# Discourse, Interpretation and Translation: The SLI Occupation and its Current Meanings / *Discurso, interpretação e tradução: a profissão TILS e seus sentidos na atualidade*

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the issue of the Brazilian sign language interpreter as a discursive position in construction following the theoretical-analytical contribution French Discourse Analysis (AD) in the perspective of Michel Pêcheux in interface with Translation Studies. The interest in the resumption of a recent research is mainly due to the fact that new conditions for the production of speech about translators and sign language interpreters (TILS) and their activities are more capillary in the last decade in the whole country.

KEYWORDS: Translator and Sign Language Interpreter; Discourse Analysis; Translation Studies; Formation; Profession.

*RESUMO*

*O presente artigo trata da questão do intérprete de língua brasileira de sinais como uma posição discursiva em construção sob o aporte teórico-analítico da Análise de Discurso (AD) francesa na perspectiva de Michel Pêcheux em interface com os Estudos da tradução. O interesse pela retomada de pesquisa recente acontece, principalmente, pelo fato de novas condições de produção de discurso acerca dos tradutores e intérpretes de língua de sinais (TILS) e suas atividades constituírem-se com maior capilarização na última década em todo o país.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Tradução e interpretação em língua de sinais; Análise de discurso; Estudos de tradução; Formação; Profissão.*

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**The Revisited Study and its Backdrop**

This paper continues and expands the study described in the thesis *Brazilian Sign Language Interpreter*: a discursive position in construction[1] (RUSSO, 2010). In that study, the author discussed her work as a sign language interpreter (SLI) educator and practice-module instructor in the programs she taught in at the time. The *corpus* analyzed comprised self-assessments filled out by students in an SLI training program held in a southern Rio Grande do Sul city in 2004. The course was run in collaboration between the state office of the *Federação Nacional de Educação e Integração dos Surdos* - FENEIS [National Federation for the Education and Integration of the Deaf] and the local Association of the Deaf. We also looked into these students' accounts on their interpretation experiences later on in 2008 as practitioners.

As Russo (2010) is describing how such information was collected, she explains that the interpreter training courses she teaches focus primarily on techniques for interpreting sign language into spoken language and vice versa. To that end, as an instructor she seeks to interrelate the activities proposed by the course, the students' experience of Brazilian Sign Language (Libras), and their practice as interpreters even before they had joined the program. In other words, the author conducts contextual self-assessments whose purpose also includes allowing her to review her own practice as an SLI educator. By so doing, she gets feedback from students about the new things they learned from the program and whether it has met their expectations or not.

At the time, that study was meant to pinpoint the discursive meaning effects produced by SLIs during their training and professional practice, i.e., how discursive positions are built in the field of knowledge where SLIs operate; set up relationships between the literature on Discourse Analysis and Translation Studies in order to bring out meanings regarding the field in which Brazilian Sign Language interpreters work and their training; and contribute to discussions leading towards putting together future curricula for Brazilian Sign Language Interpreter undergraduate programs, as required by article 17 of Federal Decree no. 5626/05.

In this study, we will look specifically into the last goal mentioned above and the guiding question related to it: based on analyzing the *corpus* and on this study's

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[1] Master's thesis defended in 2009 at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) Graduate Program in Education (PPGEDU) under the supervision of Prof. Regina Maria Varini Mutti, PhD.

discussions, what meanings can we suggest for defining SLI training proposals at a higher level of education? The *corpus* analysis was two-fold: at first, we conducted a trial analysis of a single study participant; then, all participants were brought in to add to and interrelate with other elements found during the study.

As previously mentioned, the literature on which this study is grounded is French-Brazilian Discourse Analysis (heretofore DA), from the perspective of Michel Pêcheux, combined with Translation Studies. Regarding Discourse Analysis, Russo (2010) brought to the discussion mostly the notions of speech, language, subject, meaning effects, and interpretation. As for Translation Studies, she worked on the notions of translation, interpretation, native language, and foreign language, and interrelated them with Sign Language Interpretation studies.

Her analyses pointed out meaning effects that lead to the construction of SLIs' discursive position, based on their own discursive formulations. One of the identified effects highlighted the *importance of becoming proficient in the languages involved in the interpretation process*, a double meaning effect that derives from another - the *meaning effect of doing one's best to be a good interpreter*, of grasping an interpretation know-how. Other meaning effects are related to *technical and practical particularities required by the various fields in which sign language interpreters operate*. We also analyzed an effect we call *meaning effect of the importance of feeling*, a meaning that is unique to each interpreter, as well as the meaning effects of *belonging to the deaf community*, *interpreters' public exposure in the stage act of interpreting*, and finally, *realizing that knowledge is diverse.* In addition to the effects analyzed, the study identified some issues capable of contributing "to discussions leading towards putting together curricula for sign language interpreter undergraduate programs, as a response to education's current, growing demand" (RUSSO, 2010, p.9).[2]

It should also be noted that the backdrop in which the study was carried out presented with discursive production conditions pointing out the fact that SLI training was in transition, both in structural and practical terms. At the same time, such training was gaining momentum and more visibility in the different branches of government. Later on, SLI practice regulations were set forth by Federal Law no. 12319/10.

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[2] Original text: "para reflexões que apontem caminhos para a concretização de propostas curriculares de cursos de graduação de tradutor-intérprete, com ênfase na formação de ILS [nesse artigo TILS], em resposta à crescente demanda atual da educação."

Regardless of this law's many faults and significant vetoes, such as those which struck off the requirements for an undergraduate degree and the creation of professional boards, it has come to stir up fresh discussions in the country.


**Discourse and Translation: Ties, Interfaces, Challenges**


Considering French-Brazilian Discourse Analysis affiliated and indebted to Michel Pêcheux, as well as its interface with Translation Studies,[3] in this paper we examine the notions of speech, language, subject, interpretation, and translation – important sources for the analyses made in keeping with our study goals. However, it should be noted that our discussions and intended approach are not meant to settle the differences between these fields.

According to DA, the subject is constituted based on discourses that have already been uttered in a given historic-social situation but which remain there, "dormant" as previously said, ready to be used again under another condition of production. These discourses and their relationship with their new condition of production are called interdiscourse by DA. Such knowledge is already there in discursive memory and manifests itself in the intradiscourse made up of linguistic marks that help understand the workings of language and the meaning effects produced. Both interdiscourse and intradiscourse make up the subject's discourse because, to DA, discourse is understood as a "meaning effect" between speakers and reaches a social-historic-ideological level.

With respect to ideology, Pêcheux (1995)[4] says it marks the subjects' discursive production positions and conditions through interdiscourse and intradiscourse, considering that both of them make up the discourse. Ideology, i.e. the materiality of discourse, also plays a part through the imaginary formations that assign the subjects' place in the discourse. A place each subject ascribes to oneself and to the other. Hence, "a discourse is always pronounced on the basis of given conditions of production"

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[3] Translation Studies is the theoretical field in which many studies on interpretation are conducted. Studies not only on sign language but also interpretation of spoken languages in its three types: simultaneous, consecutive and/or whispered.

[4] PÊCHEUX, M. Automatic Discourse Analysis. In: HAK, T.; HELSLOOT, N. (Eds.). *Michel Pêcheux: Automatic Discourse Analysis*. Amsterdan; Atlanta, GA: Editions Rodopi B.V., 1995. pp.63-121.

(PÊCHEUX, 1995, p.79)[5] which do not belong to the physical reality of the subjects' place but instead point to an imaginary discursive place (imaginary object) that shows up within the realm of imaginary formations.

It is in that sense that we can think about the direct relationship between discourse and its conditions of production combined: the others that listen to me, how I believe the others listen to me, how I listen to myself, and how the others think they listen to me. There are different positions linked by contact points between each one of them. Therefore, discourse materializes in these different discourse places, under the different discursive conditions of production. Analysts are tasked with interpreting how language works, not only in linguistic terms but above all as a represented place where meaning is produced.

It is in this scenario of reflection that uncertainties about sign language interpreters' position surface, that is, a position which, concurrently with their day-to-day practice, has been opening up and treading pathways. It is a subject-held discursive position that often seems to be homogenous in a way, but which is in fact under a constant process of being questioned, changed, displaced, and built anew.

Vinhais (2009) says that everyone's discourse carries their history, values, feelings, and changes, and assigns meanings to events and developments that are not homogenous but instead heterogeneous, and all that shows up in discursive formulation. In addition to taking up different discursive spaces, subjects operate under the assumption that they own their discourses - an illusion, considering every discourse is loaded with previous discourses materialized by their relationship with the language, which is limited by its incompleteness, dullness, and ability of preventing us from saying everything we want to, everything we would like. Therefore, we can ratify the idea that discourse as an effect is marked by both the multiplicity of possible meanings and the mistaken notion we actually own our discourses.

Grigoletto (2007) highlights that it is not only the subjects' social place that will establish their discursive place. The structure of the language, which materializes in intradiscourse, also helps mark off one's discursive place. The discursive place occupied by SLIs is not characterized exclusively by the fact they belong to the deaf community (or not) or are accepted by it (or not). It is also characterized by how their

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[5] For reference, see footnote 4.

discourse, manifested by their use of sign language in their social relationships with the deaf and day-to-day practice as interpreters,[6] is interpreted by others. We understand that the subjects, i.e. the SLIs, have no control over the meanings produced by the use of language. There is no established meaning.

Nevertheless, there are meanings which are already structured in the "sign language interpretation" discursive event and circulate among SLIs. One of them is the meaning that all SLIs must achieve some fidelity to the meaning of the text produced in the source language while interpreting it to the target language. Another meaning already imbued in many SLIs' discursive memory steers them to be impartial, to conceal SLIs' image of or "opinion" about the product to be interpreted. Something we know is impossible, given the inputs we get from the literature. In that regard, when we think discursively about SLIs and the act of interpreting, we realize how long the road ahead is not only in terms of improving the everyday practice of interpreting but especially when it comes to theoretical reflections about such practice, that is, thinking about the discursive place we occupy and the meanings produced in this place.

Language is another concept that merits special attention, considering the discourses analyzed here come from interpreters who routinely use at least two languages – sign language, i.e., a visual-gestural language,[7] and Portuguese, a spoken and written language, which are languages in contact. According to DA, language is one of the essential conditions for there to be discourse and is linked to the concepts of subject, history, and memory. Language is a system whose elements are organized in a particular manner. However, this system is not closed but instead open because it depends on its use by the subjects under given social-historic conditions. Subjected to points of deflection and rifts of meaning, it is in a constant relationship between history and the subjects using it in their utterances.

According to Orlandi (2004), DA focuses on the way language works by interrelating the actuality of language – in its materiality, through intradiscourse, with the actuality of history – through symbolic materialities, through interdiscourse. In other

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[6] Here interpretation is seen as the action of rendering a language into another. At this point, we are not talking about the concept of interpretation according to DA. We will be talking about that next.

[7] Today, we can also say that sign language has a graphic character, written records owed to research and practice in the field of sign language writing. In Brazil, the reference in this field is researcher Marianne Rossi Stumpf  (2006), who wrote her doctoral dissertation on the topic: *Learning to Write Sign Language using the SignWriting System:* Sign Languages on Paper and the Computer

words, DA focuses on how the relationship between language and history allows us to understand the operation and production of meanings by the subjects, thereby constituting the discourse. To the author, subjects "submit themselves to language while immersed in their experience of the world and driven by the demand to assign meaning, and to give themselves meaning as well" (ORLANDI, 2007, p.12).[8] Therefore, given the subjects of this study routinely experience both the Portuguese language and Brazilian sign language, we should think about how this process of creating meanings and significations takes place under this demand for bilingual contact. This situation implies a discursive relationship that comprises language, subject, and history in a particular, border-like space. A place of strains, conflict, domination, pleasure, enjoyment, pain, non-silent gestures, expressions, and shouting, and which is located along a subtle, movable border between the two worlds, the two languages.

Going back to what Pêcheux (2014)[9] says about the establishment and movement of meanings, interpretation gestures coexist alternately with the description gestures of discursive practices, which are understood as the actuality that sets itself within the interpretation, the actuality of language, its structure, which is traversed by the blended meaning of stabilized significations and derived meanings − the place where events, the exteriority which is not outside, which is entwined with historicity, the renewing element, the new, produce other meanings.

Orlandi (2004) says that interpretation happens through the ability provided by memory, by interdiscourse: other meanings emerge from other subjects repeating what has been said elsewhere under a new production condition. Incidentally, what would be the analysts' role in the interpretation process? According to Orlandi (2004, p.80), their task would be "to show how a symbolic object produces meaning, how signification processes operate in a text, any text."[10] Paraphrasing Pêcheux (2014),[11] we point out that analysts must be aware of the place and time in which the interpretation is to happen and never forget the relationship between such interpretation and description. It

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[8] Original text: "se submete à língua mergulhado em sua experiência de mundo e determinado pela injunção a dar sentido, a significar-se."

[9] PÊCHEUX, M. Discourse: Structure ou Event? In: PARKER, Ian; PAVÓN-CUÉLLAR, David (ed.). *Lacan, Discourse, Event:* New Psychoanalytic Approaches to Textual Indeterminacy. London: Routledge, 2014. p.77-100.

[10] Original text: "mostrar como um objeto simbólico produz sentidos, como os processos de significação trabalham um texto, qualquer texto."

[11] For reference, see footnote 9.

is a dangerous description because in it the utterance takes part in a "play" in which it is some other-discourse, "the virtual presence within the describable materiality" (PÊCHEUX, 2014, p.93).[12] Hence, analysts must assume a position that recognizes regular discursive descriptions. Their act of interpretation must correspond to taking a stand that is a meaning effect.

The field of Translation Studies (TS) understands the term interpretation differently. TS use the word to refer to interpreters' specific activity of rendering one language into another in an oral or signed manner. However, in some authors working in this field we find a few converging points where they see interpretation as something that produces meaning as language is used, much like what DA suggests.

Rónai (1976) revisits the understanding of the other meanings and mentions the traps set along the path followed by translators and interpreters. He says these traps are characterized by the belief many such practitioners hold regarding the "autonomous existence of words and the unconscious conviction that each word in a language necessarily has its counterpart in any other language" (RÓNAI, 1976, p.16).[13] Here we find a co-understanding about how import the condition of discourse production is in the interpretation gesture process and how often language's dull, equivocal character is forgotten by interpreters.

When discussing simultaneous interpretation, Magalhães Junior (2007) talks about the myths of impersonality and invisibility in the interpreter's interpretative act. According to the author, that idea about interpretation is outdated. Today, we understand that any and all translation (or interpretation) is always an imperfect exercise in which translators and interpreters are constantly required to make decisions, and thereby take risks and expose themselves to mistakes, doubts, uneasiness, choices.

Incidentally, Frota (2007) discusses the field of knowledge called Translation Studies while taking Discourse Analysis into account. Initially, the author says that translators had long sought to become invisible within their translation and interpretation work. However, current authors such as Lawrence Venuti[14] look for a

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[12] For reference, see footnote 9.

[13] Original text: "existência autônoma das palavras e na convicção inconsciente de que a cada palavra de uma língua necessariamente corresponde outra noutra língua qualquer."

[14] International reference in the field of Translation Studies.

place of social visibility in the act of interpreting, that is, they see translation and interpretation as a social practice.

Translation Studies is an area that goes into so many others through its "branches" and ramifications and is not, *a priori*, constituted within its own field but instead draws knowledge from other fields. Thus, by considering translation and interpretation as a social practice, we can understand TS today moving closer to other subjects such as Discourse Analysis, which does not believe an interpreter's work can do away with historic, cultural, political, social, or ideological determinants. The notion of subject is reshaped and, therefore, so is the notion of interpretation.

Now, when at work, SLIs interpret their own experiences as they produce discourse in the target language while interpreting. They are interpreters of themselves, interpreters as practitioners who interpret from one language to another, as well as interpreters of their memories and personal histories. However, many of these practitioners still share a memory subscribing to the myth of neutrality, impartiality – dogmas and beliefs highly ingrained in the field of translation and interpretation that still remain in some discourses from said field and have gone on to infect the field of SLI. Therefore, they are interpreters in the sense they produce an utterance recorded through writing, speech, or signs, and who thereby set up a place of interpretation, provided that everything they utter can be interpreted.

In our study, considering one of the languages under focus is sign language – a visual-gestural language – the term we are going to use to define the act of interpreting, in the sense of rendering spoken Portuguese into Brazilian Sign Language or Brazilian Sign Language into spoken Portuguese, is interpretation. This choice is based also on a document presented by Pagura (2003, p.210), according to which an interpreter is someone who "works with the spoken language."[15][16] As for the notion of translation, we point out the study conducted by Russo and Pereira (2008), in which they revisit the classic categorization by Jakobson (2007) regarding the different concepts about the term *translation*: 1. interlingual: translation that involves two different languages, in which a text is reconstructed in a language other than the one it had been originally built; 2. intralingual: verbal signs are replaced by others belonging to the same language, such as through paraphrasing; 3. intersemiotic: when non-verbal signs are

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[15] In the case of Brazilian Sign Language, signed.
[16] Original text: "trabalha com a palavra falada."

turned into verbal language. In addition to those, we can also point out the sociolinguistic translation category presented by Rónai (1976) and which is characterized when the interlocutor, in synch with social conventions and the context, translates the thoughts of the enunciator.

According to Aubert (2003), Translation Studies remained for a long time focused on seeking fidelity in translation, bound as they were by the shackles of some didacticism and in pursuit of a prescription and systematization for doing translations. The author says Translation Studies are going through a time of theoretical disquietude and are no longer seeking answers but instead raising questions. The author also points out that the translation procedure clarifications advocated by the "more radical" translators should be considered, because of the fact they help propose data capable of being verified.[17] However, he advises that an approach that is not specifically directed at that may "fly higher and cast an eye over a broader, more interdisciplinary field. Therefore, these approaches do not essentially rival or oppose one another but are complementary instead" (AUBERT, 2003, pp.12-13).[18]

Another issue that merits attention refers to the translator's (in)visibility, something that has always been energetically touted by translators as a goal to be achieved in every translation. The more "concealed" translators were in their texts, the better translators they would be and their translations more highly appreciated. However, with respect to that notion, there is a point brought up by translator Benedetti (2003) that deserves a more in-depth look. The author sees translators as subjects of their translation and must think about their work and themselves. Now, we believe that, discursively speaking, the subject does not own what they do or think given that such subject is loaded with other discourses, and that is what makes the subject a subject. However, it is interesting to think that, in Translation Studies as well, translators themselves are going through a transition in terms of the discursive positions that constitute them. They are going through a time of instability where they are moving away from a radical view of neutrality and invisibility and setting themselves up in

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[17] As the materiality of the professional action of interpreting or translating, as the product of the work done by interpreters or translators.
[18] Original text: "alçar voos mais elevados e lançar o olhar sobre um campo mais vasto, mais interdisciplinar. Na essência, portanto, essas abordagens não são rivais ou opostas, e sim, complementares."

another place where they think about their practice, of being subjects of the translation process and action, discursively speaking.

The author challenges the notion of invisibility and claims translators are in fact somewhat visible both in the textual and social fields. Now, when translations are properly done, it is understood translators had to work harder in the translation process. Their comings and goings across the text, their revisions, their searches through other sources, their discursive affiliations, their social position, all of that is there in the translators' discourse, in the text they deliver. Therefore, their presence is there, albeit seemingly "invisible" to readers; a presence which is marked by, among other things, the fluency of the text.

In agreement with that position, Arrojo (2007) says a translator's duty is to produce meaning. According to her, translators need to know how to "read" and know how to "write." She understand knowing how to "read" as "learning to produce meanings from a given text that are *acceptable* to the cultural community to which the reader belongs" (ARROJO, 2007, p.76; emphasis in original),[19] as knowing how to "write" similar to a writer getting ready to write when he/she sets about writing a book.

There is yet another issue with respect to the term translation, one that is connected to the term interpretation. Quadros (2002) tells us that the word translation is used more often when a written record is made in a given target language (the language being translated into), while the word interpretation is used for oral utterances – as in the case of conference interpreters – or signed utterances – as in the case of the interpreter subjects in this study, i.e. Brazilian Sign Language interpreters. Magalhães Junior (2007) points out that the difference in terminology between translation and interpretation stands more as a teaching resource that emphasizes the fact that one does not exist without the other. "In reality, translating and interpreting are verbs and actions embedded in one another" (MAGALHÃES, 2007, p.26).[20] [21]

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[19] Original text: "aprender a produzir significados, a partir de um determinado texto, que sejam *aceitáveis* para a comunidade cultural da qual participa o leitor."

[20] The terms translation and interpretation are under review by authors that do not restrict translation to a written text and interpretation to spoken words. Sign languages provide elements for us to think about the distinction between translating and interpreting in a broader sense, including oral languages. The very concept of translation is being expanded as a result of new translation interfaces. Silvério et al. (2012) are Brazilian researchers who have been making an effort to contribute to such discussion. However, specifically in the field of sign languages, studies on translation are still in their early stages.

[21] Original text: "Na verdade, traduzir e interpretar são verbos e ações que se interpenetram."

Therefore, we should point out that the notion of interpretation to Translation Studies is different from the notion of interpretation used by Discourse Analysis. As previously mentioned, Discourse Analysis sees interpretation as the production of a meaning that comes about through the possibility a subject has of reclaiming, under a new discursive condition of production, the memory of discourse, the interdiscourse, other meanings for something that is already there, consigning them to history. Interpreting is how the subject gives meaning to the event while using language under given social-historic conditions.

With respect to interpreting within the Translation Studies framework, we would like to address a few technical and historic aspects, such as the definition by Pagura (2003) about the two types of interpretation: consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. Consecutive interpretation is the one "in which the interpreter listens to a lengthy bit of speech, takes notes and, after a significant portion or the entire speech is finished, takes the floor and repeats the entire speech in the target language, usually his/her native tongue" (PAGURA, 2003, p.211).[22]

On the other hand, interpreters' work is different when it comes to simultaneous interpretation, the type more widely used at events nowadays. It was devised in the post-war for the Nuremberg trials and further developed with the creation of the United Nations (ONU). In simultaneous interpretation, the interpreters – always in pairs – work secluded in a glass booth allowing them to view the original speaker and listen to his/her speech through headphones. As they process the message, they re-express it in the target language by means of a microphone connected to a sound system that takes their words to listeners through headphones or receivers similar to portable radios. This type of interpretation makes it possible to transpose a message into countless languages at the same time,[23] provided that the equipment allows it (PAGURA, 2003). Simultaneous interpretation also offers another possibility called "whispered interpreting" or, to use the term often borrowed from French, *chuchotage*. Pagura (2003, p.212) provides his concept for this term as well: "The interpreter sits close to

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[22] Original text: "em que o intérprete escuta um longo trecho de discurso, toma notas e, após a conclusão de um trecho significativo ou do discurso inteiro, assume a palavra e repete todo o discurso na língua-alvo, normalmente a sua língua materna."

[23] It should be noted that interpretation does not take place exactly at the same time because interpreters need to always lag a little behind the source language. This time gap is referred to by the French term *décalage*.

one or two listeners and simultaneously interprets the message spoken in another language."[24]

In that regard, we can see that some concepts Discourse Analysis presents to us, such as discursive memory, interdiscourse, intradiscourse, and interpretation, operate amidst aspects taken from the field of Translation Studies. They are imbued in the practices, in the approaches. Given "they are there," it is up to us, DA researchers and analysts, to steer them towards our analyses.

**Meaning Effects: Analyzing SLI Practice**

The year is 2017. Several SLI-related developments have been taking place in the country. SLI associations' membership, like so many others in the country, has been declining fast and hard. At the same time and in the opposite direction, we see the *Federação Brasileira das Associações dos Profissionais Tradutores e Intérpretes e Guias Intérpretes de Língua de Sinais* - FEBRAPILS [Brazilian Federation of Translators and Interpreters and Sign Language Interpreters] working doggedly and taking part in government audiences in an effort to work more closely with the Ministry of Education (MEC). It has joined forces with the *Sindicato dos Tradutores* - SINTRA [Translators' Union] and the *Associação Brasileira de Tradutores* - ABRATES [Brazilian Association of Translators], which are historical entities in the Brazilian field of translation, and built a closer relationship with the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) since 2011, when a significant delegation of SLIs attended the WASLI Conference in Durban, South Africa. Another fact is the growing number of bachelor's degree programs in sign language interpretation at several Brazilian federal universities, such as UFSCAR (*Universidade Federal de São Carlos*), UFRGS (*Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul*), UFG (*Universidade Federal de Goiás*), UFES (*Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo*), UFSC (*Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina*), UFRJ (*Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro*), and UFRR (*Universidade Federal de Roraima*). We chose to analyze only the 7 (seven) Brazilian Sign Language bachelor programs of federal universities because of the scope of

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[24] Original text: "O intérprete se senta próximo a um ou dois ouvintes e interpreta simultaneamente a mensagem apresentada em outro idioma."

analysis for this study. We examine the Courses documents looking for the effects of belonging to the deaf community and the meaning effect of doing one's best to be a good interpreter.

When the Brazilian Inclusion Act (law no. 13146/2015) was passed, the country's legislation was given yet another tool to pursue the inclusion of people with a disability. There is a significant number of tenured SLIs working at federal universities. However, other recent political and economic events in the country, such as governmental investment cuts across the board and the policy of contracting out core education activities, have posed a paradox, given the few, hard-fought achievements in the field of sign language interpretation.

Regarding one of the meaning effects emerging from our study, that is, the *longing to belong to the deaf community*, which is considered relevant by the SLIs taking part in this study, the discourse production conditions that significantly impact such effect today should be revisited. However, first we are going to look at an excerpt of the discursive materiality of a subject analyzed by our research: "[...] I earned the deaf community's appreciation and they finally gave me my sign, because before it used to be just a sign[25] - 'A's mother,' then simply 'B,' and finally I got my sign" (RUSSO, 2010, p.87).[26] Here, we see that belonging is relevant and sought-after by the subjects at the time they were training to work as interpreters. Even though the aforementioned subject is a deaf person's family member, that fact alone does not immediately make such subject a participant in or member of the deaf community because "someone who is a friend, an interpreter, a teacher, a government official, will become a member of the community when he/she shows he/she is routinely engaged with that community and shares their knowledge and ideas, that is, proves to be quite involved with and close to them" (RUSSO, 2010, p.88).[27]

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[25] In sign language, it is customary for people or entities, whether connected to the deaf community or not, or yet for someone widely known such as a government authority or a celebrity, to be given a sign, that is, a sign that identifies who each one is. It is similar to having a name in sign language. These signs are usually given by deaf people based on some physical and/or behavioral trait of said person or entity.

[26] Original text: "[...] fiquei reconhecida pela comunidade surda e enfim me deram um sinal, pois antes era sinal – 'mãe da A', depois só 'B', então enfim ganhei meu sinal."

[27] Original text: "aquele que é amigo, que é intérprete, que é professor, que é governante, será ou não membro da comunidade quando mostrar que compartilha cotidianamente da mesma, de seus saberes, de suas ideias, mostrando um maior envolvimento e cumplicidade."

Based on the fact that this longing to belong is referred to by SLIs and many Sign Language Interpretation Studies instructors and researchers as "to smell deaf,"[28] it would be obvious to think that the curricula of new bachelor's degree programs in sign language interpretation take such wish into account, firstly because most students going into these programs today do not come from the deaf community as it used to be in the late 1990s. That ratifies the issue examined in the previous study.

> However, we must ask ourselves how long we will be able to say all sign language interpreters emerge from and are born in the deaf community, or yet, how long we will be able to keep this oftentimes close relationship between interpreters and the deaf community going. There will be a day when a child or a teenager will answer when asked: "what are you going to be when you grow up?" –"I am going to be a sign language interpreter." In case that happens, how will we hold on to this sense that all SLIs are born within the deaf community? Further still that SLIs must have this close relationship with the deaf community? There's more. How do sign language interpretation training programs acknowledge this particularity and bring this aspect of *belonging* to the deaf community into their plans and development? (RUSSO, 2010, p.71).[29]

Another reason is the very discourse by many SLI instructors who endorse this longing to belong and urge students to get closer to the deaf community even before graduating. However, upon analyzing the political/educational projects (PEPs) and curricula of some bachelor's degree programs in Brazilian Sign Language interpretation we find such wish is more often than not largely overlooked by these programs. It is not actually a topic and a practice directly approached in their courses, except for internships where, because of their very nature, getting closer to the deaf community is inevitable. In the UFES program, we found the courses *History of Sign Language* (4 credits) and *Cultural Practices and Sign Language*: *Deaf Studies* (4 credits); in the UFRGS program, the courses *Deaf Studies I* and *II* (4 credits each); in the UFG

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[28] Literal translation of the Brazilian Sign Language sign for "being near," "being close," often used to underscore it is important for Brazilian Sign Language interpreters to be close to the deaf community.

[29] Original text: "Entretanto, devemos nos questionar até quando poderemos dar conta de que todos os intérpretes de língua de sinais surgirão e nascerão dentro da comunidade surda, ou ainda, até quando poderemos manter esta, muitas vezes, íntima relação dos intérpretes com a comunidade surda. Haverá um dia em que uma criança, ou um adolescente, irá responder, ao ser perguntado: "o que você vai ser quando crescer?" "Vou ser intérprete de língua de sinais. Caso isto ocorra, como iremos manter este sentido de que todos os ILS nascem dentro da comunidade surda? Ou, ainda, que os ILS devam ter esta íntima relação com a comunidade surda? E mais. Como os cursos de formação de intérpretes de Língua de Sinais reconhecem esta especificidade, trazendo para dentro do planejamento e elaboração dos mesmos este aspecto do *pertencimento* na e da comunidade surda?"

program, only *Deaf studies, society and culture* (4 credits); at UFSC, only the mandatory course *Deaf Studies I* (4 credits) and the elective course *History of Libras Interpretation Studies* (4 credits); in the UFRJ program, we found the courses *Fundamentals of the History of Deaf Education* (2 credits) and *Fundamentals of Bilingual Deaf Education* (2 credits); and at UFRR, the course *Fundamentals of Deaf Education* (4 credits). We were taken aback by the fact that, in the PEP of the UFSC bachelor's degree program, a pioneer in SLI training and a benchmark for many programs in the country, the term *deaf community* shows up a single time and merely when the law is mentioned. However, we should highlight the bachelor's degree program at *Universidade Federal de São Carlos* (UFSCAR): one of the goals stated in its PEP includes "allowing students to learn by having contact with the deaf community, thinking about new practices, and improving their knowledge" (UFSCAR, 2016, p.8).[30] Additionally, the curriculum includes courses such as *Introduction to Interpretation and Studies on Deafness* (4 credits), *Interpretation at School I* and *II* (4 credits each), and *Multiculturalism and Deafness* (2 credits), whose syllabuses show the program aims at instilling this sense of belonging to the deaf community in students.

However, we understand a program curriculum does not materialize merely in the shape of documents, a roll of courses or at school but instead through practices that encompass the entire training process. In that regard, we acknowledge that practices among the deaf community are included in other ways at the aforementioned federal universities.

Another meaning effect revisited by this study is the one that highlights *doing one's best to be a good interpreter* and grasping an interpretation know-how. Nowadays, there is a significant number of SLIs at federal universities after several recruitment processes were carried out across the country. They work as non-faculty staff for whom a high school diploma is the minimum education requirement. Therefore, SLIs have the underlying preoccupation of successfully handling the particularities of interpreting in the academic environment's three load-bearing pillars: teaching, research, and extension. Such preoccupation is justified because SLIs' day-to-day work at federal universities takes place in a wide variety of backdrops and fields of knowledge, and at different levels (laboratory schools, undergraduate, graduate studies).

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[30] Original text: "dar condições ao estudante para aprender no contato com a comunidade surda, refletindo sobre novas formas de atuação e redimensionando seu saber."

Therefore, we point out the political-economic aspect related to the job done by SLIs. As previously mentioned, most SLIs at federal universities today work as non-faculty staff in a position called *sign language interpreter*. The position requires at least a high school education and is listed at the so-called D level of federal servants' career. Nevertheless, we find there is a legal paradox there because, while article 17 of Federal Decree no. 5626/05 regulating Brazilian Sign Language requires all SLIs working in higher education institutions to hold an undergraduate degree in the field of BSL – Portuguese Language, Federal Law no. 12319/2010, which regulates the SLI occupation, was passed without the same requirement set by the decree.[31] Since then, MEC has been allowing federal universities to offer high school education-level places in SLI recruitment processes, in keeping with the latter law and to the detriment of the position. The position also exists in the federal servant career and is called *translator* interpreter. It is usually filled by translators and interpreters hired for the other languages and who are required to hold a bachelor's degree in language studies. In 2015, the Brazilian Inclusion Act (law no. 13146/2015) was passed. Its article 28, paragraph 2, item II, once again requires that "to interpret in undergraduate and graduate program classrooms, Brazilian Sign Language interpreters must hold an undergraduate degree primarily in Brazilian sign language interpretation" (BRASIL, 2015).[32] More recently, since April 2017, adding to the aforementioned paradox and following the flow of the national policy on outsourcing, the federal government has been opening up temporary jobs at various federal universities for sign language specialists holding an undergraduate degree. Incidentally, these temps are paid more than tenured ones. There is even a terminological inadequacy, considering it is a sign language, i.e. Brazilian Sign Language – Libras, regulated as such by Federal Law no. 10436/02.

Therefore, a new analysis about the described discursive conditions ratifies what the research described regarding the preoccupation with delivering a good interpretation, and sees in-service training as the path towards such improvement and an

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[31] It should be noted that back when the regulations on the SLI occupation was being set, MEC was graduating 450 new BSL bachelors across the country through an online program run by UFSC in 16 Brazilian states.

[32] Original text: "os tradutores e intérpretes da Libras, quando direcionados à tarefa de interpretar nas salas de aula dos cursos de graduação e pós-graduação, devem possuir nível superior, com habilitação, prioritariamente, em Tradução e Interpretação em Libras."

"opportunity to practice and enhance one's performance" (RUSSO, 2010, p.81).[33] However, given most federal universities only learned about professional SLIs after they were hired and began working and are completely in the dark about the particularities of sign language interpreting, they have no experience or knowledge enough to suggest any type of training for SLIs. Hence, it is SLIs themselves who are at the helm of their in-service training. They suggest, devise, and provide training to their SLI peers within the very federal universities where they work or at the invitation of others.

Another initiative taking place comprises the recent call-ups by FEBRAPILS, such as online meetings[34] with interpreters, to share the association's concerns regarding SLI training. Once again, the meaning effect is ratified also with respect to the institution representing SLIs nationwide.

## Conclusion

The analysis revisited in this paper points to the vast array of possible paths to follow in order to foster and ensure the initial, continued, and in-service training of sign language interpreters. Written at a time of transition and new developments regarding the organization of sign language interpreters across the country, this paper is affected by new production conditions that include the pursuit of empowerment and greater visibility and legitimacy for SLIs, creation of a higher number of on-campus, undergraduate sign language interpreter programs, and SLI participation in studies dedicated to sign language interpretation in various fields of work.

Therefore, in keeping with the sense of belonging to the deaf community and the topics previously discussed, we can suggest, based on our follow-up on analyses of the original *corpus* (RUSSO, 2010), that new interpretation programs training sign language interpreters need to define, within their philosophy and curriculum, ways to ensure students keenly understand the deaf community's issues without having to have previously belonged to it. From this standpoint, we can provide opportunities for a

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[33] Original text: "oportunidade de praticar e melhorar sua atuação."
[34] On September 14, 2017, FEBRAPILS held the first online meeting with SLIs to publicize the steps the institution has been taking to begin drawing up a proposal for SLI training.

closer relationship between students, i.e., future interpreters, deaf people, and sign language.

We understand that the meaning effects emerging both from the process of analyzing the *corpus* carried out in the study conducted between 2006 and 2010 and from this new analysis of the new discourse conditions of production, considering the theoretical-analytical framework of Discourse Analysis and Translation Studies, were produced according to the analysts' interpretation. Hence, it should be noted that such effects are neither finite nor fixed. Considerations by Santos (2015), Rodrigues and Beer (2015), and Dinarte and Russo (2015) point in that direction, as they discuss pertinent issues about the implementation of SLI activities at federal universities, affiliation to translation and interpretation studies, and SLI work in graduate programs, respectively. Finally, we should mention that these meaning effects came about at a given time in history and are always open to new analyses should production conditions change.

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