

The Social Representation of the Deaf: A Sociocognitive Study of Discourse / *A representação social sobre os surdos: um estudo sociocognitivista do discurso*

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this article is to specify and analyze the categories that (re)construct the social representation (SR) of the deaf within the discourse of the social group itself. We view SR as an amalgam of several skills that guide and enable the subject-subject, subject-object and subject-world interactions. The discourse intermediates the relationship between the subject's cognition and the society. We defend the importance of this research because, on a daily basis, many discriminatory practices involve the group and are naturalized, in part, due to lack of knowledge about the deaf and associated issues. In an incipient knowledge field, we are proposing to explore the discursive language marks which spin around socially prejudiced practices naturalized in a mostly hearing society. Through semi-structured interviews, we concluded that deaf people resort to three main discursive strategies to re(construct) a positive SR about the ingroup while at the same time deconstructing a negative SR (re)built by the outgroup.

KEYWORDS: Social Representation; Discourse; Deaf

RESUMO

O objetivo principal do artigo é precisar e analisar as categorias que (re)constroem a representação social (RS) sobre o surdo dentro do discurso do próprio grupo social. Encaramos a RS enquanto um amálgama de diversos conhecimentos que orientam e possibilitam a interação sujeito-sujeito, sujeito-objeto e sujeito-mundo. O discurso intermedeia a relação entre a cognição dos sujeitos e a sociedade. Defendemos a importância desta pesquisa porque, cotidianamente, muitas práticas discriminatórias envolvem o grupo e são naturalizadas, em parte, por falta de conhecimento sobre o surdo e assuntos circunvizinhos. Em um campo de conhecimento incipiente, propomo-nos a desbravar as marcas linguísticas discursivas que estão em torno de práticas socialmente preconceituosas naturalizadas numa sociedade majoritariamente ouvinte. Por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas, concluímos que os surdos recorrem a três estratégias discursivas principais para (re)construir uma RS positiva sobre o endogrupo ao mesmo tempo desconstruindo a RS negativa (re)construída pelo exogrupo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Representação Social; Discurso; Surdos

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Introduction

Currently, it is possible to find a growing interest with regards to studies that involve the social and discursive practices associated to minority social groups, such as the studies that involve the racist discourse, the studies referring to homophobic discourses, etc. Nonetheless, we found few studies that refer to the prejudiced discourses about the deaf group, about the deafness universe and about the Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) – the first language of the referred to group. This work is justified because, on a daily basis, many discriminatory practices involve the group and are naturalized, partly due to lack of knowledge about the deafness universe. In an incipient knowledge field, we do propose to explore the discursive linguistic marks, we focus in the presuppositions and in the lexical choices, which spin around socially preconceived practices naturalized in a predominantly hearing society.

The first goal of this article is to specify and analyze the categories which (re)construct the social representation (SR) about the deaf within the discourse of the very social group itself. We stare the SR as a double nature phenomenon: social and cognitive. It is a set of socially shared knowledge; individual experiences, etc., which guide the subjects to position themselves and act in the world. Moreover, the SR is a phenomenon which emerges in the interaction between subject-subject, subject-object and subject-world at the same time that it makes the interaction possible. Discourse, on its turn, intermediates the relationship between the cognition and the society. That is, the discourse is the privileged to analyze the socially (re)constructed knowledge sets.

To reach the article's goals, we undertook semi structured interviews with all the deaf teachers of a federal institution in the Faculty of Arts – Libras course, totaling five interviews. All the interviews were undertaken in Libras, without the intermediation of an interpreter, that is, they were undertaken directly with the researcher and, afterwards, transcribed for the Portuguese by the researcher himself. Hence, this research has a

¹ In Portuguese: "Cada um de nós é um símbolo que lida com símbolos."

descriptive and interpretative character. The questions that formed the analysis' *corpus* were:

- 1) Tell me about your life. Up to the moment which were the achieved victories and which were the overcome barriers?
- 2) Do you think that other deaf and hearing people's generations did contribute for some of your victories?

Before analyzing the discourses, we shall make a brief discussion about the basic concepts which uphold the article; about the Social Representation phenomenon, under the Social Representation Theory (SRT) perspective, especially in Jovchelovitch (2004; 2013a; 2013b; 2014; 2020), and about the Sociocognitive Discourse Analysis, especially in Van Dijk (1993;² 2008).

1 Theoretical Basis: The Social Representation in the Eyes of Jovchelovitch

The Social Representation Theory (SRT) was founded by Serge Moscovici and had as an introductory landmark his seminal study *La psychanalyse, son, image et son public* (1976). Ever since, the STR has gathered followers and relies on different approaches, but not unequal. That is: the cultural approach, the societal approach, the structural approach and the dialogic approach. They see one same phenomenon, the Social Representation (re)construction (RS), under several facets, producing, therefore, a complex and interdisciplinary study object.

In this article, we shall discuss the basic concept of the SRT mainly through of the studies of Sandra Jovchelovitch (2004; 2013a; 2013b; 2014; 2020). According to that social psychologist, the representation:

[...] it is an intermediation structure between subject-other, subject-object. It is constituted as work, that is, the representation structures itself through a communicative action which links subjects to other subjects and to the object-world. In this sense one may say that the representation is immersed in the communicative action: it is the communicative action which shapes it, whilst it shapes in one same and

² VAN DIJK, Teun Adrianus. Discourse and Racism. In: GOLDBERG, David Theo; SOLOMOS, John (Eds.). *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002.

only process, the participants of the communicative action (Jovchelovitch, 2004, p. 22).³

In other words, the SR is intrinsically associated to the interactive work, mediated by the discourse, between the social subjects and between the subjects and the world. It is a strategy, sustained by symbols, developed by social subjects to (re)create the social reality – which finds itself in permanent changes within a world which belongs to the Self and to the Other – mediated by the interaction (work of the word and that of the discourse), by social and cultural practices (Jovchelovitch, 2013a). Hence, they surface mediated by the interaction, but also are responsible for the social mediation, this because they do occupy a common space in the manufacturing of meaning which sustains the several realities which transform the individual into a social subject inserted in a symbolic network of knowledge, “the processes that engender social representations are immersed in the communication and in the social practices: dialogue, discourse, rituals, work and production standards” [...] (Jovchelovitch, 2013a, p. 67).⁴

Jovchelovitch (2014 p. 226) adds to the SR definition as a “mobile point within a transformation system which comprise a representational game derived from intergroup and interinstitutional relations in the public sphere.”⁵ That is to say, the social psychologist regards the SR as an intrinsic dynamic element to the representational game, also of a dynamic nature, because it springs from the relationship amongst historically and socially situated subjects. This is tantamount to saying that the SR is therefore crossed by relationships of power, ideology, values, beliefs and so forth.

To Jovchelovitch (2013a), we are, while social subjects that circulate in the public space, “traversed by the impressive power of the word” (p. 54),⁶ apart from that, the development of the Self depends of the otherness. The joint effort of the Self and of the Other, mediated by the public sphere interaction, for the (re)creation and comprehension

³ In Portuguese: “[...] é uma estrutura de mediação entre sujeito-outro, sujeito-objeto. Ela se constitui enquanto trabalho, ou seja, a representação se estrutura através de um trabalho de ação comunicativa que liga sujeitos a outros sujeitos e ao objeto-mundo. Neste sentido pode-se dizer que a representação está imersa na ação comunicativa: é a ação comunicativa que a forma, ao mesmo tempo que forma em um mesmo e único processo, os participantes da ação comunicativa” (Jovchelovitch, 2004, p. 22).

⁴ In Portuguese: “os processos que engendram representações sociais estão embebidos na comunicação e nas práticas sociais: diálogo, discurso, rituais, padrões de trabalho e produção [...]”

⁵ In Portuguese: “ponto móvel dentro de um sistema de transformações que compreende um jogo representacional derivado de relações intergrupais e interinstitucionais na esfera pública.”

⁶ In Portuguese: “atravessados pela força impressionante da palavra.”

of the surrounding reality is solely possible through the (re)construction of SRs; the “Symbol, the Self and the otherness” are “constitutive elements of each other”⁷ (Jovchelovitch, 2013a, p. 61).

[...] it is through its activity and relationship with others which the representations originate, enabling a mediation between the subject and the world, which it at the same time discovers and builds. On the other hand, the representations allow the existence of symbols – pieces of social reality mobilized by the creative activity of social subjects to grant meaning and shape to the circumstances in which they meet. [...] there is not possibility for the symbolic construction outside a network of already built meanings. It is on and within this network that the work of subjects takes place to recreate what is already there. The psychic subject, therefore it is not neither abstracted from the social reality nor merely condemned to reproduce it. Its task is to prepare the permanent tension between a world which is already constituted and its own efforts to become a subject (Jovchelovitch, 2013a, p. 66).⁸

We may, thus, conclude that the SR emerges from the Self / Other relationship as well as rendering such relationship possible within an already constituted symbolic network, but liable of changes, it also sustains the relationship between amongst the social subjects, the objects and the world. The SR results from the effort between the subjects to control and comprehend a reality which is under permanent change. The subjects (re)create and share the social skills, which do constitute a symbolic reality of the world, at the same time that are constituted as subjects through the representations in a dialectic relationship between the Self and the otherness. Since these are symbolic structures (re)constructed by different social groups, and these grant concreteness to the social, the representations “are not innocent, they also cross power spaces” (Jovchelovitch, 2014, p. 232).⁹

⁷ In Portuguese: “Símbolo, o Eu e a alteridade” são “elementos constitutivos um do outro.”

⁸ In Portuguese: “[...] é através de sua atividade e relação com outros que as representações têm origem, permitindo uma mediação entre o sujeito e o mundo que ele ao mesmo tempo descobre e constrói. De outro lado, as representações permitem a existência de símbolos – pedaços de realidade social mobilizados pela atividade criadora de sujeitos sociais para dar sentido e forma às circunstâncias nas quais eles se encontram. [...] não há possibilidade para a construção simbólica fora de uma rede de significados já construídos. É sobre e dentro dessa rede que se dão os trabalhos de sujeitos de re-criar o que já está lá. O sujeito psíquico, portanto, não está nem abstraído da realidade social nem meramente condenado a reproduzi-la. Sua tarefa é elaborar a permanente tensão entre um mundo que já se encontra constituído e seus próprios esforços para ser um sujeito.”

⁹ In Portuguese: “não são inocentes, elas também atravessam espaços de poder.”

In this article, therefore, we regard the SR as a responsible symbolic structure for the (re)construction of objects and of the surrounding reality, it emerges from the subject-subject, subject-object, subject-world relationships through the social interactions, mediated by the discourse, and by the social practices. At the same time that it constitutes the reality and the subjects – and are constituted by them –, help them to comprehend the reality and socially act. This way, it is a double nature structure: social and cognitive, crossed by different power relationships; by interests from the different social groups; by values and beliefs systems which underlie the different contexts.

1.2 Sociocognitive Analysis of the Discourse

Considering that we consider the SR a cognitive and social structure, (re)constructed through the interaction between subject-subjects and subjects-world, we regard the language as an action and a non-autonomous and symbolic system – one of the constituting pillars of the knowledge –, crossed by extralinguistic elements, such: power; ideology; values and beliefs. Our goal is to analyze the discourse, the language in action, to understand which elements anchor the SR on the deaf.

For Teun Adrianus Van Dijk (2002, p. 144), the discourse is “understood to mean only a specific communicative event, in general, and a written or oral form of verbal interaction or language use, in particular,”¹⁰ moreover,

discourse should be located in society, as a form of social practice or as an interaction of social group members (or institutions). This overall inclusion relation, however, remains rather vague and is in need of further specification in order to explain which properties of text and talk typically condition which properties of social, political or cultural structures, and vice versa (Van Dijk, 1994, p. 107).¹¹

The discourse is, hence, crossed by the social macrostructure elements, such as power; beliefs; ideology, etc., but organized and materialized by linguistic elements. These two levels are interrelated.

¹⁰ See footnote 2.

¹¹ VAN DIJK, Teun Adrianus. Discourse and Cognition in Society. In: CROWLEY, David; MITCHELL, David (Eds.). *Communication Theory Today*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994.

Nevertheless, Van Dijk (1994) defends that the discourse structure and the social structure are of different nature. Even though they are related, such relationship cannot be direct. That is why the linguist defends a “my approach assumes that there are crucial theoretical reasons why such social cognition should be analysed as the interface between discourse and society” (Van Dijk, 1994, p. 110).¹² In other words, the relationship between discourse and society is mediated by cognition. The social structures may only affect the discourse and vice-versa as long as they affect the minds of the subjects. Van Dijk (1994)¹³ views the social cognition while mental representations socially shared which control the production and the interpretation of the discourse. The representations, on their turn, are comprehended while subject mental models of events or of situations. Here, we point out a theoretical difference in the way of regarding the representations, while Van Dijk (1994)¹⁴ regards them as mental models organized while *scripts*, we do consider the representation as being itself a social and cognitive structure responsible for guiding the subjects in their social and discursive practices among peers (members of the same social group; ingroup) and not peers (members of other social groups; outgroup).

In other words, we distance ourselves from Van Dijk with regards to the study interest vis-à-vis the social cognition. While the linguist studies the cognition through the mental models, in this article we analyze the social cognition (re)constructed through the SRs. Nonetheless, we share his positioning about the relationship between the discourse, the society and the cognition.

Van Dijk (1994, p. 110) starts at the following presuppositions to argue that cognition acts as an interface between discourse and society:

(1) discourse is actually produced/interpreted by individuals, but they are able to do so only on the basis of socially shared knowledge and beliefs; (2) discourse can only ‘affect’ social structures through the social minds of discourse participants, and conversely (3) social structures can only ‘affect’ discourse structures through social cognition.¹⁵

¹² See footnote 11.

¹³ See footnote 11.

¹⁴ See footnote 11.

¹⁵ See footnote 11.

That is to say, the subjects, to produce and interpret discourse, activate skills and beliefs, that is, social representations. They are the SRs, social and cognitive structures, which guide the subjects to position themselves and acting socially and discursively. The relationship between discourse and society is mediated by the social cognition, that is, through the SRs, (re) constructed in the cognitive map of the social players, and these activate different types, to act, produce and interpret the discourses.

2 Methodology

The survey was descriptive and interpretative and the Discourse Sociocognitive Analysis, Van Dijk (1993, 1994) ¹⁶, guided the discourses analysis which refer to the trajectory of the deaf; about the deafness and about surrounding issues. Apart from that, we used the SRT, proposed by Moscovici [in the article, we base ourselves especially in Jovchelovitch (2004; 2013a; 2013b; 2014; 2020)], this is so because it offers an analysis model capable of unravelling the complex relationships between language, cognition and subject. We shall have access to the SR, a cognitive structure, through the discourse, once the discursive practices affect and are affected by the representations that the subjects (re)formulate about the social reality, “the main concepts of such a theory as it connects to both discourse and Society” (Van Dijk, 1994, p. 110). ¹⁷

For the survey, we interviewed deaf professors from a federal institution of the Language Arts Course, this means that they are deaf which have access to the urgent agendas raised up by the ingroup. A total of five teachers were interviewed (the total of deaf teachers of the institution of the course wherein we made the field survey). Within the five interviews, we selected two of them as samples for the present article. The criterion of choice was: 1) deaf people which position themselves *vis-à-vis* the different social spheres of performance. In the first interview, the participant refers to the agency of the deaf in spheres of everyday life, supermarket; shops etc., in return the second participant positions his discourse specifically in the academic sphere. Although the first participant speaks about higher education, the interviewees trigger, in the discourses, different agency environments.

¹⁶ See footnote 11.

¹⁷ See footnote 11.

Initially, we recorded the interview in Libras – natural language of the deaf social group – and, afterwards, we transcribed them into the written Portuguese, respecting the structure of the language used in the interview. The questions which compounded the semi-structured interview were:

- 1 Tell me about your life. Up to this moment, which victories were achieved and which were the overcome barriers?
- 2 Do you think that other generations of deaf and hearing people contributed for some of your victories?

As we said before, the discourse is organized through linguistic elements, but traversed by skills; beliefs, ideology, values, etc. Thus, the selected linguistic strategies in the production of the discourse may unveil the positions that the subjects do assume and how they mean their surrounding social reality. Due to that, we shall observe the implicit ones within the discourses. The enunciations have different degrees of explicitness, so that some information may be inferred as from the enunciation. We shall focus on the enunciation presupposition and in the lexical choices in the attempt of unveiling the SR which guide the construction of the discourses.

3 Analyses

Transcription: interview 1

- 1) Past grow up take look miss not having Libras. Listening people Libras do not have. Because I family deaf. Grow up Libras, all speak. Good Family! But outside general society (bewilderment expression)¹⁸ Libras, strange! Hearing person does not know, speak with the mouth (expression of surprise). I realize it is barrier, all (society) barrier. Because I grow communication all family know Libras, grandpa deaf. But, realize, in society. Ask the family: hearing person does not know Libras? Answer: yes, majority know very little. Understand! Shop; supermarket and others show script. I realize barrier, communication is missing. Communication society locked. Afterwards growing, after year 2022 law translation libras, bilingualism in Brazil. After fighting against the deaf movement barriers, movement fights. Society important look. Libras grow. People Libras

¹⁸ During the interview transcriptions for the written Portuguese, we described some facial and body expressions of the participant. We did that because the expressions – not manual, i.e., facial and body are one of the five phonemes that compound a signal (Ferreira-Brito, 1995) and (Quadros & Karnopp, 2004).

course. I compare past barrier, today already grow, barrier diminished. I feel accessibility increase.

- 2) My opinion, important what? Important deaf people and hearing people. Why is that? Libras hearing person develop, increase. Observe has several places, a lawyer may work, police may work, may drive car; bus; different may, may, may... Deaf people not power (expression of disbelief?) Why? Deafness problem? Today, no! May visual. To know libras, reads, bilingualism. Deaf may win, he is able to. May profession of architect; policeman; lawyer; judge. Deaf study college, help future to be formed. Need to show a diploma, society sees it. Deaf confused how? No. Communication. May profession, have translator; learn Libras. Why is that? Past, I find deaf evolves, graduate, computer diploma faculty. Diploma able to graduate. Distribute diploma company. Places look him work computer graduate good! That is not required, better work basic, separate. How (disapproval expression)? Inferior? No. He has already diploma, graduated. Like hearing person, victory. Because deaf already suffer to graduate as a lawyer. It is not possible, barrier. According to Judge; hospital. Deaf has education, but barrier. Observe work nothing. Because needs society law. He needs to fight against barrier for qual hearing person. Society company hearing person because do not know communication deaf difficult. No! Profession graduated, equal hearing person. It needs victory law, all profession needs.¹⁹

The analysis was based, chiefly, on the assumptions:

Table 1 – Assumptions referring to the interview 1

Excerpt from the discourse	Assumption
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¹⁹ In Portuguese: “Passado crescer olhar faltar não ter Libras. Pessoas ouvintes Libras não ter. Porque eu família surdo, vovô surdo. Crescer Libras, todos falar. Família bom! Mas, fora geral sociedade (expressão de espanto) Libras, estranho! Ouvinte não saber, falar com a boca (expressão de estranhamento). Eu perceber é barreira, todos (sociedade) barreira. Porque eu crescer comunicação tudo família, saber Libras, vovô surdo. Mas, perceber, na sociedade. Perguntar a família: ouvinte não saber Libras? Resposta: é, maioria saber muito pouco. Entender! Loja; supermercado e outros mostrar escrito. Eu perceber barreira, falta comunicação. Comunicação sociedade travar. Depois crescendo, depois ano 2022 lei tradução libras, bilinguismo no Brasil. Depois lutar contra as barreiras movimento surdo, movimento luta. Sociedade olhar importante. Libras crescer. Pessoas curso Libras. Eu comparar passado barreira, hoje já crescer, diminuir barreira. Eu sentir acessibilidade aumentar. Minha opinião, importante o quê? Importante surdos e ouvintes. Por que? Ouvinte Libras desenvolver, aumentar. Observar tem vários lugares, pode trabalhar advogado, pode trabalhar polícia, pode dirigir carro; ônibus; diferentes pode, pode, pode... Surdos não poder (expressão de descrença)? Por que? Surdez problema? Hoje, não! Pode visual. Saber Libras, lê, bilinguismo. Surdo pode vencer, consegue. Pode profissão arquiteto; policial; advogado; juiz. Surdo estudar faculdade, ajuda futuro se formar. Precisa mostrar diploma, sociedade vê. Surdo confuso como? Não. Comunicação. Pode profissão, ter tradutor; aprender Libras. Por que? Passado, eu achar surdo evoluir, formar computador diploma faculdade. Diploma consegue se formar. Distribuir diploma empresa. Lugares olhar ele trabalhar computador formado bom! Não precisa, melhor trabalhar básico, separado. Como (expressão de desaprovação)? Inferior? Não. Ele já ter diploma, formado. Igual ouvinte, vitória. Porque surdo já sofrer para se formar advogado. Não conseguir, barreira. Segundo Juiz; hospital. Surdo tem formação, mas barreira. Observar trabalho nada. Porque precisa sociedade lei. Precisa lutar contra barreira para igual ouvinte. Sociedade empresa ouvinte porque não saber comunicação surdo difícil. Não! Profissão formado, igual ouvinte. Precisar vitória lei, toda profissão precisa.”

“Grandpa deaf. Grow libras”	1. Because of one relative, the family knew and used Libras in the family interactions, regardless of it being formed by deaf people or by some hearing people.
“I realize it is barrier [...] hearing person does not know Libras? [...] shop, supermarket and others show written. I realize barrier, communication is lacking”	2. Due to ignorance of hearing people about Libras, the deaf people were prevented from acting discursively and, consequently, socially.
“society communication blocked”	3. Because of the linguistic difference, there is a blockage in the interaction amongst deaf people, Libras speakers – a visuo-spatial language – and hearing people, Portuguese speakers – an oral language.
“People Libras course. I compare past barrier”	3. Once the barrier pointed by interviewee 1 was the lack of knowledge of hearing people regarding Libras, the “people” to whom the interviewee refers to is the hearing subject itself. That is, the accessibility of deaf subjects depends on the knowledge about the Libras of the hearing community.
“Deaf people cannot (disbelief expression)? Why is that? Deafness problem? Today, not!”	4. Today, deafness is not regarded as a problem – for the deaf community. This viewpoint does not apply to the (re)constructed skills by the group of hearing people once the interviewee denounces the work difficulty for the deaf people, on being the employed by hearing people, “better work basic, separated” and “observe work nothing.”
“Past, I think deaf evolves, graduate computer diploma faculty.” “Because deaf already suffers to graduate to graduate as a lawyer. Not being able to, barrier. Second Judge; hospital”	5. Due to the imposed barriers by the listening society, deaf people suffered (and still suffer) prejudices and do not have access to socially valued goods, such as the mentioned professions: judge and physician. Nevertheless, the interviewee categorizes this reality as in the past because “knows Libras, reads, bilingualism. Deaf may win, he is able to. May profession [...].” But the victory possibility does not depend only on the deaf people group but also on the hearing people, since the interviewee makes the marginalization of such subjects in the labor market clear due to the SR which is shared by the other, the hearing people.

Initially, the interviewee 1 builds his discourse through his memory during the childhood and through his family interaction experience, the communication was fluid

because all knew Libras, including “deaf Grandpa.” Since all communicated through Libras, the interviewee positions himself: “family good!” Nevertheless, when stumbling with the society, the interviewee, consequently, stumbles into a barrier; “[...] hearing person does not know Libras?”. In this moment, the interviewee denounces a barrier which is extended for all daily activity, in other words, the deaf people are unable to socially act due to ignorance of Libras; “shop, supermarket and others show script. I realize barrier, communication is missing.”

Especially, through the constructed discourse, when answering the second question, the interviewee (re)constructs the SR about the deaf grounded in the fighting element to all the struggles fought by the group in order to get an adequate superior education and work, “deaf may win, he can. Professions that deaf people might exercise: architect; policeman; lawyer; judge. Deaf study college.” Moreover, Libras itself, nowadays, according to the interviewee’s opinion, is more widespread; “Hearing person Libras develop, increase.”

One of the SR (re) strategies about the deaf, which equally works as a complaint, it is the SR about the deaf (re)constructed by otherness, i.e., the hearing person group. According to the interviewee 1 stance, the SR about the deaf people of the hearing people is still anchored in the element of the deficiency/incapacity; “Deaf confused how come?”. The interviewee refers to the thought of the employers/companies: “better to work basic, separate. As (disapproval expression)? Inferior?”. This ratifies that the hearing people still anchor the SR on the deaf in the categories: deficiency; incapacity; inferiority. Nonetheless, for the group whose members are deaf, a central SR category about the deaf is fighter; “He has already a diploma, graduated. Like the hearing person, victory.”

Transcription: interview 2

- 1) First question, I could not answer because much different barrier. Victory also much much different. Uiii! I shall choose a barrier of mine victory. My barrier is: to fail the master’s project here (name of the institution), place wherein I work years. To have libras methodology, but said not approved, no. Barrier reason what? Individuals from the examining board do not know libras also as union survey line does not have own deep, general speak detail specific. Libras separate is small libras barrier. My victory what? Be approved master’s project, other state. Answer place I do not have home far away. Attempting analysis project show in detail I was able to approve process study therein (name of the institution). I felt I have

gotten as a libras supervisor to study libras. To have participation translator accessibility over there. Here not (name of the institution) place I work years already 10 years. Barrier. Sad.

- 2) Yes, helps to motivate person believes. Then try example. Other I got right. Thus, crossed fingers what? Show having movement. Struggle already finished? No, it continues. Want everyone regarding linguistics equally. Life equal, it does not look reason deaf or libras (look of disdain) it does not have.²⁰

The analysis was based, mainly, primarily in the assumptions:

Table 2 – Assumptions referring to the interview 2

Discourse Excerpt	Assumption
“Fail masters project [...] reason what? Members of the Examining Board do not know libras.”	6. Deaf people suffer rejection, in the academic sphere and, in a wider context, in the social sphere, because hearing people ignore Libras.
“Research line does not have its own deep, general speak detail specific. Separate libras is small libras barrier.”	7. There is a separation between Libras and another language, in this case, the hegemonic language, i.e., the Portuguese. The linguistic segregation is a sample of the segregation between deaf and hearing people, in which deaf people are excluded from the academic sphere, as they represent a linguistic minority, and in a wider context; in the social sphere.
“I feel I was able as a libras supervisor to study libras.”	8. The interviewee failed because the examining board ignored Libras, but was approved because his supervisor knows and studies Libras. That is, the barriers and victories of the deaf are associated with the knowledge or ignorance of Libras by the listening community.
“Want all people looking to linguistics equally. Life equal.”	9. Her desire is that, in future, Libras be deemed just like the Portuguese is, and consequently, deaf people have the same opportunities of the hearing people, this is tantamount to saying that nowadays the reality is not like that, Libras is still devalued and deaf

²⁰ In Portuguese: “Primeira pergunta, eu não conseguir responder porque muito diferente barreira. Vitória também muito muito diferente. Uiii! Vou escolher uma minha barreira vitória. Minha barreira é: ser reprovado projeto mestrado aqui (nome da instituição), lugar onde trabalho anos. Ter metodologia libras, mas triste não aprovado não. Barreira motivo o quê? Pessoas banca não conhecer libras também como união linha de pesquisa não ter próprio profundo, geral falar detalhar específico. Libras separado é pequeno libras barreira. Minha vitória o quê? Ser aprovado projeto mestrado, outro estado. Resposta lugar não tenho casa distante. Tentar projeto análise mostrar detalhado conseguir aprovar processo estudar lá (nome da instituição). Eu sentir conseguir como orientador libras estudar libras. Ter tradutor participação acessibilidade lá. Aqui não (nome da instituição) lugar eu trabalho anos já faz 10 anos. Barreira. Triste. Sim, ajuda motivar pessoa acreditar. Então tentar exemplo. Outro conseguir certo. Então dedos cruzados o quê? Mostrar ter movimento. Luta já terminou? Não, continuar. Querer tudo pessoas olhando igual linguística. Vida igual, não olha motivo surdo ou libras (cara de desprezo) não ter.”

	people do not have the same opportunities of hearing people.
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In order to reply about his victories and defeats, the interviewee 2 makes a comparison between two institutions, the first one does not have accessibility even though the deaf teacher already has been working for it for more than ten years and the second one has accessibility, it has translators and teachers that study Libras.

The interviewee narrates that one of his existing barriers was his failure at the master's examining board. He justifies himself: "people at the examining board do not know libras also as union research line not having deep of its own." According to the interviewee, two reasons explain his failure: the ignorance by the examining board about Libras and the lack of survey about Libras within the post-graduation program of the referred to institution. Nevertheless, his discourse leaves it clear the marginalization of the studies referring to the deafness within the institution, "separate is small libras." The interviewee 2, in his discourse, points out that the studies referring to the oral language enjoy more space within the institution, "general speak detail specific," whereas the study about the deafness is "separate."

The interviewee 2 discourse indicates a contrast between the studies referring to the oral language versus the studies referring to the signaled language. But, more than that, it signals a contrast as well between deaf people versus hearing people, between the I and the otherness. The interviewee denounces the marginality of the studies referring to Libras and, consequently, the marginality of the deaf people within the institution. It is noted, in this contrast, that there is a clear holding of oral language power and, consequently, of the hearing people.

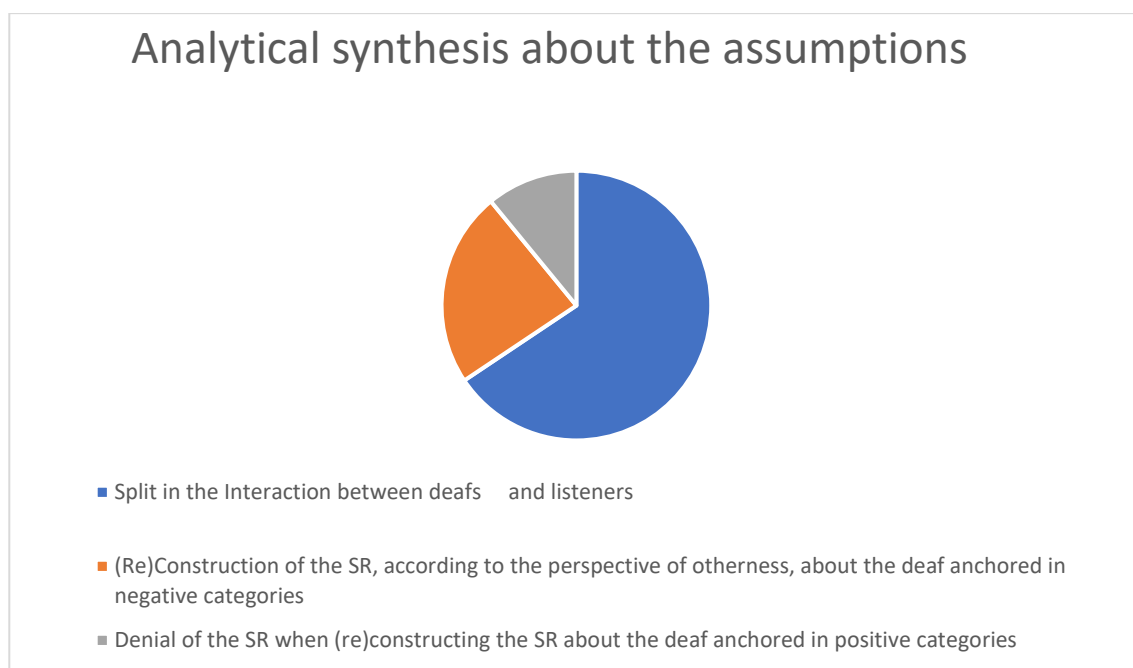
In the second question, the interviewee rescues the historical memory of deaf person movements and states that the fight continues. His longing concerns the equality between linguistic studies referring to the signalized and the oral language. Apart from that, he wishes as well "equal life," i.e., he wishes that the deaf person is no longer regarded with contempt by the listening society and that there is equality in the access of deaf people and hearing people to the socially valued resources.

We may conclude that the interviewee's discourse denounces the ignorance and depreciation of Libras, while the Portuguese enjoys prestige. Due to that, deaf people do not have the same opportunities that the hearing people enjoy. The socially valued

resources are, consequently, reserved for the hearing people both in the academic sphere and, in a wider context, in the social sphere as a whole. Moreover, when referring to deaf people, the interviewee selects the lexicons related to “movement,” “fight,” “victory also much,” (re)constructing, hence, a SR about the deaf person anchored in the battle notion.

Taking the interviews that serve as *corpus* for the article into account, note:

Chart 1 – Analytical synthesis of the assumptions



There is, recurrently, in both interviews, allusion to social barriers erected due to the hearing social group’s lack of linguistic knowledge of Libras. Interviewee 1 states that family interaction flowed because everyone knew Libras and, therefore, interacted without any difficulties (assumption 1). However, this changes within society, composed by hearing people as majority and do not know Brazilian Sign Language (assumption 2). This lack of knowledge is, therefore, a reason for the split between the Self and the Other and, consequently, there is also a split between the ingroup, that is, the deaf person, and social reality (assumptions 2 and 3). Therefore, the SR (re)constructed about the deaf person is permeated by the relationship with otherness, especially with regard to linguistic difference, that is, it is permeated by the relationship between Libras versus Portuguese and between the deaf person versus the hearing person (assumptions 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9).

Interview 2 also highlights that the barriers faced by deaf people are related to the lack of knowledge about Libras in all social spheres, including academia (assumption 7). Even in universities, there is a marginalization of Libras and, consequently, of their speakers, the deaf people (assumption 8). The interviewee's victories – being approved in the master's selection process – and their defeats – being rejected in the master's selection process – are related to accessibility (assumptions 9, 10); in other words, they are linked to the interaction between the ingroup, deaf people, and the outgroup, hearing people.

The (re)construction of negative SR, according to the perspective of otherness, is anchored by the “inferior” category (assumption 5); this denunciation serves as a basis for combating discriminatory discourse and (re)constructing a positive SR about the deaf person. Interviewee 1 uses this discursive strategy when questioning whether deaf people cannot occupy valued social spaces, such as doctors and judges. In this way, he denies the negative SR about the deaf by arguing that, today, just like the listening person, the deaf person has higher education and a visual-spatial language.

Interviewee 2, through his desire, exposes the inequality between the deaf and listening people in access to socially valued goods. There is a difference in values between Libras and Portuguese. The hegemonic power is still concentrated in the hands of the listening people while the deaf do not enjoy the same opportunities. We can therefore observe that the (re)construction of the SR about the deaf is constantly permeated by the gaze of otherness, in the subject-subject relationship, both with regard to the relationship between deaf people and listening people and with regard to Libras and Portuguese.

Final Considerations

Representation is an element of dual nature, social and cognitive, that mediates the relationship between subject-subject and subject-world. At the same time that it emerges from/in the interaction, it makes it possible. Furthermore, SR, as an amalgam of diverse knowledge – socially shared knowledge, personal experiences, etc. –, attributes meaning to the reality belonging to the Self and the Other.

We analyzed the assumptions that help the (re)construction of SR about the deaf in the discourse of the community itself. We observed three recurring discursive

strategies: 1) split in the interaction between deaf and hearing people; 2) (re)construction of SR, according to the perspective of otherness, anchored in negative categories; and 3) denial of negative SR by (re)constructing SR about the deaf anchored in positive categories. SR about the deaf is constantly permeated by otherness; deaf people point to the difficulty of interaction and lack of knowledge about Libras as the greatest barrier to acting socially. The contrast between Libras and Portuguese serves as a strategy to demand accessibility and denounce a naturalized discriminatory reality. The second and third strategies aim first to (re)construct a SR about the deaf person anchored in positive categories, such as “deaf people can win” (interview 1), or to deny the negative SR (re)constructed through the eyes of the other, such as “inferior” (interview 1) or “deaf people confused how?” (interview 1). The interviews anchor the category of fighter both to fulfill the denial of the SR (re)constructed by otherness and to ratify the positive SR about the group.

However, the other, the hearing person, crosses the three discursive strategies mentioned above, since they are permeated by categories that delimit the ingroup and the outgroup, whether due to linguistic differences (Libras X Portuguese) or the difference in the detention of social power, marked by the group’s constant struggle for access to socially valued goods regardless of the social sphere and by the denunciation of naturalized discriminatory social practices.

The study of the deaf in the discourse of the SR is still an incipient field, requiring greater depth in terms of the cognitive and social processes that surround harmful positions about the group in question. This article is a step towards uncovering them.

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Received August 06, 2024

Accepted March 21, 2025

Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana*. Revista de Estudos do Discurso [Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Reviews I

This is an innovative study in the area of Social Representation Theory and contributes to the area of inclusive education and social psychology. The article raises relevant issues for inclusive education. The text is well-founded both in the concepts of Social Representation Theory and in the area of bilingual education for the deaf. I am attaching some suggestions for modifications to improve the quality of the text and the clarity of the content. I suggest that the written translation from Libras to Portuguese of the analyzed excerpts be carried out in accordance with the technical translation standards. APPROVED WITH RESTRICTIONS [Revised]

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Reviewed on August 27, 2024.

Reviews II

We are in favor of publishing the text, with some necessary adjustments. We emphasize that both the theme and the objectives of the text are important, since the area of “Deaf Studies” is still recent in this country. The approach adopted from the perspective of Social Representation, articulated with Van Dijk’s discourse perspective, is very productive in the text. We suggest some adjustments that can be found in the body of the article that we send as an attachment. APPROVED WITH RESTRICTIONS [Revised]

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Reviewed on October 11, 2024.

Reviews III

The suggestions in the opinion were complied with. We are in favor of publishing it. APPROVED

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Reviewed on November 04, 2024.

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