


# Brazilian sign language translator and interpreter: view of a group of higher education professors

Tradutor e intérprete de Libras: visão de um grupo de professores do Ensino Superior

Traductor e intérprete de Libras: vista de un grupo de profesores de Educación Superior

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## Abstract

**Objective:** view of the role of TILS: in relation to the deaf, the teacher and the class; b) teachers' view of the relationship between teacher and TILS. **Method:** descriptive study, quantitative and qualitative. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the 14 teachers who have deaf students in their classes. For data analysis, the content analysis method was adopted. The contents were grouped into two thematic axes: a) teachers' view of the role of TILS: in relation to the deaf, the teacher and the class; b) teachers' view of the relationship between teacher and TILS. **Results:** All participants stated that it is up to such a professional to translate the teacher's statements into Libras. 57% design the translation process to mediate learning and 43% to stream content. In relation to teachers, 71% consider that TILS should be adapted to the teacher and the discipline and 29% that it is up to TILS to advise them on deaf students. Regarding the interaction of deaf students with other academics, 64% consider that TILS should favor such interaction and 29% that they should not intervene in this aspect. **Conclusion:** The partnerships between TILS and IES teachers are still in an initial process of construction in IES. The particularities pertinent to the actions of each professional and the points of convergence between them have been identified. It is

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TL, ACG, e APB were responsible for the conception and design of the study, data collection, analysis and interpretation, writing of the article and final approval of the version to be published;

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necessary to implement researches that promote knowledge capable of subsidizing partnerships between TILS and IES teachers built from the exchange of knowledge and information about academic content.

**Keywords:** Higher Education; Education of Hearing Disabled; Translator and interpreter.

### Resumo

**Objetivo:** analisar a visão de um grupo de professores de duas Instituições de Ensino Superior acerca do tradutor e intérprete de Libras (TILS). **Método:** estudo descritivo, de caráter quantitativo e qualitativo. Foi realizada entrevista semiestruturada junto aos 14 professores que têm alunos surdos em suas turmas. Para análise dos dados foi adotado o método de análise de conteúdo. Os conteúdos foram agrupados em dois eixos temáticos: a) visão de professores acerca do papel do TILS: em relação ao surdo, ao professor e à turma; b) visão de professores quanto à relação entre professor e TILS. **Resultados:** Todos os participantes afirmaram que compete a tal profissional traduzir as falas do professor para Libras. 57% concebem o processo de tradução para mediar a aprendizagem e 43% para transmitir conteúdo. Na relação com os professores, 71% consideram que o TILS deve adequar-se ao professor e à disciplina, e 29%, que cabe ao TILS orientá-lo quanto ao aluno surdo. Quanto à interação do aluno surdo com outros acadêmicos, 64% consideram que o TILS deve favorecer tal interação, e 29%, que ele não deve intervir nesse aspecto. **Conclusão:** as parcerias entre TILS e professores do ES ainda se encontram num processo inicial de construção nas IES. As particularidades pertinentes às ações de cada profissional e os pontos de convergência entre as mesmas vêm sendo identificadas. É necessário o implemento de pesquisas, que promovam conhecimentos capazes de subsidiar parcerias entre TILS e professores do ES construídas a partir da troca de conhecimentos e informações acerca dos conteúdos acadêmicos.

**Palavras-chave:** Ensino Superior; Educação de Pessoas com Deficiência Auditiva; Tradutor e intérprete.

### Resumen

**Objetivo:** analizar la opinión de un grupo de docentes de dos instituciones de Educación Superior (IES) sobre el traductor e intérprete Libras (TILS). **Método:** estudio descriptivo, cuantitativo y cualitativo. Se realizó una entrevista semiestructurada con los 14 maestros que tienen estudiantes sordos en sus clases. Para el análisis de datos, se adoptó el método de análisis de contenido. Los contenidos se agruparon en dos ejes temáticos: a) visión de los profesores sobre el papel de TILS: en relación con los sordos, el profesor y la clase; b) visión de los docentes sobre la relación entre docentes y TILS. **Resultados:** Todos los participantes declararon que corresponde a ese profesional traducir las declaraciones del maestro a Libras. El 57% diseña el proceso de traducción para mediar en el aprendizaje. 43% para transmitir contenido. En relación con los maestros, el 71% considera que TILS debe adaptarse al maestro y la disciplina y el 29% que corresponde a TILS asesorarlos sobre estudiantes sordos. Con respecto a la interacción de los estudiantes sordos con otros académicos, el 64% considera que TILS debería favorecer dicha interacción y el 29% que no deberían intervenir en este aspecto. **Conclusión:** Las asociaciones entre TILS y los maestros de IES todavía están en un proceso inicial de construcción. Se han identificado las particularidades pertinentes a las acciones de cada profesional y los puntos de convergencia entre ellos. Es necesario implementar investigaciones que promuevan el conocimiento capaz de subsidiar alianzas entre maestros TILS y IES construidas a partir del intercambio de conocimiento e información sobre contenido académico.

**Palabras clave:** Educación Superior; Educación de Personas con Discapacidad Auditiva; Traductor e intérprete.



## Introduction

One of the challenges in the 21st century society is to live with the diversity and ensure all ranges of population the right to equality. That assumes the effective participation of disabled people in several activities and social ranges, which implies, in the case of the hearing impaired, to recognize part of that population as user of the sign language, belonging to a linguistic and cultural minority<sup>1</sup>.

In face of that challenge in the field of the Brazilian Education, Higher-Education Institutions (HEI) have been particularly changing during the past decade, once affirmative higher-education accessibility actions by formerly excluded social groups have gained space and have been consolidated. Among such actions, the Quota Law, passed by the Federal Government in 2016, which not only sets aside a certain number of vacancies for disabled people in Public Higher Education, but also comprises a State policy, aiming at fostering the access to Higher Education (HE) for those subjects. That means their access, their permanence and quality education for them<sup>2-4</sup>.

Data show that 5% of the Brazilian population has some kind of hearing impairment, and can potentially apply for a major<sup>5</sup>.

Among the government initiatives, which affect the hearing-impaired in Higher Education, Federal Law number 10,436/2002<sup>6</sup> stands out. It recognizes the Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) as a legal way of communication and expression, also considering it a visual-motor linguistic system, with its own grammatical structure, able to get ideas and facts across, created by deaf communities in Brazil.

Following that legislation, Decree number 5626/2005<sup>7</sup> rules over the use of Libras, establishing that educational institutions from all levels and modalities must provide deaf applicants with a sign language translator and interpreter during the selective process, as well as within the facilities of Higher-Education institutions for the access to communication and information of the deaf impaired during their major.

Due to the implemented government policies, which aim to contribute to the social inclusion of the deaf impaired, there has been an increasing demand of SLTIs to in Higher Education. Importantly, despite the expectations of growth in the presence of the deaf impaired in that educational level, and consequently, of SLTIs, currently, deaf students

account for only 0.08% of the enrolled students, according to data from the Statistical Summary of Higher Education from the INEP (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira – National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira)<sup>8</sup>.

Considering that teachers and SLTIs are closely involved in the accessibility processes of deaf students in HE, they have a relevant role in the quality of those undergraduates' education. Therefore, the analysis of how the relations between those professionals have been conceived and established is fundamental in that educational context.

According to that view, Brazilian studies<sup>9-12</sup> point to a new configuration in all educational levels and settings with the presence of an SLTI in the classroom, which urges the need of a partnership between that professional and teachers to conduct daily pedagogical practices and, consequently, the teaching/learning process of such students.

Despite the recognition of that need, Brazilian and international studies on the deaf in HE, have not prioritized the analysis of how the relations between those professionals have been established. Contrastively, they ultimately focus on aspects such as the SLTI's profile and insertion-performance, as well as deaf and listening students' view on SLTIs' performance<sup>13-16</sup>. In a reduced amount, Brazilian and international studies can be found on the relationship between SLTIs and Higher-Education teachers<sup>17,18</sup>.

Due to the scarcity of studies in HE settings, it deems necessary to rely on studies that analyze the relation between teachers and SLTIs in the education of deaf students in other educational levels.

Research results<sup>19-24</sup> in Brazilian public schools of basic level unfold that a Libras translator and interpreter is present in all activities performed by deaf students. Additionally, he/she helps teachers during the educational process of those students, including in their relationship issues towards the class. Besides, SLTIs assumedly help teachers in test elaboration and search for alternatives and methods that facilitate students' learning.

Those studies elucidated that teachers consider the presence of an SLTI in the classroom a facilitator for the effective communication of the deaf in the teaching-learning process, and those professionals should have a more systematic involvement in the pedagogical task. Those studies consider that both professionals must be willing to develop



joint work, aiming at the quality education for the deaf student<sup>19-24</sup>.

A Brazilian study<sup>18</sup>, objectifying to analyze teachers' view working with deaf students, regarding the SLTI's role in HE, found that teachers do not understand how translation and interpretation practices are performed, once they conceive them as a mere transposition from Portuguese to Libras. Considering the way they could contribute to SLTIs' performance, teachers reported that they should just speak more slowly to facilitate the act of translation<sup>17</sup>.

Contradicting that conception, by analyzing the nature of the relationship between teacher-SLTI, studies<sup>9,24</sup> point to the fact that considering the translation a mere transposition from Portuguese to Libras assumes the reduction of that practice as a transposition from one code/language into another code/language. In addition, equivocally, it means to consider languages as transparent, and their established meanings as unique. In that case, cultural and contextual aspects, which participate in that practice, are not considered. Those studies critically analyze the translation conception as a mechanical act, which would occur from the following mechanism:

- a) transmission of a content by the teacher using a code, in this case, orally structured in the Portuguese language;
- b) the reception of that content by the SLTI;
- c) the transposition of the content into Libras, and finally:
- d) the reception by the deaf student.

Questioning the mechanisms above described in order to define the translation act, other studies<sup>12-14</sup> advocate the idea that the translation and interpretation practice implies the mediation of knowledge, views and information, which assumes the interpreter participation.

Translating contents does not mean literal speech translation. By conceiving the SLTI as a knowledge mediator, as well as the mediator in the relation between the deaf student, classmates and teachers, it is understood that apart from having large linguistic expertise, the SLTI also needs to have previous access of the content to be addressed in class, in order for him/her to have enough time to elaborate helping strategies for performing his/her job. Such understanding underlies the conception that SLTIs' job is not constrained to a mechani-

cal act of decoding teachers' speech for getting it across in Libras to the deaf student; it relies on the language, which consists of a social, historic construction taking place in the social relations<sup>9,25,26</sup>.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that this work does not corroborate the reductionist view, which conceives translation as the literal transmission of enunciations, that is, an operational task, but it claims a perspective of interpretation/mediation. This perspective considers the interpretation complexity from the dialogic relation established by SLTIs to several enunciations<sup>9,25,26</sup>.

The understanding that SLTIs' job ultimately relies on deaf students' language and their dialogic relations established in educational settings, implies that those professionals' performance aims to expand those students' possibilities as speakers among the diverse actors participating in the teaching-learning process, so that they can take on a leading role in that process<sup>9,25,26</sup>.

Importantly, SLTIs' performance must be committed to the communication accessibility, not with the deaf students' tutorship. Their job is aligned to the conception of the educational task as a dialogic process, aiming at the democratic dissemination of the systematic academic knowledge, the expansion of students' critical awareness of the reality, and their empowerment as active, changing subjects<sup>24-26</sup>. Based on that conception, to put it in practice, with the effective participation of undergraduates, SLTI and professor in the HE, some aspects should be considered, involving the appropriation process of the assigned knowledge for this educational level, as follows:

- a) there are several levels of reality appropriation, evidenced by the several existing levels of knowledge, from the common sense (spontaneous, non-systematic, from daily life) to the scientific sense (method-based, systematic, not daily life-based);
- b) human experiences from the daily living or not, and their consequent levels of complexity, imply different levels of operationalization, which can be grouped in two blocks: primary operationalization – related to everyday contents, the reality itself, and the secondary operationalization – regarding the systematic, intentional and conscious appropriation of technical, political and philosophical tenets, by means of conceptual appropriation and concept relatedness, thus enabling the reality appropriation for oneself;

c) university is the privileged setting for the secondary operationalization, once it is oriented by the tripod teaching-research-extension, which assumes the appropriation of concepts/foundations, enabling the production of new knowledge and the intentional, responsible intervention on the reality by its students<sup>25,26</sup>.

Such considerations elucidate that the partnership between SLTIs and HE teachers must promote the protagonism of the involved actors with the appropriation of the academic knowledge. In that sense, the joint work between the mentioned professionals must occur with the possibility of previous planning on the part of the SLTIs, so that they can provide fluent, uninterrupted interpretation, thus mediating an action that may favor knowledge appropriation by the deaf subjects.

A study<sup>17</sup> makes a critical review on how university teachers equivocally hesitate in providing material for the interpreters, claiming that deaf students will have an unfair advantage over listening students if they do that. In that study, it is clear that the relationship between SLTIs and teachers must be better understood and consolidated<sup>17</sup>.

Another study<sup>6</sup> clarifies that the partnership between those professionals must work in a permanent, systematic way, by sharing academic contents, the elaboration of practices and strategies to address the contents, and obviously, the deaf students' needs.

The mutual acknowledgement of the importance of that partnership and, consequently an active, collaborative participation of both professionals are the ultimate conditions for deaf students to have the right to quality education<sup>9,10,12,24</sup>.

According to the mentioned considerations, this study aims to analyze the view of a team of teachers from HEIs of a city in Southern Brazil, regarding the SLTIs' role/job in general, in relation to the deaf, the teacher and the class, and additionally, the relationship between teachers and SLTIs.

## Method

The current research is a descriptive, crosscut, quantitative and qualitative study, previously approved by the Ethics Board, according to opinion number 1.540.698.

This study was conducted in a city from Southern Brazil because that is where the research center is located, and due to the presence of many deaf

subjects, users of the sign language. According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics<sup>5</sup>, there are over 2,000 deaf people in the studied region.

Data collection was held between June and July of 2016, by means of interviews with teachers who work for two private HEIs, located in the previously mentioned city. Regarding the inclusion criteria, the study participants teach deaf subjects in a Higher Education institution, with the presence of an SLTI. It was not adopted any exclusion criteria for the participants' selection.

At the time of the field research, Institution-1 comprised 17 teachers working with deaf students, supported by an SLTI, and Institution-2 comprised 35 teachers. From 52 professionals contacted by e-mail to participate in the research, 14 answered it affirmatively. Therefore, the research sample entailed 2 teachers from Institution-1 and 12 from Institution-2, which justifies the difference in the total of participants from each institution.

After the teachers' compliance, an individual interview was scheduled and, after signing the Free Informed Consent, the interview was held and taped, using an instrument with questions concerning the following aspects:

- a) SLTIs' general attributions/functions regarding the deaf, the teacher, and the rest of the class;
- b) Pertinent actions to be developed with the SLTI.

Content analysis underpinned organization and treatment of the results<sup>27</sup>. This analysis entails a set of techniques for communication analysis by means of objective, systematic procedures of message description, indicators (quantitative or not) that enable the inference of knowledge related to the conditions of production/reception of those messages. Thematic analysis was the selected technique to conduct this study. This technique allows condensing data into categories, putting them together in thematic axes, facilitating the responses analysis. The use of that technique emerged from three steps: 1) pre-analysis; 2) material exploration; and 3) treatment of the results by means of inference and interpretation.

Data collected from the interviews were transcribed and, before their analysis, they were e-mailed to the participants for them to be informed about the transcribed content, to confirm the content fidelity, and to allow them changes, to their will.

Thematic analysis is constituted by a range of categories, which comprises the themes emerged

from the participants' speeches. By identifying the thematic axes, present in the organization of the interview questions, it was possible to fit together the information from the participants' responses, thus allowing the elaboration of the response categories, described in the following axes:

- a) teachers' view on the role/function of the SLTI: in general, regarding the deaf, the teacher and the class;
- b) teachers' view regarding the relation between the teacher and the SLTI.

Each axis was divided in sub-axes, which contemplated the core contents of the participants' responses. Excerpts, representing the responses for their further analysis, were selected to clarify the contents.

For the participants' profile, data were searched regarding schooling, years of experience with the SLTI in HE, and number of SLTIs they had already worked with in a classroom. They were identified by the letter P followed by a number from 1 to 14 for keeping their anonymity, as shown in table 1.

**Table 1.** Teachers' profile regarding schooling, educational field, years of experience with SLTIs and number of SLTIs they worked with

| P   | SCHOOLING EDUCATIONAL FIELD                  | TIME OF EXPERIENCE WITH SLTIS IN THE CLASSROOM (YEARS) | NUMBER OF SLTIS THEY WORKED WITH |
|-----|--|--|----------------------------------|
| P1  | Master's Degree in Psychology                | 10   | 10                               |
| P2  | Master's Degree in Informatics               | 5  | 3                                |
| P3  | Master's Degree in Mathematics               | 5  | 3                                |
| P4  | Master's Degree in Electronic Engineering    | 5  | 5                                |
| P5  | Master's Degree in Computer Science          | 1.5  | 2                                |
| P6  | Master's Degree in Systems Analysis          | 1  | 1                                |
| P7  | Master's Degree in Business                  | 6  | 12                               |
| P8  | Master's Degree in Production Engineering    | 10   | 4                                |
| P9  | Doctorate in Education                       | 10   | 5                                |
| P10 | Master's Degree in Philosophy                | 0.5  | 2                                |
| P11 | Master's Degree in Computer Science          | 3  | 5                                |
| P12 | Doctorate in Business                        | 3  | 1                                |
| p13 | Master's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology | 0.5  | 1                                |
| P14 | Doctorate in Dentistry                       | 0.3  | 2                                |

Source: Research data

From the 14 teachers participating in the study, all of them had a Master's degree, and 3 had a Doctorate Degree. Regarding their educational field, 3 teachers worked in the Human Sciences field (Education, Philosophy, Psychology), 2 in the Health Sciences field (Speech-Language Pathology and Dentistry), 2 in the Applied Social Sciences (Business), and 7 in the Engineering, Exact and Earth Sciences field (Informatics, Mathematics, Electronic Engineering, Computer Science, Analysis and Systems Development, Production Engineering).

As for the variable regarding the time experiencing an SLTI with them in the classroom, it ranged from 6 months to 10 years, mean time of 5 years.

## Results

Concerning the participants' view in relation to the way that they define SLTIs' role/function, all of them reported that those professionals must translate the professors' speeches from the Portuguese language into Libras. However, through the participants' responses, their contents point to two perspectives on how they understand the translation process and, consequently, the SLTIs' role, which were placed in two categories: interpreting/mediating and passing on/ getting across information.

The categories and response excerpts, regarding the teachers' view on the SLTIs' role/function, are shown in Charts 1 and 2, as follows:

Most teachers (57%) refer to the SLTI's role as interpreting/mediating the teaching-learning

**Chart 1.** Teachers' view on SLTI's role/function in general, in relation to the deaf, to the teacher and the class

| SUB-AXES                   | CATEGORIES   | NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES | ACCOUNTS  |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------|---|
| In general                 | Interpreting/mediating   | 8                      | [...] they translate what really happens in the classroom, not only what you're saying in class, they translate class reactions, ... a joke made by a student that the teacher finds it funny, then they are tuned to the environment, not only a literal translation, that's what I notice (P8) [...] it's not a literal translation, it's an attempt to put in another language, in another culture, as close as possible, a concept being worked on. I think that must be a bit hard in some cases because each language has its specificities, its expressions, they are difficult for you to translate [...] (P9). |
|                            | Passing on/Getting across  | 6                      | I think his/her sole and exclusive job would be the translation [...] (P13)<br>Translating, impartially getting across (P6).  |
|                            | TOTAL  | 14                     |   |
| In relation to the deaf    | Interpreting/mediating   | 9                      | It's a context, because the interpreter has to understand the situation, the condition, the class to pass it on to the student. It's a context, not a literal translation of words. [...] (P14)   |
|                            | Passing on/getting across  | 5                      | Libras interpreter's role is to transpose the dialogue communication (P10)  |
|                            | TOTAL  | 14                     |   |
| In relation to the teacher | Adapting to the teacher and the discipline   | 10                     | [...] I think the interpreter's skills towards the teacher is to understand that each discipline and teacher have different characteristics...in the Human Science field, he has one characteristic, in the Exacts Sciences, he has another, and the interpreter has to manage that, understand that the teacher in each field has his/her own style, and a way to learn and teach, and the interpreter has to fit into these settings (P2)   |
|                            | Guiding the teacher  | 4                      | [...] help the teacher: That student sometimes needs something special, or needs something different in the classroom [...] (P3)  |
|                            | TOTAL  | 14                     |   |
| In relation to the class   | Favoring the contact with the class  | 9                      | [...] talk to their classmates, many times the interpreter helps with that, or many times to talk with other sectors in the institution, in the library, even in the secretary a more administrative issue, making the class translation, making the translation of a conversation between class peers [...] (P12)  |
|                            | No relation to the class   | 4                      | I don't see the interpreter interacting with the class very much, if the deaf don't have a good interaction with the class, the interpreter doesn't build that bridge. He/she gets isolated in his job [...] (P1).  |
|                            | Explaining the presence of the deaf and the SLTI and its implications in the classroom context | 1                      | I think it's a good thing to introduce himself/herself to the rest of the class and explain his/her function there [...] (P13)  |
|                            | TOTAL  | 14                     |   |

Source: Lisboa TR.<sup>28</sup>

**Chart 2.** Relationship between teacher and LSTI

| SUB-AXES                             | CATEGORIES  | NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES | ACCOUNTS   |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------|--|
| Joint actions                        | Working together  | 9                      | [...] as the interpreter supports him/her to get the content across to the student, then the teacher also supports the interpreter (P6)  |
|                                      | Providing content and class material                        | 5                      | Prepare the interpreter a support material in advance, chat with him/her 5 or 10 minutes before the class to know if he/she got it right, if he/she didn't understand a certain term, something, try to explain it in a different way, change the way to explain, use an analogy, something like that (P5) |
|                                      | TOTAL   | 14                     |  |
| Contribution to the SLTI performance | Interacting with the SLTI                                   | 9                      | [...] I think I can contribute when I address the interpreter, making it clear if the student has any doubts, he/she needs to tell me that, I always say it to the deaf, but maybe I should tell the interpreter(P9)   |
|                                      | Having proper pace and speech                               | 2                      | The teacher has to be aware enough to give the interpreter time to finish the translation during class...I know I don't always give that time [...] (P4)   |
|                                      | Preparing and providing the content and material in advance | 3                      | I always provide my interpreters with the material, the courseware too, for them not to get lost (P7)  |
|                                      | TOTAL   | 14                     |  |

Source: Lisboa TR.<sup>28</sup>

process, and 43% as passing on/getting across the class contents. It should be pointed that among the teachers who had longer experience with SLTIs, in work years, regardless of the number of translators and interpreters that they had already worked with, the prevalent view was translation as an act of interpreting/mediating.

Concerning the role/function of the SLTIs in relation to the deaf students, 64% of the interviewees consider that they must mediate academic situations involving those students, and 36% consider that they must pass on the class content.

The response distribution, regarding the SLTIs' function/role in relation to the teachers, shows that 71% of the participants consider that those professionals must adapt to the teachers and the discipline, and 29% consider that the SLTIs must guide them on deaf students' related issues.

As for the SLTIs' role/function in relation to the class, 64% of the teachers consider that they should favor deaf students' interaction with the their listening peers; 29% think that they have no relationship to the class, and 7% that they must previously explain their function in the classroom concerning the deaf students, the teacher and the class.

When questioned about the actions that could be developed with the SLTIs, 64% of the teachers

referred to working together, and 36% reported that the teacher should provide the SLTIs with the content and class material.

When questioned on how they could contribute to the SLTIs' performance, 64% of the participants agreed that they could interact more with those professionals, 22% answered that they could prepare and previously provide them with the class material, and 14% consider that they could reduce the pace of their speech in order to facilitate the SLTIs' interpretation.

## Discussion

According to the participants' responses about their view on the SLTIs' role/function, in general, in relation to the deaf, and in relation to the class, shown in Chart 1, interpretation is pointed as their main activity, understood from two distinctive positions: as an act of passing on/getting across information, and as an act of interpreting/mediating.

Considering the greater incidence of the second position, it is prevalent among the participants that translation is not literal, the act of interpreting is unique, it does not merely mean the transposition of the teachers' speech into Libras. The interpretative



act, under that notion, assumes that an SLTI also translates speeches from the classroom context for deaf students to be able to apprehend the content addressed by the teacher<sup>9,29,30</sup>.

Aligned with that conception, to P8 and P14, according to Chart 1, the interpretation is connected to the SLTIs' knowledge of the discipline contents that they are interpreting. In addition, it involves classroom conversations, considering that not only the teachers' speech, but also other speeches produced by the students participate in the teaching-learning process.

However, to some participants, such as P10 and P13, translating means a transposition from a language to another, that is to say, their views are grounded in a conception of translation connected with a straight transmission, from a language to another, of contents from the teacher's speech.

According to the mentioned assumptions, we can state that the first view – passing on/getting across – as it is closely connected to the text literacy, is articulated with the perspective of the primary operationalization, once the concept of translation is reductionist by itself. Therefore, it denotes a possibility of appropriation of knowledge by itself and not for itself. On the other hand, the second view, interpreting/mediating, once it considers the complexity of the implied elements to the interpretation, broadens the possibilities for a secondary operationalization, to the extent that places the speech in a dialogical relation to its several constituting factors<sup>9,25,26</sup>.

Regarding the SLTIs' role in relation to the teachers, responses point to the fact that the translator and interpreter should guide the teacher how to interact with the deaf student; in addition, they should establish a closer relationship to teachers, considering the specificities related to the teachers and their disciplines, as demonstrated in P2's response, reported in Chart 1.

In that sense, P2 claims that each teacher has his/her own way to conduct a class, that the fields of knowledge have their characteristics and specificities, and the SLTI needs to adapt to the teacher's and the fields' idiosyncrasies. Concerning the fields' specificities, they are connected, among other things, to the technical terms used by the teachers during classes. Therefore, the SLTIs must be frequently learning, which will effectively occur if there are contacts and systematic exchanges between them and the teachers<sup>17,23,24</sup>.

Ratifying the need for SLTIs to guide teachers, some participants refer that they are not used to having deaf students in their classes, and unknowing Libras, they need SLTIs to mediate their contact and clarify those students' doubts.

We should point out that the understanding that an SLTI must help and/or guide teachers on learning issues, evidenced in some participants' responses, as well as in other studies<sup>18,24</sup>, contradicts the SLTIs' attributions, considering the definition of their occupation and professional attributions established in official papers<sup>2,4,6,7</sup>.

Moreover, we notice that the role ultimately attributed to an interpreter by those participants, refers to a primary operationalization, once it is constrained to the relation modes and the Libras adaptation to the specific technical terms of each discipline, necessary aspects, but not enough to promote a secondary operationalization<sup>9,25,26</sup>.

Regarding the class, according to most respondents, the SLTIs must favor deaf students' interactions, and explain their function in a classroom regarding the deaf students, the teacher and the whole class.

To P12, according to Chart 1, an SLTI's role/function must not be limited to situations experienced in the classroom, but it must be extended to the academic settings, so that deaf students may interact and participate in all activities of the institution. In that sense, an SLTI must not only interpret the discipline contents in a class, but he/she must also participate in the deaf students' education during several situations and academic activities, in and out of a classroom<sup>10</sup>.

Still regarding SLTIs' role/function in relation to the class, according to P13, as shown in Chart 1, they must introduce and explain the class their function in the classroom, once students, who had never got in contact with deaf students or SLTIs during their educational process, may not be aware of their function in a classroom, in other activities in the institution and, consequently, in the educational process of deaf students<sup>10</sup>.

However, evidencing an opposite view, to P1, according to response shown in Chart 1, the SLTI does not have an important role on the way a deaf student interacts with the other students, and the establishment of interactions depends exclusively on the deaf student.

In general, despite the differences in conception, research participants' responses, concerning

the importance of the SLTI-class relationship, show a qualitative leap, to the extent that they point to an educational conception that goes beyond the limits of that context, and claim the deaf students' right to a broader participation in academic life. Obviously, those responses are mostly constrained to the immediate situation, to classroom-related factors.

From the participants' responses on the relation between the teachers and the SLTIs, according to Chart 2, prevalent views are noticed, which point to the joint work and interaction between teachers and SLTIs. Teachers consider that the SLTI and the teacher should work in a collaborative way and participate effectively in deaf students' academic life so that those students have access to the class contents.

Nevertheless, only 36% of the participants referred to the fact that the teacher should provide the content and courseware to the SLTI in advance, contradicting findings from Brazilian and international studies<sup>9,10,16, 17,18</sup>, which report the need of previous planning on the part of SLTIs so that they can fluently interpret the contents addressed by the teacher.

Among the participants that stated the importance of a more effective interaction between teacher and SLTI, so that deaf students' accessibility within HE may occur more effectively, we can apprehend the understanding that the discipline planning by the teacher, allows the SLTI to search information on the planned content, regarding related terms and vocabulary of each discipline, as well as to clear some doubts with the teacher<sup>9,14</sup>.

Those participants corroborate the notion that only the presence of an SLTI in the classroom does not reassure quality education for deaf students. According to that position, P5 claims that preparation and provision of the support material to the SLTI, conversations before classes and elucidation of doubts will bring more effectiveness during translation.

Concerning the SLTI's performance, among the responses shown in Chart 2, P9 acknowledges that he could talk and approach the SLTI more, and the SLTI should ask him in case of any doubts.

P4, according to Chart 2, reports that the speed of the teacher's speech may hinder interpretation, and it is necessary to give the SLTI some time to do that. Importantly, the speed reduction of the teacher's speech may contribute to a more effective interpretation on the part of the SLTI, as well

as the establishment of an active and collaborative participation of those professionals.

In that sense, participants' responses assume the understanding that teacher and SLTI must establish a partnership, which allows them a responsive participation to share theoretical, practical knowledge and, consequently, the development of joint projects and actions towards the deaf students.

The results in this study, corroborated by other studies<sup>9,17</sup>, point out the challenges to be faced in the deaf education. In addition to issues related to the communication accessibility, we find issues involving the SLTI-Teacher-Content relationship. In order to ensure a process of secondary operationalization on the part of deaf students, the partnership between the mentioned professionals must entail discussions that allow SLTIs to develop increasing knowledge on the addressed themes in the classroom, so that they can interpret concepts and establish relations between those professionals, an essential factor for quality education in HE<sup>23</sup>.

## Conclusion

In this study, it was possible to apprehend that the partnership between teachers and SLTIs is a gradual process. Both professionals need to be committed to the process of permanence and participation of deaf students in HE. Therefore, results point to the need of understanding the responsibility and specificity in the performance of each professional in the educational context. That way, their practices may promote the effective participation of deaf students in their processes of academic education. The need of implementing research and discussions on the functions of each professional in HE institutions can be apprehended, ultimately those that promote the partnership between teachers and TLSIs.

Moreover, the importance of specific training for Libras translators and interpreters in the HE field should be pointed out. Thus, those professionals may expand their discussions on their roles and functions in order to contribute to more accessible education for deaf students.

Despite the large formulation of public Brazilian policies to support the deaf accessibility, there are still many constraints for that share of the population to have more access to the social and cultural assets of mankind.

Therefore, the consolidation of public policies is necessary, aiming at overcoming the inequality and exclusion conditions of deaf subjects, eliminating barriers that prevent or hinder their education and participation in the diverse social spheres.

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