

THE PLACE OF THE EDUCATION OF THE DEAF IN THESES AND DISSERTATIONS¹

O LUGAR DA EDUCAÇÃO DE SURDOS NAS DISSERTAÇÕES E TESES²

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ABSTRACT: The education of the deaf is, above all, oriented according to an inclusive education policy. However, the proposal of inclusion of deaf students in regular educational systems has been strongly contested by the deaf community, which, because of the linguistic and cultural particularities of the deaf, claims the right of the deaf to study with their peers in specific schools or classes, according to a bilingual perspective. Tension in this field is observed, which is also present in current education policies. This work aims to identify the place of the education of the deaf defended in theses and dissertations about the theme education of the deaf. Thus, of bibliometric approach, the Brazilian Digital Library of Dissertations and Theses was chosen as the source of information. According to the criteria of inclusion and exclusion established, 62 Master's theses and eight Doctoral dissertations were analyzed in detail. The results indicated an analogous percentage of studies that pointed out, on the one hand, the regular school, and, on the other hand, the specific school or class for the deaf as the most appropriate place for their schooling, revealing that the issue of the place of the education of the deaf is still controversial and not consensual in the field.

KEYWORDS: Special Education. Education of the deaf. School. Scientific production.

RESUMO: A educação de surdos orienta-se, sobretudo, segundo uma política educacional inclusiva. No entanto, a proposta de inclusão de surdos em sistemas regulares de ensino tem sido fortemente contestada pela comunidade surda, que, em razão das particularidades linguísticas e culturais dos surdos, reivindica o direito de os surdos estudarem com seus pares, em escolas ou classes específicas para surdos, segundo uma perspectiva bilíngue. Observa-se uma tensão no campo, presente também nas políticas educacionais vigentes. O presente trabalho tem como objetivo identificar qual o lugar da educação de surdos defendido nas dissertações e nas teses sobre o tema educação de surdos. Assim, de natureza bibliométrica, elegeu-se como fonte de informação a Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações. De acordo com os critérios de inclusão e exclusão estabelecidos, foram analisadas, na íntegra, 62 dissertações de Mestrado e oito teses de Doutorado. Os resultados indicaram um percentual análogo de estudos que apontaram, de um lado, a escola regular, e, de outro, a escola ou classe específica para surdos como o lugar mais apropriado para a sua escolarização, revelando que a questão do lugar da educação de surdos é ainda controversa e não consensual no campo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Especial. Educação dos surdos. Escola. Produção científica.

1 INTRODUCTION

Currently, in Brazil, the education of the deaf is oriented, in particular, according to an inclusive education policy, based on '[...] the right of all students to be together, learning and participating without any kind of discrimination' (Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva, 2008, p. 5). However, the proposal to include deaf students in regular education systems has been strongly contested by the deaf community, which, because of the linguistic and cultural particularities of the deaf, claims the right of the deaf to study with their peers in schools or classes specific to the deaf, according to a bilingual

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educational perspective. It is noticed that there is tension in this field, which is also present in the current education policies, as we shall see.

From the 1990s, actions in defense of the linguistic and cultural rights of the deaf widened within the deaf social movement, which led to the formulation of Law No. 10.436, of April 24, 2002 (Lei N° 10.436, 2002), which recognizes the Brazilian Sign Language (known as Libras) as a legal means of communication and expression, and Decree No. 5.626, of December 22, 2005 (Decreto N° 5.626, 2005), which regulates the law previously mentioned and establishes, *inter alia*, the organization of schools and bilingual education classes for the deaf. At the same time, official initiatives, under the strong influence of international organizations, have flourished to universalize the right and access to education of quality in regular educational systems. The Brazilian Government then organizes a set of actions and programs in order to consolidate an inclusive education policy in the country, among which we highlight the National Policy of Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva, 2008), which reiterates rights previously foreseen in our legislation and guides the re-establishment of Brazilian education policy from an inclusive perspective.

With regard to the educational organization for deaf students, we refer to Lodi's (2013) considerations in pointing out inconsistencies between the meanings of bilingual education and inclusion present in these documents: Decree No. 5.626/2005 (Decreto N° 5.626, 2005) and the National Policy of Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva, 2008), evidencing a paradox in this field. We agree with the author when she points out that the different discourses reflect the social places of those who enunciate them. Thus, these documents are based on distinct political-ideological principles, making the interlocation between their orientations and, consequently, the planning and implementation of a truly bilingual education for the deaf impossible.

According to Lodi (2013), Decree No. 5.626/2005 (Decreto N° 5.626, 2005), when providing bilingual education for the deaf, recommends the organization of schools or bilingual classes, especially in Early Childhood Education and in the initial years of Elementary School. In these spaces, Brazilian Sign Language acquires a central role in the educational process, as a language of interlocution and instruction, and the Portuguese language, in written form, is taught as a second language. According to the author, the presence of the written Portuguese language stem from '[...] the pedagogical organization, inasmuch as the activities, the complementary texts to the classroom and the textbooks indicated for reading are written in Portuguese, which also guarantees the status of language of instruction' (Lodi, 2013, p. 54). For the final years of Elementary School, High School and Vocational education, the Decree provides for schools or bilingual classes, or even regular inclusive schools, with teachers aware of the specifics of the deaf. It also provides for the teachers and instructors of Brazilian Sign Language and translators/interpreters of Brazilian Sign Language/ Portuguese language, setting guidelines for the education of these professionals. To Lodi (2013, pp. 54-55):

Thus, the development of language/appropriation of Brazilian Sign Language by deaf students in the first years of school is assured and, consequently, a solid educational base is guaranteed, since it is developed in a language accessible to students. This process opens the possibility of

thinking of another organization for the final years of Elementary School, High School and Vocational education.

Thus, we emphasise the important role of sign language in the development of the deaf child. According to the historical-cultural perspective, we understand that it is from and through the language that we are constituted as subjects. However, in the case of the deaf child, access to the world of language does not occur, naturally, through ways that depend on hearing, as in the case of hearing children, but via the visual channel. For this reason, it is through sign language, language of visual and spatial modality, that the deaf child can organize him/herself as a being of language and develop him/herself cognitively, emotionally and socially. However, most deaf children have hearing parents, who, because of their lack of knowledge of the specific features of deafness and sign language, give preference to the oral language in the family environment, the first socio-cultural environment of the child, which is not natural or accessible to the deaf child. Thus, many children who are deaf when starting school do not have a built-in language that allows them to understand and make themselves understood. It is hoped, then, that the school will fulfil this role. However, it is not a question of teaching sign language, since language acquisition does not occur artificially; it must be present in the most diverse contexts, circulate among different interlocutors, in a natural way and in significant situations, providing a rich and diversified linguistic input (Moura, 2011).

From this point of view, Lodi (2013) points out that, although the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (*Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva*, 2008) deliberates on bilingual education for the deaf, it establishes the same educational organization for all students - the regular school - at different levels and stages of teaching. Also, it does not clarify which language should be used in the educational process. However, we understand that, since it is not possible to use Brazilian Sign Language and the Portuguese language concomitantly and that the regular school is composed predominantly of hearing people - professionals and students - the language to be privileged in this space will be that of the majority group, that is, the Portuguese language in oral and written modalities. Brazilian Sign Language will be present in the classroom through professional translators/interpreters, but its use, as the language of instruction, will be directed to specialized educational service spaces. To Lodi (2013), therefore, by displacing Libras from its position of first language, assuming a merely instrumental character, the Policy (re)affirms the hegemony of the Portuguese language in the educational process of the deaf student, reproducing a dominant logic that historically guided the education of the deaf. In this perspective, we agree with the author when she points out that:

[...] the Policy reduces bilingual education to the presence of two languages within the school without allowing each one to assume its place of relevance to the groups that use them, maintaining the hegemony of Portuguese in educational processes. Such conception limits the proposed transformation for the education of the deaf only to the discursive plan and restricts the inclusion to the school, making the extension of this concept to all social spheres impossible, as the Decree advocates. (Lodi, 2013, p. 49).

In this sense, and insofar as it does not point to school or bilingual classes as a legitimate alternative, as recommended in the Salamanca Declaration itself (*Conferencia*

Mundial sobre Necessidades Educativas Especiales, 1994) –important guiding document of the inclusive education policy–, the document attributes to the deaf students the need to adapt to the teaching methods designed for hearing students; to the translators/interpreters of the Brazilian Sign Language/Portuguese language the role of facilitating access to the teaching and learning processes, and to the specialized educational service the development of the different pedagogical contents in Brazilian Sign Language, the first language of the deaf. In this perspective, school inclusion, as it is, does not provide deaf students with the necessary conditions for their schooling and their development, being limited to social interaction (Lodi, 2013).

Thus, we observe a distance between the propositions of the National Policy on Special Education in the perspective of Inclusive Education (*Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva*, 2008) and Decree No. 5.626/2005 (*Decreto N° 5.626*, 2005). The right to Brazilian Sign Language, the natural language of the deaf, is subordinated in the policies of inclusive education, rendering a full linguistic and cultural acquisition by the deaf child unviable. In turn, we understand that a truly inclusive education presupposes a process of teaching and learning mediated by accessible and meaningful linguistic and cultural experiences to deaf students. In this way, the organization of specific schools or classes for the deaf, according to a bilingual perspective, celebrates the constitution of academic spaces sensitive to their singularities, in which Brazilian Sign Language is the language of conviviality and instruction, and the Portuguese language, in written form, taught as a second language, and whose curriculum considers the sociocultural aspects of deafness.

We can say, then, that there is no consensus regarding the place of the education of the deaf in Brazilian education policies, and this paradox is also reflected in educational practices. In Moura's words (2011, p. 166): 'More than a paradox, what is posed is a schizophrenic state [...]: do I do this or that? How to satisfy the same boss with two such different orders? That can only paralyze us'. There is, therefore, tension in this field, on the one hand, Decree No. 5.626/2005 (*Decreto N° 5.626*, 2005) establishes the right to education in schools or bilingual classes for the deaf, in accordance with the demands of the deaf community itself, and, on the other hand, the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (*Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva*, 2008) legitimizes an educational proposal that establishes the inclusion of all students, regardless of, among others, their linguistic, intellectual, physical differences, in regular educational systems. The education of the deaf is therefore a field permeated by tensions and conflicts between different social groups, which represent different perspectives and interests.

In view of the above, this work aims to identify the place of education of the deaf advocated in Master's theses and Doctoral dissertations on the theme of education of the deaf, available at the Brazilian Digital Library of Dissertations and Theses (known as BDTD). We emphasize that this work is part of a Doctoral research that sought to analyze the state of knowledge about the education of the deaf based on academic research of Master's and PhD in the period between 2010 and 2014.

2 METHOD

This research constitutes an investigation of bibliometric nature (Araújo, 2006; Silva, Hayashi, & Hayashi, 2011). We selected the Brazilian Digital Library of Dissertations and Theses (BDTD), coordinated by the Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology (known as IBICT), as the source of information. In the BDTD we delimited the temporal search cut-off to the period 2010 to 2014, enabling a recent and current view of the scientific knowledge produced in the Brazilian Graduate Programs on the education of the deaf. Moreover, we chose this temporal cut-off because we infer that the productions defended in this period present some of the implications of the publication of Decree No. 5.626/2005 (Decreto Nº 5.626, 2005) and of the National Policy of Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva, 2008) in the education of deaf students in the country. Then, based on the scientific literature, we established the search term ‘education of the deaf’ for the constitution of the corpus of the research. We emphasize that the option for the term ‘education of the deaf’ was not at random nor neutral, but in the sense of indicating our theoretical position in the field, according to a socio-anthropological perspective of deafness. However, we believe that this choice may have limited the scope of the research, constituting one of its limitations.

The records were collected from the BDTD through the advanced search feature, from the fields: summary, title, subject and year of defense. Repeated (n=2), unavailable (n=3) and unsuitable for the scope of the research (n=49) were excluded, totaling 62 Master’s theses and eight Doctoral dissertations analyzed in the research, through the full reading of their production.

In this work, we present the data referring to the place of the education of the deaf defended in the theses and dissertations analyzed. As we have seen, the place of the education of the deaf is a polemic theme, reflecting a historical tension in the field. In this sense, we examined, in the course of reading the theses and dissertations, whether or not the authors were in favor of a place for the education of the deaf, be it in specific schools or classes for the deaf according to a bilingual perspective, or in regular inclusive schools. First, however, we elucidate what we understand here as specific schools or classes for the deaf and also in regard to regular inclusive schools, since we find divergences in the definition of such concepts in different settings.

Firstly, we distinguish between what we call a specific school or class for the deaf according to a bilingual perspective and a special school for the deaf. In the special school for the deaf, the predominant discourse is based on clinical knowledge, and deafness is conceived under the stigma of disability. In Sá’s words (1998, p. 189), a special school that we are used to seeing, that is,

[...] which brings together all the deaf, all the “hearing impaired” to “normalize” them’. Conversely, the specific school or class for the deaf is based on a linguistic and sociocultural perspective, that is, a school or class ‘[...] just like any other, but using its language, which reflects its different status’ (Sá, 1998, p.189).

A school or class in which sign language is the language of instruction and interaction, considered the first language of the deaf, and the Portuguese language, in written form, taught as a second language; whose pedagogical practices are based on the visual sign and where the deaf culture is present in the curriculum; which favors the presence of deaf teachers and bilingual listening teachers; among others.

At the same time, we understand that an inclusive regular school (we are dealing here specifically with the education of deaf students) to be the one in which deaf students are enrolled together with hearing students in common classes whose language of instruction and interaction is the Portuguese language, spoken and written, and, for this reason, demands the presence of translators/interpreters of the Brazilian Sign Language/Portuguese language – in order to enable deaf students to access curriculum knowledge and content –, besides the offer of Specialized Educational Service (SES), in extra-hour classes, organized according to different didactic-pedagogical moments, such as SES in Brazilian Sign Language, SES for the teaching of Brazilian Sign Language and SES for the teaching of the Portuguese language.

Finally, we clarify that certain theses and dissertations defended a bilingual education for the deaf, in which sign language is the first language and the Portuguese language the second, but they did not define a specific place for their schooling. In addition, some productions, given their problematics, did not argue about the place of the education of deaf students, in this case, we used the designation 'not stated'.

3 RESULTS

We present in Tables 1 and 2 the place of the education of the deaf defended in theses and dissertations, respectively.

Place of the education of the deaf	Master's theses
Inclusive regular school	20
Specific school or class for the deaf	18
Specific school or class for the deaf (Early Childhood Education and Elementary School)	1
Bilingual education	16
Not stated	7
Total	62

Table 1. The place of the education of the deaf defended in Master's theses
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 1 shows that 20 theses (32.25%) elected inclusive regular school as the most appropriate place for the schooling of deaf students, whereas 19 theses (30.64%) defend specific schools or classes for the deaf. Also, 16 theses (25.80%) defend a bilingual education for the deaf, without defining the place for their schooling, and 7 theses (11.29%) do not make this kind of statement.

Place of the education of the deaf	Doctoral dissertations
Specific school or class for the deaf	2
Specific school or class for the deaf (Early Childhood Education and Elementary School)	1
Bilingual education	2
Inclusive regular school	1
Not stated	2
Total	8

Table 2. The place of the education of the deaf defended in Doctoral dissertations

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Among the Doctoral dissertations, we can observe in Table 2 that three (37.5%) defend specific schools or classes for deaf people, whereas two (25%) defend a bilingual education and one (12.5%) defends the inclusive regular school as the most appropriate place for the schooling of the deaf. Two dissertations (25%) did not make this kind of statement.

When the theses and dissertations were summed, we found equivalent percentages of productions that defend the specific school or class for the deaf (31.42%) and the inclusive regular school (30%). These data reveal that the issue of the place of the education of the deaf is still controversial. As we have discussed, Brazilian legislation provides for the organization of specific schools or classes for the deaf according to a bilingual perspective (Decreto Nº 5.626, 2005), but also for the inclusion of deaf students in regular schools (Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva Inclusiva, 2008). Thus, this paradox is also reflected in the theses and dissertations analyzed.

4 DISCUSSION

‘How can the school fulfill its role? In so many different ways, but always based on a basic premise: being able to communicate with its students’ (Moura, 2011, p. 155). This statement is fundamental to thinking about the place for the education of the deaf.

As we have seen, by not being able to hear, oral language is not natural or accessible to the deaf child; following from this, it will be through sign language, whereby access occurs naturally via the visual channel, that the deaf child can organize themselves as a being of language and develop integrally. However, as we have already pointed out, since most deaf children have hearing parents and that the preferred communication method in the family context is oral, many children who are deaf, when starting school, do not have a language that allows them to act and interact in the environment in which they live. It will then be up to the school to carry out this role (Moura, 2011). Also, according to Moura (2011, p. 156): ‘It will be through language that the teacher will enable access to knowledge, the widening of notions about the functioning of the world and interpersonal relations’.

Having said that, we believe that specific schools or classes for the deaf, according to a bilingual perspective, are configured in a natural linguistic environment conducive to the

acquisition of their first language, especially in Early Childhood Education and in the early years of Elementary School. And since sign language is the language of instruction, access to curriculum content occurs naturally, ‘[...] and in the same age range as non-deaf children who are exposed to the official curriculum’ (Sá, 2011a, p. 22). Also, with the acquisition of sign language, the possibilities of learning the Portuguese language as a second language and constructing meanings in that language are broadened. Besides, the presence of deaf interlocutors may favor the construction of communicative relations and cultural exchanges, also contributing to the consolidation of a deaf identity (Moura, 2013).

Contrastingly, in the inclusive regular school, formed by a majority of hearing individuals, the privileged language in the educational process is the Portuguese language, oral and written. Brazilian Sign Language is especially present via translator/interpreter, in the SES or at predefined moments. In this sense, we believe that the acquisition of sign language by the deaf child does not occur naturally, but in a restricted and fragmented way. To Moura (2011, p. 157), ‘[...] the deaf child has limited his/her possibility of creating a world of language that allows him/her to be in the language, to live the language and to create a complex world of senses and relationships’. In addition, access to curriculum content does not occur naturally, but mediated by the translator/interpreter, and teaching methodologies tend to be based on hearing referentials.

We then ask ourselves: Has inclusive regular school provided deaf children with real conditions of development of/in the language, learning, and building a deaf identity? Does it meet the cognitive, linguistic and cultural singularities of the deaf? Does the presence of the translator/interpreter in the classroom solely guarantee deaf students to participate effectively in the teaching and learning process, especially in the early years of schooling, where many deaf children are still in the process of acquiring the Sign Language? At what point would deaf students, together with their hearing classmates, be learning the Portuguese language as a second language? And while SES has been the privileged place for the acquisition of Brazilian Sign Language, for learning Portuguese as a second language and for access to curricular content in Sign Language, could we consider this an inclusive school? In the context of these discussions, we agree with Sá (2011a, p. 52) when she states that ‘[...] the right to “be” in a space does not make this space “the best place to be”’. Before the “right to be anywhere” there is the “right to be in the best place”’.

The specific school or class for the deaf from a bilingual perspective has been claimed by the deaf themselves throughout history. As an example, we can cite the document *A educação que nós surdos queremos* - The education that we deaf want - (*Federação Nacional de Educação e Integração dos surdos*⁵ [Feneis], 1999) elaborated at an event that preceded the V Latin American Congress of Bilingual Education for the Deaf, at the *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* (UFRGS), and delivered to the official authorities in a political act that consisted of a march through the streets of Porto Alegre on April 24, 1999; the document *A educação que nós, surdos, queremos e temos direito* - The education that we, deaf, want and have the right to - (Carta de Salvador, 2006), elaborated and signed at the Meeting of the Deaf, Bahia, in 2006; and the *Carta aberta ao Ministro da Educação* - Open Letter to the Ministry of Education - (Campello

⁵ Note of translation: National Federation of Education and Integration of the Deaf.

et al., 2012), formulated by the first seven Brazilian deaf doctors in 2012. We also cite the letters elaborated by the PhD professors Nídia Regina Limeira de Sá, from the *Universidade Federal do Amazonas* (UFAM) (Sá, 2011b), Kristina Svartholm, from the University of Stockholm (Svartholm & Moura, 2011), and the professor Fernando César Capovilla, from the *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP) (Capovilla, 2011a), in which the researchers, based on their experience in the field and on scientific evidence, declare that specific schools or classes for the deaf, according to a bilingual perspective, constitute the most appropriate place for their schooling, and are against the closure of such schools or their transformation into centers for specialized educational services, as recommended by the current Special Education Policy in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva Inclusiva, 2008).

Nevertheless, we understand that the reality of many specific schools or classes for the deaf is far from ideal because, as Sá (2011a, p. 55) acknowledges:

It is known that the defense by the specific school/class will not guarantee success in full only by the fact of placing within it, deaf students, deaf teachers and having sign language as a language of instruction - since it is not the proposal that guarantees quality, before that, there are innumerable intervening factors. It is obvious that schools which do not have the profile of specificity can also do an excellent job - if they wish. Success will depend on the hierarchy of languages involved, educational objectives, adequate and continuing teacher education, educational architecture, exchanges with the social outline, consideration of psychosocial and cultural contexts, student engagement, among other factors.

Also, we emphasize that, in favor of specific schools or classes for the deaf, we do not intend to oppose the proposal of inclusive education, since we recognize that this proposal represents an advance in the trajectory of Brazilian Special Education. However, we cannot fail to consider that, given the results presented by a significant number of studies (Silva & Pereira, 2003; Dorziat, Lima, & Araújo, 2006; Lacerda, 2006; Strobel, 2006; Lopes & Menezes, 2010; Bastos, 2011; Capovilla, 2011b), the reality experienced by many deaf students in most regular inclusive schools still presents excluding factors.

In this way, let us reiterate Schwartzman's words (2011, p. 275): 'I still advocate that the best answer when I am asked if I am "for" or "against" inclusion in regular schools/classes is: "It depends!". It depends on who we are including, it depends on where we are including, and what is expected of that inclusion'. In the case of deaf children, we believe that today it is the specific school or class, from a bilingual perspective, that will best meet their needs and singularities.

Finally, when we recognize the importance of specific schools or classes for the deaf, especially in the initial years of schooling, we cannot ignore the issue of teacher education, since Pedagogy and teaching undergraduate courses have not trained professionals capable of working in bilingual/bicultural educational contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to rethink the education of teachers to act in the education of the deaf, and from this perspective, the course of Bilingual Pedagogy points out new possibilities: when considering the specificities and demands of deaf students in the scope of the initial education and when training professionals qualified to work with deaf students - in a bilingual/bicultural perspective - in Basic Education, especially in Early

Childhood Education and in the initial years of Elementary School. According to the Pedagogical Political Project of the Bilingual Pedagogy course, at the *Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina* (IFSC) - campus of Palhoça (Instituto Federal de Santa Catarina [IFSC], 2015, p. 15),

[...] a Bilingual Pedagogy course will not only have the challenge of qualifying teachers to teach in sign language. It will also have the challenge of thinking and looking for ways to another pedagogy, a pedagogy whose basic foundation includes the aspects of visibility necessary to the action of teaching and to learn in a bilingual perspective that involves two languages of different modalities, the visual-spatial and the oral-auditory, making sure to take into account the cultural issues that involve them. Furthermore, a pedagogy that allows ruptures with the traditional curricular structures that historically have marked the relationship between teacher and student, structures that place the student as a passive and receptor character and the teacher as a transmitter of contents and world understandings.

However, the offer of Bilingual Pedagogy courses in Brazil is still scarce, although in recent years it has shown some signs of growth. In general, the *Instituto Nacional de Educação de Surdos* (INES) – National Institute of Education for the Deaf – plays a prominent role in the provision of Bilingual Pedagogy courses in Brazil, both in face-to-face and in distance learning modalities, through partnerships with federal Higher Education institutions distributed among the five regions of the country, thus expanding its reach throughout the national territory. Thus, we highlight the need to expand these courses, in accordance with the goals of the *Plano Nacional dos Direitos da Pessoa com Deficiência - viver sem limites* (Viver sem limites, 2013) – National Plan for the Rights of People with Disabilities - living without limits –, in order to fill gaps and contribute to the implementation of a Basic Education truly bilingual for the deaf.

5 CONCLUSION

On one hand, we have noticed that the percentage of studies that have pointed to regular school as the most appropriate place for the education of the deaf was similar to the percentage of studies that defended a specific school or class for the deaf according to a bilingual approach. This reveals that this issue is not yet consensual in this field. On the other hand, however, in the sample analyzed, a greater number of studies have investigated the regular school⁶, many of them, possibly due to the challenges and problems observed in the implementation of the proposal of school inclusion of the deaf, pointed towards the specific school or class for the deaf as the most adequate environment for their schooling, with a structure that meet their demands.

Therefore, considering the notes made so far, we can say that this data is encouraging, as it may indicate new ways for the education of the deaf in Brazil. However, given the relevance of these issues to the current discussions, we noticed in the analyzed studies a small number of works that addressed the *bilingual school/education*⁷ theme and/or focused the scope of the

⁶ An expressive number of Master's theses focused exclusively or concomitantly with other educational settings, inclusive regular school (n=28), followed by the specific school for the deaf (n=12). As for the Doctoral dissertations, three focused on the inclusive regular school and two on the specific school for the deaf.

⁷ With regard to the privileged themes, 22 Master's theses and two Doctoral dissertations dealt with the inclusion theme; 11 theses addressed language; nine theses and two dissertations dealt with the theme of educational interpreter; six theses and two dissertations dealt with the topic of teacher education; four theses addressed the bilingual school/education theme; and ten theses and two dissertations dealt with specific topics.

specific school or class for the deaf. In this sense, we signal the need for more research that investigates such contexts, in order to examine their scope and also their limitations, and thus provide support for their consolidation.

We still have to consider that, in many Brazilian municipalities, due to a limited number of school-aged deaf people, the creation of specific schools for the deaf may not be viable. In these cases, the implementation of specific classes for the deaf within the regular schools represents a possible alternative, and the partnership between teaching and university systems can contribute to the implantation and development of bilingual educational projects in these contexts. However, there is a need for a social movement against the public powers, to claim fulfillment of the deaf people's right to study in schools or classes of bilingual education, especially in Early Childhood Education and in the early years of Elementary School, as Decree No. 5.626/2005 (Decreto Nº 5.626, 2005) ensures, in line with the demands of the deaf community.

The right to a truly bilingual education should be seen as a presupposition of inclusion, understood here not as a definite place for the schooling of all students, but in its broad sense, that is, '[...] as a consequence of quality education for all [...]' (Dias, 2009, p. 37). However, if it is not organized in order to meet the specific cognitive, linguistic and cultural specificities of the deaf, the specific school or class will not, by itself, overcome the challenges observed in the education of deaf students in Brazil.

Finally, we understand the importance of giving parents or guardians and deaf students the right to choose, that is to say, if they wish to study in common classrooms with hearing students in the regular school, in specific classes or schools for the deaf with a bilingual proposal, among others, which in turn demands the organization and maintenance of different educational models. In addition, for a conscious choice, family members need information about deafness and its implications, as well as about sign language. However, physicians and other health professionals are often the main professionals that parents or guardians have contact with after the diagnosis of deafness of a child. In these cases, discourses on deafness based on a clinical-therapeutic approach may predominate, with an emphasis on auditory *deficit* and the promotion of proposals and resources aimed at auditory development/development of auditory residue, speech and orofacial reading. Faced with this, education systems and the university itself can play an important role in this process, in order to promote orientation programs for families of the deaf from an interdisciplinary and social, cultural and political perspective, in order to overcome a strictly clinical view. Also, providing the deaf families with the teaching of Brazilian Sign Language can contribute in a unique way to the development of the deaf child, as it increases the possibilities of sign language to be present in the interactions established in the family context.

We sought, for the time being, to reflect upon - which is extremely necessary - the place of the education of the deaf, considering the data presented in Master's theses and Doctoral dissertations in the field in recent years, and especially the demands of the deaf community in relation to specific schools or classes for the deaf according to a bilingual proposal. However, such discussion does not end here, since it is necessary to consider the different perspectives that comprise this theme, given their relevance and complexity.

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