

**TENSIONS BETWEEN PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND SCHOOL  
IN(EX)CLUSION OF DEAF STUDENTS: ECHOES OF SILENCE?**

***TENSÕES ENTRE POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS EDUCACIONAIS E IN(EX)CLUSÃO  
ESCOLAR DE ALUNOS SURDOS: ECOS DE UM SILENCIAMENTO?***

***TENSIONES ENTRE LAS POLÍTICAS EDUCATIVAS PÚBLICAS Y EN LA IN(EX)  
CLUSIÓN ESCOLAR DE ESTUDIANTES SORDOS: ¿ ECOS DE UN SILENCIO?***

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**ABSTRACT:** This text is part of the field of discussions on how the school inclusion of deaf people has been contemplated by Brazilian public policies since the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (1996). Tensions between the letter of the legislative text and its forms of appropriation in school contexts are analyzed. Based on the principles of document analysis and content analysis, perceptions about the effectiveness of inclusive processes to improve the human condition of the deaf subject are discussed in the narratives of public school teachers in Baixada Fluminense/RJ. The results indicate that there is a perception of distance between public educational policies and their conditions of effectiveness, and there is a need for broader discussions involving the target audience of these policies, most of the times silenced. So, it is possible to understand the guarantee of fundamental rights, beyond the school, from the school.

**KEYWORDS:** Educational public policies. Inclusion. Deaf.

**RESUMO:** *Este texto se inscreve no campo das discussões sobre como a inclusão escolar de surdos têm sido contemplada pelas políticas públicas brasileiras, desde a Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (1996). Analisam-se tensões entre a letra do texto legislativo e as suas formas de apropriação em contextos escolares. Apoiando-se nos princípios da análise documental e da análise de conteúdo, discutem-se em narrativas de professores de escolas públicas da Baixada Fluminense/RJ percepções sobre a efetividade de processos inclusivos para melhoria da condição humana do sujeito surdo. Os resultados apontam que há uma percepção de distanciamento entre as políticas públicas educacionais e as suas condições de efetivação, e existe a necessidade de discussões mais amplas envolvendo os sujeitos público-alvo dessas políticas, na maioria das vezes silenciados. Assim, é possível entender a garantia dos direitos fundamentais, para além da escola, a partir da escola.*

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**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Políticas públicas educacionais. Inclusão. Surdo.*

**RESUMEN:** *Este texto es parte del campo de discusiones sobre cómo la inclusión escolar de las personas sordas ha sido contemplada por las políticas públicas brasileñas, a partir de la Ley de Lineamientos y Bases de la Educación Nacional (1996). Se analizan las tensiones entre la letra del texto legislativo y sus formas de apropiación en los contextos escolares. Partido de los principios del análisis documental y análisis de contenido, las percepciones sobre la efectividad de los procesos inclusivos para mejorar la condición humana del sujeto sordo se discuten en las narrativas de los docentes de escuelas públicas de la Baixada Fluminense / RJ. Los resultados indican que existe una percepción de distanciamiento entre las políticas públicas educativas y sus condiciones de efectividad, y se requiere de discusiones más amplias que involucren al público objetivo de estas políticas, la mayoría de las veces silenciadas. Así, es posible entender la garantía de los derechos fundamentales, más allá de la escuela, desde la escuela.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Políticas públicas educativas. Inclusión. Sordo.*

## **Initial words**

This article analyzes the way in which Brazilian educational legislation has addressed the issue of school inclusion for the deaf, seeking to make explicit the tensions between the letter of the legislative text and its forms of appropriation in school contexts, especially by teachers. The legislation that comprises the enactment of the Law on Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDBEN) - Law 9,394/1996 up to the Brazilian Inclusion Law (LBI) - Law no. 13,146/2016 is taken as the focus of analysis. It is observed, in this period, in formal and informal contacts with everyday school situations, that official determinations are not always understood, and even known, by the different actors of the school. Teachers are the ones who most resent of knowledge, understanding and clarification. Certainly, because they are called to meet a new demand for which they are neither informed nor prepared. This is a very recurrent scenario, especially in public schools. And, it is within this school that anxieties of the most varied natures emerge, which, in some cases, result in demands for formation.

Although the importance of actions aimed at an inclusive, less segregated, and prejudiced society is recognized, this inclusive dimension, especially in education and school, is still recent in the Brazilian context. This is reflected in the legislative texts. In these, the following perspectives are observed, regardless of specific time stamp: inclusion linked to disability and special educational needs; inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusions; inclusion aimed at all groups vulnerable to exclusion; inclusion as promoting a school for all; and inclusion as Education for All (AINSCOW; MILES, 2013).

Specifically in relation to the school inclusion of the deaf, in the Brazilian context, for a long time the education of the deaf has been incorporated into special education. And, still shyly, it has been contemplated in a specific way. Among the public policies aimed at this community, Law No. 10,436, of 24 April 2002, which recognizes Libras as a legal means of communication and expression of the deaf (BRITO; NEVES; XAVIER, 2013) stands out. Regarding Libras, it can be said that it has been the object of discussions and contradictions in the school context, becoming a challenge for both teachers and students, listeners and deaf people. This discomfort becomes more complex with the advent of the inclusive bilingual approach (See FERNANDES; MOREIRA, 2014).

Thus, considering the legislative texts, the analysis deals with “[...] internal contradictions in the formulations, since the texts show conflicting voices, in dispute. It is in this field that the ‘discursive hegemony’ is produced” (SHIROMA; CAMPOS; GARCIA, 2005, p. 431, our translation). Therefore, this article, based on the principles of document analysis and content analysis, discusses, based on the narratives of teachers from public schools in Baixada Fluminense/RJ, perceptions about the effectiveness of inclusive processes to improve the human condition of the deaf subject.

From the organizational point of view, the axes that organize the reflections presented are presented: school inclusion: concepts and propositions; the school inclusion of the deaf in Brazilian legislation; the school inclusion of the deaf in Brazilian legislation; what the narratives of public school teachers reveal.

### **School inclusion: concepts and propositions**

It is important to recognize that both Special Education and, above all, inclusion, present themselves as permanent challenges both from the point of view of the proposition of public policies and the actions that result from them and of academic production in this field. These challenges, in most cases, are due to the fact that these themes refer to issues that society has traditionally had difficulty facing, either due to lack of knowledge and lack of experience or due to prejudice not yet overcome.

When dealing with the importance of the themes Special education and inclusion, pointing to the importance of knowledge production in this field/area, Rocha, Reis and da Costa (2020) consider the need for reflections to be organized based on the research, policies and practices triad. They consider them relevant to the extent that each of these components of the triad is intrinsically related. For example, from the point of view of practices, school contexts

are not always able to overcome their traditional and segregating curricular models and concepts. Many schools still have difficulties in guaranteeing learning rights for all. Regarding research trends in the field of inclusion/special education, it can be seen that, despite the uncertainties regarding the most appropriate methodological choices, narrative research, phenomenological research and case studies have been used.

Understanding that public policies are undeniably constituted as instruments of regulation, Lemes (2016) points out that the concepts of “guidelines, goals, strategies and regulation” are structuring of this understanding. He considers that these concepts, when incorporated into the narratives used in the proposition of policies, become “arguments, procedures and processes through which public action is established, promoted, oriented and coordinated, with the purpose of achieving desirable solutions, in relation to problem situations” (LEMES, 2016, p. 1618, our translation). In this sense, the author relies on Afonso (2006) to confirm that:

[...] the regulation of public policies and public action, in education, is conceived as a process composed of a complex set of actions and interactions, carried out by multiple actors, producing the coordination of collective action in the provision of education as public good (AFONSO, 2008, p. 6, our translation).

It is worth mentioning, here, the articulations that the author establishes, in the perspective of public policies, between “public actions, actions and interactions between multiple actors, collective action and public good”. The teleological purposes of society, especially the democratic one, have been indicated here, in the sense of seeking to permanently improve the human condition from the perspective of insertion in the dynamics of life in society.

Regarding public policies, Rocha, Reis and da Costa (2020), focus on them in terms of existence or lack, recognizing them as essential for the implementation of more inclusive societal and educational models. This essentiality of public policies for the operationalization of inclusive actions is evident, if considered as the historical process of society has advanced, or tried to advance, in relation to the deficiency and the disabled. Thus, since the 18th century, political actions can be identified that, even without the intention of inclusion, serve as milestones for the recognition of these subjects. Specifically in Brazil, special education began in the 19th century, with the creation of institutions now known as Benjamin Constant Institute (IBC) and the National Institute of Deaf Education (INES), aimed at people with disabilities (ROCHA; REIS; DA COSTA, 2020).

In view of the dynamics of the political, economic, social, cultural and religious scenarios experienced in the 20th century, societies and countries felt the need for public policies that considered the insertion of the disabled in society. In the educational field, documents such as the Jomtien Declaration - Thailand (UNESCO, 1990); and the Declaration of Salamanca - Spain (UNESCO, 1994), which proposed guidelines for the inclusion “of all people in ordinary schools”.

This is certainly not an easy task. The authors (ROCHA; REIS; DA COSTA, 2020) when referring, in this respect, to the function of schools and universities as places of knowledge production, point out, taking inspiration from Belloni (1992) when he states:

It is knowledge committed to the truth because it is the basis for the construction of knowledge. Knowledge committed to justice because it is the basis of human relations. A knowledge committed to beauty because it enables the expression of emotion and pleasure [...]. Knowledge committed to equality because it is the basis of the social structure inherent to the human condition. A knowledge committed to the true, the just, the egalitarian and the beautiful; it is, in truth, a commitment to the transformation of society, as these are not values that are predominantly established and practiced in the organization of human life, despite being own and inherent to it (BELLONI, 1992, p. 73, our translation).

Resuming the regulatory function of public policies, in the Brazilian context, redemocratization is shown to be decisive for new referrals in this field, especially regarding social policies. This scenario becomes useful for studies that are concerned with studying this set of policies. From a methodological point of view, studies based on cognitive analysis of policies have contributed to a better understanding of the actions and actors involved in them. Especially in relation to the actions of the public authorities on the educational system, there is still much to investigate to explain the fundamentals that guide the decisions and proposals. And, yet take into account the distance that is observed between the legislative proposals and the expectations of the subjects for whom they are directly or indirectly intended, considering the qualitative demands in relation to the educational systems (LEMES, 2016).

### **The school inclusion of the deaf in Brazilian legislation: absences?**

In terms of the set of legislative frameworks that guide, directly or indirectly, the education of the deaf, Table 1, below, systematizes them chronologically.

**Table 1** – Main political and legal frameworks involving the Education of the Deaf

Year	Document	Subject / Theme / Title
1996	Law no. 9,394 – LDB	Establishes the guidelines and bases for national education.
2001	Law no. 10,172	Approves the National Education Plan and makes other arrangements.
2001	Resolution CNE/CNB no. 2	Institutes National Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Education.
2002	Law no. 10,436	Provides for the Brazilian Sign Language - Libras and other measures.
2005	Decree no. 5,626	Regulates Law no. 10,436, of 24 April 2002, which provides for the Brazilian Sign Language - Libras, and art. 18 of Law no. 10,098, of 19 December 2000.
2008	National Policy of Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education	The Ministry of Education/Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion presents the National Policy on Special Education from the perspective of Inclusive Education, which follows the advances in knowledge and social struggles, aiming to constitute public policies that promote quality education for all the students.
2014	Law no. 13,005	Approves the National Education Plan - PNE and takes other measures.
2015/2016 <sup>4</sup>	Law no. 13,146	Institutes the Brazilian Law for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Statute for Persons with Disabilities).

Source: Devised by the authors (2020)

Some points deserve to be highlighted in relation to the education of the deaf, based on each of the documents listed. The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (1996) alludes to Special Education, considering it as a modality of School Education for students with special needs. These students would be served in regular schools. The concept of students with special needs is now used to cover the entire set of special needs, including specific ones. Art. 59 indicates the need for curricular adjustments and physical spaces, to ensure that everyone can be served. It should be added that the school inclusion of the deaf was included in this broader conception of special needs, since there was still no specific orientation. Also, it is noteworthy that in the text of the Law the use of the term disability predominates, followed by inclusion.

Law no. 10,172 that approves the National Education Plan - PNE, in the section dealing with Special Education, specifically in relation to the Education of the Deaf, presents the following objectives and goals: “11. Implement, in five years, and generalize in ten years, the teaching of the Brazilian Sign Language for deaf students and, whenever possible, [...] for the staff of the school unit” (BRASIL, 2001, annex). The PNE marks the beginning of the process of recognizing the Brazilian Sign Language as a means of communication for deaf students. It

<sup>4</sup> A LBI foi publicada em julho de 2015, mas com vigência a partir do ano de 2016, por isso considera-se, no contexto desse trabalho, como efeito prático o ano de 2016.



is also interesting to note, from the point of view of the nomenclature used, that in the PNE there is a predominance of the term inclusion.

Resolution CNE/CEB no. 2/2001 (CNE/CEB/BRASIL, 2001), when establishing guidelines for Special Education, makes reference to the Inclusive Education paradigm. In its art. 2, determines the enrollment of all students in the education systems, and the schools recommends that they organize themselves to serve students with special educational needs, ensuring them the necessary conditions for a good quality education for all. There is no explicit reference to the deaf, which are included in art. 5th, where they are designated as those with “communication difficulties and differentiated signaling from other students, demanding the use of applied languages and codes” (BRASIL, 2001, our translation). Art. 12, paragraph 2, refers to the use of appropriate language: “like the Braille system and the sign language, without prejudice to the learning of the Portuguese language [...]” (our translation). In this paragraph, reference is made to the learning of the Portuguese language.

Law no. 10,436 made the Brazilian Sign Language - Libras official as a legal means of communication and expression of the deaf and determined in Art. 4 the inclusion of Libras teaching in the teaching courses, both at high school and at higher level, as integral part of the National Curriculum Parameters - PCNs. And, Decree no. 5,626, of 2005, when regulating Law 10,436, establishes some guidelines: the definition of the deaf person; the formation of Libras teachers and instructors; proficiency exams and assessments; the formation of the Libras/Portuguese language translator/interpreter; and guaranteeing the rights of deaf people to education and health. Also, the Decree reinforced the inclusion of the Libras discipline in the curriculum of all teacher formation courses for the exercise of teaching, which are “all undergraduate teaching degree courses, in the different areas of knowledge, the normal high school course, the normal higher course, the Pedagogy course and the Special Education course” (BRASIL, 2005, Art. 3º). The bilingual approach to the deaf educational process is guaranteed.

From the perspective of the National Special Education Policy from the perspective of Inclusive Education (2008), in the case of deaf students:

[...] it is necessary to reinvent the ways of conceiving the school and its pedagogical practices, breaking with the linear ways of thinking, and acting regarding schooling. The inclusive paradigm is not compatible with concepts that dichotomize people with or without disabilities, as human beings are equal in difference, reflected in relationships, experiences and interactions. People with deafness cannot be reduced to a sensory condition, disregarding the potentialities that integrate them to other perceptual processes, as beings

of conscience, thought and language (MEC/SEESP, 2010, p. 8, our translation).

Bilingualism, in the indication of this document, highlights the student's freedom to express himself in one or another language and to participate in a school environment that challenges his thinking and exercises his perceptual-cognitive capacity, his abilities to act and interact in a social world which belongs to everyone, considering the contradictory, the ambiguous, the differences between people (MEC/SEESP, 2010).

Law no. 13,005 PNE 2014-2024, highlights in strategy 4.1: “Guarantee the offer of Bilingual Education, in Brazilian Sign Language (libras) as the first language and in the written modality of Portuguese as a second language, for deaf and hearing-impaired students from 0 to 17 years, in inclusive bilingual schools and classes” (BRASIL, 2014, our translation)

Law no. 13,146/2015, called the Brazilian Inclusion Law - LBI, points out, albeit timidly, Special Education from the perspective of Inclusive Education. It ratifies the “offer of bilingual education, in Libras as a first language and in the written modality of Portuguese as a second language, in bilingual schools and classes and in inclusive schools” (BRASIL, 2015, Art. 28, our translation). It thus ensures bilingual education for the deaf. This suggests the need to reorganize the systems, at their different levels.

The set of legislative determinations, from what is observed in their texts, allows us to understand the emphasis, pointed out in the literature, in aspects such as: curricular adjustments, the teaching of the Brazilian Sign Language, inclusion, inclusive bilingual classes, written modality of the Portuguese language, reinvention of ways of thinking about the school and its pedagogical practices; the necessary conditions for good quality education for all. It is curious that the focus is predominantly on school spaces and, on these, on two points: the language and the pedagogical dimension in the perspective of inclusive education.

### **The teacher and the inclusive dimension of the school**

To discuss aspects related to how teachers relate and build ways of perceiving the issue of inclusion in the school context, Heredero and Anache (2020) draw attention to how decisive the Salamanca Declaration was for policy proposals in inclusive education, especially for school inclusion, highlighting:

[...] regular schools, following this inclusive orientation, constitute the most capable means to combat discriminatory attitudes, creating open and solidary communities, building an inclusive society and reaching education for all; in addition, they provide an adequate education to the majority of children and



promote the efficiency, in an excellent cost-quality relation, of the entire education system (BRASIL, 1994, p. VIII, our translation).

The authors return to the idea that school inclusion represents a collective effort that involves the entire set of school actors, such as “students, teachers, managers, other employees, families, public authorities and society”. This effort is not only of intentions and propositions, but mainly of actions beyond the inclusion of the disabled in the school physical space. What is sought is to guarantee these students effective learning, adjusted to the educational characteristics and possibilities of each one. For this to occur, reformulations of the educational and learning practices used up to that time are necessary, making them inclusive. And with that, promote the reduction of social inequalities and injustices through a permanent review of the objectives to the learning conditions, in order to articulate the social and personal dimensions of the subjects involved. It should be added that an inclusive practice is always a contextualized, singular practice aimed at specific purposes and contexts. A practice does not become inclusive in itself; it depends on who makes it operational and how it is made operational.

Specifically with regard to teacher formation, it is essential to rethink didactic-pedagogical actions, providing them with tools for more effective performance. In most school contexts, what is observed is that, although the teachers' speeches admit and recognize the importance of school inclusion, when it comes to organizing the learning experiences aimed at the included students, they feel insecure and skeptical.

It is considered important to point out that, in the context of inclusive education and school inclusion, the teacher and his formation are highlighted not in the sense of proposing specific formative actions in these fields, but of a polarization in the didactic-pedagogical issues of working with students with disabilities, especially with deaf students. And, in this sense of the emphasis on pedagogical aspects, several points have been brought to reflection. One of them points to the tensions of didactics in basic education (HAAS; TEZZARI, 2014). The authors, when specifically addressing inclusive school processes, highlight in their contributions the issues of didactic choices as an axis and the concept of pedagogical moment. They are supported by the definition of Meirieu (2002) when he states:

The pedagogical moment can be understood as this demanding meeting of two people who get involved in a game in which nothing is played in advance and in which the 'hardness' of the transaction object, its internal coherence, its own structure permanently regulates the relationship. This is where the pedagogical moment, although it inevitably refers to a relationship between two partners, has nothing to do with the 'relational' conceived as the mere reciprocal empathy of two expanding subjectivities. What irremediably separates the 'relational' from the 'pedagogical' is the control over the object

of interindividual transaction, the common work of elucidating what must be understood and said, from what must be shared in the understanding of what is transmitted (MEIRIEU, 2002, p. 90, our translation).

Still in this perspective, even though the intentions and purposes of school education and, in this case, of inclusive education are evident, the effort required to make learning objects more meaningful for students is evident. The pedagogical relationship is essentially marked by the tension between the planned and the unforeseen. From this tension, new ways of organizing teaching and learning experiences are expected to emerge. Like this:

[...] a look focused on the needs and singularities of everyday school life is taken as a powerful device to understand that the pedagogical routines do not need to be new or original to register themselves as innovative pedagogical practices and conduct. Innovation arises from the perception of the routine that makes up the daily routine beyond the mere repetition of rituals or as a non-routine routine and the unforeseen as an element that, taken in its complexity, with pedagogical investment, can trigger processes of qualitative changes in the school routine (HAAS; TEZZARI, 2014, p. 79, our translation).

The authors add:

Schooling the entire population of a society is an audacious project, but one that cannot be given up, under penalty of making the school's own attribution and existential meaning unfeasible. The pedagogue cannot give up and let himself be carried away by ideas and values rooted as immutable truths, for example, the deterministic belief that some subjects with certain characteristics or from specific social circumstances would not be able to learn (HAAS; TEZZARI, 2014, p. 95, our translation).

One can perceive, as already noted, a tendency towards a look towards the school, its subjects and contexts that, although it does not disregard, can silence other fundamental issues, especially when it comes to the school inclusion of deaf students. In this regard, Zajac (2011) problematizes the issue of the proposal for a bilingual education. A bilingual school context presupposes the interaction between listener-teacher/deaf-student, listener-student/deaf student. It also presupposes a shared language, which most of the time does not occur. This difficulty or lack of a shared language directly impacts not only learning, but the modes of communication and interrelation between the subjects. In this scenario, sign language is fundamental in the dynamics of teaching and learning relationships (See. GOES; SOUZA, 1997; LACERDA, 1996).

On the reduction of discussions about school inclusion of deaf students to pedagogical, methodological and practical issues, and, consequently, to teacher formation and performance, Bizio (2015) mentions Goldfeld (2001) when he warns of fundamental issues neglected by both

studies and for the discussions that circulate in this field. Questions related especially to the ways in which “these subjects access the symbolic universe” (GOLDFELD, 2001, p. 46, our translation). In other words,

[...] it is necessary to shift studies on language acquisition by the deaf from the stage of ideological discussions and take it as an issue that deserves particular theoretical reflection. Bilingualism in the area of deafness is an educational philosophy aimed at the education of the deaf, which, more than a simple pedagogical approach that aims at schooling the deaf - given the school failure they face -, also aims to favor and expand the development of the deaf (BIZIO, 2015, p. 38, our translation).

A broader perspective is evident in the sense of making the deaf student more and better equipped so that, respected in their difference, they can communicate better in the different spheres of life in society. In this way, it becomes essential “a more comprehensive debate that proposes guidelines for an educational and linguistic policy committed to the education of linguistic minorities erased in school benches” (LIMA, 2004, p. 49, our translation).

From what has been presented previously, it is possible to point out as key points for reflection on the tensions between legislative proposals and inclusive school contexts that welcome deaf students, the little knowledge of school actors about the deaf and deafness; beliefs about the deaf student's learning potentials; the ways in which teachers relate to the objects of learning to be mediated, especially the written Portuguese language; the little (if any) dominance of Libras by school actors. These issues, in most cases, given their immediacy, end up silencing broader issues such as a perspective of forming the deaf student who has, beyond the school space, his citizen insertion in society as a terminal.

### **What the narratives of public school teachers reveal**

For the study presented in this article, narratives of 14 teachers who work in the education of the deaf in the early years of elementary education in municipal education networks of Baixada Fluminense were selected, collected in 15 formation centers, which were taken as focus groups. This form of data collection provides an understanding of the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes related to a given theme (KITZINGER, 2000).

Regarding the excerpts of the narratives, it was decided not to include very extensive clippings in order to better preserve the anonymity of the participants. The identification of the subjects is performed by P1 to P14, with P representing “Teacher”. The treatment of the data was inspired by Content Analysis, which has as main objective “to critically understand the

meaning of communications, its manifest or latent content, the explicit or hidden meanings” (CHIZZOTTI, 2006, p. 98, our translation).

The themes identified in the narratives were organized into five main axes: about not knowing of the deaf and deafness; language as an issue; pedagogical dimension; the role of the teacher; the school in an inclusive perspective. The cited excerpts present recurring ideas in the participants' statements.

The narratives indicate that teachers are unaware of concepts that involve deafness and deaf subjects, such as deaf culture and the ways in which these subjects learn and enroll in society. There is an absence of experience in having to worry about thinking about the difference in the classroom. "For example, my brother has been a teacher for over 20 years, and when he had a deaf student for the first time he came to me in despair, not knowing what to do" (P2, authors' highlights, our translation). "People [...] don't know about deafness, they don't know anything about deaf culture, about the deaf's way of being" (P5, authors' highlights, our translation).

When it comes to the issue of language, narratives are aligned with legislation and public educational policies, presenting language as a structuring axis. "Now I started to understand that it is necessary to be aware of how to think the language, to have a look from the outside inwards" (P1, authors' highlights). The excerpt from P1 exemplifies the almost exclusive attention to the issue of language in the school inclusion of the deaf. It is curious to observe how much the language issue permeates, including didactic and pedagogical issues. When teachers indicate that it is possible to think of alternatives for their didactic-pedagogical action, they do so in this perspective. This is observed in the speech of P8 (authors' highlights): "I think he will learn, even if not like a listening student, but he will learn the main Portuguese language and will be able to understand a text [...]. To know if there is accentuation or not, is not the principal".

Regarding the role of the teacher, the narratives show that public policies, despite indicating the guarantee of a bilingual education for deaf subjects, have not been effective regarding the formation of teachers to work in bilingual and/or inclusive school contexts. "We go on working, trying our best to understand how teaching for the deaf works, but we don't have a defined path to follow" (P4, authors' highlights, our translation). This seems to indicate a gap between the letter of the law and modes of appropriation in everyday school contexts. It can also indicate silencing of the forms of operationalization and implementation of public policies aimed at the education of the deaf. "There is no guideline, or specific course before the teacher works with the deaf. [...] For this reason, we are lost on a daily basis, and we are learning the

hard way, or at least we think we have learned” (P4, authors' highlights, our translation). This “we think that we learn” is not restricted only to the teaching axis, but can also be reflected in the learning axis, where the deaf student “thinks he learns”. A counter-productive “make-believe” game for the education of the deaf, which would lead to a false sense of compliance with the legislation and of meeting the expectations of the target audience of these policies, deaf and listeners.

This dimension of the teacher's role is extended when it comes to the school from an inclusive perspective. When the issue of language is taken as central, and almost unique, for the educational inclusion of the deaf subject, there is a risk of not considering other elements that facilitate social insertion. The language is not mentioned here as not important, but that it is not the only issue to be addressed in public educational policies and, consequently, implemented in the school environment. “But whoever does not go through this rethinking of the classroom structure is left with the usual suffering, ‘the included doesn’t learn’” (P2, authors' highlights). The classroom structure goes far beyond the language used.

Teachers indicate the need for an inclusive environment, reiterating the school as a “privileged space for preparing for citizenship and for full human development” (FÁVERO, 2004, p. 53). “The school is an area of important social integration. It is important for the deaf student to be there and have contact with the other children, so that he also develops socialization, feel part of society” (P5, authors' highlights, our translation). Being and being part of human society, in addition to understanding and being understood through a common language, includes other aspects silenced both in the letter of the law and in the narratives. “In addition, it is also necessary to respect the specifics of the deaf person” (P7, authors' highlights, our translation). These specificities include culture and identity, which, although indicated in the policies as necessary articulations, do not become explicit in the school context.

This perception of the deaf as a full subject, in addition to language, implies a solid epistemological knowledge on the part of the teacher. These fundamentals contribute to the construction of their teaching practices for deaf students. It is essential for the teacher to reflect, in each situation, on who the deaf student is, their differences and potential. And also be aware of the ideological bases on which their teaching concepts are based, and whether they consider the deaf student as a full human being, individually and socially (DORZIAT, 2004).

## (Not) Final considerations

Analyzing the letter of the law and how it is appropriated by the school contexts and their subjects, especially the teachers, one perceives an almost exclusive focus on the language issue. Whether sign language or written Portuguese, the language alone cannot be thought of as a unique solution for the inclusion of deaf individuals, not only in the school environment, but in society. For the school in the inclusive perspective to be a space where differences can be found and citizenship can be built, changes are needed that promote mutual respect, the exercise of democratic experiences, the recognition of differences and specificities of the subjects and the search for form effective ways of including these subjects in society.

The content of the narratives analyzed in this work suggests the essentiality of reflections on approximation and / or contradiction between the claims of different subjects and instances of society, the legislative proposals and the ways in which both are appropriate in everyday situations. These reflections contribute to a greater clarity of what the public educational policies indicate and the possibilities for operationalizing these indications. It is necessary to contemplate the real conditions for implementing these policies, considering different contexts and actors: society, school, teachers and deaf people.

Therefore, it is understood that despite the determinations of the law, its text itself is not sufficient to promote changes in the perception of society in relation to the deaf and their differences, not only linguistic, but of identity and culture. If the field of dialogue on this set of issues is not expanded, contrary to what is proposed, the silencing of other aspects besides language is ratified, both by the letter of the law and by the subjects involved in the implementation of public educational policies. Thus, it is possible to understand the guarantee of fundamental rights, beyond the school, from the school.

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