Marketing teacher quality: Critical discourse analysis of OECD documents on effective teaching and TALIS

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Abstract

This study uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) texts on teacher quality and the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) framework. Specifically, it explores the forewords of documents written by OECD leaders, which we believe are charged with meanings related to the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) discourse. We suggest that CDA of the texts sheds light on the manner in which OECD leaders attempt to gain normative control in the teacher quality discourse. Based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for studying discourse, our analysis shows that the OECD (a) uses a discourse of fear to market teacher quality in light of global changes, implicitly framing teachers as "bad teachers;" (b) advocates reliance on the organization as a protector; and (c) promises a remedy by regulating teachers in the name of effectiveness and the knowledge economy. The study offers a nuanced insight into OECD efforts to promote normative control in the teacher quality discourse, using three dimensions of discourse (i.e., the textual micro linguistic dimension, the meso interdiscursive dimension, and the macro sociocultural dimension) that help gain ideational powers.

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the discussion on teacher professionalism has changed and teacher quality has become a central object of attention and criticism (MacBeath, 2012). This change has been viewed as complementary to the perceived global competitiveness that has been transforming the teaching profession (Sahlberg, 2006). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which has traditionally promoted economic progress among developed economies, has become one of the most important international agencies with respect to this transformation (Robertson, 2013). OECD publications concerning teachers offer a description of what the OECD calls "teacher quality," and a breakdown of the policies that promote teacher quality (Schleicher, 2015). A significant tool developed by OECD and increasingly associated with the discussion of teacher quality is the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). Prior scholarly work has suggested that in addition to framing and measuring teacher quality, the OECD invests political energy in branding and selling their conception of teacher quality (Sorensen, 2017; Sorensen & Robertson, 2017).

To examine this phenomenon, the present research focuses on how the OECD communicates and markets teacher quality. To understand the symbolic and rhetorical devices used by the OECD, we examine their documents using critical discourse analysis (CDA). Specifically, we analyze the forewords written by OECD leaders in OECD texts on teaching and TALIS. The function of the forewords to the documents is to communicate clearly with diverse audiences, including the general public, policymakers, and experts. Therefore, we argue that the analysis of the forewords can shed light on the many aspects of discourse used by OECD leaders in marketing their ideas of teacher quality. Recent research has explored how the OECD sells teacher

quality and what is the nature of the TALIS pedagogical discourse (Cerqua, Gauthier, & Dembélé, 2017; Sorensen, 2017; Sorensen & Robertson, 2017). But there has been no in-depth analysis of the three aspects of meaning making (textual micro-linguistic, meso-interdiscursive, and macro-sociocultural; see Fairclough, 1995) used by the organization, and of how these aspects relate to Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) discourse (Sahlberg, 2011). The literature can benefit from CDA exploration of OECD texts using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, focusing on the interrelated aspects of discourse the organization uses to market teacher quality, and on the associations of these aspects with GERM.

2. The Global Education Reform Movement

Globalization is a set of processes in which social interaction beyond the borders of any given country has become meaningful for societies and individuals (Green & Janmaat, 2011). Global processes have changed the context in which educational policymaking is discussed and the policy context in which educational systems operate (Robertson & Dale, 2015). World culture theory positions the global spread of education policies as part of a broader cultural shift involving the formation of shared global beliefs and values (Baker, 2009). The rise of world culture is said to be driven by the expansion of Western ideals, academic emphases, the centrality of science as an authority, and a trend of political decentralization (Smith, 2014). Some also link this trend to the growing popularity of human capital theory, which stresses the centrality of skills and knowledge in national economic success in light of global economic competitiveness (Sahlberg, 2006). Sahlberg (2011) groups the global educational policies together under the term Global Education Reform Movement (GERM). GERM addresses various policies such as standardization of education,

focus on literacy and numeracy, embracing managerialism and other corporate ideas (e.g., marketization and privatization), test-based accountability, and increased control of schools and schooling (e.g., national curricula). Some argue that GERM policies are not a new and innovative product of the global debate, but rather old ideas originating in the Anglo-American model of accountability (Lingard & Lewis, 2016). GERM in general, and the global testing culture in specific, are said to be associated with increased monitoring at the individual level (i.e., self-organizing reflexivity) and the systemic level (i.e., audit and self-observation), and as such they reshape the educators' role both in their capacity of policy implementers and of student influencers (Smith, 2014, 2016; Sobe, 2015). Ball (2008) described this "generic, global policy ensemble" as part of a global convergence of reform policies that promotes ideas of efficiency, accountability, effectiveness, and flexibility as guidelines for public systems. According to Ball's (2008) perspective, these policy efforts endeavor to form "new values, new relationships and new subjectivities" (p. 40). Thus, GERM policies can be seen as a global, large-scale re-culturing endeavor.

3. The OECD and the globalization of education policy

In the current globalized educational policy discourse, education is supposed to enhance the quality of a nation's human capital and boost its international economic competitiveness (Stobart, 2008). As a result, international comparisons of various types have become a new criterion for measuring the quality of national education systems, guiding national policy decisions and reshaping educational systems in ways that affect school and teacher practices (Smith, 2014, 2016). The emergent global education policy field, manifest among others in the rise of testing and evaluation tools produced by international agencies, is a dominant phenomenon in the 21st

century (Rinne & Ozga, 2013). Several international agencies are known to be key
players, cultivating this field and energizing its discourse. Among them, the OECD
occupies a prominent place as a leading voice in the globalized educational discourse
that has developed since the 2000s (Woodward, 2009). The growing popularity of its
standardized achievement test, Program for International Student Assessment (PISA),
combined with the widening debate on the concept of knowledge-based economy,
have contributed to establishing education and skills as principal areas of influence for
the OECD (Lingard & Sellar, 2016). Following these trends, a separate Directorate of
Education and Skills was set up within the OECD in 2002 (Woodward, 2009).
Accumulating evidence suggests that the OECD may have become the most
influential international organization in the field of education in highly developed
countries (Lingard & Sellar, 2016; Sorensen & Robertson, 2017). Woodward (2009)
suggested that the OECD is becoming a main provider of educational statistics, acting
as a "sculptor" of education policies around the world. These policies support the
market agenda, which includes free trade, deregulation, privatization, and reductions
in government spending.

Scholars have argued that the power of the OECD lies in its soft modes of
governance (Bieber & Martens, 2011; Rutkowski, 2007). Woodward (2009) outlined
four modes of governance used by the organization: (a) cognitive governance, by
selection of members based on their previously confirmed commitment to core values
linked with liberal democracy and market economies; (b) normative governance,
creating a new epistemology of policy and fostering epistemic communities at the
national level; (c) legal governance, by formal agreements, which usually work by
monitoring and peer pressure rather than by sanctions; and (d) palliative governance,
by entrepreneurial conduct following opportunities in global governance, such as

investigating emergent policy topics, and collaboration with the WTO and the G8.[1]

Lingard and Sellar (2016) further suggested that of these modes, cognitive and

normative governance are central in explaining the influence of the OECD. The active

role of the OECD in setting the agenda on policy issues such as teacher quality

provides an instructive glimpse into how the actions and language of the OECD serve

the organization in its attempts to achieve cognitive and normative governance in a

given policy area.

4. The OECD and the teacher quality discourse

There is renewed interest in teacher quality in the 21st century. Growing fears related

to the rise of the knowledge economy, and the lack of what is considered to be a

suitable skill set on the part of many school graduates, further mobilized interest in

teacher quality (Robertson, 2005). Since the beginning of the 21st century, teachers,

instruction, and teacher education have become central policy issues, both at the local

and the global levels (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2013).

Robertson (2013) drew on Bernstein's (2000) work to emphasize the

involvement of international agencies in altering teachers' work, arguing that global

agencies promote a "field of symbolic control," as they claim ownership and mastery

of discursive codes related to teaching. Examples of this pattern include the

"classification" and "framing" of issues in a manner that is denationalized. The OECD

is a key actor in the emerging discourse, which targets changes in teachers' work. At

the beginning of the 21st century, the OECD identified "teacher policy" as a new

niche, and by 2005 it had already produced a range of reviews and resources that

reinforced its symbolic authority on the topic (Robertson, 2013). TALIS was the most

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[1] G8, or the Group of Eight, brings together eight of the world's richest countries: the US, the UK, France, Russia, Germany, Japan, Italy, and Canada.

significant development in the claim the OECD laid to authority in matters of teacher quality (Sorensen & Robertson, 2017). The stated goal of the TALIS assessment framework is to deepen the understanding of approaches and policies that may be used to help countries in nurturing quality teachers (Schleicher, 2015). TALIS was administered twice, in 2008 and 2013, in 24 and 34 countries, respectively, and is the largest effort to date to collect data on teachers on an international scale.

TALIS harnessed the popularity of PISA to place the OECD in the center of not only the "student learning quality" discussion but also of the teacher quality discourse. Sorensen and Robertson (2017) recently explored the marketing practices that OECD has used to brand and sell TALIS, including coordinated tool-launch events and the dissemination of results in meetings and webinars. According to these authors, the efforts of the OECD have been magnified by the symbiotic relationship of the organization with an ecosystem of philanthropic and private actors who interpret TALIS, and in the process reap financial and reputational benefits from it. This network of organizations assists in legitimating the survey and its data. Sorensen and Robertson (2017) further found that TALIS endorses constructivist pedagogy, consistent with the knowledge economy agenda, but as TALIS survey responses are subordinated to PISA assessment, in practice TALIS promotes the re-structuring of the teaching profession as less innovative and creative, thereby contradicting the knowledge economy agenda. Despite the growing knowledge on the role and actions of the OECD in the teacher quality discourse (Cerqua et al., 2017; Sorensen, 2017; Sorensen & Robertson, 2017), OECD documents on effective teaching and TALIS have not been explored in relation to GERM policy discourse using Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework. Such analysis can shed light on the interrelated dimensions of discourse used by OECD leaders to promote their control over teacher

quality and to relate the teacher quality discourse of the OECD to GERM policies and the GERM agenda.

5. Dimensions of discourse and ideational power

We used CDA for this analysis. CDA focuses on the ways in which discourse exercises social power in institutionalizing and controlling ways of thinking and acting (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002). CDA is critical in two manners (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000): (a) it explores how current and historical power relations and ideas interact, and (b) it focuses on the use of discourse in power relations.

Fairclough's (1995) approach to CDA addresses three interrelated dimensions of discourse: the object of analysis, the processes involved in the production and reception of the object, and socio-historical aspects that characterize these processes. Fairclough (2003) viewed these three tiers as separate but interrelated, arguing that "the 'internal' (semantic, grammatical, lexical (vocabulary)) relations of texts are connected with their 'external' relations (to other elements of social events, and to social practices and social structures) through the mediation of an 'interdiscursive' analysis of the genres, discourses and styles which they draw upon and articulate together" (38). According to Fairclough (1995), CDA involves the investigation of texts, their processing, and their social context through their description, interpretation, and explanation. The literature suggests that CDA involves a non-naturalized reading of texts by readers (Titscher et al., 2000), and that such a tactic assists in uncovering codes in the text.

Following Sorensen and Robertson's (2017) analysis, suggesting that recent OECD efforts, among others in the TALIS initiative, were aimed at selling their version of the teacher quality, we were interested in the discursive strategies used to

market this version. The forewords to OECD documents about TALIS and teaching excellence are part of the OECD marketing approach, and they warrant analysis. OECD forewords represent an authoritative institutional voice. Because forewords frequently are written by system leaders and reflect their political agenda, from the point of view of public policy research they are considered ideal texts for CDA (e.g., Fairclough, 1995, 2000).

We located the OECD documents on effective teaching and TALIS in the OECD online library (http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org), tagged under the TALIS label and under the International Summit on the Teaching Profession (ISTP). Thus, the site provided the sampling lists. TALIS is today the chief OECD initiative concerning teacher-related policies (Cerqua et al., 2017). We also incorporated in the study ISTP documents. ISTP, which has been initiated by the OECD, is the largest international meeting at which teachers' polices are discussed (Fraser & Smith, 2017), and ISTP documents draw heavily on TALIS data and discourse. ISTP meetings, held annually since 2011, bring together "education ministers, union leaders and other teacher leaders from high performing and rapidly improving education systems" around the world (OECD, 2011, p. 9). Whereas the TALIS documents and forewords target multiple audiences (e.g., researchers, policymakers, educators, the general public, etc.), ISTP's are more specific, as these events involve delegations of teacher unions and governments. We omitted documents addressed exclusively to school leaders or those that contain only short technical forewords. Last, we included the "Teachers Matter" document, which is considered the cornerstone marking the OECD interest in teachers (Connell, 2009; Robertson, 2013). The final corpus included 14 documents (a table listing the documents analyzed in this study can be obtained from the authors).

The CDA of a large number of documents in this work is possible because we focused only on the forewords of the documents (1-2 pages), which are limited in scope.

To better understand the discursive purposes of the OECD, we turn to Carstensen and Schmidt's (2016) work on ideational power in public policy, which elaborates on how actors use ideational elements to influence other actors' beliefs. Carstensen and Schmidt identified three discursive maneuvers involving ideas:

(1) *Power through ideas,* which involves either (a) cognitive arguments (semi-technical and scientific) that define problems and solutions in a broad manner that can have different meanings to different parties, or (b) normative arguments that address suitable community norms and ethics of public life.

(2) *Power over ideas,* which is linked to the actors' ability to control the meaning of ideas by imposing the desired meaning on them, by shaming to motivate conformity, or by resisting alternative meanings.

(3) *Power in ideas,* which occurs only when a hegemony is formed, as the idea becomes depoliticized, thereby delimiting the range of ideas that are considered.

First, we investigated the texts at the micro-linguistic level. The literature recommends exploring the textual dimension by focusing on four aspects (Fairclough, 2001, pp. 241-242; Taylor, 2004, p. 437): (a) the organization and structure of the entire text, (b) clause combination, (c) grammatical and semantic features, and (d) words.

Second, we investigated the argumentative sections of the forewords at the interdiscursive level. Interdiscursive analysis endeavors to identify the genres and discourses that the texts draw upon, and how these various types of established discursive practices are related and combined together in the text (Fairclough, 2001, p.

241). By exploring discursive practices, CDA seeks to uncover the discursive references used in the production of the texts, as well as whether and the extent to which "receivers of texts also apply available discourses and genres in the consumption and interpretation [of texts]" (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002, p. 69).

Third, we explored the texts at the socio-cultural level. For this type of analysis, the literature advises researcher to "go outside the text, using academic and non-academic sources to get a sense of its social context" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 251). We also examined the relevant socio-historical background and discussed the manner in which language is used to construct social issues (i.e., shaping social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge) (Fairclough, 1995).

6. CDA: Marketing OECD expertise in teacher quality

Consistent with Fairclough's CDA method, we present our analysis of the forewords in OECD documents on effective teaching and TALIS in accordance with the three dimensions of Fairclough's CDA approach: textual, discursive, and socio-cultural.

6.1 Textual level (micro-linguistic analysis)

In our analysis of the organization of the text, we noted that in OECD documents, forewords are one-to-two pages long. The texts are often divided into two informal sub-sections: the first is argumentative or persuasive, addressing challenges and how to cope with them; the second is descriptive, and it includes acknowledgements of countries supporting the TALIS initiative and the staff involved in the development of TALIS. We chose to focus the rest of the CDA on the argumentative sub-sections that predominate in the text of the forewords. The argumentative sub-section has a problem-solution structure. The classic prototypical organization at the root of this

structure includes "objective + problem […] + solution + evaluation of solution" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 258). The OECD forewords, however, focus on the first three elements ("objective," "problem," and "solution"), and "evaluation of the solution" is missing.

The clause combination analysis of the argumentative sub-section in both types of documents (TALIS and ISTP) suggests that it includes compound and long sentences. The sentences contain multiple parts (identification of the topic, claim, and an outline of the reasoning), and are written in a declarative style, with the use of modals such as "may need" (OECD, 2012) and "will require" (OECD, 2011) that communicate a sense of necessity.

Our analysis of the grammatical and semantic features and words used in the forewords focused on aspects such as mood, modality, juxtapositions, and metaphors (Taylor, 2004). We found that the forewords were written by an authority figure at the OECD (usually not the author of the document itself), in a manner that justifies, certifies, and "celebrates" the work. In both types of documents (TALIS and ISTP), there is extensive use of the present continuous form, which emphasizes current processes (e.g., "'facing," "chancing," "growing," "increasing," "struggling," "looking"). For example, one document, describing traditional school systems, states that they "are not keeping up" with the fast pace of change (OECD, 2014a, 2014b; Schleicher, 2015, 2016). This association subtly links traditional systems with obsolete processes. "Goings-on" is considered a powerful transitive use of language (Halliday, 1985). In this case, it aims to evoke a mental picture of processes in progress and represent the occurrence of these processes as a fact. In this way, the texts promote a sense of disorder, with things presented at the edge of losing control

(Altheide, 2006). This is an example of a discursive maneuver of *power through ideas,* aimed to define a current problem (see Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016).

Another central semantic feature emerging in the analysis suggests a subtle dichotomous framing of "them" (teachers) vs. "us" (OECD). This is consistent with the classic framing of teachers in GERM policy discourse, which is often dualistic: teachers are an obstacle to reform, often their resistance to it is labeled as irrelevant and irrational, but they can also be an instrument of reform if they become "new professionals" (Ball, 2008, p. 143). This dualistic framing of teachers appears to be most dominant in the TALIS documents, but it is missing from the ISTP documents, which are more "teacher-friendly." Throughout the TALIS texts there is a sophisticated indirect separation between OECD expertise in teaching and the expertise of teachers, as a professional group. Teachers are repeatedly mentioned as facing challenges (OECD, 2009, 2014b, 2016), which the texts insinuate are currently unmet. The teaching profession is presented as lacking adequate skills, relevant goals, and the ability to innovate, and therefore appealing to individuals with low human capital (Jensen et al., 2012; Schleicher, 2011, 2012). One text suggests that there is a need "to build teacher professionalism," and that the profession lacks clear expectations of what teachers need to know and be able to do (Schleicher, 2016). The implication is that teachers are an unqualified collective that lays a vain claim to the title of a profession. Another text "questions whether this [pedagogical] knowledge base [of the teachers] is still in tune" (Vieluf et al., 2012) with research and the needs of society. This negative framing of teachers' expertise is also promoted implicitly. The term "high-quality" is used exclusively to describe lack of adequate teaching force or teaching development (OECD, 2014a, 2014b, 2016). Several uses of reservations generate an absurdist reading of the aspect being discussed, inconsistent

with the common meaning of the text, which produces a humorous effect. For

example, the texts suggest that "teachers themselves are often not developing the

practices and skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of today's learners" (OECD,

2014a), and that there is a need to "develop policies to make the teaching profession

more attractive and more effective" (OECD, 2009). The words "often" and "more,"

which appear to limit the generalizations, in practice amplify the criticism. To better

understand this form of indirect discourse, we can reflect on what the OECD attempts

to avoid. The literature suggests that actors' direct discourse demands speaker

accountability for the content (Holtgraves, 1990). By contrast, indirect discourse that

is used in social exchanges, ostensibly in service of courtesy (e.g., the use of

understatements) (Brown & Levinson, 1987), hints at the unpleasant message, but the

speaker remains unaccountable. The indirect negative framing of teachers can be

traced also to the "Teachers Matter" document, noting the lack of "enough qualified

teachers" and showing "concerns about teacher effectiveness" (OECD, 2005).

The image of the teaching profession as a problematic one is cultivated and

presented in opposition to the ostensibly superior expertise of OECD in teaching and

learning. This presentation is absent in the early "Teachers Matter" document (OECD,

2005), yet the positive presentation of the OECD gains momentum over time. Shortly

after its first administration, TALIS was said to provide a "comparative perspective on

the conditions of teaching and learning" (OECD, 2009). Since then, the positive

construction of OECD, in contrast to negative construction of teachers, has become

quite frequent and dominant in recent TALIS documents. TALIS "examines" (OECD,

2014a), "precisely identifies and arranges" (Vieluf et al., 2012), and "address[es]

important information needs" (OECD, 2009). The unique power of TALIS is said to

be that it carries out the reflection that teachers cannot do, as it "examines important

aspects of teachers" (OECD, 2009), focuses "on the pedagogical core of the teaching profession, namely the pedagogical knowledge base of teachers" (Vieluf et al., 2012), and examines "the nature of teacher professionalism" (OECD, 2016). In 2014, TALIS emerged in the OECD discourse as a metaphorical camera that captures teaching quality in high resolution. For example, one text suggests that "we get a true picture of the people working in our schools today and the level of responsibility they have," and that "the analysis will enable countries to see more clearly where imbalances might lie" (OECD, 2014c). This figurative language, which emphasizes the ability of the OECD to portray and illuminate teaching, serves as a vehicle for forming a hierarchy in field-specific capital (Bourdieu, 1984) between OECD and the teachers. Such descriptions may be read as attempts to establish unique professional capital—a key field-specific capital in the 21st century characterizing ideal teaching—for the OECD (e.g., Mehta, 2013). In the differentiation between the professional capital of the OECD and of the teaching profession, the OECD is presented as an organization making teachers' voices heard (OECD, 2014b). For example, TALIS is described as adding "the voice of teachers to the data and evidence the OECD regularly collects" (OECD, 2014c). Sorensen (2017) argued that in the OECD policy discourse teachers are visible yet silenced, and that the OECD treats teachers' voices as a means and not as an end, therefore teachers' voices are legitimate only if they serve the OECD agenda. The use of polarity in a text is recognized as establishing a hierarchy of power (Halliday, 1985). These examples present the effort of the OECD to gain *power over ideas,* as it strives to control who can impose meaning on policy issues (see Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016).

To summarize, the micro-linguistic analysis of the argumentative sections in the forewords of OECD texts on effective teaching and TALIS indicates that these

texts use a problem-solution structure but ignore the evaluation of solution; they use a compound declarative sentence style and resort to modals conveying necessity; use continuous forms that construct textual statements as current ongoing reality; use juxtapositions to represent the problematic professionalism of teachers and the authoritative position of the OECD; and use the camera metaphor to denote TALIS and indirectly reinforce the higher authority of the OECD. The theory of social construction of target populations (Schneider & Ingram, 1993) suggests that there is a link between the (strong/weak) power and (positive/negative) image of actors, and the benefits and sanctions they receive in policy processes, as policymakers strive to provide benefits to advantaged actors (strong, with a positive image) and initiate sanctions for deviant actors (weak, with a negative image) to gain public support and political capital. It appears that the OECD plays a part in cultivating what Kumashiro described as the "bad teacher" discourse: unprofessional or unethical teacher whose personality, skills, or conduct have negative effects. The forewords echo conventions of the modern political oratory genre, as they serve simultaneously to promote a positive self-presentation and a negative other-presentation (Reisigl, 2008). As noted in prior works on the discourse of fear, some actors are symbolically framed in the texts as protectors (Altheide, 2006). These micro-linguistic features aim to build and legitimize the cultural and ideological agenda of the OECD and its TALIS initiative.

6.2 Discursive level (interdiscursive analysis)

The most salient discourse in the texts is the GERM one. Ball (2008) identified the centrality of the self-improving system model as being related to the global universal package of policy technologies in education (paralleling GERM policies) that has been spreading worldwide. These policy technologies are viewed as "mechanisms of

change" because they promote the idea of change not as part of a limited technical adjustment, but as a deep cultural revolution aspiring to re-culture schools and teaching (Ball, 2008). Adopting these policy technologies is justified as a natural reaction to changes in the world (Ball, 2008). Change and the need for systemic change emerged in both TALIS and ISTP texts. The choice of language used to describe what systems need to do includes such words as: "responding" and "improvement," which are associated with self-improvement practices. The manner in which "words co-occur" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 113) suggests that systems should change, and change is mentioned in the context of an emotional appeal linked with fear of the unknown future. The texts subtly insinuate that OECD views the motives of countries to improve to be associated with uncertainty due to "challenges that intensify," as "demand […] continues to grow substantially" (OECD, 2009), and there is constant change in required skills (OECD, 2014a, 2014b; Schleicher, 2015, 2016). Over-wording around the concept of change through repetition is an application of overlexicalization aimed at the forceful construction of a certain representation of events (Halliday, 1985). Thus, the need for change is often charged with a sense of urgency, and changes are presented as lagging behind the fast dynamics of events (e.g., the "need to keep up," Schleicher, 2011; "demand in this rapidly changing world," Schleicher, 2012). In the TALIS documents the word "reform" is absent, but in the ISTP documents it appears frequently. This suggests a structured coping path offered by the OECD, associated with the fear from imminent changes "knocking at the door." In a complementary manner, another unique wording that was found mostly in ISTP documents is the use of words conveying a promise for the future: "better" education and lives (Schleicher, 2012, 2015, 2016), and "enhanced" qualities and development (Schleicher, 2012, 2016).

Also reflected in the texts is the "empowerment" discourse (Gore, 1989) that specifically addresses teachers. The analysis points to the use of reversal strategies, as the texts reverse the roles of systems (and policymakers) with those of teachers. The reversal of roles is manifest in several OECD publications about TALIS and effective teaching. For example, one text refers to "education systems and teachers" playing an equal part in facing changes. The conjunction, "and," communicates a resemblance in the unit of analysis, so that both systems and teachers are supra-organizational authorities that have the power to govern and control multiple organizations (Schermerhorn, 1975) and are responsible for what occurs in these organizations. Discussing systems and teachers together in other texts shows that the analogy is not part of a collaborative work model but of a differential one. Whereas teachers (with school leaders) have "the authority to act," systems mostly need to offer "effective support" (OECD, 2009) or "help teachers" (OECD, 2016). Miraftab (2004) criticizes empowerment that is expressed in the context of GERM polices because it cultivates the notion that power is binary: "here or there." In Foucault's view, however, power is never localized, but circulating in institutions and hegemonies. Thus, focusing on "the personal and the local as the sites of empowerment" deflects attention from power structures such as "the state, global capitalism, patriarchy, or racism" (Miraftab, 2004, pp. 242-243).

We also identified elements from social democratic discourse that represent societies with reference to the goal of "social cohesion" and threats to "social cohesion" (Fairclough, 2003). The texts delegitimize existing education and present it as failing to promote all students (OECD, 2009, 2016; Schleicher 2014), implying that traditional educational systems are ethically flawed, guilty of social inequality, and fail to act as a "great equaliser" (OECD, 2014a).

In sum, the discursive analysis of the forewords of OECD texts on effective teaching and TALIS indicates that the texts draw heavily on GERM discourse, as they emphasize the need for change and reform. With regard to teachers, the texts tend to use the "empowerment" discourse. Although egalitarian discourse also appears with reference to texts, it is limited in scope and "managed" by "an implicit strategy of disproportionate coexistence" (Lazar, 2000, p. 395). In practice, it is used in a sophisticated way to justify GERM policies.

6.3 Socio-cultural level (societal and institutional analysis)

Third, we explored the texts at the socio-cultural level. For this type of analysis, we examined the relevant socio-historical background and discussed the manner in which language is used to construct social issues (i.e., shaping social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge) (Fairclough, 1995).

The teacher quality discourse is part of a broader societal and institutional change in the role and status of national education in the West. Mulderrig (2003, p. 103) argued that "[e]ducation plays a newly significant role in an integrated social policy aimed at supporting the economy." National education is weakened because of multiple influences, such as the rise of the economic agenda in guiding social life, the prominence of global educational actors, the knowledge economy trend, and antagonistic media coverage of education (Lingard, Rawolle, & Taylor, 2005). The weakening of national education is manifested in the declining influence of local educational policy ideas that reflect national culture and social fabric, in favor of global policies and global-oriented intentional education (Feniger & Lefstein, 2014; Yemini & Fulop, 2015), as well as in the rise of a crisis discourse piling guilt on national education systems and educators (Weiner & Compton, 2008). In the OECD

texts, effectiveness (an economic concept originally signifying capacity of production) emerges as the central value in constructing the logical chain of events in which teachers operate in the education systems. "Effective learning" (Schleicher, 2011; TALIS, 2014b) is promoted by "effective policy responses," specifically in the domain of "effective teacher policies" (Schleicher, 2011) that assist "teachers improve their performance and effectiveness" (Schleicher, 2016). Hence, "effective support systems" for teachers (OECD, 2009) make "the teaching profession more effective" (OECD, 2009), so that teachers may produce more "effective learning opportunities" (OECD, 2014b). In this domino chain reaction, teachers are construed as a tile. This chain of events in linked with human capital theory. The texts argue that in modern economies "where the demand for high-level skills will continue to grow substantially" (OECD, 2009), we need "equip students with... competencies" (Schleicher, 2011), as students "need to become active citizens and workers" (Schleicher, 2011) and "need to contribute effectively to society" (Schleicher, 2015, 2016). The construction of modern social needs as having an economic focus is accomplished mostly indirectly, and there is a single appearance of one of the derivatives of economy (i.e., OECD, 2009). In this sense, the OECD reshapes the teachers' role as largely "servants of the global economy" (Menter, 2009, p. 225), and markets them as an active ingredient of the OECD remedy, which provides countries the ability to successfully participate in the global competition..

In the forewords analyzed, another societal and institutional aspect related to the weakened status of national education is linked to the centrality of the knowledge economy. The term "knowledge economy" has been originally linked to the role of science-based industries in social and economic change and in managerial strategies that emphasize continuous learning and innovation (Powell & Snellman, 2004). In the

OECD texts the word "knowledge" is used with different associations. It may be used to describe information (or innovation) created *by* systems or information created *about* systems (or individuals). Thus, knowledge changes from signifying economic productivity to signifying regulation or its absence. In the expression "in modern knowledge-based economies" (OECD, 2009), a connection is made between knowledge and wealth. At the same time, the OECD advocates the "creation of knowledge-rich... evidence-based education systems" (OECD, 2009), as it stresses the interrelation between economic prosperity and monitoring of education. This usage changes the meaning of the word "knowledge" with regard to education to "regulation," necessary for delivering the promise of economic productivity. Thus, close monitoring and regulation of teachers' competences and behaviors, which, as many suggest, produces more technical and professional knowledge (Connell, 2009), is associated with economic prosperity. The TALIS knowledge-based regulation tool may be used to achieve this type of control (Rinne & Ozga, 2013).

In sum, the societal and institutional analysis links the teacher quality discourse of the OECD to the weakened status of national education. This linkage is made possible by the prominence and effectiveness of the economic agenda in education, and by the rise of the knowledge economy. In this policy environment, the potential for economic success is said to be related to the use of data to regulate teaching and adopting monitoring techniques associated with the global accountability model (Lingard & Lewis, 2016; Sobe, 2015). These societal and institutional elements are consistent with previous works arguing that the OECD promises prosperity in the knowledge age. Identifying the views of the OECD on teaching as serving the human capital agenda (Fraser & Smith, 2017; Robertson, 2016; Sorensen, 2017; Sorensen & Robertson, 2017). Clarke (2015) suggests that the depoliticization of educational

policy is often promoted by locating the policy in the "technical efficacy" discourse.

We also argue that these efforts aim to make the ideas of the OECD on teachers

become depoliticized by associating them with institutionalized beliefs, gaining

unique political power for the organization on teaching policies (e.g., *power in ideas*)

(see Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016).

7. The OECD teacher quality discourse: Themes of fear and remedy

The present exploration shows that themes of fear and remedy underlie the OECD

discourse on effective teaching and TALIS. This analysis echoes the marketing

literature, which suggests that the fear discourse and the selling of "remedies"

complement each other, with products and services being presented as reducing the

probability or severity of risks (Bolton, Cohen, & Bloom, 2006). The main

contribution of the study is that, based on Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional

framework for studying discourse and on Carstensen and Schmidt's (2016) theory on

ideational power, it exposes the various dimensions and purposes used to promote the

OECD cognitive and epistemological control over the teacher quality discourse and its

relation to GERM. We have shown that OECD leaders engage with three aspects of

meaning making: micro-textual-linguistic aspect, meso-interdiscursive, and macro-

sociocultural, which promote three ideational powers. Specifically, we claim that the

OECD uses discursive maneuvers with the aim to achieve *power through ideas* by

constructing a mental image of the existing "problem" in education that necessitates

addressing it. Likewise, direct and indirect strategies, mainly based on the TALIS

tool, are used to construct teachers as problematic professionals and the OECD as

being in a position of authority. These tactics serve the attempts of the OECD to gain

power over ideas by shaping the perceptions of actors who may or may not have

legitimacy to ascribe meaning to policy issues. Last, the OECD texts on effective

teaching and TALIS aim to position the OECD's concept of teacher quality in the

broader societal and institutional discourses of the neoconservative economic agenda

in public policy (i.e., effectiveness and the rise of the knowledge economy). These

textual efforts are aimed at depoliticizing the ideas of the OECD on teaching (e.g.,

power in ideas). We offer nuanced insights into many aspects of the discursive efforts

used by OECD leaders to promote the normative control of the OECD in the teacher

quality discourse. Naturally, the normative power of the OECD is not only discursive,

and as others have noted, it relies also on enlisting partners that support its ideas and

share its interests (Sorensen, 2017; Sorensen & Robertson, 2017). The present CDA

of the teacher quality discourse afforded a glimpse into the discursive dynamics that

promote the GERM (Sahlberg, 2006, 2011).

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