

PRACTICES OF LIBRAS- PORTUGUESE TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS IN ENGLISH CLASSES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

PRÁTICAS DE TRADUTORES E INTÉRPRETES DE LIBRAS-PORTUGUÊS EM AULAS DE
LÍNGUA INGLESA DURANTE A PANDEMIA DA COVID-19

PRÁCTICAS DE TRADUCTORES E INTÉRPRETES DE LIBRAS-PORTUGUÊS EN CLASES DE
INGLÉS DURANTE LA PANDEMIA DEL COVID-19

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RESUMO: O presente estudo tem como objetivo analisar as perspectivas de tradutores e intérpretes de língua de sinais-português (TILSP) acerca de suas atuações, mediadas ou não pelas Tecnologias Digitais da Informação e Comunicação (TDIC), em aulas de língua inglesa no Ensino Fundamental e Médio durante a pandemia da Covid-19. A pesquisa é de caráter qualitativo (Triviños, 2010) e foi desenvolvida com o suporte de um questionário disponibilizando online. Ajuda a embasar nosso trabalho autores como Pagura (2003, 2015), Johnson (2004), Quadros (2004), Scholl (2008), Paiva (2019), Cani *et al.* (2020), entre outros. Os dados sinalizam a urgente necessidade de investimento em subsídios tecnológicos e formativos para que esses profissionais possam atuar de modo mais qualitativo nas aulas de língua inglesa. Além disso, foi possível verificar que as TDIC podem contribuir para a interpretação do TILSP, assim como para a aprendizagem do aluno surdo. Todavia, é perceptível que a prática desses profissionais exige deles ações para além daquilo que está previsto em lei.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: TILSP. Aulas de Inglês. Surdo.

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RESUMEN: El presente estudio tiene como objetivo analizar las perspectivas de los traductores y intérpretes de lengua de señas-portugués (TILSP) sobre sus acciones, mediadas o no por las Tecnologías Digitales de Información y Comunicación (TDIC), en las clases de idioma inglés en escuelas primarias y secundarias durante la pandemia de Covid-19. La investigación es cualitativa (Triviños, 2010) y se desarrolló con el apoyo de un cuestionario disponible en línea. Autores como Pagura (2003, 2015), Johnson (2004), Quadros (2004), Scholl (2008), Paiva (2019), Cani *et al.* (2020), entre otros. Los datos indican la urgente necesidad de invertir en subsidios tecnológicos y de formación para que estos profesionales puedan actuar de forma más cualitativa en las clases de inglés. Además, se pudo comprobar que TDIC puede contribuir a la interpretación del TILSP, así como al aprendizaje de los estudiantes sordos. Sin embargo, es notorio que la práctica de estos profesionales exige acciones más allá de lo previsto por la ley.

PALABRAS CLAVE: TILSP. Clases de inglés. Sordo.

ABSTRACT: The present study aims to analyze the perspectives of Libras-Portuguese translators and interpreters (LPTI) about their actions, mediated or not by Digital Information and Communication Technologies (DICT), in English classes in elementary and high schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research is qualitative (Triviños, 2010) and was developed with the support of an online questionnaire. We sought our discussion in authors such as Pagura (2003, 2015), Johnson (2004), Quadros (2004), Scholl (2008), Paiva (2019), and Cani *et al.* (2020), among others. The data indicate the urgent need to invest in technology and training so that these professionals can act more qualitatively in English classes. In addition, it was possible to verify that DICT might contribute to the interpretation of the LPTI professional and the learning of the deaf student. However, it is noticeable that the practice of these professionals requires actions beyond what is enforced by law.

KEYWORDS: LPTI. English classes. Deaf.

1 INTRODUCTION

In deaf education, the family, the teacher, and the sign language-Portuguese translator and interpreter (SLPTI) can, and should, be involved in the teaching and learning process. The latter having a very important role in the inclusive school since he is responsible for the communicational bridge between deaf students and hearing students and teachers who do not master Libras (Brazilian sign language).

SLPTI plays a major role in the educational process of the deaf student, as they promote accessibility between teachers of different curriculum subjects and the deaf student. Among these disciplines, there is the English language, which assumes that these professionals need to master English so that they can qualitatively translate/interpret, which, according to Moraes (2018) and Kupske (2018), normally does not occur. However, we need to reflect more on this issue, considering that the school hires the SLPTI for the language pair Libras-Portuguese, as recommended by Decree 5626/2005, but, in practice, this professional is requested to master a third language: English.

Thus, it appears that many of these professionals do not have training that meets the demands of the school (Fernandes; Moreira, 2014), since they need to perform the interpretation/translation of various contents in different areas of knowledge of the school curriculum. This reality suffered strong impacts during the Covid-19 pandemic as educators needed to reframe their practices and started to work completely remotely and/or hybrid. In this regard, as Albres and Santiago (2021, p. 25, our translation) point out very well, “[...] deaf subjects were harmed compared to the hearing population, given the lack of language policy, even an emergency one in this context”.

As we understand the emergence and complexity of the subject, this study aims to analyze SLPTI's perspectives on their actions, mediated or not by Digital Information and Communication Technologies (DICT), in English language classes during the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to achieve the proposed objective, we initially reflected on the SLPTI in the context of teaching foreign languages to the deaf. After that, we held discussions about technologies and the Covid-19 pandemic, a section followed by the

methodology and analysis of the collected data. Lastly, we proposed final reflections that we believe are important for there to be a modification of the current paradigm - which still does not meet the school demands for all and which was significantly impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

2 SLPTI IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO THE DEAF

Discuss the interpretation or the professional interpreter implies, initially, making a distinction between two terms commonly confused in society and in academic space: translation and interpretation.

According to Pagura (2003, 2015), translation concerns the conversion of a text written in one language (starting language or source language) to another (final language or target language). Interpretation, on the other hand, concerns the conversion of an oral discourse from a source language to a target language. So, translation and interpretation aim to re-signify messages from one language to another in order to establish an interaction between speakers of different languages.

Silvério *et al.* (2012) point out that the interpreter needs to know the language and master the subtleties, nuances, and specificities of the languages which they work with, even if they do not master the writing in these languages. In this regard, Silvério *et al.* (2012) and Pagura (2003) argue that interpretation is not limited to the linguistic level, since it also involves contextual, cultural, and situational aspects, that is, the interpreter's work is related to the meaning behind the utterance.

In the field of deaf studies, these notions are slightly altered due to language modalities, although they do not deviate much from what Pagura (2003, 2015) proposes. In this regard, Quadros (2004) states that translation always involves a written language. Regarding interpretation, the author states that it involves languages in the oral-auditory and visual-spatial modalities, and there may be “[...] interpretation from sign language to spoken language and vice versa, from spoken language to sign language” (Quadros, 2004, p. 9, our translation).

In the field of Sign Language Translation and Interpretation Studies (SLTIS), Rodrigues (2013) and Rodrigues and Beer (2015), while recognizing the value of the concepts raised by the authors discussed here, reinforce that the processes also need to be considered for the differentiation of terms, going beyond the source (ST) and target (TT) textual modalities.

From this perspective, Rodrigues (2013, p. 36, our translation) also draws attention to the fact that:

[...] translators have the ST written or recorded in video and/or audio and have some time to build and refine the TT, as they themselves define the pace of their work; interpreters, on the other hand, do not have much time to work on the ST, since the utterance is being uttered at the moment of interpretation, and the TT must be offered immediately, and the person who dictates the rhythm of the work is the speaker and not the interpreter.

Thus, the difference lies, according to Rodrigues and Beer (2015), in what they identified as “translation and translating” and “interpretation and interpreting”, these processes being defined by the way in which they occur linguistically, cognitively, and operationally.

The function of SLPTI is to process information in the source language and make lexical, structural, semantic, and pragmatic choices in the target language, aiming to approximate as much as possible the meaning of the source text. In this way, this professional also needs technical knowledge to make appropriate choices (Quadros, 2004; Rodrigues, 2015), a task that, as Santiago (2012) points out, is complex since it aims to bring together two languages of different modalities and that have different structures.

Santiago (2012), based on the ideas of Barbosa (1990), brings some procedures for translation, grouping them into the following categories: with a convergence of the linguistic system, style, and extralinguistic reality; with a divergence of the linguistic system; with a divergence of style; with divergence from the extralinguistic reality.

According to Santiago (2012), it is necessary for the practice of the translator and the interpreter: to know the linguistic system and the structure of Libras, to understand that the situation of the deaf is not the same as that of the listener, to study translation and interpretation procedures, to study Portuguese and Libras, to recognize linguistic elements of the languages involved and to research their practice in order to understand which praxis qualifies them. Furthermore, in contexts where there is a third language, as in the case of English, they also need to study it. However, this situation is controversial if we consider what is written in the employment contract and in the legislation. After all, these professionals are hired as translators and interpreters of the language pair Libras-Portuguese¹.

When we think about the SLPTI, it is not unusual to see situations in which this professional is confused with the teacher. In this regard, Quadros (2004) states that the role of the interpreter in the classroom is often confused with that of the teacher, causing students to turn to this professional to solve their doubts and teachers to delegate to interpreters the responsibility of teaching content to deaf students. However, we believe that a clarification of their role in the classroom is necessary, as these professionals cannot be seen as responsible for teaching deaf students, but as responsible for mediating the knowledge shared among teacher, interpreter, and student.

Regarding the role of the interpreter, Scholl (2008) states that they should make decisions about the general structure: which part of the meaning comes first, and which comes second. Finally, the syntax and lexicon are reformulated and enunciated. Translators and interpreters must be primarily concerned with accommodating the language and communication needs of users of language mediation and must be aware of cultural differences.

The nature of interpreting involves multiple contexts and a variety of participants, with demands arising from a variety of sources. Therefore, to effectively interpret across languages and deal with the multiple demands imposed by interpreting, it is critical that interpreters remain involved with the community and work as "team" members with other professionals (Davis, 2005).

Silva and Oliveira (2016, p. 709, our translation) point out the need to broaden the discussions about the current bilingual policy in some education systems that focus on the interpreter's work in isolation "to the detriment of the active participation of other school professionals; at the same time that basic working conditions are not fostered in the educational space." In this regard, Lacerda (2000) points out that the work of the interpreter takes place in precarious working conditions if we consider the great demand, the shortage of properly qualified professionals, the lack of organization in the school that considers the performance of the interpreter and its effective insertion in the dynamics of the classroom.

Furthermore, "interpreting between a sign language and a third language, which is not the interpreter's native language, this activity appears to be significantly more difficult" (Scholl, 2008, p. 334). After all, in the field of visual-spatial language interpretation, it is common to work with the national sign language and the official oral language of that same country. However, when it comes to teaching a foreign language, these professionals are required to interpret into a third language, the foreign language (Scholl, 2008), which they often do not master (Moraes, 2018; Kupske, 2018).

Therefore, it is noticeable that the reality of SLPTI requires great preparation and training in different skills, a context that was intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic, as we discuss in the next section.

¹ Although Law No. 12.319/10 clearly states that the translation-interpretation takes place between the Portuguese language and Libras, it states, in Art. 6, III, that it is the responsibility of the translator and interpreter, in the exercise of their competences, "[...] to interpret, in Brazilian Sign Language - Portuguese Language, the didactic-pedagogical and cultural activities developed in educational institutions at the elementary, middle and higher levels, in order to facilitate access to curricular contents". Therefore, some understanding of the English language would be necessary in order to provide the deaf student with access to this subject.

3 THE USE OF DICT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2020, the world was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and, as in other professional areas, the educational sector was also affected. In order to minimize the damage caused by Covid-19, educational institutions needed to adopt social isolation and remote/hybrid teaching, which meant that pedagogical practices were significantly affected and that the use of technologies in this time of crisis became something increasingly necessary (Silva; Teixeira, 2020).

According to Cani *et al.* (2020, p. 35, our translation), “today, with the real pandemic situation due to Covid-19, the choice of whether or not to use digital technologies in classrooms is no longer optional”, which signals that further discussions need to be held on this subject in order to offer a more qualitative teaching and learning process to our students. It would not be different with deaf students, since these technological instruments can favor the learning of this community (Almeida, 2021), considering that DICT are learning tools that can mediate knowledge for the deaf student (Lopes, 2012).

According to Tomaz (2018), education for the deaf is favored by DICT due to its interface, which can be linguistically more accessible. Tomaz (2018, p. 3, our translation) adds that “cyberspace not only favors the contact of the deaf with Libras but also with other languages, favoring countless possibilities of communication between deaf/deaf and deaf/hearing people.” This reality can also be present in English language classes as deaf students can expand their communicative and cultural possibilities by getting in touch with people from different parts of the world using English as the language of mediation and DICT as a support for these exchanges (Almeida, 2021).

These considerations show us that reflections are needed on the contributions of DICT to the educational work carried out with deaf students (Schenka-Ribeiro; Sholl-Franco, 2018). Despite the fact that technological changes enable the population to have faster access to information, in the educational field, it is perceived that these transformations are not being properly monitored. Silva and Teixeira (2020), for instance, point out that many education professionals still need greater knowledge about DICT, and this is often due to the lack of training directed to the use of these tools.

Thus, as indicated by the National Common Curricular Base (NCCB) (BRASIL, 2017), it is important for teachers to use DICT as mediating elements as these instruments can generate greater social engagement, autonomy, and critical communication not only in the student's country but also in other countries.

Pereira and Krieger (2018) elucidate that these instruments have become indispensable in the school environment, considering that they are social objects incorporated into everyday practices. Corroborating Cani *et al.* (2020), we believe it is essential to recognize the possibilities of using DICT for teaching, a process in which teachers, students, and SLPTI need to be involved.

In the present study, we direct our discussions to the reality of SLPTI who had experience, in elementary and high school, with technology-mediated teaching with deaf students during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, in the next sections, in addition to discussing the methodological procedures of the study, we analyze the reports of research participants about their experiences during this period.

4 METHODOLOGY

The present study is a new look at data collected in the master's research entitled “DICT in English language teaching: possibilities in the education of the deaf” (Almeida, 2021), a study that was approved by the ethics committee of the Federal University of Paraíba with Certificate of Presentation of Ethical Appreciation number 39512720.6.0000.5188.

Corroborating Paiva (2019), we believe that it is necessary to understand the perspective of the subjects who are part of the reality studied, so we can assess significant possibilities for this context. Thus, SLPTI with experience in the interpretation of English language classes was part of our research.

The study has a qualitative approach and follows the guidelines of Triviños (2010) and Bardin (2011). To collect the data, we made available an online questionnaire. It was publicized via social networks and sent to different postgraduate programs in the country. The questions on the questionnaire discussed the conditions for developing the work of these professionals, ways of coping observed in these spaces, and the methodological possibilities that can be used with deaf students. The questionnaire was available between December 4, 2020, and January 7, 2021. Respondents were English language teachers and/or SLPTI who had experience teaching/interpreting English for the deaf. All participants signed the Informed Consent Form (ICF) agreeing to participate in the study.

There were six SLPTI and five English language teachers and SLPTI. The research subjects work in municipal, state, federal, and private institutions in the states of Santa Catarina (SC), São Paulo (SP), Tocantins (TO), Paraná (PR), Paraíba (PB), Pernambuco (PE) and Piauí (PI) and are between 18 and 49 years old. Participants work with Elementary Education (1st to 9th grade), High School, Technical Education, and Youth and Adult Education (YAE) and have between less than one year and more than 15 years of experience with the education of deaf students.

As a criterion for data systematization, we identified the participants by the abbreviations I (when interpreter-translator) and TI (when teacher and interpreter-translator). In addition, followed by the acronym, they received a number referring to the order in which they answered the questions. Ex.: I1 for the first interpreter who answered, TI1 for the first teacher and interpreter-translator who answered.

The respondents answered open questions and were able to express their experiences, conceptions, and desires in relation to the interpretation of the English language for the deaf with the support of DICT. Thus, based on this data and following Bardin's (2011) guidelines, we categorized SLPTI's perceptions about interpretation in English language classes and the use of DICT with deaf students.

5 SLPTI'S PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF DICT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

According to Scholl (2008), there is a latent need for more research on the performance of SLPTI in spaces of knowledge socialization. After all, as we have already mentioned, this professional has an important role in the teaching and learning process of deaf students. In this section, with the aim of understanding (un)successful practices, we discuss this reality by analyzing responses from SLPTI who had experience with the interpretation of English language classes during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In their answers, most of the participants claim that the interpretation process is something arduous and that it demands a lot of effort, as it is possible to perceive in the speech of I2: "[...] it is a duplicated effort. A translation that spans two languages is a translation with more significant losses, which demands numerous translation skills on the part of the professional, which go beyond linguistics and technique."

I2's answer reinforces what we believe: special attention must be paid to the issue of SLPTI formation with regard to the linguistic triad Portuguese, English and Libras. Greater attention is needed to the linguistic knowledge of the languages involved, but also to the sociocultural and historical issues of the languages and subjects who are part in this process (Schenka-Ribeiro; Sholl-Franco, 2018). The most important thing is not the number of languages existing in educational spaces, but the roles they play in this space (Sousa, 2018). This demonstrates the need for reflections on how the SLPTI can be better linguistically prepared to carry out this type of activity, bearing in mind that English is a subject present in the curricula of schools in the country, although it is not one of the subjects included in the curriculum of SLPTI training courses.

We believe that using Johnson's (2004) assumptions regarding the consideration of student realities in the teaching and learning process can also be expanded to the training process of professionals who work with these students. It is necessary that their socio-historical and cultural contexts are considered and that these contexts are based on so that it is possible to achieve training processes, working hours, and wages consistent with their realities, bearing in mind that, when we think of pedagogical practices, it is necessary to consider the sociocultural contexts immersed in that space (Dantas; Santos, 2020). In addition, "[...] cultures, especially in contemporary society, are in a continuous process of interaction and (re)construction" (Brasil, 2017, p. 245, our translation), which demands that they are reassessed frequently.

Furthermore, although formative processes occur regularly in knowledge socialization spaces, few are directed to L3² teaching to the deaf, which demonstrates the existence of a demand that is not yet answered and considered. I3 confirms the existence of this demand when he points out that the process of interpreting English for the deaf "is a challenge because in addition to lexical issues (the lack of signs, for example) there are also methodological issues". It is noticed that the difficulty of lexical transfer and adaptation that exists in the context of Portuguese– Libras, also extends to the relationship between English–Libras. In this sense, we believe that methodological reflections on the teaching of English as a third language for the deaf are necessary, as well as the creation of catalogs of interpretive strategies (Bastos; Hübner, 2020) to facilitate the work of English language teachers and the SLPTI.

We understand that all these issues are often beyond the scope of the SLPTI, as they demand resources in terms of personnel, capital, and time. Thus, it is important to promote public, linguistic, policies and training so that these professionals can have subsidies to train themselves professionally with regard to the interpretation of other languages, in addition to Libras and Portuguese, for the deaf.

Still, regarding the experience interpreting English for deaf students, I1 states that the experience is "terrible, classes without context, based only on sound, without concern for the actual learning of the second/third language", which ratifies the lack of adaptation in English language classes for these students (Pereira, 2014), a process that goes against what Vasconcelos and Lacerda (2020) claim to be the ideal in relation to the adaptation of materials for these students. According to Vasconcelos and Lacerda (2020), the specificities of deaf students must be respected and considered so that they can have positive results in classes.

The experience of I1 opposes what Johnson (2004, p. 72) points out in relation to the acquisition of additional languages when she states that the student's linguistic development occurs "in a social reality – in the language in use", therefore, if there is no context, there is not, in fact, language learning. The lack of contextualization appears as a demotivating aspect since the material studied is not usable for these students. This process could be reframed if students were exposed to a variety of speech genres, in the written modality of English, which could be used in their daily practices, as they could acquire this new language in practice, as suggested by Johnson (2004).

It is clear, then, that there is allocation and not inclusion of subjects, since their specificities are not considered in the teaching and learning process, which goes against inclusive policies that propose that students are actively included in gears of educational spaces (Kraemer; Lopes; Zilio, 2020).

When asked about their experiences with English language interpretation during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is possible to see that the SLPTI went through tough times, as the terms "challenging" and "difficult" were used at different times in the answers of the research participants.

The use of these terms indicates that interpretation in English classes for the deaf is a challenge for the SLPTI. I3, for example, states that the experience was "very bad, especially considering that many students do not have quality internet, so the interpretation was truncated". That is, in addition to didactic-methodological and linguistic issues, there are also problems inherent to technological subsidies since many do not have instruments that can help them gain access to classes.

² English, in this research, is treated as L3, as well as in Sousa (2018), as it is the second "non-mother tongue" in the case of many deaf people.

T14 adds that “[...] unfortunately, as a matter of the access to the internet and technological devices, it was difficult to get closer to the student during this period, as they had very limited access.” Exactly for this reason, more than ever, it is necessary to reflect on the practices (and their absence) carried out in educational institutions that use DICT, as there are many complaints from professionals regarding the lack of access to technological devices. The school must start to insert these instruments in its spaces so that we can move towards an educational system that considers the reality of the world, in this case, in a technological and globalized way, in its practices.

T12 states that his practice was “much more difficult than in everyday life. Everything got more complicated, especially hearing what to interpret because of the bad connection.” In this case, in addition to physical distancing, connection problems were quite recurrent and configured as a persistent problem. T14, in turn, points out that “[...] the experience was interesting, but not very positive. As we were caught in the scare, we had to readapt to the way of working”.

We understand that if we seek to recognize the use of TDIC as a possibility for teaching (Cani *et al.*, 2020), it is necessary that basic subsidies, such as a good internet connection, be offered to students and teachers so that they can have quality access to classes. It is incoherent to demand from education professionals a full exercise without offering the basic subsidies so that they can carry it out, which signals the emerging need for investments in training and materials.

T11 mentions the psychological harm caused by online interpretation, as the practice is “exhausting. It involves a much greater cognitive effort to capture meaning and resignify remotely”. In addition to the existing problems of a pre-pandemic period, now, the use of the computer for long periods, as well as the effort to understand what should be interpreted, has caused greater psychological and physical exhaustion in the SLPTI. Thus, a more balanced work at the interpersonal level is necessary so that the professionals involved in this process do not have great wear and have remunerations consistent with their workloads.

When reporting her experience, I2 states that at the beginning she was an amateur, but that over the months she was supplied with technical equipment that allowed her work to have better quality. I2's report ratifies what we advocate: quality subsidies in pedagogical practices help to resignify them. However, it is necessary to emphasize that this technical equipment should not be funded by professionals, but by the educational institutions for which these professionals provide services.

The SLPTI were also asked about the use of technological instruments as an aid to the interpretations. Based on the answers obtained, it is possible to perceive that its use is still low, but that it can facilitate the practice of these professionals. I2, for example, states: “I always leave the translator open, in case it is a specific lecture in an area whose vocabulary is different from what I use in a third language”. Therefore, the use of electronic translators with deaf students emerges as a strategy to facilitate translation and interpretation between two or more languages, which has already had its contribution confirmed by Almeida, Moraes, and Brayner (2016).

Still on the instruments used in English classes with deaf people, T14 mentioned text editors and that “sometimes we managed to use the Kahoot! platform, working together with the school's English teacher”. T14's response highlights the importance of didactic-pedagogical sharing between teachers and SLPTI so that they can prepare more significantly for the class, which, if not well planned, can be exhausting and inefficient for teachers, SLPTI and students.

When asked about the use of DICT in the COVID-19 pandemic period, the answers regarding the material used were summarized as the use of video call applications, a projector, and a notebook. We believe that video call platforms are tools that help to get closer to the students, actually, the use of these tools with deaf students is essential due to the visual-spatial modality of their language.

In order for them to have a more meaningful understanding of the proposed contents, especially when these are in a third language, it is necessary to use this type of equipment for a greater exploration of the visual resources. However, using these presupposes the availability of a good internet connection, which was an issue for different participants.

When questioned about the methodologies used with deaf students, I2 makes interesting considerations, although they are not related to the educational context of the English language.

As an interpreter for events that require command of the English language, I had the opportunity to interpret in two events in this isolation. I mastered the fields so there was no difficulty. There was obviously a delay in interpretation time, typical of simultaneous interpretation, let alone going through 3 languages.

It is evident that, when the field that is being interpreted is mastered, the process is facilitated. In this sense, we believe that this strategy can be brought to the classroom when, before the lesson is interpreted, the teacher discusses with the interpreter the theme that will be discussed in the classroom.

According to I3 “the main methodologies used were lectures and activities to be done at home”. I1 also mentions the use of *PowerPoint*. It is important to emphasize the need to carry out interactive activities with the students, because we can enhance their interest in certain contents. Thus, the classes, preferably, should not have a completely expository character, and the teacher needs to build with the students, in a dialogic way, didactic possibilities that can even be made possible by DICT.

When asked about which technological tools brought better results for deaf students, I3 stated that “those that provide interaction and dynamism such as online games are the best for teaching English.” Online games emerge as a methodological possibility for the deaf, as already indicated by Moares and Almeida (2022). Furthermore, PI4 mentioned Kahoot!, and TI2 Google Classroom. TI4 stated that “in the first months of the pandemic, activities were focused on WhatsApp. The student had limited access, and this made my actions difficult in order to facilitate the contents for him”; that is, this student loses opportunities to inform himself and to access different materials (Moran, 2018). However, WhatsApp emerges as an instant messaging application that mediates knowledge, which demonstrates that technologies can be used as facilitating instruments in the teaching and learning process.

TI4 says that: “a few months ago, I started an Instagram account with a focus on giving English tips to deaf people, a project that is taking its first steps”. The social network Instagram shows itself as a resource that can democratize the access of deaf people to content in English, a fact that reinforces that DICT can be tools of great linguistic empowerment for the deaf community provided that there are reflections about their uses in these spaces.

It was possible to notice the use of some tools to improve the quality of the images in the interpretation process, such as ring lights, chroma key³, and cellphone cameras, which demonstrates the concern from these professionals regarding what the deaf student is seeing. The visibility is extremely important so that they can have access to the proposed contents (Strobel, 2006). However, it is necessary that reflections are carried out on who finances these materials, as this is (or should be) a responsibility of educational institutions.

When asked if they used technological tools before the pandemic, most responses indicated that the use did not occur or was not frequent. TI4 stated that he used “PowerPoint, Kahoot!, online videos, games based on virtual games”, TI3 says that he used “visual resources on PowerPoint” and TI2 points out that he did not use them.

Although initial, it is possible to note that progress is being made with regard to the use of DICT in teaching additional languages for the deaf, which is something positive. However, there is a need for interpreters to participate in training that enables and discusses the teaching of third languages for the deaf – mediated or not by DICT – and that this training departs from diverse socio-historical and cultural contexts.

³ It is an editing technique in which the video backdrop is replaced by an image. In the context of interpretations and online classes, normally, there is a green background used to avoid distortions in the images.

After all, even though they have deafness as something in common, these learners cannot be seen in the same way, due to the fact that learning is localized and dialectical and, therefore, cannot be seen as something linear and universal (Johnson, 2004). This knowledge offers possibilities for better quality interpretations, which seek to offer deaf learners access to the construction of meaning and learning (Garcia, 2003). On the other hand, it is urgent that technological inputs be made available to these professionals so that they can have basic conditions to carry out more qualitative work with these students.

6 FINAL REMARKS

The present study aimed to analyze the perspectives of SLPTI regarding its actions, mediated or not by DICT, in English language classes, in elementary and high school, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The data analyzed here indicate that some gaps and concerns are still present in this professional context. For instance, we have the need to catalog English interpretive practices as L3 for the deaf, as already proposed by Bastos and Hübner (2020), a problem that is linked directly to the training of these professionals, which is still quite scarce when we look at issues related to the interpretation of a third language. Furthermore, it is possible to verify that DICT can bring good contributions to the learning of the deaf student since some interpreters mentioned tools that helped to facilitate the mediation of knowledge in English language classes.

The difficulties encountered by the SLPTI concern: 1) training of this professional, which is still incipient since it does not bring some essential points for the exercise of the SLPTI function, which certainly goes beyond the domain of Libras and 2) the lack of technological subsidies and training resources so that they can work with deaf students in a qualitative way.

We understand that SLPTI are hired to work with the Portuguese-Libras language pair and, when they arrive at educational institutions, they often need to translate and interpret materials and classes in other languages, such as English in the case of our study. However, the formation of SLPTI in Brazil, according to decree 5626/2005, requires mastery of the language pair Libras-Portuguese, any other language (English, American Sign Language, Spanish, etc.) must be considered an extra qualification, with extra investment in training by SLPTI in their professionalization. Therefore, knowledge of these languages is not mandatory for the exercise of the profession. Thus, it is necessary to reflect on the ways that the education departments have thought to solve this problem in inclusive schools. We also believe that this reflection is a suggestion for future investigations, since it is a current problem that needs urgent care.

Finally, it is clear that our current educational context still does not meet the demands posed by contemporary times with regard to an education that welcomes and provides quality teaching for deaf students. In this sense, discussions and investigations about the theme must be carried out, seeking to identify narratives of (un)successes of this community, so that we can, regardless of the communication specificities of our students, provide quality teaching and education that is truly inclusive and egalitarian.

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