Instruments, materials and repercussions in the context of teaching Libras[1] in bilingual deaf schools: what language organizes what thought?

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In the present research project we seek to identify the implications that underlie the education of Libras deaf teachers in Elementary and Secondary Education in Bilingual Schools in São Paulo, Brazil. These are people that use a visual / gestural / spatial language, which the current legislation - law n. 10.436 / 02 regulated by Decree no. 5.626 / 2005 - guarantees and recognizes, as they recognize the right of the deaf to have access to knowledge, common assets and communication through their first language (Libras). The project also seeks to discuss the law's potential impact on teacher education and the outcomes of this impact with regard to public education policies (QUADROS, 2004). The research is being carried out in a critical-collaborative perspective (Magalhães, 2011), i.e., its focus is to collaborate with the processes of identity construction of teachers. In this paper, I understand that the teaching exercise is not limited to the application of pre-conceived models, but rather, it is constructed in the practice of the participating teachers according to each one's history. Thus, a formative process would move the knowledge of education theory necessary for inclusion, allowing the participants (teachers and researcher) to be able to develop the skills and abilities to investigate their own teaching activity and, from this research, to constitute their knowledge-teaching, in a continuous and dialectical process of collective construction of new knowledge (PIMENTA, 2000). More specifically, the research goals will be (1) to articulate spaces that allow the involved teacher to achieve professional development; (2) to analyze the processes of teaching Libras (Brazilian Sign Language) to deaf children; (3) to stimulate changes in the school organizational culture in which the project develops, with the intention of contributing to the foundation of the teaching practice, (4) to present the main points of socio-historical psychology proposed by Vygotsky, and the assumption of critical pedagogy that all teachers can produce knowledge about the teaching-learning process and therefore, need not be (and they are not) repeaters of theories previously developed by supposed intellectuals (the doers versus thinkers paradigm). As a result of the collaborative actions carried out within the research, pedagogical changes are expected to produce work valorization, personal growth, professional commitment, the

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[1] LIBRAS is short for Brazilian Sign Language and widely used across Brazil instead of the full expression.

development of a culture of analysis and participatory organizational practices. To Vygotsky, all human learning and development are active processes, in which there are purposive actions mediated by various tools (Vygotsky, 1934). The most important of these tools is language, for it represents the semiotic system which is the basis of the human intellect. All other higher functions of the intellect are developed from social interaction based on language (WARSCHAUER, 1997). Thus, intelligence has a social origin and learning happens initially interpsychically, that is, in the collective, and then there is intrapsychic construction. Thus, for learning to occur, there is a need for interaction between two or more people, cooperating in an interpersonal activity and enabling intra-personal re-elaboration. Within this view, it becomes necessary to bring the concept of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, which in his own words is:

ZPD is the distance between the real level of development that is usually determined through problem-solving and the level of potential development determined through problem solving under the guidance of an adult or in collaboration with more capable peers. (1934: p.112)

According to Siqueira (2003), there is the real development zone, which consists of skills and knowledge that the student has built up so far, and tasks and problems that students can solve on their own, without the help of more experienced companions. In the area of proximal development, however, one will find the skills and knowledge that have not fully matured and that need the help and guidance of an adult or a more experienced partner so that they can be used. For Vygotsky, the ZPD is considered the central point of learning, where the functions in the process of maturation are found. Newman, Griffin, and Cole (1989) emphasized the importance of the ZDP in linking teachers' social discourse to the cognitive dimensions of student learning:

The concept of ZDP was developed within a theory that has as a presupposition that superior psychological functions, distinctly human, have socio-cultural origin. The activities that constitute the zone are the social origins already mentioned; When cognitive change occurs, not only what is performed among the participants, but how it is performed, it again appears as an independent psychological function, which can be attributed to the novice who is learning. That is, the culturally mediated interaction between people in the ZPD is internalized, becoming a new function of the individual. Another way of saying it is that the inter-psychological becomes also intra-psychological.

With these concepts in mind, the research problem is verifying the extent to which a collaborative research can favor identity-building processes, placing the subjects in a position to carry out analyzes and changes in their teaching actions and institutional culture, strengthening them personally and professionally for the elaboration of collective pedagogical projects that aim at qualitative improvement in the process of teaching Libras and in the formation of the deaf student.

Keywords: Teacher training, Libras, Critical-collaborative research-action, Bilingual practices.

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