

DEAFNESS, IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

SURDEZ, IDENTIDADE E DIFERENÇA

SORDERA, IDENTIDAD Y DIFERENCIA

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to understand how the difference of the deaf person is conceived in the socio-educational context, predominantly organized based on identity. The premise is that it is necessary to know the deaf person, his/her cultural and identity aspects, the struggles for the inclusion rights of this public in all social contexts, and to demystify stereotypes that generate prejudices and segregation. This bibliographic study shows that the education of deaf children needs to overcome the pedagogical practices of colonization, under the domain of listening, and consider the protagonism and self-representation of the deaf people.

KEYWORDS: Deafness. Deaf culture. Deaf identity. Special education.

RESUMO: *Este estudo objetiva compreender como a diferença do sujeito surdo é concebida no contexto socioeducacional, predominantemente organizado com base na identidade. A premissa é a de que é necessário conhecer o sujeito surdo, os aspectos culturais e identitários, as lutas em prol dos direitos de inclusão desse público em todos os contextos sociais, e desmistificar os estereótipos que geram preconceitos e segregação. Este estudo, de caráter bibliográfico, evidencia que a escolarização de crianças surdas necessita superar as práticas pedagógicas de colonização, sob o domínio do ouvintismo, e considerar o protagonismo e a autorrepresentação do sujeito surdo.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Surdez. Cultura surda. Identidade surda. Educação especial.*

RESUMEN: *El objetivo de este estudio es comprender cómo se concibe la diferencia del sujeto sordo en el contexto socioeducativo, predominantemente organizado en función de la identidad. La premisa describe que es necesario conocer al sujeto sordo, los aspectos culturales y de identidad, las luchas por los derechos de inclusión de este público en todos los contextos sociales, y desmitificar los estereotipos que generan prejuicios y segregación. Este estudio bibliográfico muestra que la educación de los niños sordos necesita superar las prácticas pedagógicas de colonización, bajo el dominio del oyente, y considerar el protagonismo y la autorrepresentación del sujeto sordo.*

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PALABRAS CLAVE: *Sordera. Cultura sorda. Identidad sorda. Educación especial.*

Introduction

This text is the result of an exercise of scientific elaboration, with the objective of understanding the social relations and the discriminatory and excluding processes present in society and in Brazilian education, more specifically in relation to deaf subjects, as well as the processes of constitution of individual and collective identities, from the concepts of difference and identity and educational propositions in the intercultural perspective.

The study question that guides this text is thus constituted: How is the difference of the deaf subject conceived in the socio-educational context, predominantly organized on the basis of identity? From this questioning, it is necessary to know the deaf subject, with respect to cultural and identity aspects, to the rise of the struggle for inclusion rights in all social contexts, demystifying stereotypes crystallized by the hearing community. Therefore, the article aims to understand how the difference, in the specificity of the deaf subject, is conceived in the socio-educational context, predominantly organized based on the listener identity. Throughout history, it was difficult to be deaf and be included in society, since these subjects were understood as inferior beings and unable to develop their potential, in a predominantly clinical conception.

According to Lopes (2011, p. 9),

[...] deafness occupied the center of attention of experts from different fields of knowledge. Most of these experts were strongly crossed by clinical discourses that imposed themselves in the way of describing and classifying deafness and its 'carriers'. Most of them produced knowledge that guided groups to see the subjects with deafblindness as able to be 'treated', 'corrected', and 'normalized' through therapies, orofacial training, prosthetics, cochlear implants and other advanced technologies that seek, by cyborgization of the body, the condition of normality.

Deafness, deaf culture, deaf identities, Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) and bilingualism are themes that have gained increasing space in recent years, especially with the spread of school inclusion policies. Meeting the linguistic and schooling needs of deaf children poses challenges to families and schools.

Over time, different methodologies of education/schooling of the deaf were established, such as oralism, total communication and bilingualism. Currently, Law No. 10.436/2002 of 24/04/2002, which provides on the Brazilian Sign Language - Libras and other provisions, and

Decree No. 5.626, December 22, 2005, regulates that the schooling of deaf people is performed from the bilingual methodology. Bilingual education aims to provide deaf children with the acquisition of Libras, as a first language, and written Portuguese, as a second language. Recently, entered into force Law No. 14.191 of August 3, 2021, which changes the Law No. 9.394, of December 20, 1996 (Law of Directives and Bases of National Education), to provide for bilingual education for the deaf. It counts, in Art. 60 -A, that:

Bilingual education of the deaf is understood, for the purposes of this law, the type of school education offered in Brazilian Sign Language (Libras), as a first language, and in written Portuguese as a second language, in bilingual schools for the deaf, bilingual classes for the deaf, common schools or in poles of bilingual education of the deaf, for deaf students, deafblind, hearing impaired signers, deaf with high abilities or giftedness or with other associated disabilities, opting for the modality of bilingual education of the deaf (BRAZIL, 2021).

When talking about Sign Language we can see that it has its own peculiarities, just like the Portuguese language. However, both share the same goal, communication. It is important that Libras is learned from an early age, from the interrelationships with deaf people, since it helps in the linguistic-discursive process and learning. Also, the similarity of both languages - Portuguese and Sign Language - can be observed in the structures and organization of the minimal units, which, when added together, form larger and complex units. Thus, linguistic aspects such as phonetics, semantics, syntactics and morphology are contemplated in both languages.

Sacks (2010, p. 22) highlights that it is possible to observe that sign languages are "[...] complete in themselves: their syntax, grammar and semantics are complete, having, however, a different character from any spoken or written language". Therefore, it is impossible to establish the transposition of linguistic signs for both languages, because their structures are different and must be respected.

Methodological ways

This article is the result of an exploratory study and, based on a bibliographical review, we seek to elaborate theoretical analyses based on the post-structuralist perspective. These are reflections produced during the process of writing a master's thesis in education.

To demarcate the poststructuralist perspective, Meyer and Paraíso (2014, p. 19) describe that these choices "[...] draw on one or more theoretical approaches that we know under the

label 'post' - poststructuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism, post-gender, post-feminism [...]" . Following this itinerary, this research does not intend to legitimize truths, but to think in different ways, recreate and tense the conceptions taken as true. In this perspective, we rely on authors who dialogue with the theme, especially: Foucault (2005, 2006, 2017), Lopes (2009; 2011); Veiga-Neto (2006; 2007); Silva (2014) and Sacks (2010), among others.

Veiga-Neto (2007, p. 31) assures us that "what matters is not to know whether or not there is a *real reality*, but to know how this reality is thought". For this, the author explores the conception that discourse is one of the tools that enables the representation of "truth," and should not be confused with an absolute truth about reality. Foucault (2017) clarifies that truth is guided by power relations, which define what truth is and legitimize it. Thus, truth belongs to this world, established by the power relations of each society, since truth regimes undergo changes according to the development of a people and their needs.

Deaf people: conceptual and historical aspects

In recent decades, new terminologies were instituted about the themes involving deafness and deaf people. Through these new vertices, the emphasis was established on the difference and no longer on the disability, since deafness is not, centrally, visualized as a pathology that must be cured, according to the diffusion of the clinical-therapeutic model. This model intended/intended to rehabilitate these subjects, to make them able to hear, by considering deafness a problem to be corrected. Medicine, in order to minimize the damage related to social adaptations, seeks, through hearing aids implants, normalize the deaf, spreading the idea that clinical interventions would save the deaf from difference and would belong mostly to a hearing community (SKLIAR, 1998).

For Hindley (2005), deaf children have difficulties in recognizing the metacognitive skills, since the vocabulary is restricted and represented by linguistic signs, resulting in limited meanings, since the cognitive aspects would only develop from the language. However, deaf subjects have intellectual and cognitive abilities, just like listeners, and, therefore, should not be treated as deficient, since it is possible to communicate through sign language.

According to Bisol and Sperb (2010), in the mid-1970s the socioanthropological and culturalist model emerged, a philosophy that had the ideal to demystify aspects related to culture, identity and language of the deaf community. From this perspective, the deaf subject is no longer identified with the terminology "disabled", since emphasis was placed on aspects of cultural difference.

In general, the health area played a key role for better understanding about what is deafness. According to Sales *et al.* (2010), a deaf individual is characterized as one who has no perception of sounds. Therefore, the deaf person does not learn the natural language through oral and auditory stimuli, teaching alternatives for the Portuguese language. However, he has the ability to relate to his peers, connected to the world, through his minority language. The deaf can make fluent use of sign language, building identity from the very difference, since Libras is recognized linguistically by appropriating the characteristic elements of a language. Thus, the deaf subject has a legal right that the schooling process is carried out through the sign language.

Decree No. 5.626, December 22, 2005, which regulated the Law No. 10.436/2002, known as the Law of Libras, in its Article 2 states that "deaf person is considered to be that person who, due to hearing loss, understands and interacts with the world through visual experiences, manifesting its culture mainly through the use of Brazilian sign language - LIBRAS" (BRAZIL, 2005).

However, deaf subjects should not ignore the Portuguese language, just as listeners should not inferiorize sign languages: both should be available to deaf and hearing people. For deaf people, sign language is "[...] invaluable to deaf people and those growing up in the deaf community. It is a language that allows them to join and participate in a group, the deaf group" (QUADROS, 2007, p. 08). In this sense, sign language enables the deaf to be builders of their own identity.

Supported by law, it revokes the allusions that the deaf subject is incapable, requiring standardization to be inserted into society; neither should be defined as disabled (THOMA; KLEIN, 2010). The term disabled, used to classify the deaf, was widespread from social relations with listeners. Lopes and Veiga-Neto (2006, p. 85) report that "[...] the deaf was taught to look at himself and to narrate himself as a hearing impaired person," a practice that resulted in submission processes and corrective interventions "[...] derived from knowledge that inform and classify the subjects within phases of linguistic development, chronological and hearing loss.

The literature presents subsidies that make us understand how the process of inclusion and schooling of the deaf occurred over the years. However, it is relevant to ask: what does the listener know about being deaf? This question is carried out with narratives of listeners, and rarely by the protagonist of the story: the deaf. Sá (2002, p. 7) reveals that the "[...] deaf minorities have been excluded from the right to have their citizenship fully developed and their difference widely considered. It is notable that there are still barriers to be deconstructed around

the deaf subject. In summary, the presence of the deaf subject is as old as humanity itself, he has always been part of society, but most of the time, remained invisible in the eyes of the hearing population. The deaf were stigmatized, besides not always being recognized as human beings (SÁ, 2002).

The historical accounts present different information, because in Egypt and Persia, the deaf were characterized as privileged beings: by virtue of being silent, they believed they would be dialoguing with the gods. Thus, "they were kept accommodated without being educated and had no social life" (STROBEL, 2008a, p. 82).

In the Greek civilization, the deaf were diagnosed as invalids and unnecessary for society, since Spartan children were prepared for war. In Athens, children performed cultural activities, and individuals who did not meet the standards were killed, because they would be of no use to society (STROBEL, 2008). We point out that in Ancient Rome, children with imperfections were purged from society. It is possible to imagine that many deaf children were deprived of their lives. In addition to not being able to exercise legal rights, there was no consent for deaf subjects to marry and be heirs to the material goods that the family owned.

In turn, the Catholic Church vulgarized these individuals as beings without salvation, spreading the idea that they would not enter the kingdom of God because they could not prophesy the religious commandments (HALL, 2004). They remained invisible, "they were not captured by the system and services of the state, although they are captured by the governmentality of the state" (LOPES, 2009, p. 158). In short, they were invisible because they were not generating problems, for not deconstructing the parameters of normality, since they were excluded for being undesirable.

Historically, being deaf was not an easy task, because of the various injustices committed against these subjects. Foucault (2005) reveals that there were numerous problems faced, because the different has always been characterized as inferior, and cruelly, they were assigned pejorative stereotypes, generalizing the limitations and singularities.

The deaf began to have greater visibility at the end of the Middle Ages, through empirical studies, interests of doctors and scholars who sought to understand which procedures could be applied in the schooling of these subjects. However, there were numerous divergences regarding the methods propagated as efficient. Many scholars emphasized the oralist method as appropriate for education, while others sought to attribute significance to gestures and writing methodologies.

However, one of the main milestones in the history of the deaf began in 1760, when Charles-Michel de L'épée founded in France, the first school for deaf students, called the

Institute for Young Deaf and Dumb of Paris. This dedicated exclusively to the schooling of the deaf, intervening favorably for these subjects to make use of sign language. In this period, L'épée "created a teaching methodology for the deaf resulting from the combination of sign language and French grammar - this method was dubbed 'Methodical Signs'" (STROBEL, 2008a, p. 86). However, his teaching practices had repercussions for other educators to reproduce the same models of schooling (NASCIMENTO, 2006), thus disseminating the sign language, providing credibility to the deaf and the construction of their own identity.

Subsequent to this milestone, Strobel (2008a) reports in his excerpts that in Germany, in 1778, the first school for deaf students was founded, keeping the manual alphabet as the teaching method, in addition to establishing alternatives that would enable the development of speech, orality.

After an invitation made by D. Pedro II to Eduard Huet, a deaf teacher, he arrived on national lands in 1857 to found the first school for the deaf, located in Rio de Janeiro and named the "Imperial Institute of the Deaf-Mute". Its nomenclature went through some changes and, currently, is known as "National Institute of Education of the Deaf" - INES.

The founder of the school encountered several barriers that hindered its activities, since Brazilian families felt insecure with the schooling practices developed. However, in this period, the first contacts with the Brazilian Sign Language - Libras were established, promoting simultaneous communication between peers, because only in specialized schools it was possible to use Libras (STROBEL, 2008a).

After the rise of sign language in 1880, in Milan, Italy, the II International Congress of Teachers of the Deaf was held, an event that represented a significant setback for the achievements of deaf people. The central agenda involved the question: sign language or oralism as a schooling practice for the deaf? In an excerpt taken from the work "Hearing Voices", Oliver Sacks confides that the deaf teachers did not participate in the vote. Oralism won out and the use of sign language in schools was "officially" purged (SACKS, 2010). In theory, deaf students were censored from appropriating their mother tongue - sign language - since there was a belief that with the use of signs the child would become accommodated, that is, the learning of oralization would be hindered.

The oralist philosophy was perpetuated until 1960, the period called "Oralist Empire", a phase in which all deaf subjects were subject to the theories of listeners, "unlearning" sign language, subjectivizing their own deaf identity and the history of their culture, since the achievements were at the mercy of political and religious interests. With the publication of an article called "The Structure of Sign Language: the profile of a visual communication system

of the American deaf", written by linguist William Stokoe, the theme developed showed that sign languages had the same characteristics, complexities, peculiarities and expressiveness attributed to oral languages.

After a decade of the oralist doctrine, the high level of dissatisfaction arising from the results obtained was seen, and a new teaching modality was adopted: total communication. This method systematized communication through the Portuguese language concomitantly with sign language. Total communication was based on the reintroduction of sign language, complemented with the manual alphabet and facial expressions, aspects that were/are part of deaf communication (SACKS, 2010).

However, this practice produced the combination of two languages, which have specificities, thus generating a new mistaken alternative of communication: the sign Portuguese. Linguistic terms from one language were mixed into another, and, as a result, the child was prone to misunderstandings and incomprehensible syntactic structures (MOURÃO; MIRANDA, 2008). This teaching practice did not pay attention to linguistic, historical and epistemological aspects. In short, it was not relevant enough - since the intention was to promote full communication among peers and listeners -, establishing only the transposition of terms from the Portuguese language through gestures, expressions and orofacial reading. Thus, "in this view, sign language is not seen as the most important language for the deaf, but rather, a communicative resource for the acquisition of the majority language [...]" (MACHADO, 2008, p. 63), that is, the Portuguese language.

The process of literacy for deaf subjects infers in linguistic and cultural singularities, which requires "[...] think about how deaf people read and interpret the world from their linguistic and cultural singularities, think about how deaf people use socially and culturally the written language" (LEBEDEFF, 2010, p. 179). Therefore, thinking about literacy for deaf subjects involves observing the singularities of deafness, and for this, teachers need to develop methodological practices for the teaching of written language different from those planned for listeners (LEBEDEFF, 2010).

According to Skliar (1998), the generation of 1980 ensured a new alternative of schooling for deaf subjects, defined as bilingualism. To enter this perspective, it is necessary to reconstruct some parameters that have been crystallized throughout history. To this end, it is recommended that there is recognition of linguistic and cultural aspects unique to the deaf community. Lebedeff (2010, p. 192-193) points out that "The deaf do not want adaptations, do not want to be represented as simulacra of listeners. What the deaf want is a pedagogy for

deafness." The pedagogical practices used with deaf people need to be rethought from their linguistic and cultural singularities.

The bilingual proposal should not be observed only as a transposition of linguistic codes from one language to another, since both grammars have distinctions, which must be respected in order not to reproduce the sign language Portuguese. It is worth noting that Libras is composed of all the elements belonging to the oral language, having grammar, semantics, pragmatics and syntax, formally characterized as a language, and thus should be respected and used according to its rules.

However, it is possible to realize, according to Sá (2002), that the bilingual proposal would be defined incompletely, because it does not address issues related to deaf culture, the empowerment acquired from the struggles over the years, the intrinsic knowledge of the deaf, in addition to their identity and difference. Thus, deaf people need to learn the two realities - Libras and Portuguese - to be inserted into the society to which they belong. By right, the deaf person should not fit into the reality of the listener, with the adoption of oral language, but rather assume their deafness, an element that forms their identity (BARBOSA, 2011). According to the Salamanca Declaration, it is important that the deaf use sign language as a means of communication, ensuring that everyone has access to sign language from their country, because through it there is interaction with the other, besides it being the formative identity of this subject (UNESCO, 1994).

Inclusive policies are based on worldwide movements, legitimized in the Salamanca Declaration of June 1994, with guidelines that provide the right to education for all individuals who, regardless of their particularities, are part of the educational system. The document considers the educational needs and guides that the conditions and spaces must be organized in order to meet these individuals in regular education (UNESCO, 1994). In this way, the reclusion practices were reorganized and inclusion practices were established during the 19th century, whose principles reaffirm the effort of the world community to establish that everyone has the right to an equal education (LOPES, 2009).

Thus, education is an alternative that aims to operate with an inclusive character, developing practices that encourage the subject to observe himself and the other, without barriers of normal/abnormal and included/excluded. It is inappropriate to define, restrict individuals and standardize them, since the norm infers homogenization, and everyone should meet the same criteria (LOPES, 2009). Believing that all children have different abilities, characteristics, time/age, needs or ways of learning, schools should be able to include in the common education network the diversity of children, regardless of needs (STROBEL, 2008a).

Still, the Declaration of Salamanca (1994, s/p) states that every government should assign political and financial priority to qualify the educational system, thus propagating the inclusion "[...] of all children, regardless of their individual differences or difficulties.

According to Strobel (2008a), Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), based in Paris, guarantees that every issue about education should consider Special Education, affirming equality for all. In Salamanca, with the support of Unesco, an action in Special Education was structured, organized by the government of Spain. This framework on Special Education aims to communicate the policies and actions of government, non-governmental organizations, international or national aid agencies and other institutions on policy and practice in Special Education.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights combined with the World Declaration on Education ensures the right to education for all, resulting, in Brazil, in the adoption of the nomenclature "Inclusive Education". Inclusive Education is not just the adoption of a term, but implies the right to education for people with disabilities, the right to expression, and the meeting of needs to achieve quality education.

By observing the documents originating from the conception of inclusive education, anchored in the discourses of equality and rights, the educational system needs to develop different ways of organizing pedagogical activities, because just staying in the same school space is not synonymous with equity.

In this perspective, Dorziat (2008) mentions that public policies ensure that all children are regularly enrolled in school, however, they ignore the diversities that exist in each one of them, such as gender, social class, ethnicity, physical conditions, among others. In this sense, "[...] in the networks of school relations, the culture of hierarchization and models of human development persists, which already produced exclusion, in the form of school evasion and repetition" (DORZIAT, 2008, p. 32).

According to the author, children who belong to the same school system do not have the same quality and opportunities either. In reality, only the enrollment of students is assured, but "the true meaning of the right to education, which is supported by the concept of a meaningful, fair, participatory and culturally engaged pedagogical process is not completed" (DORZIAT, 2008, p. 32).

Dorziat (2008), supported by Lopes' studies, explains that school curricula do not contemplate the different cultures, ways of thinking and the different organizations of school communities. Thus, school curricula do not address diversified knowledge, they are repressed

by content bases, generating the insistent reproduction of knowledge, ignoring new ways of thinking, reproducing the same flaws, intensifying standardization.

The educational system reproduces what belongs and what does not. Dorziat (2008) states that knowledge that is supported by good theoretical bases, which extols the belonging of the other and to oneself, can be an object of exclusion. Therefore, school can also be an environment that reproduces exclusion, privileging some, while isolating the potentiality of others. According to Dorziat (2008, p. 33), "[...] school blunts the students' capacity for development by not recognizing them as capable beings.

Students considered disabled are taught to observe the world through other eyes, which are not theirs, taught to live in a distant, insignificant world, triggering aspects of disability, because "[...] to recognize the difference is to recognize, above all, the potentialities of the students" (DORZIAT, 2008, p. 33). Therefore, when the culture of recognizing differences and deconstructing the conception of the "other" is established, having no boundaries, it will be possible to think about inclusion.

Pieczkowski (2014, p. 36) stresses the importance of understanding inclusion "as a process embedded in the complexity of our time." He states that educational inclusion "is not a process dissociated from society and its exclusionary mechanisms. Thus, the contradiction between neoliberal principles and those of special education from the perspective of inclusive education is evident" (PIECZKOWSKI, 2014, p. 101). It states that: "by way of inclusion, people with disabilities are inserted into common, 'normalizing' spaces, but the practices, although often veiled, continue to exclude" (PIECZKOWSKI, 2014, p. 121).

Moreover, Dorziat (2008, p. 34) points out that "Including is, necessarily, creating conditions for human enrichment, through the approximation of different cultures and ways of thinking". Attitudes go beyond norms established by public and governmental policies, and are not present in school curricula either, but are necessary to provide real interactions among all those involved in the educational system.

Deaf cultures and power relations

The historical trajectory of deaf people has been marked by numerous social representations arising from the domains of the majority hearing culture. For Gesser (2009), deaf people have experienced periods of adversity, subjected to therapeutic treatments with the intention of normalizing them.

According to Foucault (2006, p. 75-76), the normalization of bodies infers that all subjects follow a model, which is merged from certain results, "[...] and the operation of disciplinary normalization involves trying to make people, gestures and acts conform to this model; what is normal is precisely what is capable of conforming to this norm, and what is normal is what is incapable of doing so". Thus, Foucault highlights that every disciplinary process aims to standardize the subjects, a practice that should be observed as a normation, and not a normalization.

Following this perspective, Lopes and Veiga-Neto (2006, p. 84) describe that there is a creation of borders, establishing the group of included and excluded. To this end, "[...] immaterial borders maintain a segregationist geography that feeds on the social patterns used as markers to signal who are allowed to attend either the group of 'friends'/included or the group of excluded." In this sense, the deaf subject was taught to belong to the group of the excluded, to observe himself as the other, the hearing impaired.

Based on the studies of Gesser (2009, p. 64), we understand that the greatest difficulty in recognizing the other is related to understanding the differences, which leads to the inference that "deafness is much more a problem for the listener than for the deaf," since it is defined as "normal" the listener subject, while those who break the rules of this "standard" should be corrected. Therefore, "[...] to be 'normal' is to be male, white, Western, literate, heterosexual, user of standard oral language, listener, not wheelchair-bound, sighted, without cognitive, mental and/or social 'deviations'" (GESSER, 2009, p. 68). These attributions hurt the identity of deaf subjects and their own consciousness, making them submissive to their culture, since they are put in internal confrontation, leaving marks of inferiority in the face of what is defined as normal. In this sense, we emphasize what Pieczkowski (2018, p. 63) states, that "deaf education is also a political issue, and not only a methodological one." In this scenario, we corroborate the definition of identity explored by Silva (2014, p. 74), by highlighting that identity is "[...] what one is: 'I am Brazilian,' 'I am black,' 'I am heterosexual,' 'I am young,' 'I am a man. Identity thus conceived seems to be a positivity ('what I am')," referring to himself.

Each subject has singularities and calls himself unique, 'that which I am', declaring himself independent. Thus, each of us is formed by a personal identity, with a unique personality that is in the process of construction. The multiplicity of roles is intertwined with the identity aspects. According to Silva (2014), representations are the signifiers, so cultural identity and representations are aligned, based on the hypothesis that identity is part of representation.

Santana (2007, p. 42) describes that "Identity would be the permanently (re)made construction that seeks both to determine specificities that establish identificatory boundaries between the subject itself and the other [...]." Dorziat (2009, p. 19) points out that the construction of identities is directly interconnected to power discourses, "[...] filled with absolute truths, which dominate, oppress, and exclude others, making that which represents power be assumed as identity."

Identity is structured on the basis of temporal and spatial relations with other subjects. Metaphorically, identity is a puzzle, each piece put together inserts new knowledge and possibilities to understand the different social roles, besides inferring possible power games. However, identity is formed from different social roles that are assumed, which may not be homogeneous, since they can be religious, political, functional, aesthetic, and gender roles (SANTANA, 2007).

The relationships arising from the identities and differences result in deaf culture, and it is up to the individuals of this community to understand and identify possible inconsistencies and modify them, to the point of making them more faithful to their origins. The inherent relationships between deaf and hearing subjects enable the exchange of experience, as well as more refined identities.

In mention of Silva (2014), identity and difference are interconnected, since it holds cultural and social markings. It is necessary to recognize these markings, which would help in discussions about deaf identity, since alternatives are sought that normalize what identity is, "that is, an identity norm, 'the identity of the deaf', and a corresponding cultural norm, to 'deaf culture'" (SANTANA, 2007, p. 44).

Strobel (2008b, p. 24) explores the deaf culture arguing that the deaf live a culture with different aspects of the culture taken as hegemonic, the "[...] deaf culture is the way the deaf subject understands the world and modify it in order to make it accessible and livable, adjusting it with their visual perceptions, which contribute to the definition of deaf identities and the souls of deaf communities.

In turn, it is considered that deaf culture architects behaviors and exchanges of experiences among their peers, thus promoting the identification of belonging to a minority group. Santana narrates that the term deaf culture is resized only to deaf people and professionals who work in the education of these subjects and / or attend the community, "as if the creation of the term 'culture' was associated only with a specific group" (2007, p. 47).

On this premise, it is possible to realize that the identities of deaf people are established from cultural relations. The deaf community is not restricted only to the deaf, because it

establishes knowledge exchanges with their peers. Thus, reinforcing the identity of the deaf, there is also the involvement of the majority community - listeners, making use of sign language (STROBEL, 2008b).

Going through the identity scenario, it is relevant to mention that many elements make up the deaf culture. Deaf people call themselves a being with visual experiences, observing the world through their eyes. His language has different linguistic aspects, which must be recognized and used correctly, and sign language is a manifesto that represents the deaf subject. Thus, pride is not only in the deaf language or culture, but it is the pride of being deaf, of making use of the Brazilian sign language and being happy at the same time (MCCLEARY, 2003).

We agree with Quadros and Perlin (2007) when they state that the deaf subject does not need to omit the identity markers. The hearing society should respect him as deaf, letting him organize and feel part of the hearing world, so that he self-identifies as deaf subject, belonging to a minority community, with cultural and linguistic traits.

Final remarks

Historically, it has been difficult to be deaf and to be included in social contexts, for being characterized as inferior and unable to belong to a majority community, which makes use of the Portuguese language for communication. The "deaf minorities have been excluded from the right to have their citizenship fully developed" (SA, 2002, p. 7). Sometimes, sign language is defined as inferior, in addition to situations of disregard for cultural aspects of the deaf community.

Based on the studies we conducted, it is possible to agree that deaf individuals feel "foreigners in their own country", and that the schooling of these children is based on pedagogical practices of colonization, under the dominance of listenerism. However, decisions about the schooling of the deaf should enable them to self-represent and not be conditioned again to the domains of listeners.

Lebedeff (2010) points out that educational practices involving the education of deaf students implement activities and didactics grounded in visual literacy. However, research is lacking on "[...] what these pedagogical practices or what visual literacy events would be" (p. 180). Quadros (2004) highlights the relevance of thinking about a curricular restructuring from the consideration of the effects of sign language, which has as its fundamental structure the visual-gestural.

The difference exists, regardless of the authorization or not of those who do not recognize it. However, for Pieczkowski and Naujorks (2014, p. 148), "[...] subjects are thought of from the marks of difference, and thus categorized, narrated, named, and excluded." The most excluding factor is not the disability itself, but what it represents in the social imaginary. In our society, "being normal" infers homogenization, based on the standardization of bodies and following idealized paths in search of the singularity of individuals, that is, normality. Santana (2007, p. 32) points out that social norms "[...] organizing all our social life (ways of speaking, dressing, acting in the world, thinking, etc.) 'authorize' segregation. The way deafness is described is ideologically related to these norms.

The recognition of difference as a factor of sum, of cultural strengthening, is a prerequisite for us to tension society and school, which standardize and hierarchize. For this, it is relevant to allow a democratic education, enabling equal access and equal conditions for education, because belonging to an environment characterized as "normal" is not enough. For the schooling process to make sense, it is necessary to promote interrelationships.

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