

INVENTORY OF THESES AND DISSERTATIONS ON THE EDUCATION OF DEAF THEME (2010-2014)¹

BALANÇO DAS DISSERTAÇÕES E TESES SOBRE O TEMA EDUCAÇÃO DE SURDOS (2010-2014)

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ABSTRACT: In the last decades, discussions about deaf education have provided a fertile ground for the development of researches in the field. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the state of knowledge about deaf education based on Master's and PhD researches. Through a bibliometric approach, a total of 62 Master's theses and eight PhD dissertations about the theme, available in the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, defended between 2010 and 2014, were analyzed in detail. The results indicated a higher concentration of productions in the Southeast and South regions of Brazil, in public Higher Education institutions and in the areas of Human Sciences and Linguistics, Literature and Arts. It was also observed a considerable number of deaf people among the authors of the productions and the prevalence of a socio-anthropological conception among the theses and dissertations. Among the privileged themes in the investigations, those that focused on inclusion, language, educational interpreter, teacher education and bilingual school/education were the main themes in the area. Finally, from the scenario observed, it is expected that future research deepens the themes investigated, contemplates the observed gaps and, mainly, continues to indicate ways for changes in the educational reality of deaf students.

KEYWORDS: Special Education. Deaf education. Scientific production.

RESUMO: Nas últimas décadas, as discussões sobre a educação de surdos instituíram um terreno fértil para o desenvolvimento de pesquisas no campo. Diante disso, este trabalho tem como objetivo analisar o estado do conhecimento sobre a educação de surdos com base em pesquisas de Mestrado e Doutorado. Por meio de uma abordagem bibliométrica, foram analisadas, na íntegra, 62 dissertações e oito teses sobre o referido tema, disponíveis na Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações, defendidas entre 2010 e 2014. Os resultados indicaram maior concentração de produções nas regiões Sudeste e Sul, em instituições de Ensino Superior públicas e nas áreas de conhecimento Ciências Humanas e Linguística, Letras e Artes. Verificou-se, ainda, um número sensível de surdos entre os autores das produções e a prevalência de uma concepção socioantropológica entre as dissertações e as teses. Entre os temas privilegiados nas investigações, destacaram-se aqueles voltados à inclusão, linguagem, intérprete educacional, formação de professores e escola/educação bilíngue. Por fim, a partir do panorama observado, espera-se que pesquisas futuras aprofundem os temas investigados, contemplem as lacunas observadas e, principalmente, continuem a indicar caminhos para transformações na realidade educacional de alunos surdos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação Especial. Educação dos surdos. Produção científica.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the last 25 years, Brazilian Special Education has undergone profound transformations. From a parallel and substitutive system to common education, it became a transversal modality at all levels and stages of education, in order to offer specialized educational services (SES) - complementary or supplementary - and provide services and resources to support and ensure the educational process and development of students with disabilities,

¹ <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1413-65382519000100008>

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global developmental disorders and high skills/giftedness - their target population - in regular educational systems (*Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva*⁴ [PNEEPEI], 2008).

Focusing on the education of deaf students, who are part of the target population of Special Education - although this issue is controversial in the field - we can say that the current proposal for school inclusion has been strongly challenged by the deaf community. In recent decades, discourses on deafness have expanded beyond clinical interpretations. Inspired by anthropological and cultural foundations, they describe deafness as a cultural difference (Lopes, 2011). In this perspective, the deaf community has demanded the recognition of the linguistic and cultural specificities of the deaf people in their educational process, which must be thought about and organized according to a bilingual and bicultural approach. Thus, it is understood that sign language, the first language of the deaf, should be the language of instruction and interaction in the educational process, and the language used by the majority group of the country should be taught as a second language. Moreover, the deaf student should be with his/her deaf peers as well as deaf adults, which contributes to the development of language, to the construction of a theory of the world and to the construction of a deaf identity.

Law No. 10,436 of April 24, 2002, which provides for the Brazilian Sign Language (known as *Libras*) and Decree No. 5,626 of December 22, 2005, which regulates the Law aforementioned, legitimize the demands of the deaf community from the legal recognition of *Libras* and the organization of specific schools or classes for the deaf in a bilingual perspective. It turns out that the current inclusive education policies, such as the PNEEPEI (2008), go against such recommendations, establishing the inclusion of all students, regardless of their physical, cognitive, linguistic and cultural characteristics, in the regular educational systems. In this proposal, deaf students should be with their hearing peers in the ordinary classes of regular education. However, it is understood that since it is not possible to use *Libras* and the Portuguese language concomitantly and that the regular school is composed of a majority of hearing students, the language to be privileged in this space will be that of the majority group - Portuguese language - oral and written. *Libras* will be present in the classroom through professional translators/interpreters and its use, as an instructional language, will be directed to SES spaces (Lodi, 2013).

This scenario contributed to the fact that the reflections on the education of deaf students established a fertile ground for the production of researches in the area in the last decades. According to the results of the inventory conducted by Ramos and Zaniolo (2014), Pagnez and Sofiato (2014) and Azevedo, Giroto, and Santana (2015), between 1992 and 2013, the scientific production on the education of the deaf presented constant growth.

In order to examine the knowledge that has been elaborated in this field and the conditions in which the studies are produced, researchers have dedicated themselves to the investigation of the scientific production on the education of the deaf in recent years, among them we highlight the studies developed by Bisol, Simioni, and Sperb (2008), Ramos (2013), Pagnez and Sofiato (2014) e Azevedo et al. (2015), given their relevance to the discussions here.

⁴ National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education.

Bisol et al. (2008) outlined the contributions of Brazilian Psychology to the study of deafness from papers published in national journals classified in the Qualis/Capes evaluation in strata A, B and C. Of the 34 papers selected for analysis, the authors observed that a significant number (n=24) was in line with the socio-anthropological perspective of deafness. Among the privileged themes, they have identified: language; cognitive development; family; psychic constitution of the deaf subject; educational process; ideology; cochlear implant; systematic screening of deafness and music therapy. Among the methodological approaches adopted in the experience reports (n=16), the authors pointed out that half (n=8) employed a quantitative approach, while seven employed a qualitative approach and one employed a qualitative-quantitative approach. When comparing the findings of the research with the international scientific literature on deafness, Bisol et al. (2008) indicated gaps in the national investigations analyzed, as well as the lack of publications aimed at the validation of tests for the psychological evaluation of deaf children and adolescents; to psychopathological processes; to the physical and mental health care of the deaf population; family relations between deaf parents and hearing children, deaf parents and deaf children, deaf and hearing brothers; to communication between hearing mothers and deaf babies and between deaf mothers and hearing babies; to the cochlear implant; among others. According to the authors, despite being incipient, Brazilian Psychology has raised important contributions to the study of deafness.

Ramos (2013), from the abstracts of dissertations and theses on the subject of education of deaf people in the thesis database of the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes), between 2005 and 2009, sought to identify thematic tendencies of the respective productions and to map the field of research according to the criteria: year; modality; locality; university; program and funding. In general, the results indicated: a gradual increase in the number of academic productions in the area; predominance of productions in the academic master's modality; geographical distribution of concentrated production in the Southeast and South regions; relevance of the *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (UFSC), *Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo* (PUC-SP) and *Universidade de Brasília* (UnB) in the production of knowledge in the field; prevalence of productions linked to graduate programs in Education, Literature and Linguistics, and the presence of programs in Computer Science, Engineering and Technology, commonly observed in different areas of knowledge, expressing the multidisciplinary nature of the field; and the scarcity of financial contributions destined to scientific production. Regarding the main themes of the research, the author highlighted the categories: language, educational processes and school/social inclusion. Finally, Ramos (2013) indicated the need for studies that contemplate the discussions of the deaf community regarding the education of deaf students, through reflections and propositions conceived with the deaf, in order to fill the gaps found in this production. Also, it pointed out singularities, ambiguities and omissions in the texts of the abstracts, which limited the process of analyzing its content in greater depth.

In line with Ramos (2013), the research carried out by Pagnez and Sofiato (2014) presented an overview of dissertations and theses in the Capes thesis database between 2007 and 2011, according to the following keywords: education of the deaf and *Libras*. In summary, the authors have observed: predominance of Master's theses; constant growth in the production of research in the field; higher concentration of productions at UFSC, PUC-

SP, UnB and also at the *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP), and in the areas of Education and Linguistics, in accordance with the results observed by Ramos (2013). In turn, the authors found an increase, as of 2010, in the financing of scientific production. As for the privileged subjects in the investigations, they emphasized the schooling of deaf people; the acquisition of Portuguese by deaf people; conceptions and representations about deaf people; the teaching of *Libras*; the linguistics of *Libras*; the teaching of Portuguese written to deaf students and bilingualism among the most frequent. Pagnez and Sofiato (2014) also pointed out problems in the composition of abstracts, such as limitations in their structure and formal nature and absence of specific information.

Finally, Azevedo et al. (2015) analyzed the scientific production in the area of deafness in the *Revista Brasileira de Educação Especial* (Brazilian Journal of Special Education) between 1992 and 2013. According to the authors, there was a constant growth of this production, associated with changes in legislation; the papers were published mainly in co-authorship; and regarding the areas of education of the authors, they emphasized Education, Speech Therapy and Psychology, expressing the multidisciplinary character of this journal. As stated by the authors, evaluative research prevailed, followed by intervention and descriptive research; the most frequent themes were literacy and inclusion; and, in relation to educational/therapeutic approaches, studies based on a bilingual approach predominated, in line with the current educational legislation. In view of the results obtained, Azevedo et al. (2015) pointed out the need for studies that contemplate pedagogical practices in the process of acquisition of sign language as a first language and in the learning of Portuguese as a second language, “not only with regard to its instrumentation/evaluation, but also with regard to the reflection on the nature of these practices and their contexts of use” (Azevedo et al., 2015, p. 471), they also point out the successful experiences of school inclusion in different educational models.

We can say that these inventories, from different approaches and contexts, present important indications about the research on the education of the deaf in Brazil in recent years. In this perspective, we point out the importance of studies that analyze the state of knowledge in a given field, indicating possible trends, perspectives and existing gaps, in order to provide subsidies for future investigations and contribute to the improvement of the field of research. Thus, we agree with Silva and Sánchez Gamboa (2011, p. 376) when they affirm that,

if research is important to help man to overcome the problems he encounters, it is necessary to analyze the research itself, to investigate the paths that are adopted for its development, to identify the social-political-economical interests and determinants that guide it, and also to explain the main tendencies in a specific area of knowledge. This is so that not only the problems identified by man in reality are overcome, but also so that the problems perceived in the very act of investigating can be overcome.

In this sense, this work, a cutoff of a Doctoral dissertation, aims to analyze the state of knowledge about the education of the deaf based on Master's and Doctoral studies, considering the studies available in the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (known as BDTD) on this theme, defended between 2010 and 2014. In this way, we seek to delineate a recent overview of scientific production in the field, in order to answer the following

questions: Where have the studies been produced? By whom? What are the deaf conceptions that underpin the investigations? And what are the privileged themes?

2 METHOD

This work is an investigation of bibliometric nature. According to Silva, Hayashi, and Hayashi (2011), bibliometrics comprises a set of techniques, quantitative and statistical, applied to measure and evaluate the aspects of scientific production and communication. In order to expand the possibilities of analysis of scientific production, bibliometrics can be used in conjunction with qualitative methods.

For the survey of dissertations and theses, the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (known as BDTD), coordinated by the Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology (IBICT), has been defined as a source of information. In the BDTD/IBICT, we delimited the temporal search cutoff between 2010 and 2014, which made possible the realization of a recent overview of the scientific knowledge produced in the Brazilian Graduate studies on the education of the deaf. We also infer that the productions defended during this period present some of the implications of Decree No. 5,626/2005 and the PNEEPEI (2008) in the education of deaf students in the country. Then, based on the scientific literature, we defined the search term “deaf education”, which indicates our theoretical position in the field, according to a socio-anthropological perspective of deafness. However, we understand that the choice of that term may have limited the scope of the research, constituting thus one of its limitations.

The records were collected at BDTD/IBICT on November 27, 2014. For access to this database, we used the *advanced search* feature, in order to conduct the search from the fields: *title*, *subject*, *abstract* and *year of defense*, totaling 124 productions. Repeated records (n=2), unavailable (n=3) and not suitable for the scope of the research (n=49) were excluded, totaling 70 productions (62 master’s theses and 8 doctoral dissertations) analyzed in the research. We emphasize that among the productions that did not fit the scope of the research were those that dealt with subjects such as blindness or deafblindness and those that were strictly theoretical and/or did not contemplate the educational scope.

Data were collected by reading the theses and dissertations in their entirety and organized into record sheets according to previously defined bibliometric parameters. Afterwards, they were processed through the VantagePoint® program, a tool that allows cross-referencing of bibliometric parameters and enables the analysis of textual data and the construction of bibliometric indicators (Hayashi, 2013).

According to their nature, the data collected were quantified and later interpreted in the light of the theoretical reference of the research. With regard to the privileged topics in the studies, we defined thematic axes, which emerged from the data collected. To this end, exhaustiveness and exclusivity criteria have been established.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As we are dealing with a dense set of data, and considering the limits of this paper, we seek, at this moment, to highlight the main trends observed in the scientific production on the education of the deaf, taken here as an object of analysis.

3.1 WHERE STUDIES ARE PRODUCED

We present here data on the geographical, institutional and administrative dependency distribution, as well as the areas of knowledge and the graduate programs of theses and dissertations analyzed.

From the total number of master's theses (n=62), the data indicate a higher concentration in the Southeast (n=30) and South (n=19) regions of the country, followed by the Northeast (n=8) and Central-West (n=5). We also noticed the absence of productions in the northern region of Brazil.

Many studies have evidenced the concentration of productions in the Southeast and South regions and a still incipient production mainly in the Central-West and North regions, signaling regional asymmetries in the national Graduate System (Guimarães, Bulhões, Hayashi, & Hayashi, 2015; Cirani, Campanario, & Silva, 2015; Ramos, 2013; Marin, Bueno, & Sampaio, 2005; Ventorim, 2005). In turn, it should be noted that the Southeast region comprises approximately 42% of the Brazilian population, which may reflect a significant percentage of productions in this region, as André (2006) observed.

According to data from the Capes 2013 three-year evaluation (*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* [CAPES], 2014), Brazilian Graduate programs have shown significant growth in recent years, mainly in the North (40%), Central-West (37%) and Northeast (33%), while the South and Southeast regions showed growth of 25% and 14%, respectively. These results reveal the efforts to overcome the regional asymmetries of the national graduate system. However, the inequalities between the regions of the country still remain (Cirani et al., 2015).

As for the distribution of master's theses between the states and Higher Education institutions (HEIs), in the Southeast region, we highlight the state of São Paulo with 17 theses, distributed in a federal HEI, two state and two private institutions (*Universidade Federal de São Carlos* (UFSCar) (N=6), *Universidade Estadual de Campinas* (UNICAMP) (n=4), PUC-SP (n=4), USP (n=1) and *Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie* (Mackenzie) (n=2)). In the Southern region, we highlight the state of Rio Grande do Sul with 13 theses, distributed among four federal HEIs and two private universities (*Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* (UFRGS) (n=5), *Universidade Federal de Santa Maria* (UFSM) (n=4), *Universidade Federal de Pelotas* (UFPeL) (n=1), *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande* (FURG) (n=1), *Universidade de Caxias do Sul* (UCS) (n=1) and *Escola Superior de Teologia* (EST) (n=1)). In the Northeast, we highlight the state of Paraíba with three master's theses in a federal HEI (*Universidade Federal da Paraíba* (UFPB)). And in the Central-West region, we point out *Distrito Federal* with three theses in a private HEI (*Universidade Católica de Brasília* (UCB)).

Of the 28 HEIs identified, seven (four federal, two state and one private), in the Southeast and South regions, comprise 50% of the total number of master's theses analyzed in the period, namely: UFSCar (n=6), UFRGS (n=5), *Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo* (Ufes) (n=4), UFSM (n=4), UNICAMP (n=4), *Universidade Estadual de Londrina* (UEL) (n=4) and PUC-SP (n=4). On the one hand, we observed a high concentration of productions (n=31) in certain HEIs (n=7); on the other hand, there is a great dispersion of productions (n=31) among the other HEIs (n=21).

As for the doctoral dissertations (n=8), we observed a high concentration in the Southeast region (n=6), with a strong emphasis on the state of São Paulo with five productions (UFSCar (n=4) and USP (n=1)). Then, in the South and Northeast regions, respectively, in the states of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) and Paraíba (UFPB), a doctoral dissertation is presented. Referring to HEIs, UFSCar presents, once again, a prominent role with four doctoral dissertations in the period, indicating its relevance in the academic production on the education of deaf students in the country.

Finally, the absence of dissertations and theses from UFSC and UnB has drawn our attention, since these HEIs presented expressive percentages of productions about the education of the deaf in the studies carried out by Pagnez and Sofiato (2014) and Ramos (2013). In addition, particularly UFSC stands out in the national scenario with the offer of the undergraduate degree in *Libras*, undergraduate and bachelor's degree, in face-to-face and distance modalities, moreover, it counts on the presence, among its faculty members, of important deaf researchers. In this sense, we infer that the absence of productions linked to UFSC and UnB can be due to the search cutoffs established in the BDTD/IBICT, and do not reflect the real context of academic production in the scope of education of the deaf of these universities.

Regarding administrative dependence, the data show that federal HEIs concentrated 50% of total master's theses, while state HEIs accounted for 21% and private HEIs 29%. We noticed, therefore, that public HEIs (federal and state) gathered a considerable percentage of theses in the period (71%), when compared to private institutions, expressing the fundamental role of the public sector in the production of Master's studies in this field. As for the doctoral dissertations, we observed that seven are distributed in federal HEIs, accounting for 87.5% of the total of dissertations, and one is distributed in a state HEI, accounting for 12.5% of the total. These results correspond to those presented in the National Graduate Plan (known as PNPG) 2011-2020 (CAPES, 2010), which indicate that federal and state HEIs concentrate most of the *stricto sensu* Graduate programs in the country. As for the theses, we observed that seven are distributed in federal HEIs, accounting for 87.5% of the total theses, and one is distributed in a state HEI, accounting for 12.5% of the total. These results correspond to those presented in the National Graduate Plan (PNPG) 2011-2020 (CAPES, 2010), which indicate that federal and state HEIs concentrate most of the *stricto sensu* Graduate programs in the country. The hegemony of the public sector in the distribution of *stricto sensu* Graduate programs and academic production was also pointed out in the studies of Gatti (1983), Campos and Fávero (1994) and Macedo and Sousa (2010), on educational research in Brazil in the last decades.

As far as the distribution of the productions between the areas of knowledge and the Graduate programs is concerned, the Human Sciences area of knowledge had the largest number of master's theses in the period (n=43), accounting for 69.35%, especially in Education (n=39). Next, we highlight the area of Linguistics, Literature and Arts (n=10), representing 16.15% of the theses. These results confirm those obtained by Ramos (2013) and Pagnez and Sofiato (2014) in their studies about the hegemony of these areas in academic production on the education of the deaf. In turn, the presence of programs commonly observed in other areas of study concerned with the education of the deaf, such as Geography, Theology, Rural Extension and Business Administration, reveals that this theme may be related to different investigation perspectives. The doctoral dissertations were developed in Education (n=3), Special Education (n=4) and Linguistics (n=1) programs, confirming the relevance of the areas of Human Sciences and Linguistics, Literature and Arts in academic production on education of deaf people. We highlight UFSCar's Special Education program, which comprised 50% of the dissertations, and 12.85% of the total work (theses and dissertations), confirming its importance in the field.

3.2 THE AUTHORS PROFILE

During the data collection we verified a significant occurrence of authors who declared themselves to be deaf or who indicated a direct relationship with deafness. Thus, among the authors of the master's theses (n=62), five declared themselves to be deaf. Thus, we infer that the others were hearing authors (n=57), of which a significant number (n=36) expressed their relation to the area of deafness, such as: teachers of deaf students (n=21), interpreters (n=9), teacher of *Libras* (n=2), teacher of *Libras* and interpreter (n=1), daughter of deaf parents and interpreter (n=1), speech therapist (n=1) and counselor at a school of deaf (n = 1). However, 21 authors did not mention deafness. As for the doctoral dissertations (n=8), there were no authors who declared themselves to be deaf; we infer, therefore, that the eight authors are of hearing, of whom three did not mention a relation with deafness and the others are: daughter of deaf parents (n=1), teacher of deaf students (n=1), teacher of *Libras* (n=1), teacher of *Libras* and interpreter (n=1) and psychologist (n=1).

The works (n=5) whose authors identified themselves as deaf are, therefore, Master's theses, which were defended in a recent period, between 2012 and 2014, in four distinct HEIs (UFRGS, UFSM, UCB and *Universidade de Fortaleza* (UNIFOR)), highlighting UFRGS with two theses. These productions are mainly related to Education programs (n=4) and are concentrated mainly in the South region (n=3), which accounts for 60% of the total work produced by deaf authors in the studied sample. It is interesting to observe that, despite having the largest number of theses in the period (n=30), there are no works whose authors are deaf defended in the Southeastern region of the country.

Although incipient, these results are favorable, since discussions on deafness, according to a perspective that recognizes it as a cultural difference, have emphasized the need for the deaf to participate as protagonists in reflections and decision-making in the context of education of deaf students.

The works have yet been conducted by a majority of hearing researchers listener, however, according to the 2010 Demographic Census (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* [IBGE], 2012), 5.1% of the Brazilian population is hearing impaired. Thus, if we consider the percentage of deaf authors among the authors of the theses and dissertations analyzed, approximately 7.15%, we observed that in the sample studied the percentage of deaf authors is higher than the deaf rate among the Brazilian population, which may indicate that, in spite of the difficulties of access and permanence due to the available accessibility conditions and of a deficient Basic Education, deaf students have enrolled in *stricto sensu* Graduate programs, mainly at Master's level. However, it is pertinent to consider that, because it is a topic directly related to deafness, the percentage of deaf authors in the analyzed scientific production may be higher than the percentage of deaf authors in other areas of knowledge.

The protagonist role of deaf researchers in scientific production in the field is strongly defended by Rezende and Pinto (2007), intellectuals and deaf militants. To the authors, the lived experience extends the possibilities of reading and analysis of the social, cultural, linguistic and educational phenomena experienced by the deaf. In addition, the knowledge produced would be displaced from a logic of a hearing person, glimpsing other perspectives of analysis, as it was possible to observe in the respective master's theses.

Vilhalva (2010) also points out that the number of deaf students approved in *stricto sensu* Graduate courses has increased since the approval of Law No. 10,436/2002 and Decree No. 5,626/2005. According to the author, from 1990 to 2000, only two deaf students were enrolled in Master's and Doctorate courses in the country; from 2000 to 2005, there were four; and from 2005 to 2010, that number jumped to twenty.

Considering the entry into undergraduate courses, a *sine qua non* condition for admission to *stricto sensu* Graduate courses, we believe that the offer of undergraduate courses in Bilingual Pedagogy and *Libras* Literature and Language can contribute to a greater insertion of deaf people in *stricto sensu* graduate programs in the country, because they have enabled deaf students to have access to Higher Education of quality, since they are structured in such a way as to meet their specificities and demands.

3.3 THE DEAFNESS CONCEPTION OF THE STUDIES

Tensions, conflicts and resistance have historically permeated the area of deafness over the interpretations, discourses and practices related to deafness and the deaf, which rely, in short, on clinical knowledge or on social, cultural and political bases. For this reason, we seek to examine the conceptions of deafness that have grounded the investigations in recent years.

Regarding the master's theses, we observed that a significant number of them adopted a socio-anthropological perspective of deafness (n=53), among which some authors (n=11) also signaled an approximation with Cultural Studies and/or Deaf Studies. Only one thesis adopted a clinical-therapeutic perspective; and another a post-structuralist approach. It was not possible to identify the concept of deafness adopted in seven theses. As for the doctoral dissertations, six adopted a socio-anthropological perspective of deafness, and in one production it was not possible to identify the concept of deafness adopted. In addition, a thesis has stated that it

takes a concomitant socio-anthropological and clinical-therapeutic perspective; however, we consider that both perspectives are not consistent or even complementary.

We emphasize that, although most theses and dissertations have left explicit the concept of deafness adopted, in some studies it was only possible to identify it through implicit elements emphasized by the authors throughout the text and the theoretical reference used. Still, there were studies in which it was not possible to identify the concept of deafness adopted, even considering the underlying aspects.

The predominance of a socio-anthropological perspective between theses and dissertations reflects the transformations in the ways of conceiving the deaf subject and deafness in the last decades (Lopes, 2011). In other words, the results of studies on sign languages in the 1960s, attesting to their linguistic status as well as aspects of the development of the deaf and their linguistic and cultural specificities, together with the strengthening and action of deaf social movements and the enactment of linguistic and educational policies in a bilingual perspective in the last decades, have inserted the education of the deaf into a discursive field more appropriate to their linguistic, cultural and communitarian condition.

Nonetheless, we have to consider that the search term used - deaf education -, in line with the theoretical reference of the present research, privileged a set of productions that guided its investigations according to a socio-anthropological perspective of deafness, since the designation “deaf” presents a connotation strongly rooted in a concept of deafness based on social, cultural and linguistic paradigms. Thus, most of the productions based on a clinical-therapeutic perspective, which presents a vision focused on the biological deficit, according to a discourse of cure and rehabilitation, and in which we commonly find designations related to hearing loss and their derivations were excluded (Gesser, 2008).

3.4 THE PRIVILEGED THEMES

In relation to the themes that were privileged in the studies, we noticed that the master's theses deal mainly with the main themes: inclusion, language, educational interpreter, teacher education and bilingual school/education.

We observed that the main theme “inclusion” concentrated the largest number of theses (n=22), with 35.48% of the total analyzed. The following secondary themes were included: pedagogical practice (n=7), Higher Education (n=5), SES (n=3), implantation of the inclusion proposal (n=3), Youth and Adult Education (n=2), affective interaction between teacher and deaf student (n=1), and creative classroom environment (n=1), specified below. The master's theses on pedagogical practice in an inclusive educational context contemplated pedagogical practice as a whole or specifically in relation to the teaching of Geography, Mathematics, Portuguese and English. On Higher Education, the productions were, in short, about the access and permanence of deaf students at this level of education, about accessibility in virtual learning environments in a distance learning course of Higher Education and on inclusion policies according to the conceptions of deaf professors who work in Higher Education. About SES, the master's theses examined, in particular, their implications for the school inclusion of deaf students. Regarding the implementation of the inclusion proposal, the investigations contemplated broader aspects and were not restricted to pedagogical practice.

Finally, a production examined the contribution of affection in the interaction between hearing teacher and deaf students in inclusive classrooms, and one examined the promotion of a creative environment in a classroom that deaf and hearing students took part.

Then the main theme “language” was touched upon by 17.74% of the analyzed master’s theses (n=11) and included the secondary themes: Portuguese (n=6), *Libras* (n=4) and English (n=1). Regarding the Portuguese language, the theses examined the paths taken in the teaching and learning of this language and the factors that may interfere in this process, or presented proposals for its effectiveness. As for *Libras*, the productions presented different approaches, such as the linguistic variation of *Libras*, the creation of specific signs for the teaching of Chemistry, the writing of sign language and the process of acquisition of *Libras* by a deaf child in Childhood Education. A thesis investigated the English-language learning process of deaf students.

The main theme “educational interpreter” included 14.51% of the theses analyzed (n=9) and covered the secondary themes: performance in the educational context (n=6), education (n=2) and senses and meanings (n=1). The dissertations investigated, in short, the specifics of the performance of the interpreter in educational context, they also analyzed aspects of their initial education, or, still, possibilities of a course of continuing education. One production examined the senses and meanings attributed to this professional.

The main subject “teacher education” comprised 9.67% of the theses (n=6), which dealt with the discipline of *Libras* in initial teacher education (n=3), the influence of a continuing education course on teachers’ conceptions about deafness (n=1) and a process of collaborative education aimed at the teaching of mathematics for deaf students (n=1).

In turn, the main theme “bilingual school/education” concentrated 6.45% of the theses analyzed (n=4), which examined in particular the pedagogical practice in bilingual schools (n=3) and the meanings attributed by deaf and hearing students to a bilingual school (n=1).

Finally, ten theses (16.12%) included specific topics. Thus, it was not possible to include them in the thematic axes presented, or even to establish new thematic axes in order to bring together a cohesive set of themes addressed, which dealt with: the history of the education of the deaf in Caxias do Sul (state of Rio Grande do Sul); the trajectory of the Specialized Attention Center in the Deafness Area of Campo Largo (state of Paraná); the constitution of the deaf identity in a special school; the meanings attributed to the deaf in a rural school and community; the consolidation of the deaf culture in the school space; the deaf pedagogical subject in the space of convergence between the school for deaf and the deaf community; Physics teaching for deaf students in regular inclusive schools and in specific schools for the deaf; the childhood and educational experiences of a deaf child; the perception of parents and professionals about the school performance of a deaf child with a cochlear implant; and the learning and development of teaching in the context of the education of the deaf.

Regarding the doctoral dissertations, we observed an equivalent distribution between the main themes (n=2), educational interpreter (n=2) and teacher education (n=2), each of which accounted for 25% of the works. As for the theme “inclusion”, the dissertations examined the pedagogical practice, especially in what concerns the teaching of Portuguese and Physics.

Regarding the theme “educational interpreters”, the doctoral dissertations dealt with their role in an inclusive educational context. On the theme “teacher education”, a thesis dealt with the knowledge, practices and experiences that permeate teacher education in the field of education for the deaf, and one on the education of teachers of *Libras*. Finally, similar to the dissertations, two theses (25%) examined specific themes, namely: development of additive composition in deaf children, and the constitution of sexuality of deaf young people in a special school.

Considering the theses and dissertations analyzed in the research, we can say that the themes identified reveal the main discussions in the area, mainly due to the current education policies focused on the education of the deaf, such as Law No. 10,436/2002, Decree No. 5,626/2005 and the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (2008), which raise questions about the school inclusion of deaf students; of the languages involved in the educational process - *Libras* and Portuguese; of the educational interpreter; of initial and continuing teacher education to work with such students and bilingual education. In this perspective, and according to Bueno (2014, p. 216), we understand the studies as “practices of cultural production specific to a field, practices that have suffered numerous social influences from the place where they were composed”.

We can also affirm that those themes correspond to the themes identified by Ramos (2013) and Pagnez and Sofiato (2014) in their studies, which may express a tendency in the field and a continuity in dealing with these matters. Also, the predominance of productions that dealt with issues related to the school inclusion of deaf people and language, especially on Portuguese language teaching and learning, corroborates the findings of Azevedo et al. (2015).

Studies that have investigated the scientific production on deafness and the education of the deaf in the last decades have also revealed gaps in this field of research, such as the lack of research aimed at: validating tests for the psychological evaluation of deaf children and adolescents, psychopathological processes, physical and mental health care of the deaf population, family relations and the cochlear implant (Bisol et al., 2008); discussions of the deaf community regarding the education of deaf students (Ramos, 2013); pedagogical practices in the process of acquisition of sign language as a first language and in the learning of Portuguese as a second language, and successful experiences of school inclusion in different educational models (Azevedo et al., 2015). Thus, we infer that the themes identified in the master’s theses and doctoral dissertations analyzed here signal some advances in the knowledge that has been produced in the respective field; nevertheless, the current scenario is still incipient and demands continuous efforts. Finally, we understand that the absence of certain themes, such as those indicated by Bisol et al. (2008), may be due to the search term employed in the present research, which privileged studies focused mainly on the educational process of deaf students and its unfolding.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We seek here, to elaborate a state of knowledge about the education of the deaf based on Master’s and Doctorate research available at BDTD/IBICT on this theme and defended between 2010 and 2014, especially with regard to geographical and institutional distribution; according to the administrative dependence, areas of knowledge and graduate programs of the

productions; to the profile of the authors; to the conceptions of deafness that underpinned the investigations; and the privileged themes.

In this sense, we observe that the Southeastern and Southern regions of Brazil and the public, federal and state Higher Education institution gather the largest number of theses and dissertations in the universe analyzed. These data express the indicators of the National Graduate System, which reveal asymmetries in the distribution of programs and in the production of research among the five regions of the country, with a greater concentration on the Southeast-South axis, as well as denoting the unique role of the public sector in the academic scenario of the *stricto sensu* Graduate studies, despite a strong growth of the private sector. We also highlight the great areas of Human Sciences and Linguistics, Literature and Language and Arts in the production of research in the field, with more emphasis on the programs in Education, as we expected, given the nature of the subject studied. However, the presence of research in areas such as Geography, Theology, Rural Extension and Business Administration indicates that the education of the deaf can be related to different fields of research, which enriches the production of knowledge in this field, by broadening the perspectives of analysis.

Another fact that has drawn our attention is the number of authors who declared themselves to be deaf among the analyzed works, which is relevant, since it indicates that deaf students have entered Higher Education and *stricto sensu* Graduate programs. Also, as we have already discussed, the presence of deaf authors in the production of research on the education of the deaf contributes to the construction of knowledge based on a properly deaf perspective, since the experience shared by the deaf widens the possibilities of reading and analysis of the educational phenomena that they experience. However, we understand that the total number of deaf authors observed is still incipient, especially since it is a topic directly related to deafness. That said, it is necessary to consider the conditions offered to the deaf for their access and permanence in Higher Education and *stricto sensu* Graduate studies, in the different areas of knowledge and, more importantly, it is necessary to consider the basic schooling conditions of these students, since their specificities and needs have been neglected in most Brazilian schools, compromising their performance and academic success. If deaf students in Basic Education have their cognitive, linguistic and cultural specificities respected, they will certainly have a better chance of joining Higher Education.

We have noticed the hegemony of a socio-anthropological conception of deafness amongst the theses and dissertations analyzed, which, without doubt, from the place in which we speak, expresses advances in the ways of conceiving deafness and studying the education of deaf students, since it includes deafness and the deaf from social, cultural and political bases. However, we cannot fail to consider that this predominance agrees with the term of search employed: “deaf education”. Thus, if we used the term “education of the hearing impaired” we could find different results, with a greater emphasis on a clinical-therapeutic conception. In other words, the predominance of a socio-anthropological conception of deafness among the analyzed works does not denote a rupture or the overcoming of a clinical-therapeutic model, but, in turn, expresses the consolidation of this *new* look on the deafness and the deaf in the recent years in this field.

We also verified the prevalence of research that dealt with the themes of inclusion and language, which represent the main problems of deaf education today. The other main themes identified - educational interpreter, teacher education and bilingual school/education - are shown, directly or indirectly, related to inclusion and language themes. As we pointed out earlier, we infer that the themes identified correspond to the main guidelines that escort the education of the deaf in Brazil, which raise questions about the school inclusion of the deaf, bilingual education and languages involved in this process, teacher education, translators/interpreters of *Libras*/Portuguese language and other professionals to act in the education of the deaf, among others, indicating that the theses and dissertations on the education of the deaf analyzed have faced the nodal themes in the area.

To conclude, from the observed scenario, we hope that future research will deepen the themes investigated, contemplate the gaps observed and, mainly, continue to indicate ways for changes in the educational reality of deaf students, which is still so necessary.

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Received on: 03/04/2018

Reformulated on: 04/06/2018

Approved on: 05/15/2018