

The decree 10.502/2020 beyond opposition and uncritical acceptance: an invitation to look in the mirror?

O decreto 10.502/2020 para além das oposições e da acolhida acrítica: um convite a rever-se no espelho?

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Abstract: This article discusses the Decree 10.502 of September 30, 2020, as an (in)opportune trigger for reflections on special and bilingual education. The Decree, which was suspended after a judgment of the Federal Supreme Court and revoked by President Lula, historically, is a reference of a special education government action, linked to neoliberal education policies in tune with international organizations, which emphasize competencies and further weaken the public school. In this sense, the Decree has generated opposition, but surprisingly, it has been welcomed by some segments, particularly by the deaf community, which felt contemplated in a proposal for bilingual education. We believe that this document provides a serious reflection on special education, an in-depth evaluation of what has been achieved in the last two decades, and points out challenges that still need to be properly addressed when idealizing bilingual education that constitutes a milestone in this desire of the deaf community. This text, of a bibliographic and documentary nature, offers an overview of this context and invites us to look through the mirror while waiting for new determinations about bilingual education in Brazil.

Keywords: Legislation. National Special Education Policy. Deaf Education.

Resumo: O presente artigo problematiza o Decreto 10.502, de 30 de setembro de 2020, como (in)oportuno desencadeador de reflexões sobre a educação especial e sobre a educação bilíngue. O Decreto suspenso após julgamento do Supremo Tribunal Federal e revogado pelo presidente Lula, constitui-se, historicamente, como uma referência de uma ação de governo da educação especial, vinculada às políticas de educação de cunho neoliberal, afinadas com organismos internacionais, que enfatizam competências e fragilizam ainda mais a escola pública. Neste sentido, o Decreto gerou oposições, mas, surpreendentemente, uma acolhida por alguns segmentos, particularmente, a comunidade surda que sentiu-se contemplada numa proposta de educação bilíngue. Consideramos, que tal documento propicia uma séria reflexão acerca da educação especial, uma profunda avaliação do que foi realizado nas últimas duas décadas e aponta desafios a serem ainda devidamente enfrentados ao se idealizar uma educação bilíngue, constituindo-se com um marco histórico desse desejo da comunidade surda. Este texto, de cunho bibliográfico e documental, oferece um panorama desse contexto e nos convida a olhar através do espelho enquanto se aguardam novas determinações acerca da educação bilíngue no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: Legislação. Política Nacional de Educação Especial. Educação de surdos.

"[...] Let's pretend that the mirror has become soft, like gauze, so that we can pass through it... Look, it is turning into a kind of mist now, it is! It'll be easy to get through..." He was standing over the fireplace console as he said this, although he had no idea how he had ended up there. And no doubt the mirror was slowly starting to fall apart, as if it were a luminous silver mist. In the next instant, Alice had gone through the mirror and leapt swiftly into the Mirror House room. (LEWIS CARROLL, 2002, p. 108-109).

1 Entering the mirror game to reflect

Lewis Carroll recounts Alice's entry into the house of mirrors as an event that allows the character to revisit old acquaintances, discover new possibilities, take a chance on a game of chess and place herself in a surreal world. It is through the mirror — letting herself pass through it, allowing herself to be immersed in it — that Alice can see herself in the strange, in the unknown. Alice's move sets off on an adventure. Instead of sticking to old conceptions, Alice takes a risk.

Literature preserves the symbolic power of the mirror¹. From being a magical instrument that tells the truth or a source of contemplation of passionate beauty, the mirror is an invitation to reflect. It is there, given to us in everyday life, discreetly waiting for us to launch us into an encounter with ourselves. We look at the mirror like a speculum; after all, it invites us to speculate. It is a proposition of tensions, it is a movement of going into the past, it is a launching of glances into the future, it is a restlessness from the present.

¹According to Ana Lúcia Souto: "We can consider mirrors as contradictions, at once fictitious and real... an element that can bring a blurred and distorted image of reality, like those found in ancient Egypt, dating back to 3,000 BC, made of polished bronze, which at the same time can mirror something valid in the adulterated. An object that reveals the truth of the person who owns it can also be used as a tool for vanity and revenge, as in the fairy tale of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs by the Brothers Grimm. Even before being tamed, materialized and capitalized, the reflection presents, through the Greek mythology of Narcissus, the exacerbated love for one's own image, seeking an image, mirroring oneself, a search and encounter with oneself. We believe that there is this opposition all the time in the game, in this game that sometimes the fictitious becomes real - the truth, and sometimes the truth becomes fictitious - false." Link: <<https://pt.khanacademy.org/science/3-ano/materia-e-energia-luz/fenmenos-luminosos/a/historia-dos-espeelhos>>.

Looking in the mirror is far removed from the positivist understanding. There is a certain truth in it, but not the truth at all. The mirror, depending on its angle, distorts reality, changes it, blurs it, scratches it. The state of the mirror, in a way, interferes with the way we look at ourselves. However, regardless of its qualities and also its defects, scratches, cracks, when we stand in front of the mirror, we are confronted.

All this preamble consists of the proposal to take the Decree 10.502 of September 30, 2020, which establishes the *National Policy for Special Education: Equitable, Inclusive and with Lifelong Learning* (in Portuguese, *Política Nacional de Educação Especial: Equitativa, Inclusiva e com Aprendizado ao Longo da Vida*), as a mirror in front of which we want to review our experience as educators in special education, and also, to rethink some issues about bilingual education. There were countless reactions to the Decree, quickly polarizing between repudiation and unrestricted acceptance, interspersed with some positions that tried to read it from a more critical and radical perspective, in the sense of getting to the root of the problem it presented. The Decree 10.502/2020 was suspended on December 1, 2020 by the Federal Supreme Court, following an action of unconstitutionality filed by the PSB (Partido Socialista Brasileiro; in English, Brazilian Socialist Party). Among several actions revoked by President Lula from the previous government, the Decree 10.502, considered by many to be the "exclusion decree", was rendered null and void by the Decree 11.370 of January 1, 2023.

Despite this, we believe that this annulled document deserves reflection as a historical contribution and record of a contextualized action by one of the governments that claimed to be in line with the demands of the deaf community. This document was received by part of this community as a significant step in the constitution of bilingual education. To take the Decree 10.502 as a mirror, is to want to stop in front of it, not just to refute/repudiate it, but to exercise in reviewing what has been constituted historically, and how the special education policy outlined therein has been developed in the democratic contexts of governments that were more dialogical with popular

movements and less accustomed to neoliberal conditioning.

Therefore, what motivates this paper is to suggest a reflection based on the text of the Decree 10.502/2020, inspired by a theoretical constellation that assists us with its productions. We tried to reflect on special education from the perspective of the contributions and interlocutions of Freitas (2002), Dubet (2020), Santos (2010), Meirieu (2005), Silva, Sobrinho (2020), Oliveira (2020) e Gramsci (1999). Also, we have another interlocutor in Foucault (2013), in his understanding of heterotopia. With each theoretical contribution, new facets can be glimpsed in the encounter with this mirror offered to us in times of pandemic. And this is essential, because it was at one of the nation's most delicate moments of suffering, with thousands of deaths due to the negligence of the federal government, during which such a Decree was instituted.

2 In the mirror, denaturalizing inclusion

There are no clear boundaries, no definitive rules, no reasons to support the metanarrative of inclusion in the face of good questions about the delimitations of borders. However, there is a vital need, considering a type of modern rationality, for the boundaries of in/exclusion to be maintained (LOPES, 2007, p.18).

According to Lopes (2007), the invention of inclusion does not stand up to good questioning, although, the boundaries of in/exclusion, especially at the moment when it is somehow threatened, insist on not being blurred. In saying this, Maura Corcini Lopes is not arguing that inclusion does not exist or that inclusion is not something good and productive for those who enjoy other conditions of life and life at school. In contrast, she argues that inclusion is a discursive invention. This means that it is something produced by practices forged in different fields of knowledge, such as in education, sociology, medicine, psychology, law, and others.

It is also a practice forged in the countless fights for rights to social participation, access to school,

health and learning, among other spaces, in which historically negatively discriminated groups (CASTEL, 2008) have not had access. Therefore, it is an invention, from the point of view of militancy, useful and undoubtedly necessary in the context of the Brazilian political, economic, and social history. What makes Lopes (2007) question the concept and the uses of inclusion is the proliferation of its meanings and the cheapening of its uses today. Inclusion seems to have achieved a status of truth that can no longer be thought of outside its limits. And here we have a problem of a certain dogmatization and unquestionability of a practice.

In the dynamics of the mirror there is always the subtlety of movement and displacement, of the light that invisibly makes its way in search of the reflection. In the invisibility of the movement, it is the faces that we want to make known. Hence, the invitation to denaturalize what we call inclusion. Freitas (2013) helps us to understand that the so-called inclusion is not a natural fact given by itself in social history and, specifically, in education. It is in the modern school, with its process of homogenization and synchronization, that the existence of those who do not fit in, who break with the programmed order, who subvert what is expected, is immediately pointed out.

If learning is possible for everyone, it is true that each person does it at different times and ways, and some, due to a certain vulnerability, make this clearer. Thus, we can position ourselves next to those who, dwelling on the limitation of the body, reduce the other to inefficiency, or risk breaking the trap of this logic and consider that "[...] disabilities and non-disabilities only become distinguishable in the experience that constitutes society itself. One is not disabled in isolation" (FREITAS, 2013, p. 41).

Freitas shows us how historically there have always been movements that, despite accepting the premise of education for all, have wanted to either adapt the person with a disability to the reality of school, denying him/her the chance to be who and how they are, or put them out of school:

The presence of these agents in schools is the result of significant society fights to recognize and guarantee universal rights without exception. Therefore, while it is necessary to recognize that the school structure does indeed need to change in order to include, it is also necessary to recognize that the presence of these children and adolescents, even if they are permanently pushed out, is a presence that qualifies and transforms the relationship between all the protagonists of everyday school life for the better. (FREITAS, 2013, p. 64).

The Decree 10.502/2020 can be read in this interpretative framework. It seems to be a proposal for a special education policy that makes explicit a certain desire to remove from ordinary schools those who, having arrived there, have encouraged the demand for new practices. That's why, we insist, just like a mirror, you have to pass the Decree...

If inclusion is a state imperative, as Lopes (2009) states, there is no one who, at some point, is not on the grids that determines it, but there are those who, for a few moments, resist inclusion practices, forgetting about it (VIEIRA-MACHADO; LOPES, 2015, p.7).

In recent decades, the creation of an inclusive special education policy has sought to comply with the norms of international conventions to which Brazil was a signatory, and also, to legally translate into the country what was presented as a new — and more coherent — way of thinking about issues relating to people with disabilities and, in the case of schools, issues of those who would need specialized educational assistance.

This process did not take place peacefully, without friction or far from political and economic interests. Maria Abádia Silva (2002) portrays this game of tensions well:

A critical-reflexive synthesis shows that social policies, including educational policies, are established by international financial institutions, with the consent of local governments and conservative elites, for the scientific and educational communities in a prescriptive, objective and covert manner, and, not without resistance and alterations, are executed, altered, and assimilated by the society. In order to elaborate, hierarchize and prioritize them,

there are political-economic and ideological clashes between external prescriptions, party-political pacts of state and business origin and civil society, represented by citizens and academic and trade union entities, defenders of public, secular education with quality that better responds to the real needs of the local educational community. (SILVA, 2002, p. 96).

It is on this chessboard between intervention and consent that the requirements for special education were also agreed internationally and re-agreed nationally. Or, if we want to use the dichotomies perceived by Boaventura Sousa Santos and use them to read reality, special education policies seem to move between emancipation/regulation and appropriation/violence (SANTOS, 2010). If, on the one hand, they translate elements that show the desire for emancipation and contribute to regulating actions, on the other hand, they also signify the appropriation of a public by neoliberal interests that will increasingly demand training paths in order to integrate into the increasingly scarce and demanding job market.

In Freitas's (2002) analyses of special education policies:

The more we talk about inclusion, the more we legitimize social exclusion prior to schooling, through a dissimulative mechanism of formal inclusion in school that transmutes objective school exclusion (repetition, dropout) into subjective school exclusion (self-exclusion between cycles, "options" for less privileged progression paths, formal transit without real mastery), based on class horizons and possibilities previously internalized by the objective conditions of each class in society. (FREITAS, 2002, p. 310).

3 The school that reflects in/exclusions

This movement to review special education policies brings us face to face with the fact that school can also be a space for exclusion. And that even inclusion policies can generate exclusions. This issue has been well addressed by Lopes and Dal'Igna (2007), and Fabris and Lopes (2013) under the term "in/exclusion". Dubet had already warned us about this when he pointed out that the school is not only a reproduction of what exists in society, thus a

reproducer of social exclusion, but that it also creates exclusionary mechanisms within itself.

Public schools remain indebted to the vast majority of their students, because they reproduce and create mechanisms of exclusion. Applying this thought to special education, perhaps, in everyday school life, it is the modality that experiences the most exclusionary processes, in many cases, starting with a confused interpretation about the special education teacher, the role of trainees, the multifunctional classrooms.

All this seems to generate a "micro-school" within the school and, consequently, marked by the exclusions created by the school itself: "In other words, social equalities directly control entry into school careers, and the school processes themselves produce these inequalities which, in turn, reproduce social inequalities" (DUBET, 2003, p. 34).

Assuming the limits that stand in our way does not mean denying the countless achievements, but questioning again the tension between what we want and what we have been able to build in the reality of a public school, which has perhaps never been considered a political priority in the country. Still taking on board Dubet's contributions, we have that

["the school is a mirror, it adapts to everything that changes behavior (new technologies, internet, cell phones, etc.). But what do we do with these convulsions? How can we integrate them into an educational project? These questions do not seem to interest many people. (DUBET, 2013, w.p.).

Dubet contributes by pointing out that within the school, the students themselves realize the perverse game they are being thrown into and react to it. School failure is systematically constructed, because "equality of opportunity rests on an obligation to take part in the competition; withdrawing from it is a form of defeat and abandonment" (DUBET, 2020, p. 72). And many students, in order to retain their dignity, choose to leave the game.

We can therefore see that special education is under the influence of various factors. If it partly reflects the neoliberal moment, as Silva (2002) points out, then it requires analysis that takes into account the

funding processes for this modality. Research has shown how much the issue of funding makes explicit the complex and deep-rooted relationship between public and private. Over the last few decades, specialized institutions have tirelessly tried to take over a significant part — since the legislation does not allow it - of the budgets applied to the area of special education.

Around the argument of the "family's right to choose" when it comes to the schooling of students with disabilities, these institutions are aggressively presenting themselves on the political discussion stage, putting even more pressure on the achievements of inclusion made since the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (in Portuguese, PNEE — Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva) in 2008. We agree with Oliveira and Sobrinho (2020, p. 7) when they point this out from the state of Espírito Santo, because "the argument of parental 'choice' does not enhance the formative dynamics of the students — the main stakeholders — but on the contrary, places them back inside the 'cave', with the propensity to close them in on themselves".

Perhaps it is worth remembering that the text of the PNEE/2008 itself had modified the preliminary version, that is, the document drawn up by the Working Group appointed by the Ministerial Order No. 555 of June 5, 2007, extended by the Order No. 948 of October 9, 2007. The text of the PNEE/2008 did not include item *IV Guidelines for education systems*, in which there was a clear and manifest proposal not to invest in new specialized institutions from now on. The Decree 10.502/2020, by insisting on this argument, reinforces the possibilities of segregating students with disabilities and benefits from the apparently generous welcome propagated by specialized institutions.

4 Reviewing the meaning of school

When you question something about special education, you are questioning the whole school. A review of special education is a call for a review of the

school at its deepest roots. Meirieu helps us reflect on the meaning of school by linking it to democracy:

Thus, in a democracy, as paradoxical as this may sound, the fundamental principles of the school are not the result of the citizens' choice, but of a priori conditions that make democracy possible. To choose democracy is not to give oneself the right to choose any school, but to choose the school, whose principles lead precisely to the advent and renewal of democracy. (MEIRIEU, 2005, p. 27).

Virtually all students need some kind of specialized educational assistance. The dropout rates (higher in the past but still present), the blatant rates of poor assimilation of content, and the lack of interest in school knowledge, reveal an old fissure that has been reformed with various modes.

By recalling the limits of public schools in general, we want to point out how much special education shares this reality. And perhaps the mirror is a timely reminder that, in many situations, we have also failed to educate the so-called "normals", setting precedents for those who violently question their existence. Meirieu warns us:

[...] opening the school to all is not a choice among others: it is the very vocation of this institution, a consubstantial requirement of its existence [...]. A school that excludes is not a school [...]. The school itself is an institution that is concerned with not discarding anyone, with ensuring that the knowledge it must teach everyone is shared. Without any reservations. (MEIRIEU, 2005, p. 44).

However, it is this same school that has been reformulating itself for years and trying to offer a quality education, despite meager investments. The school is just another piece in this complex game and can never be blamed for failures. Not even blaming its professionals. The best course of action would be to allow for a serious review and evaluation of their reality, a real diagnosis that would allow them to set achievable goals that are related to their demands. According to Saviani, this was essential for drawing up the National Education Plan (2014-2024):

The absence of a diagnosis made the plan much weaker. In fact, it is the diagnosis that, by characterizing the educational situation with its problems, limits, shortcomings and prospects, highlights the elements that justify the setting of targets and the need for them to be achieved. If there is no diagnosis, the targets are arbitrary. (SAVIANI, p. 328).

The diagnosis that the current situation provokes in us may be, in order to risk thinking about other forms of school action, an opportunity to not only think about special education as a modality, but to think about it in the broader context of the struggles of basic education and to be in tune with them. This broadening of the reflexive angle may lead us to attack what has really prevented learning within the school and what can enhance it as a wise rebellion in contrast to hegemonic interests.

5 When the mirror shows scissions

The mirror of the Decree 10.502/2020 has thrown a clear divide in our faces. One community, which is never limited to the issue of physical disability, but is historically constituted as a linguistic minority, received the Decree as welcome news, as the unprecedented realization of a long-dreamed utopia, which would be the institutionalization of bilingual schools. And this is where the mirror is shattered.

The National Federation for the Education and Integration of the Deaf (in Portuguese, FENEIS — Federação Nacional de Educação e Integração dos Surdos) note, supporting the Decree and suggesting minor adjustments, reverberated a decades-old conflict, but also pointed to a coloniality linked to deaf education. It is worth remembering the threat to close the National Institute for Deaf Education (in Portuguese, INES — Instituto Nacional de Educação de Surdos) in 2011 by a Ministry of Education that claimed to be a supporter of inclusion.

This note can also be interpreted, according to Lopes (2020), as a ricochet of the decisions made in 2008 without a broad discussion of what this space means with this group that differs so much in the different meanings that the word segregation produces.

The great resentment caused by the split between the group of deaf subjects and the larger group of special education led to a revanchist practice among the deaf, since they somehow felt that they had been included in the Decree.

However, it was in that "government", the same one that dismantled the PNEE, that the possibility was proposed of creating a school in which Libras would be the language of instruction and would meet the demands of deaf students, although it did not point out the elements to make it happen. How would this school work? Which professionals could run it? What funds would be allocated to it? Which subjects would be served? What understanding of bilingualism would guide this proposal? There were more questions than answers, since the Decree 10.502/2020 affirmed a new policy towards the deaf, but did not demonstrate its most practical constituents in both the short and long term.

It can therefore be concluded to some extent that, despite the efforts of those in favor of bilingual education being set up outside of special education (given that there was a bilingual education directorate and another for special education), there was an acceptance that this policy still remained within the scope of special education purely because of the funding.

We feared that, as in the past, such a possible gift to the deaf would only be a shard of glass with an apparent shine. A reminder of our coloniality might help: "Europe offered a lot of beads, a lot of glass and mirrors, but for the others to see themselves. Because they were indigenous, barbarians and had never seen themselves in a mirror. In this way, it deceived them, exchanging mirrors for gold and valuable products" (SANTOS, 2011, p. 27). And some questions could not be silenced. What in that exchange would be taken away from the deaf community? Or how much would the apparent privilege of contemplating only one segment within the so-called target public of special education cost? Did the Decree achieve its goal of dividing to better govern?

Another division that, despite the pandemic context, began to circulate as a "forbidden speech"

(because it was politically incorrect) but present inside the school, was that the Decree 10.502/2020 would "solve our problems". In other words, for many teachers, including some in special education, who, over the last few years, had argued that they did not have the proper training to work with children with specialized educational needs, the Decree seemed to confirm the never-ending desire for these children to be out of school. Segregation remained in the minds of many as the salvation for people with disabilities.

At the same time, for the deaf community, being in a separate space would mean the opposite of segregation, as the Decree's proposal was in line with a certain idealization about bilingual education which — considering quite objective practical elements such as interaction between peers, the presence of deaf teachers, classes in Libras — also experienced a certain anguish at realizing how varied the situation of the deaf people in Brazil was and the risks of a certain ineffectiveness of the proposal.

6 Projecting oneself beyond the mirror

What is this institution that we want to preserve and call a school? Who is it for? Meirieu (2005) warns us that the school's vocation is to be open to everyone, not to be exclusionary, and for this to happen it needs to accept common laws, become a space for adhering to common values and for stories to coexist within it. In the author's words:

[...] no one should feel excluded, affected in their integrity or despised in their identity within a public space. Public space, from this perspective, is not the negation of individual histories and adherences; it is the possible place for these to coexist and for a common project to be realized (MEIRIEU, 2005, p. 45).

Possibly, Gramsci's (1999) perception of the unitary school as a space-time in which the new is generated in contact with knowledge helps us here. Gramsci's own fight against the Italian school model²

²It is a school organization that guarantees the maintenance of privileged groups over subaltern groups, in such a way as to

proposed by the government can serve as an inspiration. It is by breaking with the predictability of certain governments that we can point out, from within the school, another way of thinking about it that allows students all the means so that their qualities are valued and can develop together with others, because "each one transforms himself insofar as he transforms the whole set of relations of which he is the central point" (GRAMSCI, 1999, p. 413).

The unitary school proposed by Gramsci is the possibility of forging citizens, leaders, people who, having reached the level of knowledge accumulated over the years, are aware of the dialectic present in the social structure and do not allow themselves to succumb to oppressive forces. Gramsci's words, when commenting on the school model in force at his time and the need for a disinterested school, seem to be written for today:

In today's schools, as a result of the profound crisis of cultural tradition and the conception of life and man, there is a process of progressive degeneration: professional schools, i.e. those concerned with satisfying immediate practical interests, predominate over the formative school, immediately disinterested. The most paradoxical aspect is that this new type of school appears and is praised, when in reality it is not only designed to perpetuate social differences, but also to crystallize them in Chinese forms (GRAMSCI, 2001, p. 49).

It is not the school that perpetuates the differences we have built up in recent times and which we have now seen at risk of being cut down. That's why it's up to us to fight back:

It will be said that what each individual can modify is very little in relation to their strength. This is true only up to a certain point, since the individual can associate with all those who want the same modification; and if this modification is rational, the individual can multiply a large number of times, obtaining a much more radical modification than at first seemed possible (GRAMSCI, 1999, p. 414).

prevent access and ascension for those who are located in a hierarchically subordinate social configuration.

7 Pass through the mirror and renew strength for new fights

Alice passes through the mirror again to return home... The text of the Decree 10.502/2020 is a provocation! Faced with it, can we react or act, intentionally take a stand, or just regret the backward steps it presented? As a legislative process, the decree is a mirror through which we must overcome certain immediate images. If it gives us the opportunity to see ourselves more clearly in terms of our motivations and weaknesses, it also gives us the opportunity to regroup our forces to confront exclusionary practices that prevent the full development of deaf people. Denying the existence of such a decree, even if it was not implemented in favor of the deaf, or minimizing its neoliberal onslaughts, perhaps, has not contributed to advancing beyond what we have already achieved and which, possibly, would be difficult to ensure in times of antidemocratic politics (2019-2022).

Foucault (2001), when reflecting on heterotopia, certainly helped us to question what was historically experienced and the desire present there, while the Decree was certainly an element that made us reflect on the choices we made, launching us towards ourselves and the ideals we cultivate:

The mirror... is a utopia, because it is a place without a place. In the mirror, I see myself where I'm not, in an unreal space that opens up virtually behind the surface, am I far away? a kind of shadow that gives me my own visibility, that allows me to look at myself where I am absent: the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia, insofar as the mirror really exists, and has a kind of retroactive effect on the place I occupy. It is from the mirror that I discover myself absent from the place I am because I see myself far away. From that look that... is directed towards me, from the depths of this virtual space that is on the other side of the mirror, I return to myself and begin to direct my eyes towards myself and to constitute myself there where I am; the mirror functions as a heterotopia in the sense that it makes the place I occupy, at the moment I look at myself in the mirror, at the same time absolutely real, in relation to all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since it (sic) is forced to

be perceived, to pass through that virtual point that is far away (FOUCAULT, 2001, p. 415).

Trying to put the pieces together at the end of this reflection, we dare to make some assertions...

The decree is a mirror and in it we cannot succumb either to the image it wished to impose on us or to the image we idealize of ourselves. The Decree 10.502/2020 presented a controversial, retrograde, demeaning proposal for special education, while at the same time provided the opportunity, depending on the reflection desired, for a reflexive onslaught. A document that worried us, that took us out of our place, at the same time, that challenged us to take a stand, a document that reflected the advancement of some in favor of the regression of others, that translated the fight of some in favor of indifference to the struggle from others... We do not want to assume such propositions for our practices. We also do not want to dwell on what we idealize, because unlike that "government", our self-criticism allows us to take a constant and vigilant look at what really matters when it comes to education in general, and special education in particular, as well as the bilingual education we want. We are much more than what the mirror and its blurriness can show us.

Our practices in special education reflect a commitment to education, to free public schools, to inclusion, to democracy and to building new ways of acting in society. What has materialized as special education over the last two decades in Brazil has taken place in a constant dialogue with the subjects involved in the teaching-learning process, in an understanding that the school is a public space for everyone, in the certainty that it is the student with his or her singularities, in contact with our theoretical contributions, who shows us the ways in which learning takes place. And so it is contact with deaf people, in their singularity and in their community experience, that also allows us to rethink a proposal for bilingual education. Without the participation of this individual, any proposal is doomed not to meet the needs he or she experiences and to become just another fad.

The mirror as prospect challenges us to rethink our epistemological foundations in order to embark on new initiatives. Crises have devastating effects and, despite the possible progress they bring, nothing justifies them when they are the result of negligence, neglect, colonial despotism and capitalism with traces of patriarchy. The Decree 10.502/2020 demanded that we adopt a proactive attitude in which our bases were better grounded and allowed us to encounter strange novelties that dislodged us. The fateful document, in proposing a commitment to bilingual education, brought down a serious, but also controversial, history of fights in which a linguistic minority claimed, from other parameters, to be assumed as a public policy in a divorce with special education.

In front of the mirror there is a need to raise the questions that challenge us and reveal our vulnerabilities. Some tasks seem to loom before us, from which we cannot escape. We haven't managed to popularize all the beauty and "success" of the work carried out by special education. How can we bring these results closer to the reality of schools and families to the point of having them as our true partners and not just the object/subject of our research? How can we strengthen ties between academia and public schools? And when thinking about this relationship, it is also inevitable to ask what training is expected of a special education teacher. How should this professional be trained? How can their training lead to attitudes within the school that do not conform to the imposition by many to make them the "owner" of the *student-public-target-special-education*? How can we, not necessarily free the student, but free the US from this *student-public-target-special-education*?

Does the Special Education subject, mandatory in undergraduate courses, promote adherence to the inclusion proposal? Language has incalculable power. We need to review a series of terms we use in the context of special education. Does person with a disability portray well how we understand disability in its relationship with society? And what about the subjects related to deaf education in the context of teaching degrees? Does *target-public-of-*

special-education correspond to the set of ideas we subjectivize with this statement? Will they continue with their reduced working hours? Does target-public-of-special-education correspond to the set of ideas that we subjectivize with this statement? Should we still insist on specialized educational “service”? What better term to use for the teacher who works with special education? Is it really special education or does each and every student, regardless of their uniqueness, require a special education that takes into account their specificities?

Furthermore, special education is permeated by funding issues. How can we bring about transparency in public accounts with elements that allow us to defend a proposal for public education in regular schools? Which control bodies could help us in this process of demanding transparency in the financing of special education? What do we still need to learn from other sciences, particularly from economics to make this possible?

In relation to bilingual education: what are the risks of making Libras the language of the bilingual school? What practical and related funding challenges arise most directly and require a reframing of bilingual education? How can we ensure that the content worked on in a bilingual school does not turn into an impoverished curriculum due to the small number of qualified professionals who master Libras and the Portuguese language where historically accumulated knowledge has circulated? Considering the distances and multiple realities of continental Brazil, how can we offer quality bilingual education accessible to deaf people scattered throughout the country? Wouldn't it be more powerful to recognize the multiple forms of bilingual education?

The Decree 10.502/2020 reflected the sad moment we were living... The Decree in question was not an isolated piece of a political game. It was yet another reflection of what has followed since October 2019, but it also goes back to the 2016 coup against Brazilian democracy. Every day an act of “government” revealed the real lack of interest in education, public schools, health, the needs of those most impacted by social inequalities, and decent work.

Each act also revealed the real interests in continuing to agree with the conservative and backward elites, with the industrial oligarchies, with those who put profit before humanity in order to strip away democratic rights and achievements. We follow Dubet (2020, p. 122): “The democratic left should take up the questions posed by populism and strive to react to them by proposing another horizon of social justice and democratic life.”

Sometimes representations of ourselves, sometimes tools of our truths, sometimes models of images to be followed, sometimes natural, sometimes materialized, sometimes normal, sometimes abnormal, sometimes inclusion, sometimes exclusion, sometimes my 'self' that I want to see in the 'other' (reflected) or sometimes the 'other' that does not reflect me... Distortions, contradictions, oppositions, deviations, which accentuate and demarcate our arenas, our vanities, our positions. And in this tense movement, a desire for bilingual education is still sketchy.

We believe that revisiting the Decree 10.502/2020 makes explicit the field of tensions in which a desire for bilingual education has been situated and still persists in fighting, since there is an inclusivist discourse that tends to assert itself, even with serious criticism of what has become, particularly for the deaf, a school in-exclusion. We also think it is important to address that looking at this mirror — the Decree 10.502/2020 — was also a historical exercise to raise questions about the field from our present concerns, since we do not know what direction bilingual education will take in Brazil, suggesting more research on the subject.

We need to feel provoked to think about other ways, the many ways and the many possibilities of reflections. We need to know that the reflection is both real and unreal, clear and mysterious. As Borges (1998) says in *Berkeley's Crossroads*, “reality is like this image of ours that appears in all mirrors, a simulacrum that exists for us, that comes with us, gestures and leaves, but in search of which we only have to go to always comes across it” (BORGES, 1998, p.130).

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