between the speaker/writer and the listener/reader (HEBERLE, 2000a), minimizing the authoritative tone of the imperatives, which involve obligations and responsibilities (YOUNG e FITZGERALD, 2006).

Finally, it is important to mention that the reflections expressed in this paper do not aim at denying the fact that teachers, and education, do contribute to the development of a country. However, it is imperative to recognize that teachers alone cannot solve all the problems, they need all the society and the government to join forces in order to make Brazil 'more developed, fairer, with opportunities for all'.

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Appendix

The analyzed text on the left, has been transcribed from the video downloaded from: <http://sejaumprofessor.mec.gov.br/index.php>, and the translated version done by the authors, on the right. The words in capital letters are not verbalized, appearing in the video only. The words in parenthesis are explanations added by the authors. All the foreign words in the text appear with subtitles in the video.

Portuguese	English
1. INGLATERRA	1. ENGLAND
2. FINLÂNDIA	2. FINLAND
3. ALEMANHA	3. GERMANY
4. Alguns países mostraram uma grande capacidade (o narrador fala)	4. Some countries have shown a great capacity (the narrator says)
5. COREIA DO SUL	5. SOUTH KOREA
6. de se desenvolver social e economicamente (o narrador fala)	6. of developing socially and economically (the narrator says)
7. ESPANHA	7. SPAIN
8. nos últimos 30 anos (o narrador fala)	8. in the past 30 years (the narrator says)
9. HOLANDA	9. THE NETHERLANDS
10. nós perguntamos a pessoas desses países: (o narrador fala)	10. we asked people from these countries: (the narrator says)
11. FRANÇA	11. FRANCE
12. “Qual é, na sua opinião, o profissional responsável pelo desenvolvimento?” (o narrador fala)	12. “Who is, in your opinion, the professional that is responsible for development?” (the narrator says)
13. O PROFESSOR.	13. THE TEACHER
14. Der Lehrer. (Alemão)	14. Der Lehrer. (German)
15. O PROFESSOR.	15. THE TEACHER
16. (símbolos em Coreano)	16. (Korean symbols)
17. O PROFESSOR.	17. THE TEACHER
18. El maestro. (Espanhol)	18. El maestro. (Spanish)
19. O PROFESSOR.	19. THE TEACHER
20. Opettaja (Finlandês)	20. Opettaja (Finish)
21. O PROFESSOR.	21. THE TEACHER
22. The Teacher.	22. The Teacher.
23. O PROFESSOR.	23. THE TEACHER

24. De Leraar. (Holandês)	24. De Leraar. (Dutch)
25. O PROFESSOR.	25. THE TEACHER
26. Le Professeur. (Francês)	26. Le Professeur. (French)
27. Venha construir um Brasil mais desenvolvido, mais justo, com oportunidades para todos. (a professora fala)	27. Come to make Brazil more developed, fairer, with opportunities for all. (the teacher says)
28. Seja um professor. (a professora fala)	28. Become a teacher. (the teacher says)
29. Bom dia (a professora fala)	29. Good morning (the teacher says)
30. Bom dia (as crianças respondem)	30. Good morning (the students reply)
31. Vamos lá? (a professora convida)	31. Shall we go (the teacher invites)
32. Vamos (as crianças respondem)	32. Let's (the students reply)
33. Informe-se no portal do MEC (a narradora fala)	33. for more information, visit the MEC website (the female narrator says)
34. <u>WWW.MEC.GOV.BR</u>	34. <u>WWW.MEC.GOV.BR</u>
35. ministério da educação (a narradora fala)	35. Ministry of education (the female narrator says)
36. Brasil, um país de todos (a narradora fala)	36. Brazil, a country for all (the female narrator says)