

Decentralization of Deaf Education in Brazil and its Developments in the State of Espírito Santo (Brazil)

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Abstract

This article results from a broader study which aimed to examine deaf people's literacy in the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil, from 1950 to 1970. The article's goal is, more specifically, to understand the process of decentralization of deaf education/literacy in Brazil, as well as the consequent creation of the first literacy classes for deaf children in Espírito Santo, with regard to the political and administrative aspects of this process. It adopts historical research, as well as documents/texts, as the central object of analysis. It builds on the conception of history proposed by Marc Bloch and on the Bakhtinian perspective on language to understand texts/documents as an enunciation produced by subjects in their time. We conclude that the Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education was fundamental to enable the economic and social project aimed at decentralizing schooling, as well as to ensure that a greater number of deaf people, until then excluded from the constitutional right to education, could learn the country's official language, which was literacy's central goal at the time. Decentralization of deaf education in Espírito Santo, in turn, has actually taken place, but it has largely depended on partnerships between public and private institutions. If, on the one hand, these partnerships have postponed schooling offer as a right, on the other hand, they have enabled the concrete conditions for the education of a group of people until then excluded from this process.

Keywords

Deaf education – Special education – Decentralization.

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Descentralização da educação de surdos no Brasil e seus desdobramentos no Espírito Santo

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Resumo

Este artigo resulta de uma pesquisa mais ampla cuja finalidade foi estudar a alfabetização de surdos no Espírito Santo, Brasil, no período de 1950 a 1970. Objetiva, especificamente, compreender o processo de descentralização da educação/alfabetização de surdos no Brasil e a conseqüente criação das primeiras classes de alfabetização de crianças surdas no Espírito Santo, quanto aos aspectos políticos e administrativos. Adota a pesquisa histórica e o documento/texto como objeto central de análise. Toma como referência teórica a concepção de História proposta por Marc Bloch e a perspectiva bakhtiniana de linguagem para compreender o texto/documento como um enunciado produzido por sujeitos no seu tempo. Concluiu-se que a Campanha para a Educação do Surdo Brasileiro foi fundamental para viabilizar o projeto econômico e social que objetivava de descentralizar a escolarização e garantir que o maior número de estudantes surdos brasileiros, até então alijados do direito constitucional à educação, pudessem aprender a língua oficial do país, objetivo central da alfabetização da época. A descentralização da educação de surdos no Espírito Santo, por sua vez, ocorreu, mas dependeu, em grande medida, das parcerias entre as instituições públicas e privadas. Se, por um lado, essas parcerias adiaram a oferta da escolarização como direito, por outro lado, viabilizaram as condições concretas para a educação de um grupo de pessoas, até então excluídas desse processo.

Palavras-chave

Educação de surdos – Educação especial – Descentralização.

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Introduction

This article develops from a broader study which aimed to examine the history of deaf education/literacy in the Brazilian state of Espírito Santo, from 1950 to 1970. As we will see, the 1957 launch of the Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education was part of the developmentalist project adopted by then Brazilian president Juscelino Kubitschek, and thus aimed to include deaf people in the country's economic life. The creation of deaf schools or classes in Espírito Santo as part of the modernization of the National Institute of Deaf Education (Ines)¹ towards a more decentralized education, enabled covenants and agreements between the Espírito Santo state department of education and philanthropic organizations, thus showing the government's weak performance in executing the project of education/literacy for deaf people.

By building on the conceptions of Marc Bloch (2001), we intend to separate ourselves from a vision of history as the science of the past, as this vision hides the historian's subjective character and takes documents as the sole, immutable truth. When he separated from this positivist vision which dominated research in the 19th century, Bloch (2001) advocated a new way of writing history, now as a science of men in time, and its goal should be to understand human action according with the historical conditions of its time, in the political, social, cultural and economic dimensions. Thus, history's concern shifts from narrating to the analysis and understanding of events.

If, in a traditional perspective, history should rely on the legitimacy of official documents, in a new way of writing history, two challenges emerge: resorting to other types of source and asking new questions to the

1- The Imperial Institute for the Deaf and Mute had its name changed many times. In 1949, the Decree 26,974, of July 28, 1949, refers to the denomination National Institute for the Deaf and Mute. On July 6, 1957, it had its name changed to National Institute of Deaf Education (Ines), which remains until today. Although the names refer to the same place, in this text, we will use the acronyms ISM and Ines only for historical placing.

past. In this perspective, any trace can become a document. "The variety of historical evidence is nearly infinite. Every thing that man says or writes, everything that he makes, everything he touches can and ought to teach us about him" (BLOCH, 2001, p. 79).

In line with this statement, we recognize in the Bakhtinian perspective on language important contributions regarding the work of analyzing and producing texts in human sciences research. "In other words, sciences turn their attention to man, but it is man who produces texts" (BRAIT, 1997, p. 28). In this perspective, we can argue that each text or enunciate brings within itself a history made by subjects in a close relationship between themselves and with the world around them, including their conceptions, values and culture. In other words, in the analysis of documents, it is necessary to consider the dialogical context that constituted them, and to view them as a link in a discourse chain, both as an answer and a provocation to new enunciates.

To establish a coherent relationship with the theoretical presuppositions we presented, it is fundamental to choose a research methodology that considers the document/text, our central object of analysis, as a product of dialogical relationships between, at least, two minds or two individual or collective subjects. From this conception of text, the type of research we conducted is historical research. To Moreira and Caleffe (2006, p. 75), what characterizes research of this type is that the researcher can analyze "[...] documents or other sources of data about a given problem, behavior or event occurring in the past", in order to understand history's marks in today's practices, with an emphasis on explanations and accounts of experiences. With that purpose, the *corpus* of a study can be formed by sources constituted by texts and accounts of people who participated in the event analyzed.

It is necessary to note that other researchers have also dedicated themselves to studying the history of deaf education. At a national level, the works of Soares (1996)

and Rocha (2009) converge as they stress the importance of actions implemented by Ines to expand education for deaf students; however, they diverge as to the importance of the teaching method, denominated oralist, which guided the pedagogical practice in deaf schools for approximately fifty years.

To Soares (1996), because the oralist perspective prioritized oral language teaching and denied deaf children the right to appropriate other types of knowledge, following an assistencialist path rather than one of right and citizenship, it became separated from the education provided to hearing children. Rocha (2009), however, says that the oralist perspective should be understood considering the context of the time. In this direction, and through a thorough documentary survey, the latter ponders that the deaf education provided by the Ines dialogued with the oralist conceptions that underpinned education in Brazil and in the world, as well as with the ideas of progressive education which, with Anísio Teixeira at the head of the Inep, accompanied the idea of an educational reconstruction of the country. Souza (2007), Schimitt (2008) and Neves (2011), in presenting the first indications of the implementation of deaf education decentralization by Ines in the 1950's in Aracaju (SE), Santa Catarina and Caxias do Sul (RS), respectively, confirm Ines' influence in the management of public policies dedicated to deaf education.

The present text aims, specifically, to understand the process of decentralization of deaf education/literacy in Brazil, as well as the consequent creation of the first literacy classes for deaf children in Espírito Santo, with regard to the political and administrative aspects of this process.

Decentralization of Deaf Education

Firstly, it is important to stress that no public agency responsible for deaf education and socialization existed in Brazil until the 1840's. In 1857, this situation changes when

E. Huet, a French deaf teacher, presents to Brazilian emperor D. Pedro II the proposal of creating the first deaf school in Brazil. Hence was created the Imperial Institute for the Deaf and Mute (ISM), which has acquired a great relevance in the Brazilian education field as it has produced the guidelines that orient deaf education in the country until today.

A few authors, such as Jannuzzi (2004), Bueno (1993), Mazzotta (1996) and Mendes (2010), indicate as the landmark of special education in Brazil, along with the creation of the Institute of Blind Boys, in 1854, and today known as the Benjamin Constant Institute, the creation of the Imperial Institute for the Deaf and Mute, pointing to its relevance not only for the history of deaf education, but also the history of education in Brazil. With the creation of this institute, the idea of deafness as an abnormality or a deficiency, inscribed in the field of ineducability, gained another outline, starting a new time and space for deaf education, and ensuring an institutional status for deaf people. This movement appears in a context where people who were socially excluded were struggling for access to instruction processes, as, according with Faria Filho (2010), in the imperial period, debates on whether schooling should be provided for the excluded, particularly black people, Indians and women, were frequent. Thus, according with this author,

Recent studies about Brazilian education in the 19th century, particularly the imperial period, have shown that, in various provinces, there was an intense discussion on the necessity of schooling for the population, mainly the so-called "inferior layers of society". Questions such as whether it was necessary to provide instruction for black people (free, liberated or slaves), Indians and women were broadly discussed, and there was an intense activity in provincial assemblies in pursuit of a legal framework for school education (FARIA FILHO, 2010, p. 135).

This legal framework would seek to ensure public instruction for the majority of the population, a challenge that was posed to the Empire of Brazil. However, according with the author, this project was limited in virtue of the great social inequality and the slow-moving action of the state as the responsible for this process. Therefore, the creation of the institute also appears in a historical and social context of discussions about public instruction as an essential element for the modernization of Brazil, and, therefore, about the exclusion that affected much of the child population, including deaf children, and whether it was possible to provide them with access to school.

In addition to the compliance with the legal requirements² imposed by the reform of primary and secondary education promoted by the imperial minister Luiz Pedreira de Couto Ferraz, through the Decree 1,331-A, of February, 1854, the creation of ISM and its operation kept a continuous dialogue with the educational conceptions of the period, which refutes the idea that deaf education has, since the beginning, proceeded with no connection to Brazilian education (SOARES, 1996). To the contrary, documents indicate that the educational practices adopted at ISM, by means of curriculum and methods, kept a close relationship with discussions on the literacy of hearing children, yet with specific features related to deafness, primarily directing practices towards the teaching of oral language, or oralization, an element that was also central to children's literacy.

The curriculum adopted in primary schools and the curriculum at the Imperial Institute for the Deaf and Mute were similar in every discipline, although for deaf children, the inclusion of the disciplines of Lessons of Pronouncement and Articulation emphasized the teaching of oral language, or oralization.

2- Although the document does not mention deaf children, the requirements for creating schools are defined, such as submitting a study program as a requisite for creating the institution, and submitting reports about its functioning (RODRIGUES, 2014, p. 41-42).

However, in defining a unified curriculum, the Couto Ferraz reform proposal determines, on Article 73, that the inspector general, after hearing the board of directors, can “[...] determine, when he deems adequate, that another one be adopted in any parish, according with its necessities and resources”. In this perspective, the inclusion of those disciplines in ISM's curriculum fulfills this purpose, thus signaling that another method was necessary for deaf children.

By 1874, Tobias Leite, head of the Institute, was adopting the principles of the Intuitive Method for its classes, and he advocated that the way for deaf children's learning would be through writing, rather than oralization. In the field of pedagogy, this method took form based on the ideas of the Swiss teacher Jean-Henri Pestalozzi and, in Brazilian historiography, the first references about it date back to the 1880's, when Rui Barbosa, in 1881, translated the book *First Lessons of Things*, by the American writer Norman Calkins, into Portuguese, although the work was not published until 1886 (VALDEMARIN, 2004). The characteristics of this method were in line with Leite's conceptions on education, which combined the teaching of oral language and written language, thus confirming that the perspective he adopted, albeit guided by the specific character of oral education for the deaf, was not far from what was discussed about hearing children's literacy at the time.

In the 1950's, after Ana Rímoli de Faria Dória took office as head of the ISM, two actions caused significant change in deaf education as a response to this whole movement which had started in 1857: the creation of the first Curso Normal [Teacher Preparation Course] for teachers of deaf students, and the Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education (Cesb). In the former, which was supported by the Ministry of Education and Health, the institute started a broad training of teachers through the first Curso Normal for teachers of deaf-mute students, in 1951, building on various

theoretical works by Ana Rímoli in which the pedagogical proposition was lip and speech reading. Among them, it is worth mentioning the *Compêndio de educação da criança surdo-muda* [*Deaf-Mute Child's Education Textbook*] (1958) and the *Manual de educação da criança surda* [*Deaf Child's Education Manual*] (1961).

In the *Compêndio de educação da criança surdo-muda*, Ana Rímoli justifies the creation of this course with statistics indicating that, in a population of approximately 40,000 deaf people, only 1.52% were receiving systematic education. In addition, she believed that the number of deaf people would increase by 20% each decade, pointing to Ines' impossibility to serve all students across the country. Therefore, it would be necessary to expand the service through the preparation of teachers who would teach in their respective cities, after completing the course.

The Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education, the second action to produce change in this type of education, was widely divulged in the media, and it was part of an educational and cultural program of the Juscelino Kubitschek administration which announced a bold goal: to eradicate illiteracy among deaf students. It was created on November 30, 1957, by Decree 42,728 of December 3, 1957, to celebrate the institution's centennial, and its slogan was: *The deaf person is not different from you. Please, help to educate him.* One of the actions of the Ministry of Culture and Education which alluded to Ines' centennial was the publication of a brochure titled *Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education*, containing the text which Ana Rímoli attached to the draft she had submitted to the minister Clovis Salgado on November 27, 1958, requesting the creation of the campaign, as well as the speeches they both gave at the ceremony that marked the event. In his address, Clóvis Salgado, the minister of education and culture, explained that the goal of the campaign was:

[...] to offer states and municipalities our specialist teachers, for whom classes

dedicated to teaching the deaf child side by side with normally hearing children are being formed in primary schools. Thus can we progressively expand the range of federal action, until we meet all our needs, which comprehend approximately 60,000 deaf people in the whole of Brazil. (BRASIL, 1958, p. 10).

The teachers were already being trained at the Curso Normal. In his speech, the minister announces the partnership between the federal government, responsible for implementing the program in states and municipalities, and the Ines, responsible for training specialist teachers. Ana Rímoli reaffirms the proposal of expanding the education for deaf children on grounds of the necessity to educate useful citizens for the nation:

Convinced that this collectivity of deaf people to be educated will yield, in not too distant a future, useful citizens for the nation, the management of the National Institute of Deaf Education, with the approval of Mr. Minister of Education and Culture, defends the expansion of the education system, in which the hearing and speaking impaired can find a suitable condition. (BRASIL, 1958, p. 6).

Therefore, based on the idea that everybody has the right to education, including the sensorially impaired, Ana Rímoli recommends to the Ministry of Education and Culture the creation of the Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education. Training teachers and sending them to states and municipalities was the basis of the decentralization program, which spread across various states in Brazil, including Espírito Santo. In this perspective, we can say that this program, guided by the constitutional principle of the right to education, was in line with the public and economic goals of the time, and was well explained by minister Clovis Salgado as he affirmed that "The campaign starting now has this elevated sense of affective

care, of true recovery of a considerable mass of good elements, capable of cooperating in the struggle for the prosperity of the common nation” (BRASIL, 1958, p. 10).

The competence attributed to Ines to realize this task is also corroborated in the words of minister Salgado as he affirms that the methods used by the institute in the education of the speaking and hearing impaired, in this case, the Pure Oral Method, yielded good results, since they were in line with the latest, most efficient techniques found in more developed countries.

In 1959, at the 1st National Conference of Deaf Education Teachers, held at Ines to celebrate the institution’s centennial, the *Curso Normal* and the Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People’s Education gained visibility. In the opening speech, the conference’s general coordinator, professor Tarso Coimbra, stressed the event’s relevance in congregating teachers from the whole national territory, having as its main consequence

The enhanced technical-scientific preparation of highly qualified personnel for educating and helping these impaired individuals at all levels, as well as the study of the means for deaf people to acquire and adequately use hearing aids in general, in addition to the sociological planning of priorities to eradicate basic care deficiencies regarding deaf people, whether in public or private activities, in each Brazilian demographic area. (BRASIL, 1959a, n.p.)

In his speech, professor Tarso de Coimbra presents the context in which Ines’ proposals for deaf education are developed. He highlights that government actions should occur at each level, and should provide qualification in two directions, i.e., technical and scientific. Knowing the latest, science-based techniques in speech teaching would be necessary for being a teacher.

In his words, the government’s efforts to support deaf education campaigns was

aimed at “[...] integrating the seventy thousand mute people into the national community, metamorphosing them from ‘dead weight’ into a valuable asset through the act of teaching them to speak [...]” (BRASIL, 1959a, n.p.). In a context of great undertakings in the Juscelino Kubitschek administration, the inclusion of deaf people in this developmentalist program would only be possible by teaching them to speak, since mutism did not allowed their active participation in society, keeping them as a “dead weight”. Although the institute had abolished the word “mute”, it reappears in professor Coimbra’s speech, confirming the oral language as a condition for the inclusion of deaf people in the social and professional world.

This conception of education attached to economic development, as mentioned by Coimbra, was reaffirmed in the speech of the ministry of education and culture, Clovis Salgado. According with the minister, the country’s economic progress required the inclusion of every Brazilian citizen in the government’s programs, including deaf people. He said: “Understanding that Brazil has approximately 60,000 deaf people, it is the country’s unrefusable task to make efforts to value this large contingent, to recover it for national life, to integrate it into our community as a productive element [...]” (BRASIL, 1959a, n.p.).

Thus, correcting the impairment would be the driving force towards individual development and, consequently, towards the development of the Brazilian nation, which required productive people to ensure its economic development.

In a text published in 1959 by the Ministry of Education and Culture, titled *O desenvolvimento da educação e da cultura no Governo Juscelino Kubitschek (Development of Education and Culture in the Juscelino Kubitschek Administration)*, the federal government compares its administration’s quantitative data with those of the previous administration, i.e., Café Filho’s (1955).

Regarding the Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education, the document presents some comparative data for the period from 1955 to 1959, when the number of deaf education schools across the country increased from 10 to 84, and the budget allocated to Ines increased from Cr\$ 18,690,020.00 to Cr\$ 52,939,260.00. In addition, it is worth highlighting the creation of the *Specialization Program for Deaf Education Teachers* across the national territory, the creation of the *Curso Normal Rural* for teachers in rural areas, the certification of 470 deaf education specialist teachers, and the training of 5,000 teachers to teach in states and federal territories. Still according with the text, these measures aimed at “[...] the practical solution of problems relating with the inclusion of the hearing and speaking impaired into the Brazilian society [...]” (BRASIL, 1959b, n.p.).

However, in the context of the educational measures carried out in the beginning of the Kubitschek administration to train teachers and eradicate illiteracy, a great emphasis was placed on the developmentalist project, which aimed at, among others, to enable Brazilian citizens to exercise their right to vote, which was granted only to the literate. In line with these measures, illiteracy eradication campaigns were carried out from the 1940's to 1963 (SAVIANI, 2013). Among these are the National Campaign for Rehabilitation and Education of the Visually Impaired (1958); the Campaign for Education of Adolescents and Adults (CEAA) (1947-1963); the National Campaign for Rural Education (CNER) (1952-1963); the National Campaign for the Eradication of Illiteracy (1958-1963); the National Mobilization against Illiteracy (MNCA) (1962-1963); and the Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education, in 1957.

And who would have the task of expanding literacy for Brazilian deaf people? The institute, by means of its specialist teachers and the “[...] expansion of the education and care system for such children, starting a penetration towards the country's inland regions, through the necessary technical-administrative

decentralization” (BRASIL, 1959a. n.p.). Thus, the federal government carried out this program, which was founded on two actions: teacher training, based on scientific foundations, and management decentralization, by creating new deaf education classes in a few Brazilian states, such as Espírito Santo, as we will see below.

Expanding Deaf Children's Education

In the 1950's in Brazil, there was no specific legislation to guide deaf children's education, therefore, these children's access to the education system took place through covenants between the Ines and state departments of education, pursuant to the Decree 42,728 of December 3, 1957, which established the Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education.

In the state of Espírito Santo, the Decree-Law 16,490 of March 11, 1947, which established the Organic Law on Primary Education in the State of Espírito Santo, defined that primary education enrolment, albeit mandatory, might be excused for students who “[...] suffer from a physical deficiency or who, for any other reasonable cause, are unable to study” (ESPÍRITO SANTO, 1947, n.p.). In this perspective, legally speaking, attending school was mandatory for those who had no physical deficiency and were able to study. Therefore, mandatory enrolment did not apply to deaf children.

Nevertheless, with the Decree 612 of April 24, 1959, “The State Department of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture's Culture and the National Institute for the Deaf and Mute have decided to establish 3 (three) courses³ for the education of the phonation and word impaired [...]” (ESPÍRITO SANTO, 1959, n.p.), provisionally operating at the Alberto de Almeida Comprehensive School and at the Maria Queiroz Lindemberg Primary

3- This was the name given to special classes for deaf children in regular schools in Espírito Santo.

School, both in Vitória, and at the Vasco Coutinho Comprehensive School, in Vila Velha. Therefore, similarly to what occurred in Caxias do Sul, Aracaju and Santa Catarina, the creation of the first deaf literacy classes in Espírito Santo was associated with the decentralization movement engendered by the National Institute of Deaf Education, and, in this last state, it was conducted by teacher Álpia Couto-Lenzi,⁴ a student from the first class of Ines' Curso Normal, from 1951 to 1953.

Ines' orientation in terms of specialist education recommended for deaf children to be educated in regular schools. In defending decentralization across Brazilian states, Ana Rímoli affirmed that removing the deaf from the institute would inaugurate a new time, as the Brazilian society would see "[...] once and for all – that deaf people should not be educated isolated, but in coexistence with normal children" (BRASIL, 1959a, n.p.).

This orientation had a major influence on the organization of special deaf education classes in annexes to regular schools, not only in Espírito Santo, but in many other Brazilian states.⁵ The term *special classes* allowed education access for a group of students until then excluded from formal teaching and learning processes, while revealing a situation of difference between deaf children and normal children, according with the conception of the time.

It is worth noting that, in Espírito Santo, the attempt to integrate deaf children into institutional education was gradually implemented. In a news story published in the A Gazeta newspaper on August 23, 1969 (A CRIANÇA, 1969), the State Department of Education informed that, in addition to the municipality of Vitória, the number of special classes in primary schools was already being expanded in Cachoeiro do Itapemirim (5), Colatina (3), Cariacica (2), São Gabriel da Palha (1), Castelo (1) and Mimoso do Sul (1). In virtue of our

4- She was designated by the Ines to the position of Teacher Responsible for the Education of the Hearing Impaired in Espírito Santo.

5- Pernambuco, Espírito Santo, Santa Catarina, Mato Grosso, Federal Territory of Rondônia, Pará, Bahia, Alagoas and Rio de Janeiro (BRASIL, 1959a, n.p.).

limits, we will concentrate on the municipalities of Vitória and Cachoeiro do Itapemirim.

In Vitória, the local government's allegation of lack of a place to serve deaf children led teacher Álpia Couto-Lenzi to lend space at her school, at no cost for the state, until 1969. The relationship between the public and private spheres to ensure deaf children's schooling is the political-administrative mark in Espírito Santo throughout the period investigated. It was not until 1970, after nine years occupying the space at the Ângela de Brienza School, that "[...] the school for the deaf began to operate somewhere else, a whole floor in a building rented by the department of education, under the name of Oral Institute of Espírito Santo" (COUTO-LENZI, 1004, p.42), at Suá Beach, in Vitória.

In this context, the institute's management sought to establish partnerships. In the example below, Letter #04/74, sent to the department of health, there is a request for health care for the poor minors at the institute:

Vitória, March 22, 1974

From the Head of the Oral Institute of Espírito Santo To Dr. Bruno Costa – Department of Health

Dear Mr. Director

As Head of this Institute, which specializes in education for the audio-communication impaired, I am writing to consult you about the possibility for your department to provide dental care for our students, since we have many minors with no financial means who, therefore, lack any kind of dental or health care.

I hope we can rely on your collaboration, and let us know if we can be of any assistance.

This example evidences that the assistencial relationship occurred within the government itself, between its entities, yet not restricted to them. In the field of politics, a favor-

exchange relationship also became established as “[...] forms of favor regulation – the ‘you scratch my back and I scratch yours’ practice – whether through First Ladyism or through benefits granted by political representatives (MESTRINER, 2011, p. 13). This can be considered a paradox, as the actors responsible for establishing social and educational policies not only conformed to these palliative measures for immediate problem-solving, but they also legitimized social assistance to the detriment of more egalitarian education policies. Letter #166/75 and letter #167/75 bellow, with the same kind of content, sent by the institute respectively to city councilors Edgar Gomes Feitosa and Claudiomar Lopes Parreira, evidence this relationship:

I'm very glad to write to you to show my appreciation for the donation to our school.

Rest assured that you have made a great contribution to the hearing-impaired studying here.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you the assurances of my highest consideration. Letter # 166/75.

In Cachoeiro do Itapemirim, a municipality in southern Espírito Santo located 139 kilometers away from Vitória, the deaf education decentralization proposed by the Ines was marked by partnerships between the public and private sectors, involving state and local governments and the civil society. The teaching of deaf children started at the Bernardino Monteiro Comprehensive School. Initially, 21 deaf students and 11 students in speech therapy⁶ occupied one of the classrooms in this school. As the number of students grew, they began to occupy two classrooms, leading to a campaign

6- "Students who present speech problems, particularly letter-substitution, both in speaking and writing, stammer, coordination deficiencies, etc. This correction is carried out with students from three years old up". (INTERVIEW, September 17, 1971).

for the construction of three exclusively deaf classrooms in the school's yard.

From the mail exchange used by the management to monitor the work in municipalities, we can see the efforts of teachers in a constant pursuit of partnerships with assistencial entities to ensure the start and operation of special deaf education classes. On March 7, 1970, a group of teachers signs a letter addressed to teacher Álpia Couto-Lenzi where they thank her for sending them the book *Posso falar [I Can Speak]*,⁷ eagerly awaited by them all. Then, they proceeded to let her know about the positive results achieved in the previous year, adding that, in the current year, their work would be harder:

We need to struggle harder than last year to acquire a wider classroom for our students. Today, we had the first initiatives to that end, accepting suggestions from our incomparable principal, L.P.M., which we will execute still this week.

In a letter of April 8, 1970, the teachers ask teacher Álpia Couto for collaboration to accelerate the construction of the classrooms, which would be at no cost for the state.

Since we already have the place to build our classroom here at the school, we officially required, through our principal, a permit from the secretary to build it; our requisition was acknowledged, but not authorized; we also clarify that this is at no cost for the state. Once again, we count on your collaboration.

That same year, on June 26, the classrooms, the school office and two restrooms were opened. In this exclusive space, deaf students were taught until it was transferred to the Special Deaf School, in 1986.

7- A textbook written by teacher Álpia Couto and used in deaf children's literacy process.

To offer education for students considered exceptional, the government resorted to partnerships with the private sector, and, therefore, the service oscillated between a right and an assistance. It also relied on the participation of dedicated deaf education teachers, as shown in the interview given to the *O Momento* newspaper on September 17, 1971, by teacher Wanda Montenegro, who taught at the Bernardino Monteiro Comprehensive School, in the city of Cachoeiro do Itapemirim (ES):

Newspaper: Who maintains the classrooms?

Teacher: The teachers are paid by the State, but classrooms we teach in were built by mayor Hélio Carlos.

Newspaper: Are the work conditions satisfactory?

Teacher: Due to special needs involved in this education, our situation is still very deficient, particularly concerning the necessary equipment for better efficiency.

Newspaper: Is it worth it to teach in this type of education?

Teacher: The work is hard by the triumph is consoling. We teachers must have love, understanding and abnegation, most of all, and to pursue the educational goal of integrating these beings into society. (INTERVIEW, 09-17-1971)

At the end of the interview, after thanking Hélio Carlos, the mayor of Cachoeiro do Itapemirim, for building the classrooms, she mentioned the names Itapemirim, Real, Carleto, São Pedro and São Cristóvão, all of which were companies that had collaborated in transporting the students, and gave special thanks to her principal, Maria de Lourdes P. Moyses: “[...] who has been giving us full support and, most of all, who authorized the construction of our classrooms. She has been a real mother to us” (INTERVIEW, 09-17-1971).

The next year, in a letter sent to teacher Álpia Couto-Lenzi, on August 8, 1972, teacher Vanda Montenegro informed her about a public-

private partnership aimed at buying hearing aids for the school:

[...] through ‘Lions’, we are achieving a fabulous campaign in order to get money for donation to our deaf classes, so we can buy a hearing aid. But I contacted the president’s wife and she gave me a very good idea. That I should ask you, if it be possible, for general information and even a form about the aid we need, with the price and everything, because ‘Lions’ would directly contact the representative firm, which I believe is in São Paulo, isn’t it?

The partnership with Lions Club was not limited to buying equipment and helping in building special classrooms. Documents show that the association was responsible for building the Lions Professor Napoleão Albuquerque Deaf School, in 1986, now the head-office of the Center for the Training of Deaf Education and Care Professionals (CAS). In reply to the requisition submitted by Lions Club to the state civil cabinet on November 28, 1978, under number 4341, the State Department of Culture and Social Well-Being authorized the construction of the Deaf School, as stated in the document below:

[...] I hereby authorize Lions Club in Cachoeiro to Itapemirim to build, at its own expenses, in a plot of land belonging to the state, at Rua Dr. Deolindo, in the Municipality of Cachoeiro do Itapemirim, a school-type building to function as a school for deaf students.

The aforementioned building is to become property of the state, which shall keep it functioning, and the state hereby reserves itself the right to change the building’s specific purpose (Deaf School) at its discretion and at any time, and no right shall remain for Lions, even for purposes of complaining or legally or extra-legally questioning.

The document evidences the partnership between the government, which does not exempt itself from its responsibility, keeping administrative control over the school, and the philanthropic institution, which works as an intermediary between the state and citizens, since, in this relationship, “[...] public social assistance has historically dedicated itself to introduce support mechanisms for organizations, rather than directly for the population” (MESTRINER, 2011, p. 17). It is worth reinforcing that the decree which created the Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People’s Education defined, on Article 6, that: “The Campaign might establish covenants with public and private entities in order to achieve its goals”. Thus, Lions Club in Cachoeiro do Itapemirim was an important partner for the State Department of Education. In the institution’s official website, the construction of the School for the Hearing Impaired in Baiminas figures as one the most important works of the club in its 49 years of existence.

The creation of the first special deaf classes in Espírito Santo points to the fragility of the legislation of the time to ensure schooling as a right rather than an advantage. Deaf children occupied an idealized place, both physically and in terms of discourse. They attended a regular school, but they were not regular children, they were deaf. From the occupation of a few classrooms lent in the regular school to the construction of classrooms in annexes, their integration was not a right, but the result of organized movements which demanded deaf children’s access to education, albeit with restrictions. In this scenario, it is worth highlighting the responsible action of the various subjects who, whether individually or collectively, mobilized and manifested themselves, producing a movement that dialogued with the most immediate context of their own community, and with a broader one in a national project founded on the principles of special education.

At a national level, special education was acknowledged through the Law 4,024,

i.e., the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, of December 20, 1961, which created the Federal Council of Education and, for the first time, provided for the education of exceptional students:

Art. 88. The education of the exceptional must, where possible, fit in the general system of education, in order to integrate them into the community.

Art. 89. Every private initiative considered efficient by the State Councils of Education concerning the education of the exceptional shall receive special treatment by the government, by means of grants, loans and subventions.

According with Bueno (1993) and Mazzota (1996), the term *exceptional* appeared in an educational context, to address questions related with learning difficulties. Until then, deficient children were considered idiots or abnormal.

The term exceptional has been used to designate the world addressed by special education, substituting others, such as deficient, impaired or diminished, in order to minimize the pejorativeness inherent in these traditional designations, and to achieve a more precise terminology. (BUENO, 1993, p. 28)

Although this term was coined in the context of research of care provided for the mentally deficient, with regard to legislation, it was applied to every child considered as exceptional, including deaf children. In the above-mentioned law, the government still has not assumed responsibility for education, although it recommended enrolment in regular education where possible. The offer of education for these students was reaffirmed in regular classes, whenever possible, or in special schools, as we can see in the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, 5,692/71:

Art. 9º Students who present physical or mental deficiencies, those who are considerably behind regarding regular enrolment age, and the intellectually gifted shall receive special treatment according with the norms defined by the competent Education Councils.

In our state, in the context of primary education, it was not until the 1960's, through the Law 2,277 of January 30, 1967, which addressed the Espírito Santo State Education System, on book 7, that exceptional students' education was catered for.

What we can see with regard to legislation is that, although special education was not legitimized until the 1961 Education Guidelines and Framework Law, the Ines and state education departments were already engaged in that movement towards deaf children, by means of covenants. On the other hand, the beginning of special education institutionalization in Brazil legitimized the dichotomy between it and regular education, which founded proposals of education for children considered as non-standard, as well as the classification of children as either normal or abnormal, thus postponing schooling processes. The words *integrating* and *integration* then represented the line of thought that countered segregation processes institutionalized by special schools. Thus, creating special classes within regular schools would be the shortest way towards integration. According with Sasaki (1997), this period was characterized by the proliferation of classrooms in annexes to regular schools, where so-called exceptional students were concentrated. This movement caused pedagogy to seek a dialogue with other areas of knowledge, such as the medical field, for answers to deviations.

Final Considerations

The Campaign for Brazilian Deaf People's Education was fundamental to enable

the economic and social project aimed at decentralizing schooling, as well as to ensure that a greater number of Brazilian deaf students, until then excluded from the constitutional right to education, could learn the country's official language, which was literacy's central goal at the time.

With regard to the administrative organization, the creation of special classes followed what was instituted by the campaign, i.e., special classrooms in regular schools. We note that, although the discourse about the integration of deaf children in regular schools was accompanied by a defense of equality of conditions, we have seen that these measures served to deepen and reinforce access differences between both groups, as evidenced by teachers' complaints about the spaces lent, the lack of teachers and, particularly, the lack of appropriate material for teaching children to speak, which was then the goal or education/literacy. In this context, we highlight that the political position of professionals was decisive to further a project which proved not only professional but also idealistic.

Without the government's effective participation, partnerships between the public and private spheres were fundamental in this process. If, on the one hand, these partnerships postponed schooling offer as a right, on the other hand, they enabled the concrete conditions for the education of a group of people until then excluded from this process, thus also evidencing the school community's resistance movement in face of precarious conditions. Well, knowing history gives us conditions to assume a more critical, less anachronistic stance towards the past. To speak about deaf students, in the present, and thus to advocate projects and public policies presupposes that one day they were raised to condition of students. History does not exempt itself from acknowledging these pioneer movements, although the present insists on making them invisible.

Now, the State Oral and Auditive School, in Vitória, and the State Lions School of

Auditive Education for the Deaf, in Cachoeiro do Itapemirim, which were built in this context, are still part of the state framework for deaf students, although within the new perspective. They were turned into the Center

for the Training of Deaf Education and Care Professionals (CAS). Thus, the non-passivity of that time showed an individual and collective positioning in building a public policy that remains, in some aspects, until today.

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