


## THE INCLUSION OF THE DEAF STUDENT AND TEACHER TRAINING: A STUDY OF FEDERAL PUBLIC POLICIES

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to carry out a mapping of the official documents issued by the federal government, from 2005 onwards, seeking to identify what they say about the training of regular school teachers, to work in inclusive classrooms with deaf students. It was guided by a qualitative and documentary approach, selecting those that addressed inclusive public policies with emphasis on deafness and teacher training, with a time frame from Decree No. 5,626/2005, which ensures Libras as the natural language of the deaf. The Education Development Plan, the National Policy for Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education, the National Education Plan, the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and the National Common Curriculum Base were also listed. The scope of the documents analyzed showed that the training of teachers to work with deaf students, in regular classrooms, is treated in a little depth, denoting gaps and weaknesses for this training, consequently affecting the school development of these students. Thus, it is necessary to invest in the initial and continuing training of teachers who work in inclusive education, with a view to giving a new dimension to their pedagogical practice.

**Keywords:** Teacher training. Deafness. School inclusion. Federal public policies.

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## INTRODUCTION

The knowledge obtained through the investigation showed us that the education of the deaf was interposed, depending on the time, by different conflicting conceptions: the non-right to formal education, the non-acceptance of sign language, gesticulation and the obligation of oral language with the perspective of making them normal.

The unsatisfactory results obtained by such conceptions were noticed over time by researchers in the area, emerging new approaches that contemplated signs in the education of the deaf, these, in turn, began to organize themselves and demand the recognition of sign language in their education and to claim their culture through this emerging language, then, bilingual education, in which Libras and the written Portuguese language, constitute languages of instruction, enabling bilingual training.

As pointed out in the document of the Secretariat of Special Education – (Brasil, 2006, p. 19), "Deafness consists of the greater or lesser loss of normal perception of sounds. There are several types of people with deafness, according to the different degrees of hearing loss" and can be considered partially deaf or deaf, according to the classification below:

Partially Deaf (with hearing impairment):

- Mild deafness – up to 40 decibels dB. This hearing loss does not prevent the normal acquisition of oral language, but it may be the cause of some articulatory problem in reading and/or writing;
- Moderate deafness of 40 to 70 dB. Has greater difficulty in auditory discrimination in noisy environments [...] in understanding certain relation terms and/or complex grammatical forms. Your verbal comprehension is closely linked to your aptitude for visual perception.

Deaf:

- Severe deafness of 70 to 90 dB. Verbal comprehension will depend, to a large extent, on your ability to use visual perception and to observe the context of situations.
- Profound deafness greater than 90 dB. The severity of this loss is such that it deprives him of the auditory information necessary to perceive and identify the human voice, preventing him from acquiring oral language. (Brasil, 2006. p.19).

Also according to the same document, deafness can be classified as "unilateral, when it is present in only one ear and bilateral, when it affects both ears. Decibel (dB) is the unit of measurement used to measure the intensity of sound." (Brasil, 2006 p.19)

Decree No. 5,626, of December 22, 2005, in its chapter I, Art. 2, "a deaf person is considered to be one who, because he has hearing loss, understands and interacts with the world through visual experiences, manifesting his culture mainly through the use of the Brazilian Sign Language – Libras" (Brasil, 2005).

It is noteworthy that it was not only the deaf who suffered prejudice, educational and social segregation, but all people who had some type of disability. It was only from 1980



onwards, through movements and struggles for civil rights, that they began to gain strength in the political, educational and social world, to guarantee equal rights and access to society as a whole, thus initiating the inclusive process, bringing great transformations to the Brazilian educational system.

From this perspective, a series of documents, conventions, governmental, national and international movements in favor of people with disabilities emerged, outlining inclusive proposals such as: specialized educational assistance for each stage of schooling, considering their needs; combating exclusion and discrimination; guarantee of rights; strengthening of public policies; teacher training program in special education and inclusive education, among others.

Inclusive education must be committed to quality schooling, to the access and permanence of all its students, regardless of their physical or intellectual conditions or specific needs, (Brasil, 2010). Inclusion refers to "the process of building a society for all and, therefore, the targets of transformation are the social environments and not the person" (Brasil, 2008, p.32).

In 2015, Law No. 13,146 instituted the Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Statute of Persons with Disabilities), bringing in its article 2 what it considers as a person with disabilities,

Those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with one or more barriers, can obstruct their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with other people (Brasil, 2015).

In relation to deafness, Article 3 points out that communication is the "form of interaction of citizens that covers, among other options, languages, including the Brazilian Sign Language (Libras)" (Brasil, 2015).

In order to make Libras official as a legal mean of communication and expression for Brazilian deaf people, Law No. 10,436, of April 24, 2002 – known as the Libras Law – was enacted, which points out in its sole paragraph:

Brazilian Sign Language – Libras, is understood as the form of communication and expression, in which the linguistic system of a visual-motor nature, with its own grammatical structure, constitutes a linguistic system for the transmission of ideas and facts, originating from communities of deaf people in Brazil (Brasil, 2002).

In 2005, Decree No. 5,626 regulated the aforementioned law recognizing Libras "as a legal means of communication and expression for the deaf" (Brasil, 2002). This recognition values the cultural identity of the deaf that "involves rituals, languages, looks,



signs, representations, symbols, conventional models, profoundly plural and cultural processes" (Perlin, 2000, p. 23).

The above points out that it is through sign language that the deaf acquire language in a natural way, constituting itself in social relations, producing knowledge, transforming and developing, as "it represents an expressive role in the life of the deaf subject, leading him, through a structured language, to full development" (Dizeu; Capolari, 2005, p. 588).

This new educational and inclusive political panorama indicates that teachers need training to have theoretical knowledge in order to resize their pedagogical practice and offer quality teaching to all their students, especially the deaf, due to their linguistic specificities.

The objective of this study was to carry out a mapping of the official documents issued by the federal government, from 2005 onwards, seeking to identify what they say about the training of teachers to work with the inclusion of deaf students.

Reflecting on how teacher training has been contemplated in official documents from an inclusive perspective, with emphasis on deafness, becomes fundamental to understand more clearly what is expected of their performance and, above all, the importance of the role of being an educator in the face of the transformations that have marked Brazilian education.

It is justified, therefore, by the need to know these policies more densely, since the language of the deaf person is given through Libras, which makes them capable of communicating, learning and socializing, that is, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. On the other hand, the teacher's responsibility is to offer teaching/learning that expands the potential of students, allowing them to develop integrally, in addition, it requires them to be susceptible to changes and adapt to the needs of students in different contexts.

Thus, teacher training is crucial for the construction of education in a country, making it necessary to invest in their initial and continuing education, with a view to giving a new dimension to their pedagogical practice.

## **METHODOLOGICAL PATHS**

The present study is guided by a qualitative approach because it allows the researcher to establish a more enlightening understanding of the object of study, since his interest is focused on the process that involves it and not simply on the product (Bogdan; Biklen, 1994).

Doing qualitative research is analyzing and interpreting data, reflecting and exploring what they can provide, seeking regularities to create a rich understanding of the researched



context. Documentary analysis was used, which, for Lüdke and André (1986, p.38), "can constitute a valuable technique for approaching qualitative data, either by complementing the information obtained by other techniques, or by unveiling new aspects of a theme or problem". It was sought to identify the documents that addressed inclusive public policies with emphasis on deafness and teacher training, with a time frame from Decree No. 5.626 of 2005 that ensures the Brazilian Sign Language – Libras as the natural language of the deaf.

The data analysis was elaborated from the documents on the subject in question, seeking to achieve the proposed objective.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The researched documents will follow the chronological order of publication on teacher training and the inclusion of deaf students, from Decree No. 5.626/2005. The aforementioned Decree presents a vast contribution in the sense of establishing more precise directions for the inclusive process of these people, supporting the dissemination of Libras among school communities and higher education institutions as a "mandatory curricular subject in teacher training courses for the exercise of teaching, at secondary and higher levels, and in Speech Therapy courses" in all institutions of the education systems, whether they are of a private or public nature. Chapter III refers to the training of teachers "for the teaching of Libras in the final grades of Elementary School, High School and Higher Education", "for the teaching of Libras in Early Childhood Education and in the early years of Elementary School", "continuing education courses", "training of the Libras instructor", "training in Translation and Interpretation of Libras – Portuguese Language". Finally, this Decree provides guarantees from the public authorities in all spheres of society to support the training and training of professionals for the use of Libras "primarily those related to the training, qualification and qualification of teachers, servers and employees for the use and dissemination of Libras and the translation and interpretation of Libras – Portuguese Language".

According to (Lacerda; Lodi, 2012, p. 12-13), it was only after this Decree that, at the national level, "discussions began regarding the need to respect the linguistic particularity of the deaf and the use of this language in educational spaces".

Quadros (2004) points out that the sign language interpreter in the classroom must master both sign language and the spoken language of the country, in addition to having specific qualifications for his performance. Because communication between teachers and deaf students only occurs fully when the former acquires Libras as a first language or the



latter acquires Portuguese as a second language (LACERDA, 2000). When this does not occur, the role of the interpreter is vital in maintaining communication between them (Cabral; Córdula, 2017).

Against this backdrop, "the appropriate preparation of all educators is a key factor in promoting progress towards the establishment of inclusive schools" by ensuring that "teacher training programmes, both at the initial and in-service levels, include responses to special educational needs in inclusive schools" (Brasil, 1994, p. 10).

Referring to the deaf, their language is a visual space and is transmitted by hand signs and received by sight (Fernandes, 2003), and through it, they consolidate their capacities in a social relationship, thus making it necessary to have adequate linguistic and sociocultural conditions for the appropriation of the acquisition of their language. Hence the importance of providing "a regular class teacher with knowledge about the linguistic uniqueness manifested by deaf students" (Brasil, 2005), as well as ensuring the presence of a Libras interpreter with a view to promoting access to communication and developing the cognitive functions necessary for their school learning.

In 2007, the Education Development Plan (PDE) was launched, with one of the main points being teacher training and the valorization of education professionals. However, it did not point out any specificity regarding the training of teachers in regular classrooms for the inclusive process, nor did it mention deafness.

According to Pimenta and Lima (2010):

teachers are essential professionals in the processes of change in societies, because if they are left on the sidelines in the pedagogical and curricular decisions of others, no matter how interesting they may seem, they do not become effective, they do not generate effects on society (Pimenta; Lima, 2010, p.11-12).

In 2008, the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education provides for the specialist teacher the "initial and continuing education, general knowledge for the exercise of teaching and specific knowledge of the area" (Brasil, 2008, p.11), including those related to the teaching of Libras. It contemplated inclusive education as a social, political and pedagogical action in defense of everyone's right to education, directing special education actions to the Specialized Educational Service – AEE, responsible for providing resources and guiding the learning of students with disabilities in regular classrooms. This policy is aimed at special education teachers and did not mention the training of regular school teachers to deal with the inclusion of deaf students.

In the 2014 National Education Plan, Law No. 13,005, goals 15 and 16 ensure higher education training for all basic education professionals, obtained in degree courses in the





area in which they work, and investment in continuing education considering the needs, demands and contexts of the education systems. In its goal 4, in item 4.13, it guarantees a differentiated team of professionals to assist people with disabilities and for the deaf, Libras teachers, specialized teachers preferably Deaf and/or bilingual and translators and interpreters of Libras, not mentioning the preparation of regular class teachers in dealing with these students.

Law No. 13,146/2015 – Brazilian Inclusion Law (LBI) – presents determinations on the inclusion of people with disabilities and also addresses the training of Translators and Interpreters of Sign Language and Portuguese Language, interpreter guides, the provision of Libras teaching and didactic and technological resources favorable to the teaching of the deaf, aiming to promote the development of their autonomy and participation.

In the National Common Curricular Base – BNCC (2017), Libras is cited as an example of visual-motor verbal language and not effectively as a language. Nor is any element found that indicates the training of regular school teachers to work with deaf students.

According to Glat (2018), in order to meet the inclusive school in the face of current demands, "the matrix and curricular organization of teacher training courses need to be articulated [...] so that there is an interface and dialogue between the disciplines, in a perspective of human diversity as a standard" (Glat, 2018, p.14).

As Severino (2003, p.83) points out, "investment in the professional performance of educators cannot, therefore, be reduced to a supposed purely technical qualification. It also needs to be political, that is, to express sensitivity to the historical-social conditions of the existence of the subjects involved in education".

Therefore, "we are not born educators, we are trained and self-formed to be educators in a permanent practice-theory-practice allied to reflection and critical self-reflection [...] and hopes present in our educational work". (Monteiro, 2003, p. 325-326).

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In view of the above, the documents under study, despite the flaws pointed out, represent an advance for the inclusion of people with disabilities, especially the deaf, as their struggles over time have been concretized in relation to their language, their education and their rights. However, not all the documents cited emphasize the appropriate training of regular school teachers, and for there to be changes, they must be involved in the pedagogical and curricular decisions of the school, as well as act with knowledge with a view to offering quality education to all students. They also point out the importance of the



teacher specializing in Libras being in collaboration with those in regular classes, to meet the specificities of students with special needs, with emphasis here on the deaf, so that, in a collaborative way, they can build a curricular proposal capable of promoting their learning. Therefore, theoretical knowledge about Libras and deafness is necessary so that teachers can develop a more conscious and appropriate teaching to the linguistic specificities of these students.

Thinking about the training of these teachers today is configured in a linguistic field of multiple visual/motor specificities such as culture, identity, educational history, educational aspects and, notoriously, their language, which is totally different from the majority language, the oral/auditory.

Thus, the documentary analyses indicated gaps and severe problems associated with the way this training is placed. This is not only due to the different public policies for these students which move between bilingual education, special education and inclusive education, but also due to the way in which Libras is valued within the formative contents and its curricular structures in the Teaching Degree courses, because in the documents analyzed the minimum workload for this training is not mentioned, which configures, above all, a problem to be evidenced in the educational quality that these students will receive.

In Decree No. 5,626/2005, the training of teachers to work in Early Childhood Education and in the early years of Elementary School is treated in a way that does not value Libras, the language of instruction of deaf students, essential for their literacy, development and progress to studies in the following cycles. Thus, to the extent that the documents refute the place of Libras in this education – treating it as a discipline within the teaching degree that seems to follow a trend of teaching that is not very comprehensive with regard to the language and the inclusion of the deaf, not making bilingual training feasible – the schooling of the deaf student is doomed to failure. In this sense, he will have guaranteed access to studies, but his permanence and, perhaps, his success, will be uncertain.

From the analysis of the documents presented here, we could infer that, despite the legal purpose that supports the rights of this community, the school inclusion of the deaf is still consolidated in the characterization of a homogeneous education, structured to the standards of a hearing society and, therefore, suffering the influences of "audintism" which, as paraphrasing Skliar (1998, p.15), the term 'ouvintismo' refers to "a set of representations of the listeners from which the deaf person is obliged to look at himself and narrate himself as if he were a listener".





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