

Teaching-learning process of the Portuguese language by distance education for deaf students in the social-historical-cultural perspective – Challenges and Possibilities

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This research aims at contributing to expand the opportunities for deaf people in their learning of the Portuguese language. I am designing and offering a distance education course about the new grammar rules in the Portuguese language – a course designed specifically for the deaf and taught in Brazilian Sign Language.

I became interested in this area when I used to teach deaf children. I could notice that, although they spent many years at school, they completed their schooling with significant gaps in reading and writing, even in spelling and intonation.

Concerning spelling and other peculiarities of the teaching-learning process of the Portuguese language, in general terms, I will use as bibliographical reference some previous investigations where these issues were discussed by authors such as Geraldi (1993) and Koch (2011), who present concepts about the language that pervades education, as well as their consequences in the Portuguese teaching process; and Fulgêncio and Liberato (2012), who reflect upon how the texts used in school are inadequate from a readability point of view, demanding the reader to rely on information that he or she does not have. In addition, authors who debate distance education in Brazil will also be used as references, such as Riano (1997), Landin (1997) and Vianney (2010).

With regard to the teaching process of the Portuguese language, specifically for deaf students, Pereira (2005) analyzes the reading and writing process of some students, stating that many of the unsatisfying results obtained are due to the lack of an established language which could be used to produce writing. Also Lodi, Bortolotti and Cavalmoreti (2014), in an article, consider that literacy for deaf people is built with the use of social practices that involve two languages and present an educational proposal for literacy that arises from the experiences with Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS) and Portuguese; Dias Jr. (2010), in his master's degree research about Portuguese as a second language, exposes the need to adapt methodologies and strategies in so called bilingual classrooms. Góes (1996) points out some works that refer to difficulties concerning text comprehension, reading and writing faced by deaf students, due to the quality of the schooling experience offered to these students. The author could verify that learning is poor and students

scarcely use writing, and also that reading and writing activities are limited to simple and short texts.

To bring all aforementioned issues together, some concepts developed by Vygotsky (1924-1934) are key, enabling the comprehension of the complex relation between human development, teaching and learning, that are present in the issue I intend to study – i.e., mediation, development of higher psychological functions, relations between language and thinking, zone of proximal development, the learning-development relation, and compensation.

The methodology choice for this work is anchored in the critical paradigm of research, since it has an interventionist background. I have considered this paradigm, given that this research encompasses a critical review of the teaching-learning situations experienced in distance education. The research will be carried out in a collaborative manner, since all subjects, researcher and deaf students will be active in the search for answers to the concerns that led to the present study. The course will be designed and offered via moodle platform first to a few deaf students – a sampling of 3 or 4 participants – who are graduating or about to graduate high school. After being assessed by these students, it will be offered to deaf public in general.

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