

The Interface between Indigenous School Education and Deaf Education in MS

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ABSTRACT – The Interface between Indigenous School Education and Deaf Education in MS. The text presents the result of an investigation carried in Guarani and Kaiowá communities, which aimed to survey and analyze the discourses that circulate among indigenous school education professionals about the differences of deaf students. The theoretical-methodological foundation approached the post-critical theory assumptions. Survey participants listed the barriers students face in accessing schools and accessing local and universal knowledge, including the languages used in their community. It presents arguments about the expansion of investigations and the use of emerging sign languages in those contexts may contribute to more adequate plurilingual teaching practices for indigenous deaf students.

Keywords: Indigenous School Education. Deaf Education. Sign Languages.

RESUMO – A Interface entre Educação Escolar Indígena e a Educação de Surdos no MS. O texto apresenta o resultado de uma investigação realizada em comunidades Guarani e Kaiowá que teve como objetivo o levantamento e análise dos discursos que circulam entre os profissionais da educação escolar indígena sobre as diferenças dos estudantes surdos. A fundamentação teórico-metodológica abordou os pressupostos da teoria pós-crítica. Os participantes da pesquisa elencaram as barreiras que os estudantes enfrentam para o acesso às escolas e aos conhecimentos locais e universais, incluindo as línguas utilizadas na sua comunidade. Argumenta-se que a ampliação das investigações e do uso de línguas de sinais emergentes naqueles contextos pode contribuir com práticas de ensino plurilíngue mais adequadas para os estudantes indígenas surdos.

Palavras-chave: Educação Escolar Indígena. Educação de Surdos. Línguas de Sinais.

Introduction

The construction¹ of school education in Brazil made possible the institutionalization, dissemination and access of the majority of the population to the (selected) universal knowledge of humanity. However, in this path, influenced by European colonization, many other types of knowledge, languages, cultures were left out of institutionalized materials, knowledge and practices.

In urban areas, children know languages from Europe and North America, and do not know the languages of peoples from South America. In most urban schools, the first language taught is Portuguese, followed by English and Spanish as a second and third language. This hegemony of the languages and knowledge of the colonizing peoples is intertwined in a discursive network that encompasses the didactic and media materials used in Brazilian schools and universities.

Elaborating an argument about the construction of the interface between the bilingual education of the deaf and indigenous education modalities requires considering the trajectory of these teaching modalities and their specificities within the national discursive context, it also requires delimiting some specific aspects of indigenous schools, such as the plurilingual context and language policies, in an attempt to establish a dialogue that does not seek consensus, the reaffirmation of it, but that is a generating power of something new (Deleuze, 2000), or as Costa argues (2007, p. 113), that allows the production of knowledge “that subvert the hegemonic discourses and inscribe in the curriculum, in the school and in society narratives that contain stories of new subjects and new stories that remove the old identities from their privileged positions of reference and normality”.

In this sense, this research aims to present the results of an investigation carried out in schools of indigenous communities located in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul (MS), Brazil. The study focused on the survey and analysis of the discourses that circulate among indigenous school education professionals about the differences between deaf and special education students from the perspective of inclusive education and was published in a doctoral course conclusion thesis. The theoretical-methodological foundation addressed the assumptions of post-critical theory, which guides the understanding of how codes, words, languages are used to constitute a reality and give meaning to it. For Foucault (1999), discourses are practices that identify subjects, narrate things and at the same time constitute them, thus constituting a certain reality that is constructed within discursive plots. For this reason, it is never possible to inaugurate any discourse, as countless voices have already enunciated it before and constituted discursive networks with them. Veiga-Neto (2007, p.43) explains that, when we analyze the school, the resume, the pedagogy, the didactics, the function of the school, the roles of teachers,

[...] we are not talking about things that were simply there, waiting for what we have to say about them. What we are doing is entering a previous discursive network that, before, had already placed them in the world insofar as it had attributed certain meanings to it.

In order to understand the discursive network of indigenous schools, this study chose to interview municipal education managers, school directors, pedagogical coordinators, indigenous teachers and a deaf student of legal age, in indigenous lands in the municipalities of Amambai, Paranhos and Coronel Sapucaia in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Community leaders were consulted before the visits, as well as municipal education departments and indigenous schools, which, through their managers, allowed visits, conversations and records. All people who participated authorized the disclosure of data by signing a free and informed consent term prepared by the researcher. Voices, images and observations were recorded in a field diary.

The methodological procedures followed the theoretical framework of post-critical ethnography, which, according to Klein and Damico (2014, p.70), allows the use of seeing and narrating movements that cast doubt on a series of strategies aimed at capturing individuals and human multiplicities. The need to adapt an ethnographic method to our different time and space leads us to a less purposeful and ritualistic path and more self-reflective with respect to subjectivity and more self-aware of linguistic and narrative strategies (Klein and Damico, 2014).

Below is the contextualization of the theme and the discussion of the results of the study carried out.

School education and the Guarani and Kaiowá peoples in Mato Grosso do Sul

The indigenous school education that is being developed in the lands inhabited by the Guarani and Kaiowá peoples must be problematized from the historical aspects of the communities, their struggles for land and for schools that consider their cultural and linguistic practices. In these times, the indigenous population of Mato Grosso do Sul needs to re-signify its existence, culture and language on a daily basis in order to constitute a school in its own way, in an attempt to break with the hegemony of national education models.

According to the 2010 census, there were around 818,000 people who declared themselves indigenous in Brazil, of which 502,783 lived in rural areas and 315,180 lived in Brazilian urban areas. In this study, approximately 305 ethnic groups and more than 274 different languages were identified (IBGE, 2010). One of these indigenous languages is the Urubu-Kaapor Sign Language, used by the Urubu-Kaapor peoples in the state of Maranhão (IBGE, 2010). Researchers Martins and Chamorro (2015, p.729) point out that, if we consider only the languages that still have speakers, as is commonly presented by researchers and mission-

aries who work directly with Brazilian indigenous communities, this number decreases to about 180 languages. They also claim that before the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century there were more than a thousand languages in Brazilian territory. These studies do not present data from other indigenous sign languages that are recognized or that are in the process of being cataloged and investigated.

Census also reveals that, even with the identification of the indigenous languages in use, within the lands there are many individuals who do not speak the language of their community (about 43% do not speak an indigenous language), while the Portuguese language is spoken by 76.9%. Outside indigenous lands, virtually all indigenous people speak Portuguese and only 12% use an indigenous language.

The Guarani and Kaiowá ethnic groups are often combined into a single generic group called the Guarani-Kaiowá, which together make up a total of 67,523 people and make up the second largest ethnic group in Brazil in terms of the number of people. In the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, this indigenous population is the most numerous and is spread over several areas, such as indigenous lands, indigenous reserves, camps and areas of resumption of traditional territories, the latter being considered areas of conflict in several municipalities in the state.

Studies indicate that since the first contacts of Europeans with native and native South Americans, during the colonization period, there have already been communication attempts that boosted literacy and schooling of the original peoples, named indigenous peoples. From the perspective of the colonizer (non-indigenous), the peoples on this side of the ocean were uncivilized and condemned to eternal punishment, they needed the light of knowledge that would lead them to salvation (Nascimento; Vinha, 2012; Cohn, 2014).

The challenges that arose in attempts to civilize South American indigenous people were related to linguistic and cultural differences. Colonizers tried to learn the native language, register the indigenous oral language in spelling and elaborate grammars of these languages, as part of projects that aimed to promote a transitional bilingualism, that is, the teaching of the mother tongue and from it the learning the national language, often in partnership with the Brazilian State (Cohn, 2014; Knapp, 2016). The authors analyze that, in the history of indigenous schooling, educational services have always been offered with the aim of changing what these people are and integrating them into the society that surrounds them.

The change in the objectives of the indigenous school began with the claims of indigenous movements from the 1970s, organized and articulated through large Indigenous Assemblies, which united previously isolated groups in the struggle to guarantee their rights (Conh, 2014; Knapp, 2016). From then on, a change in the discourse on Indigenous School Education can be seen. The results are expressed in statements that began to be recurrent in academic productions, such as indigenous protagonism, the school as an instrument of self-determination and au-

tonomy, the school and the contribution to the appreciation of cultural practices and differentiated identities. The indigenous community begins to define the principles for the management of the differentiated school: need for specific teaching materials, literacy in the mother tongue, school calendar integrated with the daily practices and rituals of the group, qualified indigenous teacher for teaching at the same time that he/she goes to school, school education for intercultural dialogue (Grupioni, 2008, p. 49; Knapp, 2016, p. 74).

For Cohn (2014), the contemporary model of indigenous school education (called indigenous differentiated school) presents itself as an option against the integrationist projects of the past. In its beginning, it was put into practice through alternative projects to official policy, and, with the indigenous movements in the 1970s, it becomes legally recognized and legally guaranteed in the 1988 Constitution. In article 210, paragraph 2nd of the Federal Constitution of 1988, provides that “regular elementary education will be taught in Portuguese, ensuring indigenous communities will also be able to use their mother tongues and their own learning processes” (Brasil, 1988).

In this context, the differentiated indigenous school was created to be a form of resistance to normalizing policies and pedagogies, which prioritized curricula and languages of urban communities. Practices that intended to subvert institutionalized education struggled to include the mother tongue of indigenous communities in schools, ways of differentiating resume, space and methodologies. Some works identify in the speeches of the indigenous community the relationship between language and the processes of meaning and maintenance of identities (Nascimento; Vinha, 2012).

Indigenous researchers, including Lescano (2016), argue that the differentiated indigenous school today can be an instrument for valuing culture and fighting for visibility in disputes waged against the hegemonization of Brazilian culture. These researchers and other non-indigenous researchers draw attention to the fact that a bilingual and intercultural education among indigenous peoples must not only be based on the student’s culture and use their mother tongue as a bridge to the acquisition of a second language, but also seek to value and preserve these cultures and languages (Martins & Chamorro, 2015; Knapp, 2016). Teachers Nascimento and Vinha (2012) also defend the construction of a specific and differentiated school that does not promote the erasure of the meanings of indigenous knowledge and sociocultural practices, through indigenous self-management and intercultural dialogue.

Nowadays, indigenous communities, through the differentiated school, try to re-signify the function of writing and indigenous language, in a relationship of resistance to the traditional model of school, urban centric and monolingual. At the core of contemporary struggles is also the adequacy of indigenous schools to the proposed bilingual education for deaf students (which should include sign languages and the written modality of oral language). It means that new languages and

codes are being disseminated and taught in the indigenous school, already a plurilingual space.

In Brazil, we have a large deaf population, there are 9.7 million people with hearing impairment, 5.1% of the population, and 2.7 million are profoundly deaf, that is, they cannot hear anything, according to data released by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2010). The census did not disclose how many of these people are indigenous. Researcher and linguist Shirley Vilhalva (Vilhalva, 2009) estimates that there are 1,286 indigenous people with some hearing impairment in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, however, only a small part of these citizens is enrolled in schools located in the countryside and on indigenous lands.

In the document “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (UN, 2008), it was recommended that States adopt effective measures to ensure the continuous improvement of the economic and social conditions of indigenous peoples, with special attention to the rights and to the specific needs of the elderly, women, youth, children and indigenous people with disabilities. In it, education for the disabled population in indigenous schools is placed as a right, as well as health, freedom and the mother tongue.

The modality of Bilingual (or plurilingual) Education for the deaf in Brazil

The schooling of indigenous people with disabilities appears in Brazilian educational policy recently, especially in the discussions of the “National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education” (Brasil, 2008). This document recommends that all children be included in schools in the regular education network, with guaranteed access, participation and learning at all levels of education, in addition to access to Specialized Educational Assistance (AEE) and training for teachers and other professionals in the education. Specifically, about the existing difference in the context of schools in indigenous lands, the text only mentions:

The interface of special indigenous education, rural and quilombola education must ensure that resources, services and specialized educational assistance are present in the pedagogical projects carried out based on the socio-cultural differences of these groups (Brasil, 2008, p. 17).

For teaching deaf people in regular schools, the Policy is based on the Libras Law (Brasil, 2002) and Decree 5626 (Brasil, 2005); these documents recommend that bilingual education consider sign language as the first language of deaf students who sign and oral languages in the written modality as second and third languages. It is understood that this teaching will be carried out with the insertion of Libras and Portuguese translators/interpreters in classrooms common to all students and bilingual teachers in AEE and in bilingual classes within regular

schools. The text also recommends that, due to linguistic differences, the deaf student should be with other deaf peers in common classes in regular school (Brasil, 2008).

In recent years, the deaf movement has claimed recognition and differentiation of the Bilingual Teaching modality within the regular education system, as well as the organization of bilingual classrooms and schools, already provided for in Decree 5626/2005 (Brasil, 2005). In 2019, a review of the then-current Special Education Policy was carried out, with the aim of expanding the possibilities of serving the target audience of special education students, and including specialized institutions and special/bilingual classes in the regular education system. In regular schools. In 2020, Decree Nº 10.502/2020 was published, which established the National Policy on Special Education: Equitable, Inclusive and with lifelong learning, which, after 60 days, was suspended by the Federal Supreme Court. In the analysis by Rocha, Mendes and Lacerda (2020, p. 2):

The aforementioned Decree was suspended by the Federal Supreme Court (STF) because, unlike laws, this type of legal instrument does not have the power to create, extinguish or modify rights and obligations. In this sense, Decree No. 10,502/2020 was considered unconstitutional, for violating current laws, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, approved by Legislative Decree No. 6,949, of August 25, 2009 (BRASIL, 2009), with status Constitutional Amendment in Brazil.

The text proposed for the new Special Education Policy (Brasil, 2020) argued that regular schools did not meet the special educational needs of students with disabilities, and advised that the teaching of these students should also happen in the network of specific and specialized institutions. In the field of education for the deaf, it defended the organization of bilingual education in specific schools as a way of guaranteeing the realization of the linguistic right of the deaf to communicate and learn using Libras as a means, a defense that has already been carried out by the deaf movement since 2012, with the delivery and publication of the “Open Letter to the Minister of Education, prepared by the first seven Brazilian deaf doctors, who work in the areas of education and linguistics” (Campello et al., 2012).

The cited documents do not mention the different languages already identified among indigenous communities and other deaf communities that constitute specific systems for communication, and could be effective instruments in school teaching. Another problem resides in the organization of bilingual schools, as they would be conditioned to the number of deaf students needed for their implementation, as well as the bilingual classes located in regular schools. These spaces would also be made available to deaf people who opt for this service.

In the wake of the neoliberal policies of the Jair Bolsonaro government, in 2021, Law nº 14,191 amended the Law of Guidelines and Bases

of National Education - LDBEN, to recognize bilingual education for the deaf as a type of school education, offered in 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 bilingual education centers for the deaf, for deaf, deaf-blind students, with significant hearing impairment, deaf with high abilities or giftedness or with other associated deficiencies, opting for the modality of bilingual education for the deaf (Brasil, 2021).

In this way, Bilingual Education for the deaf acquires the status of a teaching modality, such as indigenous school education, youth and adult education, and others. As a specific modality, it is argued that the curriculum, methods and teaching materials should be differentiated and the financing of this new modality should be funded by the Union, offering technical and financial support to education systems for the implementation of adaptations in across the country (Brasil, 2021).

If, on the one hand, the recognition of the Bilingual Education modality represents the appreciation of the historical and political struggles of the deaf movements and the sign language of the urban deaf, on the other hand, it imposes on the education systems the responsibility of offering this education to all deaf people opting for school education in Libras. However, the lack of special schools for the deaf or bilingual classes in rural education, in rural and indigenous areas, or in water schools, indicates that this modality will not be a reality in those contexts. And, if they are organized in these regions, the curriculum, strategies and teaching methodologies will necessarily be different from urban schools, considering the plurilingualism of deaf indigenous communities.

The deaf indigenous linguist Shirley Vilhalva (2009) conducts research with the aim of registering and disseminating studies on indigenous sign languages and on the school education of deaf indigenous students in MS. Her investigations demonstrate that deaf indigenous people use different forms of communication, which are named by other researchers as mother tongues, mother tongues, native language, homemade signs, among others. In a recent research, in partnership with João Carlos Gomes (Gomes; Vilhalva, 2021), the authors argue that this communication is developed in the sociolinguistic context of deaf people in different regions of Brazil and present the same characteristics common to natural languages, such as linguistic variations, iconicity and arbitrariness, in addition to its own grammars that include all linguistic levels - phonological, morphological, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic, which allow citizens to express different meanings (Gomes; Vilhalva, 2021).

With the analysis of different investigative research, Gomes and Vilhalva (2021) demonstrate what they call evolutionary epistemologies of sign language studies, as they consider that family signs evolved into emerging signs of indigenous sign languages, constituted in different intercultural contexts. For the authors, family signs have intercultur-

al iconographic configurations, and can be used as teaching-learning processes in the contexts of indigenous schools. They argue that the inclusion and use of indigenous sign languages can significantly improve the quality of this teaching. They also state that professional interpreters will have the responsibility of promoting the linguistic accessibility of deaf indigenous students through the interpretation of the culture, histories, movements, culture and identity policies of what the authors call the deaf people.

Expectations and impasses for the school attendance of deaf indigenous students

The survey carried out at the municipal education departments and confirmed during visits to the schools showed that there were five students with hearing difficulties enrolled and attending community schools, four students attending the early years of elementary school and one completing high school. This number increased in relation to a first study carried out in 2011 (Coelho, 2011), when eight deaf people were identified in the communities, but only three attended school.

The interview with managers and teachers addressed different themes that permeate the inclusion of deaf students in indigenous schools. Of these themes, some of the most recurrent ones in the speeches were selected to be discussed in this text: identification and evaluation of deficiencies, hiring professionals to care for deaf students and strategies of professionals from the indigenous school for teaching deaf students.

The inclusion of people with disabilities in differentiated indigenous schools has been expanded recently, as a result of inclusive educational policies. However, there are still many reports of students who fail at school or who are still out of school. In the school routine, teachers point out problems such as the lack of physical, material and personnel structure to meet the needs of students and lack of specific training with regard to differences in behavior, learning and communication, among others.

The education professionals who participated in the research explain that the interface between the modalities of indigenous education and inclusive education is not so simple, precisely because of the sociocultural differences mentioned in the PNEEPEI text (Brasil, 2008). Recognition of the linguistic difference between indigenous people and deaf people and the mention of this interface in policy are not enough to put this teaching into effect in everyday school life. The first barriers that arise are related to the assessment of differences and the provision of resources for the specific assistance of deaf students.

For the three representatives of the municipal education departments (who are not indigenous) interviewed, the lack of a clinical report attesting to the student's disability would make it difficult to attract material and human resources to work in schools. The appreciation of

clinical/medical knowledge is evident when they say that this report is necessary for the organization of specific assistance to students: “the city hall has to justify the hiring of this professional. Why are we paying a mediator instructor? Because he is assisting a deaf child. Then we should show the report” (special education manager apud Coelho, 2019, p. 102).

In the municipality where this manager works, we saw these words echo in other voices, from other professionals: “if she had the report, she would guarantee a support teacher”, said a school coordinator, another director justifies that “some (students) are with characteristic, but without a report” and even a teacher vents: “the concern I have is that we can get the report” (apud Coelho, 2019, p. 102). In rural communities, far from municipalities, where most people live in a situation of social vulnerability due to the lack of basic things for survival, the search for this medical report becomes a very time-consuming negotiation.

The Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Person with Disabilities, which ratifies the Statute of Person with Disabilities (Brasil, 2015) reaffirms in Article 2, paragraph 1, that the “assessment of disability, when necessary, will be biopsychosocial, carried out by a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary team”. This law presents a series of factors to be considered when assessing whether or not a citizen has a disability, such as: impairments in body functions and structures; socio-environmental, psychological and personal factors; limitation in the performance of activities; and participation restriction. The law allows the person to be evaluated considering a group of characteristics that is not limited to the clinical diagnosis provided by the medical professional. Other knowledge from other professionals can be considered, in addition to other characteristics that must be observed in the subject.

The subordination of school attendance to the clinical evaluation and report gives rise to other problems when carrying out this evaluation; especially when they try to evaluate indigenous children outside their context, without knowing the language and the cultural and social aspects of the community. None of the special education centers in the municipalities surveyed have an indigenous teacher on the team. The managers stated that they intend to include a professional soon, due to the difficulties that the technicians encounter when they visit the indigenous schools.

The complexity of evaluating indigenous children who speak another language is discussed by the managers, with examples of situations experienced during the evaluation work being presented. Lack of knowledge of indigenous culture and language led special education techniques to interpret children’s expressions and experiences in different ways. On many occasions, they did not identify the strengths or difficulties of the evaluated students. They regret that, because they do not know the mother tongue of children and young people, the assessment is compromised and they end up experiencing situations of speaking and not being understood.

After evaluating these children, the professionals of special education and indigenous education in the municipalities say that they are faced with a new and next problem, that of hiring specific professionals to attend school to deaf students. The students' cultural and linguistic differences would be the reasons that make hiring difficult. In addition to these, the managers explain that there is a lack of professionals specifically trained to care for deaf students in the municipalities; there is a lack of professionals trained in sign language for interpretation in schools in the municipality in general, including schools located in indigenous lands.

The lack of a bilingual pedagogue to work in the initial years of indigenous schools is the justification for replacing this professional with a Libras interpreter or support professional who would work in partnership with the indigenous teacher. Thus, the school management has deposited the hope of promoting an improvement in the service of deaf students with the insertion of a professional sign language interpreter in the literacy classrooms.

In addition to pedagogical and linguistic knowledge, the managers also explain that the professional must understand the cultural differences that exist in that community. When asked about the continuing education of indigenous teachers to care for children with disabilities, the managers say it is something very complex to plan. In addition to the specific knowledge of the area, the professional to work in indigenous education should also know the indigenous mother tongue and the sociocultural aspects of the community.

The discourse of the need for a specialist in the area of special education to assist children with disabilities or the need to acquire a corpus of specific knowledge is recurrent among indigenous professionals. The directors repeat that the teachers at the indigenous school "are not prepared" for this challenge of teaching people who cannot hear. They expose concern about the lack of knowledge about Libras and methodologies to teach content to deaf students, but defend the importance of this dialogue with other knowledge, which would be outside the community. They reproduce the discourse of the need for Libras and specific methodological knowledge.

The interviewees also point out a series of factors that make work difficult, mainly the lack of "appropriate" material and human structure. The PNEEPEI (Brasil, 2008) recommends that the complementary or supplementary service of the target audience of special education students should be carried out in a different shift from the regular one. And for this service, multifunctional resource rooms should be organized in regular schools, including indigenous ones, and the hiring of teachers specifically qualified for this function.

In the deliberation of the State Council of Education of Mato Grosso do Sul, No. 10.647 of April 28, 2015, which established norms for the provision of indigenous school education in the State Education System, it is established that "the specialized educational service should

compose the pedagogical proposal of the indigenous schools under the terms of this Deliberation” (Mato Grosso do Sul, 2015, p. 4). The document’s recommendations range from ensuring school accessibility for students with disabilities to organizing spaces with human and material resources, in addition to encouraging the use of emerging signs by deaf indigenous people.

As for accessibility, what is not said in the documents and what the on-site observations in indigenous communities and different schools allowed us to verify was that indigenous lands are often extensive and the houses located in different parts of them, some closer and others more distant. The paths are always unpaved and, depending on weather conditions, make it difficult for means of transport such as bicycles, motorbikes, cars and buses to pass. The mobility problems of children in the communities also make it difficult for them to attend indigenous schools, especially when they are children with disabilities. A relationship could be established between the difficulty of accessing indigenous schools and the participation of children with disabilities in regular classrooms and in specialized educational services. The study showed that the difficulties identified in 2011 (Coelho, 2011) have not yet been resolved, prolonging the exclusion of children with disabilities from specific services to meet the educational needs of deaf students.

The widespread lack of resources to carry out specialized educational services for deaf students is eloquent and shows how far indigenous schools are from achieving adequate conditions, according to policy recommendations and the claims of deaf movements. In all the cases cited, we saw that there is a political technology denying access to schools for people with disabilities by not offering transport, not hiring more professionals, not offering continuing education to indigenous teachers to work in this context.

We previously discussed that the constitution of a differentiated indigenous education is based on the discourse of valuing the mother tongue and the cultural aspects of the communities. One of the school principals explained to us that the communities were substituting the Guarani language for the Portuguese language and many fathers and mothers opted to teach their children only the Portuguese language. The indigenous school enters this context to be an instrument of linguistic and cultural visibility and appreciation.

However, when we compare the results of years of schooling of deaf children in indigenous schools with others who had some hearing loss but understood speech, it becomes evident that even partial hearing determines the academic success of students in these contexts as well. Education professionals analyzed that the learning experiences of two students in the classroom were positive because they “understood the language spoken at school and more specifically the Portuguese language”, which is the language of school materials. Unfortunately, sign languages still do not find possibilities to be developed, researched and used in many indigenous communities.

The linguistic issue in the deaf indigenous community

In most indigenous schools today, preschool and the first two grades of literacy are taught in the mother tongue and, after the third grade, Portuguese is included as a second language. And the deaf student must learn these two languages and also the official sign language of the Brazilian deaf community, Libras. In practice, the native language of the indigenous community ends up becoming restricted to oral and social communication, and the Portuguese language is used for school records, since it is the language of didactic and printed materials in general, of the media, of institutions such as FUNAI, churches, supermarkets, bus station, hospital and bank (Knapp, 2016).

To exemplify how this language teaching takes place in the investigated indigenous schools, we will expose three cases of school assistance for deaf children narrated by teachers, in three different schools. In the first case, a seven-year-old student enrolled in the pre-school room of a municipal school studied with 23 other students. The classroom teacher is bilingual, knows Guarani and Portuguese, but does not know sign language. The school proposes bilingual teaching from the literacy phase. About the student, the teacher explains that she is attentive and smart, observes everything around her and copies the behavior of her colleagues and the teacher. She copies activities in the notebook when visually oriented, using “hand signals and gestures”. Only in that year did the child begin to learn the manual alphabet of the Portuguese language and some Libras signs in the multifunctional resource room. We observed the student in the classroom and we could see the communication attempts of the colleagues and the teachers with her, always using iconic and emerging signs.

In the resource room, she is assisted by an indigenous teacher who speaks Portuguese and Guarani and knows little about Libras. The service is carried out during class hours in some periods of the week, due to the difficulties that the student has in accessing the school in both shifts. The teacher explains that the student has a profound hearing loss and that she tries to imitate the movements of her mouth and the sounds made by people around her. She reports that classmates at school create visual strategies for communicating with the deaf student, who also uses the resource of pointing to objects and people. The girl’s family also uses signs created in the family environment to communicate and encourage lip reading in the Guarani language. She is not yet literate in any of the languages; and, according to the teacher, she only knows a few isolated signs and words.

When asked about language teaching in the multifunctional resource room, the teacher replied: “I am teaching the Portuguese language anyway” (apud Coelho, 2019, p. 127). The room has a banner with the signed Portuguese alphabet hanging on the wall, and the teacher explains that it is easier to teach those who already have a translation into sign language. Thus, she says she teaches Portuguese and Libras at the same time. We also saw the materials used in the resource room

and they were mostly for teaching the Portuguese language. Teaching is not restricted to the signed alphabet and writing of the Portuguese language. The teacher also reports that she composes the service carried out individually by teaching the sounds of letters using an oral stimulation technique.

The teacher showed how she does it with the student so that we could observe the technique. It is similar to the one used by speech therapists, in articulatory exercises, for speech training through the imitation of mouth movements. The teacher stands in front of the student, points to the letter of the alphabet on the banner, makes the sound of the letter with the student's hand on her throat and then takes the girl's hand to her own throat so that she can imitate the sound and perceive the movement of the hands on the vocal chords. We observed that the student was able to perform some sounds and not others. Other proposed activities such as writing one's own name and the letters of the alphabet are also carried out through imitation. The teacher wrote on a piece of paper and the child copied it. The teacher says she knows little about Libras, as she only took a basic course, and that she is learning along with the student. This experience serves as an example of the discrepancy in bilingual education for the deaf in urban and rural areas of the same country; they are very different practices within the same national territory, practices that are anchored in the corrective pedagogies to which the deaf have been submitted for a long time (Lopes, 2007).

For the deaf indigenous student, the mother tongue of the community has been on a third plane. However, once the student acquires Portuguese and sign language, the teacher believes that teaching the Guarani language will be possible. These are practices that show that, within the possibilities available for this teaching to be effective, teachers resort to teaching the hegemonic oral language in the school context: the Portuguese language of school materials, banners, children's stories, which are also present in school indigenous.

The second case is from another school in the same municipality. The six-year-old student is in the literacy room and has a support teacher who accompanies him daily in the room, and who also plans individual activities sporadically in the multifunctional resource room. This school, like other indigenous schools, aims to teach indigenous children first in their mother tongue, the Guarani language, and then teach Portuguese as a second language. The Portuguese language becomes the language of instruction at school from the third year of elementary school onwards.

In the classroom where the deaf student is included, the literacy teacher is indigenous and speaks the Guarani language, as well as the support teacher, also indigenous who knows Libras. The municipal and school managers celebrate the hiring of the support teacher, because, according to them, the student "was able to learn something" (apud Coelho, 2019, p. 130). The school principal reports that the family has its own communication system with this child, but now he is "actually learning a language" (Libras).

According to the teachers' reports, in the classroom the boy is very excited, and seems to enjoy interacting with other classmates. Teachers and administrators believe that the presence of deaf students at school is beneficial for all students, as they try to establish communication with deaf students. It is so well connected that the support teacher says that the learning activities have become less interesting than playing with the other students. However, some difficulties are pointed out, and they are related to the complexity of teaching the languages involved in the context of the indigenous school.

The support teacher explains that she has difficulties finding strategies for teaching the mother tongue in the regular classroom, and, for this reason, she removes the student from the regular classroom a few times a week to teach the languages individually in a separate classroom. In the regular classroom of the first grade of elementary school, where the boy was included, we observed that the board contained activities only in the Guarani language. Even though Guarani is the language of instruction in the room, initially, in the resource room, the teachers report that they did not find possibilities to promote the teaching of the Guarani language and opted for teaching the Portuguese language. Then they decided to include Guarani in the student's literacy process, so that he could follow classes in the regular classroom. The support teacher explains that it started with frequent individualized care, then it was reduced to keep the student in the regular classroom longer.

The teacher reports that the times and days of individual assistance in the resource room are not fixed, and are decided by the teachers according to the content and activities proposed for the room on the day. About the communication between them, she replied: "We communicate with homemade signs and I also use Libras". This teacher had taken a specialization course in Special Education and training courses in Libras, and, in the municipality, for the special education manager, she was considered the best indigenous teacher qualified for this service.

The support teacher had the responsibility of teaching written Guarani language, Portuguese and Libras, in addition to learning with the student a way to signal specific concepts of their community. For the time being, the language that has been the student's language of instruction is Portuguese. And the teacher teaches this language in moments of individual assistance and also in moments of collective learning in the regular classroom. In the observations we made in the classroom and in the resource room, we found that the student signs some objects, animals and their name, as well as writes some words in Portuguese and Guarani, based on the command signaled by the teacher.

According to the teachers, the concomitant teaching of the Guarani language and the Portuguese language is already a very complex process, and they need to develop strategies to accomplish this using the signed alphabet of the Portuguese language. For the time being, the main teacher only speaks in Guarani in the classroom and the support

teacher needs to interpret using the manual alphabet of the Portuguese language. On this linguistic issue, the teachers explain that the alphabet of the Guarani language is different, with a few more letters:

Guarani is different from Portuguese, the alphabet has 33 letters, and the Portuguese alphabet is smaller. [...] In Guarani there are A and Ā, N and Ñ. What Guarani does not have is Z, X, F and C [...]. We only use K. But I use the manual alphabet to teach Guarani, for example: if I'm going to teach Ka'i (monkey), then he writes the K, the A, the little comma at the top (apostrophe) and the I [...]. In the Portuguese language, there is no word NT and G with tilde, nor the sound of ũ. [...] Now we already have all the letters of the Guarani alphabet, he already signed for all of them (Support Teacher apud Coelho, 2019, p. 133).

It is interesting to note that the teacher developed, together with the student, a signed form of the Guarani language alphabet. For her, writing this language is a challenge even for many speakers in the community, who speak the language but do not write it. The teacher explains that many teachers who entered the teaching profession until 2013 as lay people (without higher education) "did not know how to plan in the language, did not know how to write in the language". The writing of the Guarani language is being resumed, discussed, researched and disseminated recently by indigenous teachers who already have higher education and are dedicating themselves to teaching and researching the language. For this reason, teaching materials are also scarce in the Guarani language, and are in the process of being created. The books and teaching materials available at the school are mostly in Portuguese. We note that the signs, messages posted in the hall and in the office, as well as other materials are produced in Portuguese.

In a third case analyzed, two deaf students are enrolled in the classroom of the third grade of elementary school in an indigenous school, but they attend with difficulty, because, in the land where they live, there is no internal bus line, and the line that there is a pass on the highway (a few kilometers away from the houses) and it takes you to the city. These students were offered specialized educational services at a school in the city, but, despite the importance, the special education manager says that because it is far away and difficult to access, they do not require students to attend. They attend the regular classroom, participate in meals and common activities, but according to the teachers, they are not literate in any of the languages involved.

The difficulty of communicating with students has been a reason given for the failure of literacy and literacy attempts. In the classroom, the teacher is indigenous and teaches content in the Guarani language, but the students are not assisted by a support teacher and/or Libras interpreter. The classroom teacher reports that the boys do not attend school assiduously.

On the day that the researcher visited the school, both students were present. At the time of the visit to the classroom, the students in the classroom were on the court for the physical education class, but they did not participate in the class, and one of them was walking around

the school and seeing what was happening around. There was an attempt to communicate, but the deaf child kept looking attentively at the signs and did not respond, just imitating some signs. The other student seemed more integrated into the group in the room. He also imitated some signals and just repeated what the researcher signaled. The two seemed to be happy with the attention they received and with the way used in the communication attempts, as they accompanied the visitors to the school gate for the farewell. It is noted that they do not have a language of instruction and communication, but develop signaled communication strategies with classmates and school teachers.

About the teaching of these students, the teacher states: “we do what we can with him”, which suggests that, even without specific training in sign language or in education for the deaf, he tries to find strategies for this teaching to happen in everyday school life. The activities carried out are to point out the contents, people and objects and ask to copy from the board. Students are not literate in written oral languages and do not even know Libras.

In these three cases, we found that the lack of adequate material and human structure, such as professionals trained to teach deaf students, lead to exclusion and school failure of students. When students have this support, from a support teacher and/or Libras interpreter, even if they are learning another language outside their indigenous context, they access a lot of information and possibilities. However, we understand that the Portuguese language and Libras are hegemonic languages in urban inclusive schools, and school attendance in indigenous contexts must consider the different mother tongues and signs already developed and used in the community, as oriented in the CEE/MS Deliberation No. 10,647 (2015).

Final considerations

The research data show that the discourses of school education in its indigenous, bilingual, special modalities, circumscribe people and pedagogical practices in pre-established discursive plots, which capture differences and make them invisible in specific contexts. The barriers imposed on the access and participation of deaf indigenous students in school institutions show that the education system has denied the linguistic right and the very right to school education that students have. Structural barriers prevent people with disabilities from accessing institutions and services, and communication barriers arise when deaf students interact with other students and professionals in the network (teachers, administrators, special education technicians, etc.), and if intensify in moments of teaching and learning curriculum contents. The general lack of professionals who are knowledgeable in sign languages, with specific training, imposes on deaf indigenous students an individual responsibility for school success in a plurilingual context. The demand for school education professionals, in this context, requires training in Sign Languages and Bilingual/Multilingual Educa-

tion that is more attentive to the cultural and linguistic differences of indigenous deaf students.

The AEE offered to deaf students in SRMs, when it happens, presents the same characteristics already pointed out by the researcher Enicéia Mendes (2017) in the evaluation of the results of the National Observatory of Special Education (ONEESP). It is configured as a one-size-fits-all service, for all students with disabilities at the school, and is unable to respond, during one or two hours of service in the same school shift, as in the cases presented, to the differentiated needs of deaf children who, in general, arrive at school only at the age of 6, with linguistic and cultural specificities. The researcher also analyzes that the success of school inclusion should not be evaluated based on numbers and statistics of increased enrollment in the special education modality of educational institutions, but by the impact on the lives of citizens in the short, medium and long term (Mendes, 2017).

This study pointed out that deaf indigenous students are not learning the mother tongue of their community; the proposed educational model for Brazilian indigenous schools based on teaching the indigenous mother tongue as a first language and the hegemonic language as a second language does not apply to deaf students in the investigated region. We problematize that teaching strategies have made the emerging sign languages already identified in these communities invisible (Gomes; Vilhalva, 2021), as well as subordinating the cultural differences of deaf indigenous students and not contributing to the appreciation of mother tongues in indigenous communities. It is important to expand investigations on sign languages and their use in indigenous communities, as they can contribute to the school adaptation process for teaching deaf students and to the creation of language policies and more appropriate and relevant multilingual teaching practices. In the development of the interface between education for the deaf and indigenous school education, it is necessary to design and implement new and different training for teachers and teaching strategies, enhanced by the appreciation of the many languages and cultures that exist in indigenous territories.

Received on 26 April 2022

Approved on May 5, 2023

Note

- 1 This article dialogues with the thesis of one of the authors (Coelho, 2019), and presents excerpts from the previous work that were submitted to new analyses.

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Availability of research data: the dataset supporting the results of this study is published in this article.

Editor in charge: Lodenir Karnopp

