



## Some subsidies for understanding Spanish education for the deaf: historical and legal evidence<sup>1</sup>

Alguns subsídios para a compreensão da educação de surdos espanhola:  
indícios históricos e legais

Algunas aportaciones para entender la educación española de sordos:  
indicaciones históricas y jurídicas

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### Abstract

The education of deaf students has become a very important theme in the academic discussions of various countries and, permeating such debates, their emerging historical and legal context is evident. This international character allows a perspective of approximation between different contexts, especially in Spanish, since it was in this scenario that deaf education began. Thus, this research aimed to offer historical and legal support for understanding Spanish education for the deaf, and characterize the communicative approaches present in this context. We use the bibliographic and documentary research as a methodology for this study. The results pointed out the intense debate around public policies aimed at these students and the linguistic modalities used in their educational process and, therefore, we consider the importance of balance between the different positions.

**Keywords:** Deaf education. Legislation. Communicative approaches.

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## Resumo

A educação de alunos surdos se tornou um tema muito importante nas discussões acadêmicas de vários países e, perpassando tais debates, evidencia-se o contexto histórico e legal emergente dos mesmos. Este caráter internacional possibilita uma perspectiva de aproximação entre diferentes contextos, em especial no espanhol, dado que foi neste cenário que se iniciou a educação de surdos. Desse modo, esta pesquisa objetivou oferecer subsídios históricos e legais para a compreensão da educação de surdos espanhola, além de caracterizar as abordagens comunicativas presentes nesse contexto. Utilizamos a pesquisa bibliográfica e documental enquanto caminho metodológico para este estudo. Os resultados apontaram o intenso debate em torno das políticas públicas voltadas para este alunado e das modalidades linguísticas utilizadas em seu processo educativo e, por isso, consideramos a importância do equilíbrio entre os distintos posicionamentos.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação de surdos. Legislação. Abordagens comunicativas.

## Resumen

La educación de los estudiantes sordos se ha hecho un tema muy importante en las discusiones académicas de varios países y, permeando tales debates, su contexto histórico y legal es evidente. Este carácter internacional permite una perspectiva de aproximación entre diferentes contextos, especialmente en el contexto español, ya que fue en este escenario que empezó la educación de sordos. Por lo tanto, esta investigación tuvo como objetivo ofrecer apoyo histórico y legal para comprender la educación de los sordos españoles y caracterizar los enfoques comunicativos presentes en este contexto. Utilizamos la investigación bibliográfica y documental como forma metodológica para el estudio. Los resultados señalaron el intenso debate cerca de las políticas públicas dirigidas al sordo y las modalidades comunicativas utilizadas en suyo proceso educativo y, por lo tanto, consideramos importante el equilibrio entre las diferentes posiciones.

**Palabras clave:** Educación para sordos. Legislación. Enfoques comunicativos

## Introduction

In the current discussions on educational policies from the perspective of inclusive education, the field of deaf education provides enthusiastic debates, which proliferate in different spaces: in universities, in inclusive schools, in deaf schools, in teacher training spaces and between militancy of deaf movements.

In this sense, schooling and organization of teaching for these students has become a very important topic in academic discussions in several countries. This international character allows a perspective of approximation between different contexts, especially in the Spanish context, since Spain is considered a pioneer in the education of the deaf through educational initiatives for these individuals (GOLDFELD, 2002; GASCÓN; STORCH, 2004). Thus, this research aimed to offer historical and legal subsidies for understanding Spanish deaf education, in addition to characterizing the communicative approaches present in this context.

This work is configured as a possibility for the internationalization of academic knowledge. This process, in turn, meets the need for dialogue between different realities. For this reason, we emphasize the importance of Spain as a country that, for a longer time, has implemented public policies for inclusive education in its educational system, in addition to being considered one of the “birth places” of special education and thus influencing the policies around the world.

Thus, we use bibliographic (MARCONI; LAKATOS, 2012) and documentary (GIL, 2008) research as a methodological path for this study.

For this, we present some historical aspects linked to deafness, signaling some implications in the educational context. In this sense, we have outlined an overview of Spanish educational policies in the field of deaf education in recent decades, considering the actions of the deaf social movement, whose demands for the recognition of its linguistic and cultural difference influenced the formulation of public policies.

When referring to Spain, it should be noted the significant progress that has been taking place in discussions around special education in the country and in the implementation of public policies that promote quality education for all students.

Spain, a member of the European Economic Community, is located in southern Europe, on the Iberian Peninsula. The country is divided into 17 Autonomous Communities (configuration comparable to that of States in Brazil) (ASÍN VERGARA, 1999).

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 favored a decentralized state model. Thus, the Autonomous Communities can adapt national legislation according to the needs and demands of their context. Decentralization refers to several factors. However, we must highlight the importance of this for the allocation of funds and economic support for the educational scope and, even more, for the attention to diversity, since, with the services being organized in a decentralized manner, it is possible to meet the needs of reality more effectively, which, in turn, can guarantee the child's specificities.

It is noteworthy here that educational centers in Spain are classified as public, private and private concerted. Public centers are financed by the State and private centers are financed by the students' parents. The concerted private centers are private in nature, but subsidized by the Central Administration, so that they can serve a part of the students that could not be served by the public school, as initially there were not enough schools (SPAIN, 2006).

Early childhood education is divided into two cycles, the first for children between zero and three years old, which is not free, and the second for children aged 3 to 6 years, free - both of which are not mandatory. Primary education, between 6 and 12 years old, is free and compulsory and is divided into three cycles of two years each. Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) comprises 4 school years, from 12 to 16 years old.

It is worth mentioning here that the teacher who works in these educational modalities is called Teacher Tutor or just Tutor, being in charge of guiding a group of students both individually and collectively and of relating to their parents. The formation of this teacher is the graduation in Teaching<sup>2</sup>, offered in the Faculties of Education. The course lasts for 4 years and the degree obtained at the end is divided into the specialties: Early Childhood Education and Primary Education. With a complementary course (Master), they can obtain the specialty of Foreign Language, Physical Education, Music Education, Special Education / Therapeutic Pedagogy and Hearing and Language.

The educational center also has an orientation team, regulated by law, constituted by the advisor, who is the team coordinator and other teachers specialized in Therapeutic Pedagogy and Hearing and Language. The function of this team is to assist teachers in planning, developing and evaluating measures to address students' diversity, offering support to families in their difficulties, collaborating in preventing and evaluating students' learning problems and planning, with teachers, support measures and school reinforcement that meets the needs of students.

## 1. History of Deaf Education in Spain

Before entering specifically into the history of education for the deaf in Spain, it is necessary to make some considerations from the general history of education of these individuals, since this history is intrinsically linked to Spain.

Deafness is as old as Humanity, so, since the most remote times, we have tried to explain this, through religious, medical, philosophical, linguistic and pedagogical reasons. Since this time, there have been deaf people who, because they cannot hear, cannot speak normally or speak with great difficulty, which is why they used signals to communicate.

In the Renaissance period, during the 15th and 16th centuries, the fact that some men assumed the protagonism of decisions stands out, not accepting everything as determined and as immutable truths, as well as bringing significant ruptures in relation to medieval ideological traditions. It is under this historical panorama that education is seen as a promoter of reflection for the learner. The causes of sensory limitations and their educational possibilities are also evident, and it is precisely at this point that the education of the deaf comes to have a new look, that is, recognizing that the deaf are equal to all men. In this way, deaf people were allowed to express their feelings through language, the form of expression of this language being secondary and thus it was common to find deaf people communicating with each other in a language that was surprising for its accuracy and speed (SÁNCHEZ, 1990).

There are two fundamental facts in the history of the so-called “sordomudística” in Spain: the establishment of practical education for the deaf during the 16th century, thanks to the particular interest of a few teachers, among them Pedro Ponce de León, and what will follow, at the beginning of the following century, with the publication of the first pedagogical system on this teaching, thanks to Juan de Pablo Bonet.

Benedictine Friar Pedro Ponce de León (1513-1584) performed his work, making Spain a pioneer in the education of the deaf. Through the Aristotelian doctrine that the so-called “dumb deaf” could never speak, nor have abstract ideas, however, Ponce de León, however, demonstrated that this was possible, educating several deaf by birth, firstborn of noble families, situating themselves for this feat, also as initiator of Special Education. Ponce de León achieved significant achievements for his time using a system to teach deaf children through lip reading, writing, speaking and typing (GASCÓN; STORCH, 2004).

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<sup>2</sup> Equivalent to the Pedagogy course in Brazil, which enables teachers to work in Early Childhood and/or Elementary Education. In Spain, there is a Pedagogy course, but it is intended for clinical care, outside of school, and educational guidance.

In 1620, Juan Pablo Bonet (1573-1633), Spanish priest, defender of the oralist methodology, published the first book on deaf education “Reducción de las Letras y Arte para Enseñar a Hablar los mudos”, proposing an oral teaching method for the deaf through the use of manual signs in the form of a manual alphabet, to improve their communication.

And in 1793, Father Juan Andrés y Morell, Spanish Jesuit from the province of Alicante, published a letter to his brother Carlos, about “el origen y las vicisitudes del arte de enseñar a hablar a los mudos sordos”, containing news of how this art was developed in Europe, making clear the protagonism of Spain in its origin and consolidation, as well as claiming the glory of Pedro Ponce de León (1508-1584) and Juan Pablo Bonet (1573-1633) in the field of deaf education. His main concern was to prove and defend the primacy of Pedro Ponce de León as the first representative of formal education for the deaf in Europe.

The figure of Miguel de L'Épée (1712-1789), born in Versailles in France, is also noted, a religious and pedagogue, considered with the other names mentioned, one of the most relevant figures in the history of the deaf education. In 1771, through its own means, he founded in Paris the "National Institute for Deaf-Mutes" (OVIÉDO, 2006).

The starting point of the pedagogy developed by L'Épée was the “natural signs” themselves, that is, the same ones that his students commonly used in their spontaneous communications, to which later were aggregated other “signs” of his own invention, which have been termed “methodical signals”. The abbot also used the “manual alphabet” as a pedagogical complement, made known by Juan de Pablo Bonet and which later came to be called the “Spanish manual alphabet”, a name that currently persists (GASCÓN; STORCH, 2004).

The concern to develop a positive and satisfactory educational process for the deaf was a constant in this period. In any case, it is possible to perceive between the lines a transition in positions (which sometimes even diverge) related to sign languages between different exponents of deaf education.

Thus, throughout the history of deaf education, different methodologies were created for teaching this population. Some were based only on the language, others on the sign language and still others, created different visual codes, however that were not characterized as language. Currently, three educational approaches stand out, and all have relevance and representativeness in working with the deaf, they are: oralism, total communication and bilingualism. It is especially up to the family to choose that approach that is most appropriate for the deaf child and this option will reflect on their schooling, because through it they will develop (GOLDFELD, 2002).

Therefore, the real needs and situations of the deaf must be considered and thus offer the best educational option in order to enable an effective language development and full cognitive development.

## **2. Educational and legislative background**

After the starting point given by the French Miguel de L'Épée, regarding the “methodical signs”, the Spanish professor and doctor Juan Manuel Ballesteros, published in 1836 in Madrid, the first Sordomudos Manual, with the manual alphabet for the deaf. It is noteworthy that Ballesteros became known through Ramón de La Sagra, Spanish economist and intellectual, who was the precursor to significant changes in early childhood education in Spain and who studied the organization of institutions, including those of the deaf and blind (GASCÓN; STORCH, 2004).

In 1852, by the Royal Decree of 16 January, the Real Colegio de Ciegos y Sordomudos, was recognized as a public education establishment. In 1863, for the first time in Spain, the need for the Braille system, as a reading and writing system for the blind, was manifested. However, this system was not officially recognized until 1918 (VICENTE; VICENTE, 2003).

With reference to the legislative antecedents, these appeared in the middle of the 19th century, in 1857, with the promulgation of the Ley de Instrucción Pública that contemplated the education of sensory deficient in special centers. From the twentieth century, advances have taken place both at the scientific and legislative levels. In 1907, Francisco Pereira founded a sanatorium school in Madrid, known as the Pedagogical Psychiatric Institute for children with mental retardation. In 1910 the National Patronage of Sordomudos, Ciegos y Anormales, was created, which served children with disabilities and mental delays. In view of this, the official bodies began to structure actions for the education of people with disabilities, and in 1917 the National Patronage of Anormales was created by the Minister of Public Education and Bellas Artes, which organized the teaching and dissemination of knowledge among these people (GASCÓN; STORCH, 2004).

It is noteworthy that, during this period, the Spanish educational modernization was in line with the innovations that came from other European countries and with the considerations addressed in international congresses. In that sense, such events also ended up influencing education in Spain in general. However, with the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the dictatorial government of General Francisco Franco (1939-1975), innovative professionals and educational groups disappeared (CEREZO, 2003).

Special education was a topic addressed only in the early years of Francoism. However, in 1938, by means of a Decree from the Government of Burgos, the National Organization of the Blind of Spain - ONCE was created, which remains until the contemporary era (VICENTE; VICENTE, 2003).

Until 1955, little progress was noted in the teaching of children with disabilities, however it is also during this period that the Spanish political situation began to change and in 1962 the Ministerio de Educación Nacional came to be called the Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia - MEC, and thus the problems of people with disabilities became part of the investigation of the educational field (GASCÓN; STORCH, 2004).

In 1970 with the Ley General de Educación, the term Special Education was adopted and this was considered as a specific educational modality and with its own curriculum, however this law provided for the creation and operation of special education classes in ordinary schools (ESPANHA, 1970).

In 1978, with the approval of the Constitution, the principles of equal access to education for all were ratified, as well as paying the necessary attention to people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities. In the same year, the National Institute of Special Education created the Plan Nacional de Educación Especial, which establishes the principles of standardization, sectorization, individualization and integration, as well as the creation of special classes and multi-professional teams.

In 1982, amid the beginning of a socialist government, was approved the Ley de Integración Social de los Minusválidos - LISMI, a law that presented a significant advance for school integration, guaranteeing support programs and appropriate resources. The term minusvalid was defined as “toda persona cuyas posibilidades de integración educativa, laboral o social, se hallen disminuidas como consecuencia de una deficiencia, previsiblemente permanente, de carácter congénito no, en sus capacidades físicas, psíquicas o sensoriales” (ESPANHA, 1982, p.11107)<sup>3</sup>.

In the years that followed, inclusive education grew progressively from the promulgation, in 1985, of the Royal Decree of Ordinance of the Special Education. From

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<sup>3</sup> Any person whose possibilities for educational, employment or social integration are diminished as a result of a disability, predictably permanent, whether congenital or not, in their physical, mental or sensory abilities (personal translation).

this decree, the movement to integrate children with disabilities into regular centers begins. Based on this norm, the country had important achievements such as the inclusion of psychopedagogical teams and the incorporation of two new teachers to this educational system, aiming at specialized support: the teachers of Hearing and Language and Therapeutic Pedagogy (SPAIN, 1985).

Subsequently, with the Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo (LOGSE), of October 3, 1990, the idea of education for all is reformed, ensuring policies that reinforce the action of the education system, in order to avoid inequalities derived from the student. Through this law, the presence of specialist teachers became more common in common centers and their functions began to become more specific (ESPANHA, 1990).

The concept of “attention to diversity” and the term students with “special educational needs” were used for the first time in Spain through the aforementioned law, LOGSE, and this term was consolidated worldwide in the Declaration of Salamanca in 1994, approved by the World Conference on Special Educational Needs: Access and Quality. This term refers to “all children and young people whose needs are derived from their disability or learning difficulties” (UNESCO, 1994, p.59).

In view of the efforts made over this period to regulate and organize special education, it is necessary to highlight the Royal Decree 696/1995 of the Ordination of Education with Special Educational Needs - which establishes guidelines for the quality of education for these students, as well as the term sensory, motor or psychic disability to refer to this type of need (ESPANHA, 1995).

In 2006 the Ley Orgánica de Educación - LOE is created, which dedicates Chapter I of its Title II to the attention of students with “specific need for educational support - ACNEAE”, referring to students who require different educational attention for presenting special educational needs. Such legislation also refers to specific learning difficulties, high intellectual capacities and late incorporation into the education system. In view of these aspects, there is a significant change in relation to the principles used, which become normalization and inclusion, based on effective equality in the access and permanence of students in the educational system (SPAIN, 2006).

Current legislation, under conservative government and with neoliberal components, refers to Ley Orgánica de Mejora de la Calidad Educativa - LOMCE, published as Ley Orgánica 8/2013, which is not a new education law, but a law that modified the previous one, the LOE: a single article law that introduces 109 modifications, and the three main changes affecting the entire education system refer to the definition and elements of the curriculum, types of subjects and external assessments (ESPANHA, 2013).

With regard to Attention to Diversity, the autonomy of the centers was favored in order to “Organize teaching flexibly and establish measures of attention to diversity” and to achieve these ends, the following measures are contemplated: “Make adaptations of the curriculum and integrate subjects ; make flexible groupings and adopt support measures in common groups ”(SPAIN, 2013).

According to Casanova (2011), this is the general trajectory, which is continuing at the present moment, however with some advances that tend to expand since the integration to inclusive education, that is, that the educational system itself is able to serve all types of students in ordinary classes. According to the author (2011, p.11) “esta es la escuela inclusiva, que debe derivar en una sociedad inclusiva, democrática al fin, que valore las diferencias de todos los ciudadanos y se enriquezca con ellas ”<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> TN “This is the inclusive school, which must derive from an inclusive society, with a democratic end, which values the differences of all citizens and enriches itself with them”.

### 3. Support services in the Spanish education system

The Ley Orgánica 9/1995, of November 20, of the Participation, the Evaluation and the Government of Teaching Centers, defined the school population with special educational needs as that which it requires during a period of schooling or throughout it, determined specific educational support and attention due to some type of disability (physical, mental or sensory), serious conduct disorders, intellectual giftedness or for being in disadvantaged social or cultural situations (ESPANHA, 1995).

The Decree of Attention to Diversity published on October 11, 2002, gives the centers personal resources of a general nature to students with special educational needs, along with tutors, specialist teachers in Therapeutic Pedagogy (PT), teachers of Hearing and Language (AL), teaching staff to support educational compensation, technical assistants, physiotherapists, sign language specialists, visual impairment specialists, occupational therapists and / or other social intervention specialists (CASTILLA-LA MANCHA, 2002a).

The Therapeutic Pedagogy teacher is the specialist dedicated to promoting teaching to students with special educational needs associated with disabilities or serious conduct disorders. It is up to this teacher to develop, along with the other teachers, individualized attention to students with special educational needs associated with gifted conditions, psychological, sensory or motor disabilities, multiple disabilities and serious conduct disorders that have significant curricular adaptations, as well as students who have some kind of learning disability (CASTILLA-LA MANCHA, 2002b, p.10876)<sup>5</sup>.

The Hearing and Language teacher, on the other hand, is a specialist dedicated to promoting and developing language skills, as well as improving pathologies related to oral and written language. This teacher also works in collaboration with the other teachers, intervening according to the following order of priorities:

- a) La atención individualizada al alumnado con deficiencias auditivas significativas y muy significativas o con trastornos graves de la comunicación asociados a lesiones cerebrales o alteraciones de la personalidad.
- b) La atención al alumnado con disfemias y dislalias orgánicas.
- c) La realización de los procesos de estimulación y habilitación del alumnado en aquellos aspectos determinados en las correspondientes adaptaciones curriculares y en los programas de refuerzo y apoyo.
- d) La orientación, en su caso, al profesorado de educación infantil en la programación, desarrollo y evaluación de programas de (CASTILLA-LA MANCHA, 2002b, p.10876)<sup>6</sup>.

It is also noteworthy that this teacher can perform interventions primarily in the last course of early childhood education and in the first cycle of primary education. It is also

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<sup>5</sup> Directly develop the teaching process for students, in those aspects determined by the corresponding curricular adaptations and in the reinforcement and support programs (our translation).

<sup>6</sup> a) Individualized attention to students with significant and very significant hearing impairments or serious communication disorders associated with brain injuries or personality changes.

b) Attention to students with organic dysphemias and dyslalias.

c) Carrying out the processes of stimulation and qualification of the student in the aspects determined in the corresponding curricular adaptations and in the reinforcement and support programs.

d) Guidance, in your case, to the teacher of early childhood education in the planning, development and evaluation of language stimulation programs (our translation).

important to say that this teacher can work inside or outside the classroom and with a group of students or even individually (SEBASTIÁN HEREDERO, 2000).

#### 4. Deaf education and communicative approaches

Once the deaf education in Spain is historically and legally contextualized, we will address the main communicative approaches found in this country. For years, such approaches have been losing their real objectives by failing to focus on the individual, his possibilities for linguistic development and the context in which he is inserted, to the detriment of his crystallized concepts about deafness. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind the needs and linguistic potential of each child, so that, as families are informed about the educational communicative approaches that can be used with the student, whether the families themselves are given the opportunity to make conscious choices for the approach that most favors the education of the student in question.

Below we will present the main approaches used in the Spanish context: the Spanish oral language, the Spanish Sign Language and bimodalism.

Regarding the oral Spanish language, according to Schiavon (2017) it is possible to note the importance and encouragement on the part of the Spanish Government of this communicative modality in the schooling of the deaf. This becomes clear when we note, for example, the financial support received by the family of deaf children from the Health Service of the Autonomous Communities of the Spanish Government, which offers the possibility of purchasing devices and implants free of charge to people who need them.

Anyway, it is worth the warning: The implant is offered to deaf people, but they must meet some requirements, among which, the following stand out: presenting profound or total bilateral neurosensory deafness; impossibility to benefit from a conventional hearing aid and conviction of hearing improvement through the Cochlear Implant and perform a series of tests to determine to what extent the patient's hearing can be restored (such procedures are performed by a multidisciplinary team). Also noteworthy is the fact that the rehabilitation of the implanted child is offered free of charge by Education (through the specialist teachers present at the Educational Centers and some speech therapists linked to Associations) and by Health (with accompaniment in hospitals) (FIAPAS, 2010).

Regarding the relationship that can be established between the aspect of oral rehabilitation, from the cochlear implant and sign language, points out Capovilla (1998) that

The cochlear implant and the Sign Language are complementary alternatives in the education of the child, while scientists, the professionals must research the relative effectiveness of both in rigorous experimental designs. The professional must refrain from assuming a radical a priori position of prescribing one alternative and proscribing another. Instead, he must consider the need for clinical and educational research on the reactive and complementary impacts of the implant and sign language for the cognitive, linguistic and academic development of the child with congenital deafness. It is necessary that the professional has a broad vision of the person in their conditions of Deaf and deaf<sup>7</sup>, covering both the anthropological aspects of the Deaf Culture as doctors of hearing impairment (CAPOVILLA, 1998, p. 15).

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<sup>7</sup> In the area of Deaf Studies, the use of the capital "D" in the word "deaf" denotes belonging to a deaf community with the use of sign language as a mother tongue. The use of the lower case "d" in the word "deaf" refers to people who have a clinically proven hearing loss, but who may not consider themselves members of a deaf community and do not use sign language.

In view of all these considerations about the importance of the oral language, we must take into account that the deaf child can acquire oral language significantly when he presents auditory conditions for this acquisition. Anyway, some aspects must be considered and among these we can mention the need for an intact sensorimotor channel and good language processing; subjective interest on the part of the deaf; having a structured language and being inserted in a medium in which the language makes sense, that is, the oral language is in the child's context (SINDELL, 2013).

Now, in relation to language and signs, Law 27/2007, of 23 October, recognizes Spanish Sign Languages (LSE) and regulates the means of supporting oral communication for deaf, hearing impaired and deafblind people. Such legislation aimed to give sign language the status of language to people who freely decide to use it for their communication (ESPANHA, 2007a).

We emphasize that, prior to this legal recognition, there was the regulation of the professional Sign Language Interpreter, whose training appears regulated by Royal Decree 2060/1995 of 22 December, which establishes the title of Superior Technician in Sign Language Interpretation Spanish. Such a profession, legally recognized, represented an important advance for the Deaf Community because it occurred at a time when sign language had not been officially recognized as the language of the Spanish State, a fact that only occurred in 2007, as already mentioned (SPAIN, 2007a). The most recent regulation on this professional was published by Royal Decree 831/2014, of October 3 - and this replaces the nomenclature used - which now names him as Senior Technician in Communicative Mediation.

According to Schiavon (2017), sign language is often considered - for those deaf students with functional hearing - as an auxiliary system, which can be used to access the curriculum, or as an instrument. This (the sign language) appears as a positive aspect for their schooling, both for the cases in which the students developed the oral language, and for those who had it as their mother tongue, once the importance of its acquisition for later acquisition of the language was explained. Spanish language written and / or spoken. Thus, the use of signs and gestures becomes important and of great value, as well as the help of an interpreter in LSE and specific teachers. These augmentative systems enhance oral language, serve as reinforcement or help with the purpose of facilitating or increasing your ability to communicate through speech, as well as promoting intellectual skills related to language acquisition (VALMASEDA, 1994).

Regarding the bimodal method, most of the Spanish public policies focus on this type of approach, since it consists of the simultaneous use of the two languages: oral-auditory and gestural-visual, in which manual codes obey the organization structure of the oral language (SPAIN, 2007b).

Such signs are usually taken from the sign languages of the deaf community in the country that uses it. The "Bimodal Communication", therefore, refers to a communicative strategy and not to a fixed set of signs or a specific complementation methodology that varies according to the child's characteristics. This term is a generic concept that includes any program that combines the use of signs with oral language, as well as adaptations of interaction strategies, in order to improve communication and enhance access to speech (MONFORT, 2006).

Bimodalism refers to the way in which the language is presented to the deaf and, therefore, it is expected that the child through the oral language accompanied by the use of signs develops their linguistic skills, and a work is also done to use hearing aids and speech. In view of this, there are divergent thoughts regarding the use of this modality, but there are also positive

and significant points in the use of it, such as, for example, improvements in the quality of teaching and communication of the deaf student. Therefore, it is up to the parents and the school (when the family allows) to decide together the best option to be worked with the student.

### **Final considerations**

The schooling and organization of teaching for deaf students involves several issues - communicative, political and historical, among others - and interweaves several points related to different factors arising from their historical process and given their complexity and linguistic specificities. In this way, this study intended to offer subsidies (historical and legal) for understanding Spanish deaf education, in addition to characterizing the support services and communicative approaches present in the Spanish context.

We highlight the strong trend towards oralization in relation to the learning of sign language found in Spain. We find in the Spanish context a prevalence of the perspective of oralization over sign language and, at the same time, the presence of significant and pedagogically effective supports, such as, for example, the work of hearing and language (LA) and therapeutic pedagogy professionals (PT).

There are divergent debates about the education of implanted deaf people and / or users of hearing aids and FM systems and linguistic modalities. Currently, it is common to find authors who point out that more satisfactory results in schooling for the deaf are due to the auditory possibilities provided by cochlear implants and devices, thus expressing that they achieve a good command of the oral language. On the other hand, there are authors who defend exclusively sign language, who, for example, criticize the option of the deaf for implants, pointing out this procedure as being invasive for the deaf, removing their identity and deaf culture. However, one must take into account the importance of balance between such positions, since what is at issue is the cognitive and linguistic development of the deaf child.

Thus, the results of the study mentioned here, showed that both oral and sign language cannot be seen as exclusive alternatives, and that it is necessary to consider that the deaf, in one way or another, will participate in two communities, oral (listeners) and gestural (deaf), however, the most important thing is that they have the necessary skills to fit into both. Thus, we believe that it is possible to articulate the oral language (developed by the deaf child also with the help of technology) and the sign language, one serving as a support for the learning of the other. All of this is something that evidently happens, in the Spanish context. We can even infer, through woven notes, that the deaf student in Spain can achieve effective communication through sign language, oral language or a combination of both.

The idea is reiterated that professionals working in the educational field should not assume a radical a priori position of prescribing one modality and proscribing another. They must consider the real and effective needs and conditions of the deaf child about the reactive and complementary impacts of oral and sign language on the child's cognitive, linguistic and academic development.

The analysis of the Spanish context offered us, in short, this reflection: each deaf student must be considered individually and, for this, much more than taking into account the communicative modality and the theoretical-academic approach that we will use in their education, it is extremely important to realize the possibilities we have and the needs (accompanied by the freedom of decision) and conditions that the student presents (and in which his family also participates).

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