"Anyway, I don't think I'll ever be prepared": pre-service teachers' beliefs and affective states

"De qualquer maneira, acho que nunca estarei preparada": crenças e estados afetivos de professoras em pré-serviço

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ABSTRACT

Some studies in contemporary Applied Linguistics have considered the role of beliefs and affective domains in initial and continuing English Teacher Education. In this paper we present the results of a case study (BROWN; RODGERS, 2002), carried out with two pre-service teachers, in which we aimed to investigate the beliefs and affective states that emerged in the classes of an English course in which the students were enrolled. The data, collected mainly by means of written accounts, which resulted from open questionnaires, suggest a consistent relationship between beliefs and affective states, i. e., the students do not feel prepared for the teaching profession, pointing out some limitations that are justified by their beliefs and strengthened by factors of the affective domains, such as insecurity and anxiety.

Keywords: *Beliefs; affective states; Language Teacher Education.*

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RESUMO

Alguns estudos na Linguística Aplicada contemporânea têm considerado o papel das crenças e dos domínios afetivos na formação inicial e continuada de professores de inglês. Neste artigo, apresentamos um estudo de caso (BROWN; RODGERS, 2002) realizado com duas alunas de Letras, em que procuramos investigar crenças e estados afetivos que emergem nas aulas de um curso de língua inglesa no qual essas estudantes estão matriculadas. Os dados, coletados principalmente por meio de relatos escritos advindos de questionários abertos, apontam uma relação consistente entre crenças e estados afetivos, ou seja, as estudantes ainda não se sentem preparadas para a futura profissão e destacam limitações que são justificadas por crenças e fortalecidas por fatores de domínio afetivo, como insegurança e ansiedade.

Palavras-chave: *crenças; estados afetivos; formação de professores de línguas.*

1. Introduction

The first studies regarding beliefs in language teaching and learning, in Brazil, appeared in the 1990's (BARCELOS, 2007). Since then, inquiries have embodied different perspectives such as contexts, including multi-qualitative instruments, and more recently, the role of emotions and beliefs in order to better understand teachers' and students' subjective dimensions.

Concerning emotions, psychologists have long been developing theories aiming at broadening their knowledge about them (PERKINS, 1966; BOWN; WHITE, 2010, among others) and recently, researchers in the field of Second Language Acquisition (henceforth SLA) have acknowledged the inclusion of emotions in their studies (HORWITZ, 2001; ARAGÃO, 2007; IMAI, 2010; among others). Affect[1], in turn, has also played an important role in the field of Education in Brazil since the late 1980's due to the contribution of Carl Rogers' and Henri Wallon's studies, which provided resources to analyze affect issues in the process of teaching and learning (MAHONEY; ALMEIDA, 2009).

In this paper we aim at analyzing students' written accounts about their teaching career since we observed that in such reports they revealed

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1 The term "affect" is used in this study based on Arnold (1999) and Brown (2005). The first author states that "affect refers to emotion or feeling" (p. 153) and the second contends that "affect has to do with aspects of our emotional being […], considered broadly as aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behavior" (p. 1).

not only beliefs but also aspects of affective domains related to their beliefs about teaching. The data were generated through qualitative instruments: an open questionnaire and a written narrative. For the analysis, we considered both beliefs and affective states based on studies within Applied Linguistics, Education and Psychology (ORTONY *et al.*, 1987; MAGIOLINO, 2004; ZEM-BYLAS, 2002, 2005; BOWN; WHITE, 2010, among others).

In the first section, we present the theoretical background on beliefs and affect/emotion. In the following section, we present the study, outline the profile of the participants and describe the instruments used for the data collection. Thirdly, we analyze and discuss our findings. Finally, we conclude by highlighting the need for future inquiries, which could comprise both beliefs and affect in studies within Language Teacher Education.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this section, we will present the theoretical basis over which we construct the analysis and the discussion. We will argue about beliefs, affect, emotion and their influence on the learning process.

2.1. BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING: UNDERSTANDING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' SUBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS

The study of teachers' and students' beliefs and cognition about language learning has been one of the most prominent in the field of Language Teacher Education (JOHNSON, 2006). In Brazil, the pioneer studies in Applied Linguistics appeared in the middle of the 90's and more than a decade later the number of researches increased substantially (BARCELOS, 2007). Throughout these years there has been a constant discussion about the different terminologies used to define beliefs (BARCELOS, 2004), as well as their nature and the role of previous experiences in their construction (PAJARES, 1992; RICHARDS, 1998).

Johnson (1999), for example, refers to them as "the rock we stand on" in order to explain how teachers tend to recall their experiences to make choices that will affect their actions in the classroom. In this way, she adds that beliefs have "a filtering effect on everything that teachers think about, say and do in classrooms" (JOHNSON, 1999, p.30). In a similar perspective, Borg (2003, p.81) uses the term "teacher cognition", which he defines as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think".

In this paper, we understand beliefs as "a way of thinking, as reality constructions, ways to see and perceive the world and its phenomena, co-constructed in our experiences and resulting from an interactive process of interpretation and (re)signification" (BARCELOS, 2006, p.18). Thus, we will analyze the students' beliefs considering that they have always been under an interactive process of interpreting their own experiences, especially since they started studying a second language.

In Brazil, the studies about beliefs developed since the 90's have focused on two main contexts: the public schools and the undergraduate language teaching programs[2]. According to Lima (2011), in public schools researchers have carried out studies in three perspectives: a) focus on the teacher, b) focus on the students, and c) focus on both teacher and students. Studies involving the teachers offered a broad view of how they have conducted their teaching practice related, for example, to their personal experience. Studies under perspective (c) have considered the interactive relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs. For example, Lima (2005) and Zolnier (2007) found out in their studies that the teachers influenced their pupils' beliefs and motivation. There are not many studies focused only on the learners, and those which exist are usually related to intervention (PITELI, 2006; LIMA, 2012). This type of study provides the experience of engaging learners with different activities by making changes in their classroom routine (i.e. involving group work in a class that is more teacher-centered, conducting activities that learners are not familiar with, among others). Both Piteli (2006) and Lima (2012) focused on language learners in public schools. The former was interested in their beliefs about reading while the latter studied the process of learners' belief change.

About the pre-service teachers' beliefs, scholars have investigated specific ones, such as beliefs about accent and ways of learning (BARCELOS, 1995), the representations they have of their major and what they believe other people think about it (SILVA, 2005), just to mention a few examples. Abroad, Richards (1998) and Richards and Pennington (1998) studied novice teachers' beliefs and their experiences in the first year of teaching. While studying these teachers, Richards and Pennington (1998) concluded that contextual factors such as too many unmotivated students in a classroom discourage teachers to look for innovation in their practice.

In order to understand how the participants in this study conceive the teaching profession, we will consider, besides beliefs, the participants' affect that emerges when they are invited to reflect about the career they have chosen for their future and to register their impressions about it. In the next section, we will discuss emotions and affect and their importance to research in Language Teacher Education.

2 This term refers to *Curso de Letras* in Brazil.

2.2. Affect and emotion in the teaching and learning process

Since Plato's time many fields of study have sought to understand what emotion is (JACKES; VICARI, 2005; SCHERER, 2005, ARAGÃO, 2007). Therefore, the literature shows an array of disagreement about its meaning and nature. For this reason, it would be "surprising indeed if there were a tidy definition of emotion" (ZEMBYLAS, 2002, p. 80). For example, Scherer (2005, p. 696) points out that, in 1981, the researchers Kleinginna and Kleinginna "reviewed more than one hundred definitions" for emotion. However, in spite of its thorny nature, emotions have been the epicenter of many researchers into several fields such as Psychology, Philosophy, Anthropology, Education, among others (SOLOMON, 1977; HARGREAVES, 1998; ZEMBYLAS, 2002; SCHERER, 2005). Despite its complexity in terms of conceptualization, researchers in the field of SLA and Education have been inserting the term *emotion* as well as the term *affect* in their studies due to their relevance in relation to learning outcomes, and the understanding of students' and teachers' interpersonal relationships (IMAI, 2010).

But do affect and emotion mean the same? In fact, this is an issue of several debates, in which researchers have attempted to set the boundaries between emotion, affect and feeling. Although these terms are commonly treated as synonyms in literature – mainly *emotion*, which is used to refer to many affective states (ORTONY *et. al*. 1987; MAGIOLINO, 2004, p. 7) –, researchers claim *affect* to be a broader term.

Bown and White (2010, p. 433) state that affect is "applied to a wide range of disparate constructs, including personality features, self-referential judgments, emotions, self efficacy, beliefs, attitudes, motivation, cognitive styles, and learning strategies". In line with this view, Brown (2005, p. 153) argues that affect represents "the emotional side of human behavior and it may be juxtaposed to the cognitive side". The author also affirms that "the development of affective states or feelings involves a variety of personality factors, feelings both about ourselves and about others with whom we come into contact".

Considering the disagreement among theorists about "what counts as an emotion[3]" (ZEMBYLAS, 2002, p. 80), in this paper we corroborate the

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3 Although the literature offers a great number of studies highlighting the thorny attempt in defining what an emotion is, as we mentioned earlier, some researchers use their own definitions and/or conceptualization in approaching emotion. The Chilean researcher Humberto Maturana, for instance, employs the term emotion, and his definition for it, in his studies in order to establish an array of understanding and comprehension of human beings behavior, among other aspects, in social life. However, we advocate the theory that all emotions are affective conditions (ORTONY *et al.*, 1987), but not reversely. For this reason, we do not present a definition of emotion in this study since we agree affect is a broader term to refer and discuss about the different affective states reported by the students.

premise that "all emotions are affective conditions, but not that all affective conditions are emotions" (ORTONY, *et. al.* 1987, p. 343) to argue about the participants' emotional and sentimental aspects. More precisely, since affect has its positive and negative manifestations (HARGREVAES, 1998; ARNOLD; BROWN, 1999; ZEMBYLAS, 2002; ZEMBYLAS, 2005; BOWN; WHITE, 2010), we will use the term *affective states* (FORGAS, 1995; JACKES; VICARI, 2005; ARAÚJO, 2011), which can be positive or negative. We will only use the term *emotion* to cite studies developed by other authors, who chose to use that term.

Going through the boundaries of other academic disciplines, researchers in the field of SLA and Education acknowledge emotions and affect to be a central aspect that colors, shapes, influences, and impacts on students' and teachers' lives (HARGREAVES, 1998, ZEMBYLAS, 2002, 2005; IMAI, 2010). Forgas (1995, p. 60), for example, claims that there is a tidy connection between affect and moral judgments. His findings suggest that people have a tendency to "form social judgments in terms of their feelings". Anxiety, in turn, is assumed to be the most investigated aspect of affect (EYSENCK, 1979; YOUNG, 1991; HORWITZ; YOUNG, 1991; HEMBREE, 1998; MCINTYRE, 1999), and researchers have shown how powerful its impact on students' achievement can be, since it presents various degrees of manifestation. It also presents itself intertwined with other affective sates such as motivation, risk-taking, inhibition, shyness, fear, and nervousness (PARREIRA, 2008).

Recently, there seems to be an increasing interest in investigating the relationship between beliefs and emotions/affect and how they are interrelated in the teaching/learning process. In this way, it is assumed that their relationship can explain a great deal of the positive and negative affective states a student and a teacher experience in classroom, which influence their actions towards the process (ARAGÃO, 2011).

In Education, Zembylas (2005) contends that emotions must be seen as a crucial element which provides many answers to the complexities involving the process of teaching and learning, mainly in relation to Teacher Education. The author emphasizes that exploring emotions in this context is a promising and new direction in order to obtain a better understanding of teachers' professional and personal lives. Finally, Hargreaves (1998, p. 835) claims that "emotions are at the heart of teaching. They comprise its most dynamic qualities". He also affirms that "whether positive or negative, all organizations, including schools, are full of them".

In this way, we chose to investigate students' beliefs and affect in an attempt to understand the connection between the two of them. We believe that this knowledge will bring important insights into the decisions made

by the language students concerning their future career, considering that in undergraduate teacher education programs they have the chance to (re) evaluate or (re)conceptualize these aspects, which can influence their future teaching practices. Moreover, the field of Teacher Education in Brazil does not present a large number of inquiries about teachers' and students' affective states nor their relationship with language learning beliefs. (ARAGÃO, 2007; COELHO, 2011; CANDIDO-RIBEIRO, 2012).

2.3 LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF BELIEFS AND AFFECT

According to Johnson (2006), studies that comprise teacher cognition are responsible for bringing insights to the complexities of language learning, actions, decisions and personal thoughts every teacher has, thus representing a significant contribution for Language Teaching Education. In the 90's, scholars such as Freeman (1996) pointed out the need of understanding the way teachers became teachers and how they learned to make sense of it.

As we already mentioned, since the 80's there has been a significant number of studies about teachers' and students' beliefs on learning and teaching. Many of them have referred to people's affective factors but, as Zembylas (2005, p.466) claims, emotion is still "the least investigated aspect of research on teaching, yet it is probably the aspect which is most often mentioned as being important and deserving more attention" (op.cit.). Based on in his research with Brazilian English teachers' affect in their first years of teaching, Candido-Ribeiro (2012) emphasizes the relevance of affect in this context by pointing out an array of affective states and their interrelation with the construction of teachers' identity, beliefs, and decision-making process. The author also points out the importance of understanding the way such affective states influence their teaching approaches.

To sum up, Barcelos (2010) claims that the study of beliefs and emotions is relevant since the two of them are interactively related. After studying public school teachers' emotions of *frustration* and *hope,* she states that both emotions create a great impact on teachers' beliefs. While the former relates to the way they construct their reality of teaching, for example, whether or not they believe that it is possible to teach English in public schools, the latter represents an alternative to change, a desire for improvements and quality of their workplace. Therefore, we claim that studies that consider both aspects may be greatly beneficial for Applied Linguistics since this kind of research is still incipient (BARCELOS, 2007).

3. Methodology

In this section, we will present the research context, the participants and the instruments used to generate the data.

3.1. Context

This case study was carried out with a group of undergraduate students, enrolled in an English course, English Language IV, of the Language Teaching program at a Federal University in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. They were sophomores in a class of 18 students which met two nights a week, with two classes of 50 minutes each night. For this study, our discussion will consider two students who accepted to collaborate to our study and showed strong affective states in their written accounts. To become language teachers, after passing the entrance test, the students take courses in different foreign languages such as English, French and Spanish for a year. In the second year (from a total of 4), they have to choose one foreign language or literature to focus on for the next three years and major in. During the four years they also take Portuguese classes, since they get a degree in both languages. The data were generated during the second semester of 2010 along eight classes taught by the first author of this paper.

The English Language IV course focused on their language development and the syllabus comprised the use of an English textbook but also other activities provided by the teacher. The unit from the textbook they were studying at the time suggested the topic of telling peoples' lives through autobiographies and, in the grammar section, students were supposed to review the simple past tense. Other activities included reading biographies of renowned teachers and educators.

In one of the classes, the group watched the movie "Front of the class"[4], which portrays the true story of Brad Cohen, a novice English teacher working at a public school. Despite all the challenges, Brad also struggled with Tourette syndrome[5], a condition which caused him trouble since schools were not willing to hire him.

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4 The choice for using a movie in their language class was conceived with the purpose to study their perceptions on their future career.

5 **Tourette syndrome is a neuropsychiatric disorder in which the person presents spe-**cific tics which can be physical (motor) or by making sounds (phonic). In the story of Mr. Cohen, for instance, when he was a kid other people had a hard time with him around because they thought his repeated sounds (compared to "barking") were intentional to draw peoples' attention at school. People tend to associate Tourette syndrome with Coprolalia, a condition where the person involuntarily speaks obscenity, which is rarer.

When he is finally hired, he has to deal with parents' and teachers' prejudice regarding his Tourette syndrome. One of his biggest challenges is show them that learning is an activity which should respect diversity, and in his classroom everyone would be accepted for who they were.

3.2. INSTRUMENTS

After watching the movie "Front of the Class"[6], the students were asked to think about the challenges they believe they would have to face as teachers in the future. After the discussion, they were given an open questionnaire with the following questions to answer at home: (1) Do you feel prepared to be an English teacher? Why? (2) Are you afraid of anything? What? (3) As a future teacher, what do you consider to be your strong and weak characteristics?

In the following class the students shared their answers to the questionnaire with the whole class. When the discussion was over, they were asked to write a narrative about their language learning history, from their first experiences to the recent ones as undergraduate students. The narrative should also encompass their hopes and plans for their future career. In order to do so, they were presented some topics to guide their writing: (1) Places of learning; (2) Language teaching experience, if any; (3) Reasons for choosing the program; (4) Future teaching plans. In addition to that, they were allowed to include any extra comments they considered relevant[7].

3.3. PARTICIPANTS

In this section, we outline the profile of the two participants, considering their written narratives. Driven by ethic principles, we decided to omit their real names, referring to them by aliases they have chosen: Miriam and Juliana.

3.3.1. MIRIAM

Miriam is a 19-year-old undergraduate student. She studied English in middle and high school for seven years and in a private language center for four years. Nowadays she teaches English at an extension course at the university where she is studying. Although Miriam has worked as an

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6 FRONT OF THE CLASS. Director: Peter Werner. The United States of America: Hallmark Hall of Fame, 2008. 1 DVD (95min), NTSC, color. Brazilian title: O Primeiro da classe.

7 The students wrote the narrative and answered the questionnaire in English.

English teacher for the last three years, she still has doubts about what to do in the future. Before applying for the undergraduate language teaching program, she took entrance exams in other universities for different majors such as Mathematics and Information Systems. For personal reasons she does not mention, she chose the university where she is now studying. Miriam says that she had considered getting another degree, but changed her mind because she was not sure if she would feel happy with a new choice. She admits that, in the very beginning, she did not intend to continue working as a teacher after getting a degree, but now she considers teaching English in specific contexts such as private language centers. Besides, she does not intend to pursue a master's or a doctor's degree. She describes herself as a very relaxed person who enjoys living her life without a lot of tension and stress, and also emphasizes that she does not see herself in a job or career which causes suffering or discontentment. She says she is also not fond of teaching large groups of noisy students, as it is common in regular schools (COELHO, 2005; ZOLNIER, 2007; LIMA, 2012). Besides, there is a common belief that the good English teachers are the ones who work in language centers (COELHO, 2005). Usually, these schools have fewer students in each class, around 15, and there is not a lot of indiscipline (ZOLNIER; MICCOLI, 2009).

3.3.2. JULIANA

Juliana is a 30-year-old undergraduate student. Besides studying English in middle and high school, she studied for three years in a language center in Brazil. Later on she worked for an American multinational company where English was a pre-requisite. Her recent job is related to editing and book reviewing but most of her work is done in Portuguese rather than in English. Juliana has never had any teaching experiences. Before choosing the actual major, she started Business Administration and Marketing in the State of São Paulo, but when she came to the university where she studies now, she applied to Business Administration, but due to difficulties with Mathematics, she did not pass the entrance test. Thus, she decided to apply for a program which was related to her skills, chose Language Teaching and succeeded, but with the initial purpose of exchanging to B. A. and Marketing again. However, she fell in love with the course (her exact words) and did not want to give it up. After she graduates, Juliana intends to take a master's and a doctor's degree in Language Studies, where she plans to research about teaching undergraduates. She also believes she does not have the suitable profile for teaching younger students such as middle and high school ones.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, we will present the data about the students' beliefs and the affective states related to their teaching profession. We will discuss how they feel about being English teachers in the future, and what they believe to be their fears, strengths and weaknesses.

4.1. PREPAREDNESS TO TEACH

Even while attending a program in which they learn to become teachers, sometimes our students do not reflect about how prepared they feel for this task, especially nowadays, when we see more and more students come straight from high school to the university. They start college at a very young age and may take a little longer to realize that the program they chose will turn them into teachers. For that reason, the teachers' identities may take many years to be constructed, since many of them see themselves just as students, not teachers in pre-service (ZOLNIER, 2011).

In addition to that, students come to university with certain beliefs formed through their previous experiences as learners, which can hinder the learning process. Besides, not all teacher educators are willing to spend time to create conditions to give them "the opportunity to look for an explanation for their beliefs, assumptions and knowledge about what is involved in the learning and teaching process of the foreign language" (VIEIRA-ABRAHÃO, 2004, p.132).

Concerning our two participants, both of them reveal negative beliefs about themselves, claiming not to feel prepared to be English teachers, as stated below:

> **Miriam**: *I think I have much more to improve in my abilities on using the language and dealing with people. I try to do my best, and sometimes it goes well (although sometimes it doesn't). I try to learn from my mistakes. Anyway, I don't think I'll ever be prepared.*

> **Juliana**: *I don't feel prepared to be an English teacher because I think I need to improve my vocabulary and become more secure to explain the contents to the students. I feel so shy while I am speaking English and also very nervous. I must overcome that problem before teaching English.*

Miriam demonstrates being aware of two aspects of the teaching career she needs to improve: language abilities and dealing with people.

REVISTA LETRAS, CURITIBA, N. 88, P. 129-150, JUL./DEZ. 2013. EDITORA UFPR.
ISSN 0100-0888 (VERSÃO IMPRESSA); 2236-0999 (VERSÃO ELETRÔNICA)

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She feels insecure about her language proficiency, especially if we consider the fact that when students ask questions, teachers expect themselves to be able to give them the immediate feedback. Thus, linguistic proficiency is something that concerns these future teachers.

Miriam also believes she is making efforts to improve her language and her skills to deal with people but concludes that she may never feel prepared. One can understand this belief of *never being prepared* as something bad, but we consider that even with successful teaching experiences, different groups usually bring new challenges for the teacher. Besides, our experiences make us more comfortable with our profession and choices in the long run, but there will always be something new to experience. Despite this idea, Miriam does not demonstrate that due to this certain insecurity she will not be able to be a teacher. Since she is just half the way through the program (she is taking up English IV and the courses go up to English VIII), we hope this insecurity is part of a temporary stage she will eventually go through. Miriam seems to believe that learning is a continuing process which is never complete. Therefore, what she will have to do is keeping on trying hard.

Concerning affect in her speech, we see a relationship between judgments and insecurity. The judgment is about her language abilities and her capacity to deal with people (which also include her students in our view). In this way, the key point here is the possible relationship between affect and judgments, or if the former influences the latter. Forgas (1995) points out that "despite the ubiquitous role of affect in judgments, remarkably few empirical studies in early social psychology examined this relationship" (p. 42).

Moreover, the views this participant has about her teaching must not be taken into consideration by implying issues of reflection and cognition only. As Zembylas (2005) states, teacher beliefs are relevant components of the teacher's knowledge, but "it is not obvious that they are the only components or even the major ones.[…] Certain aspects of teaching can only be learned in practice through how one feels and are not easily described by cognitive schemes" (p. 468). In other words, we believe that to have a better understanding of Miriam's conceptions about her lack of abilities in language and dealing with people, a deeper exploration of her feelings and emotions must be taken into account in order to attempt to visualize the connection among these aspects. Also, we believe that as the program runs its course she will have the opportunity to read about language learning theories and reflect about her classes with the help of a supervisor, considering that now she is being mentored by a more experienced teacher at the extension course where she works. These practices may allow her to evaluate her approach to teaching, creating opportunities for changes such as more security as a teacher.

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REVISTA LETRAS, CURITIBA, N. 88, P. 129-150, JUL./DEZ. 2013. EDITORA UFPR.
ISSN 0100-0888 (VERSÃO IMPRESSA); 2236-0999 (VERSÃO ELETRÔNICA)

In addition to this, a question can be asked: for how long would she feel unprepared without having support or being monitored/mentored by an experienced teacher who, among other things, would consider her affective states as a subject of matter in her process? In this sense, this question brings its relevance, for example, in what comes to the first years of teaching, which "have long proven to be challenging and frustrating for novice teachers" (MASSEY, 2006, p. 73). We believe that students who are not supported by teacher educators who provide opportunities for future teachers to understand their own beliefs and affective states during initial education are likely to face more difficulties. Consequently, such struggle may result in challenges and frustration, which may lead to burnout feelings (GOUVEIA, 2010).

That is why the undergraduate teacher education program becomes essential in providing an articulated and structured philosophy which is able to connect with the students as they progress in their teaching and learning process. As Johnson and Golombek (2002) claim, these programs have to be more sensitive to this subjective domains which surround the process of learning to teach. And as we see in both narratives, Miriam and Juliana are showing how they feel and believe, essential aspects to be considered if we wish to help them make sense of their future profession.

Similarly, Juliana says she does not feel prepared to teach. She believes she needs to improve some linguistic aspects such as vocabulary and grammar. Besides, her main challenges are related to the affective domains, which strengthen the belief that she will be ready to be a teacher once she can overcome these issues concerning affect that hamper her actions (speaking English in public, for example). In a similar way, one of the teachers investigated by Candido-Ribeiro (2012) reported various negative affective states such as nervousness an inhibition when teaching grammar due to the fact that she believed she had a low level of proficiency. Candido-Ribeiro's participant affirmed that what helped her in coping with this situation was the support and monitoring she received from her co-workers and coordinators at workplace.

Although Miriam has experienced language teaching with small groups at the extension course at her university, she still believes she needs improving. Juliana, on the other hand, who has never taught English, also suggests that she believes she needs to improve her language proficiency. None of them referred, for example, to not being prepared to be a teacher due to contextual factors, such as indiscipline or students' lack of motivation, which is common in regular schools (COELHO, 2005; ZOLNIER, 2007; LIMA, 2012).

Juliana's and Miriam's beliefs about not being prepared to teach are surrounded by affective domains. For instance, shyness and nervousness

REVISTA LETRAS, CURITIBA, N. 88, P. 129-150, JUL./DEZ. 2013. EDITORA UFPR.
ISSN 0100-0888 (VERSÃO IMPRESSA); 2236-0999 (VERSÃO ELETRÔNICA)

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seem to shape Juliana's beliefs about teaching and contribute negatively in terms of achievement. In other words, her insecurity and nervousness may be a result of her language proficiency beliefs (e.g. "I need to improve my vocabulary"). The fact that Juliana considers having a low proficiency level in English may justify the affective states reported in speaking the language. She believes her English is not good enough and, as consequence, feels unprepared.

Summing up, we assume that some beliefs students bring to the classroom are directly related to the arousal of some affective states they present. For instance, if one believes that non-native speakers can learn English only in a country where this language is spoken (BARCELOS, 1995), which affective states might this student have in a language course with solely Brazilian teachers and students? Thus, we agree that beliefs are important components of teacher's knowledge (ZEMBYLAS, 2005), which comprises crucial cognitive aspects that play an essential role in teachers' development. Therefore, we should also include affect studies in our undergraduate language teaching programs, since they can provide more subjective dimensions towards a richer understanding of teaching. In this sense, we strongly advocate Denzin's view on the role of affect in the teaching and learning process when saying that people "are their emotions. To understand who a person is, it is necessary to understand emotion" (1984, p.1).

4.2. Affective state: fear

Everybody has to face fear at some point in life. What about the participants in this study? Concerning the future, what are they afraid of? Excerpts 3 and 4 give us some insight into their reflection about their fears:

> **Miriam**: *I am afraid of being unfair [with my students] because of the personal side of the job. I am also afraid of having my teaching methods and approaches disapproved by the students. I'm afraid of being unable to explain a subject clearly.*

> **Juliana**: *I have poor language knowledge, I'm shy and nervous, and have a bad pronunciation. All of these aspects worry me a lot because nowadays my English could be better. Even improving my English as I've been doing, I feel very insecure about my language knowledge and pronunciation. I think I am not ready yet. I need to be fluent.*

Miriam reveals some important beliefs: (a) teachers must be fair with students; (b) students must have confidence in the teachers' methods and approaches and (c) teachers must explain a subject clearly. Miriam's apprehensive beliefs are intrinsically related to fair relationships in the classroom and confidence in what teachers bring and teach. *Being unfair* to the students and having her methods and approaches to teaching questioned are her main fears. In other words, her main concern is basically based on fear of being rejected as a teacher.

Juliana, on the other hand, reveals to be insecure about her linguistic proficiency and believes she has *poor language knowledge,* even though she has studied English for many years and has worked for a multinational company where speaking English was a demand. In spite of that, she does not claim to have a good linguistic proficiency level and considers her pronunciation not good enough. In this way, we understand that Juliana believes that her lack of fluency in English is a major challenge she presently thinks she has to overcome.

Miriam and Juliana present concerns in their reports that may lead them to experience certain level of anxiety. Parreira (2008, p. 18) claims that anxiety, "emotionally speaking, appears as an indefinite and diffuse apprehensive feeling […] and receives different names like tension, stress, and nervousness, and extend itself to concepts such as fears, phobias, panic, and depression". The author discusses that those are distinct phenomena which hide different levels of anxiety. As we observe in the participants' responses, both of them show affective factors in relation to the context of the learning and the teaching process. Their feelings seem to be grouped in what McIntyre (1999) defined as language anxiety:

> The apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient, […] the propensity for an individual to react in a nervous manner when speaking, listening, reading, or writing in the second language. (ibid, p.5)

Juliana's and Miriam's fears show a relationship between their beliefs about their proficiency in the second language and their concerns about other people's judgments, which brings uncomfortable affective states for both of them. This leads us to a discussion in Horwitz (1991) in which the author states that anxiety is debilitative when it comes to language achievement. In other words, she argues that anxiety is directly related to learning and can contribute to poor linguistic performance. According to that, we can infer that there is a vicious circle: the students believe their proficiency is

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low and feel anxious because of that. As a result of being anxious they present a poor performance when communicating, which confirms their beliefs about not being good speakers.

Summarizing, we consider that understanding the relationship between beliefs and affective states is crucial to the learning process and we conclude that the students' emotional manifestation hampers not only their language output but may also prevent them from learning something new. Following Eysenck (1979), who argues that "worry and [...] anxiety impair the quality of performance" (p. 364), we assume that a wide range of affective states, besides anxiety, may cause impairments to the learning and teaching process as well.

4.3 Strengths and weaknesses

Considering their beliefs about the characteristics of a good English teacher, the students in this study were invited to reflect about their strengths and limitations concerning the teaching career. The data show that when evaluating their personal traits, both students put more emphasis on their faults rather than on their positive features, as stated in the following excerpts:

> **Miriam**: *My strong point: sense of humor. I try to be friendly; I'm good at creating activities and exercises (at least I think so). Weak points: I'm not very funny (although I try). It's not something natural for me. If I lose control of something, I get a bit nervous. [...] I'm not good at improvising. I usually double-check everything before class, because if it goes out of my control, I get nervous and start making mistakes, stammering, etc.). I don't feel very sure about my teaching approaches, and I don't try all my best to make my students learn when they don't cooperate. (A little revengeful, isn't it?)*

> **Juliana**: *My strong points are perseverance, persistence and patience. My weak point is insecurity; I don't trust myself and it makes things worse when it comes to my emotional control. I know my problems but I also know that I am able to get everything I want.*

Miriam describes herself as someone who has a good sense of humor and tries to be friendly, which probably suggests that she believes these aspects are important for an English teacher. She also thinks she is creative when it comes to exercises and activities. As a teacher at the ex-

tension course, she has had experiences with designing extra activities to use in her classes, which allows her to consider that aspect. Although she pictures herself as someone with good sense of humor, she does not think she is funny. She may have the belief that "a good teacher is funny", which would explain why she says that she tries to be like that.

Miriam also feels insecure when she loses control of the things she had planned for her class. *Improvising* seems to be a great challenge, because whenever a class takes a different turn from what she had first idealized, she gets nervous and stammers. She ends with a comment where she addresses a question to us ("a little revengeful, isn't it?"). Here she seems to understand that she should try to motivate her students all the time, but chooses not to do so when they do not correspond to her expectations.

Her claims suggest that having motivated students is essential to make her feel motivated as well, a result also shown by Candido-Ribeiro (2012). The novice teacher reported in his study that she strongly needs to see students' motivation to be motivated to teach. His participant affirms she feels more enthusiastic and willing to always provide better classes when students are motivated and responsive to the class activities. Likewise, Miriam affirms to feel more enthusiastic and willing to provide better classes when students get involved in the lessons.

When it comes to Juliana, although being critical about her skills as a learner (and as a future teacher), she portrays herself with good qualities which are necessary for good teachers (perseverance, persistence, patience). However, despite these strong features, she reveals to feel very insecure, which causes conflict.

Both students emphasize the importance of control. For Miriam it is important to have control of the teaching situation. She expects to be able to teach all the topics the students may have doubts about. Nevertheless, if they ask something she does not know, she will probably start "making mistakes" and "stammering", as she reports it. In a similar way, Juliana does not trust her knowledge, and, because of that, she is afraid of losing control of her emotions in difficult situation, what we believe is related to the same teaching situation Miriam refers to. Here, two beliefs come up: "A good teacher knows everything" (Miriam) and "a good teacher controls everything" (Juliana).

As teachers, we understand their concerns about having everything under control, but since all students are different, all classes will be different and challenges will always emerge (HALL, 2011). Even though when we try hard and prepare ourselves for everything we think it may happen, we need to learn how to face the unknown. Unfortunately, teachers can experience many years of insecurity at work because of the belief that a teacher must "know everything" (ZOLNIER, 2011).

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In her doctoral research, Zolnier (2011) realized that her research participants were able to change that belief only after a long time of participation in a Continuing Education Project. Therefore, we do believe that students should start reflecting about their beliefs while they are still in college and try to focus on doing a very good job, but knowing that mistakes will happen. When teachers recognize their mistakes in front of students, and correct them, they are showing to the students that it is all right to be wrong sometimes, since mistakes are a part of the learning process. What they need to know is make their errors work for their learning (NUNAN, 1999).

In this section, we presented the discussion through the participants' reports. Both of them claim they do not feel ready to start teaching because there are some aspects they believe they still have to improve while taking classes at their language teaching program. While Miriam emphasizes the desire to improve her ability to deal with people, Juliana is more concerned with her linguistic proficiency. At the same time, fear was an affective state highlighted in both cases, which is related to the negative perceptions these future teachers may have about the students' approval of the teaching methods used in class (Miriam), and also related to the belief of having poor language knowledge (Juliana). In addition to this, we also discussed briefly about anxiety based on the view that it is usually behind other affective states or that it even receives different names such as nervousness and fear (PARREIRA, 2008).

In terms of their strong qualities, Miriam sees herself as a creative person when it comes to thinking up classes and activities, even though she recognizes the need of having everything under control. Juliana, in turn, claims that her weakness is the lack of trust she has on her knowledge, which causes insecurity. However, she believes to be a person who has perseverance, persistence and patience, and that she is able to get everything she wants. Hopefully, such personal qualities and the assistance provided by their undergraduate teacher education program will enable them to overcome the challenges they believe they have at the moment.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study aimed at approaching the role of beliefs and affect in teacher language education by emphasizing the relevance of both aspects in Language Teacher Education. The students' perspectives demonstrate strong beliefs about their readiness to teach. These future teachers enumerate aspects which they need to improve, in order to feel confident enough to start

teaching. In other words, the feeling of being ready to teach seems to emerge when these future teachers overcome the limitations they believe having.

At the same time, their beliefs are intertwined with different affective states, once the constraints they believe having are perceived in situations that will be common in their future classrooms, such as the ability to deal with other people (Miriam) and to explain things in a way students will understand (Juliana). Considering the dilemmas they reported, we emphasize the role of undergraduate teacher education programs in providing support to students in their initial education by helping them to articulate and negotiate their own conflicts, provide them opportunities of hearing, sharing and voicing their beliefs and affective states, since they are essential in teacher development (HALL, 2011).

The students in this study reported, for example, affective states of fear, nervousness and insecurity, which can present in their roots certain level of anxiety as we discussed. Such affective states, mainly anxiety, have been subjected of a great number of inquiries being frequently experienced by students when learning, and teachers in their first years of teaching (HORWITZ; YOUNG, 1991; HORWITZ, 2001, ARAGÃO, 2007). Thus, teacher education programs should also help students understand and examine closely the affective states they feel concerning their future career.

There are several contemporary challenges in teacher education in which changes have to respect the local needs of contexts (JOHNSON, 2009). We provided an example of an inquiry conducted within an English language course for future teachers, indicating which local needs our students have – among others. We assume that teacher education is an aspect that should be considered in all courses these students take in their undergraduate years, not only in specific courses such as the Teaching Practicum in their final years.

In conclusion, we believe that the teaching of a new language to pre-service teachers should be a reflexive practice all the time, in a way that all classes provide opportunities for students to talk about themselves, expressing how they feel, what they believe about themselves and their fears and hopes for the future. If teachers learn to reflect from the very beginning of the program, they will have more opportunities to construct more realistic teacher's identities and to make sense of their profession (JOHNSON; GOLOMBEK, 2002). By doing so, teacher educators may be helping their students fight their personal battles in their development, so that when they finally start teaching, the job does not present itself as an extremely new terrain.

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