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## Interculturality and Education Sciences in Chilean Sign Language: The Body as Culture's Memory

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### Abstract

The deaf persons education generates opposing views among supporters and those who defend the deaf persons rights to participate in an intercultural society. The arguments from each other generate several historic problems that will be analyzed in light from theoretical concepts in Psychology, Linguistics and Education.

To Ladd (2003), the deaf community cover to “those deaf persons, with auditive difficult, share a common experiences and language, values and the interaction with listeners”. This Deaf Community concept introduces the notion of deaf and listeners interaction understood from a symmetrical and horizontal communication between both cultures, opening a better way improve intercultural education.

**Key words:** Sign language; Deaf culture; Interculturality; Education; Psychology; Linguistic; Cognitive

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### INTRODUCTION

In general terms, the education of the Deaf, generates opposite opinions, between those who partake to a medical model of the disability and those that defend the right of a deaf person to participate in an intercultural society.

Being deaf is more than the simple notion of loss of hearing, as it includes the idea of a different way to

comprehensive and conceptualize the world, by its culture and particular communication type: Sign Language. For Ladd (2003) the Deaf community includes “deaf persons and those with hearing impediment that share a common language, experiences and values and a common way of interacting between themselves and the Hearing”. This approximation to the concept of a deaf community introduces the notion of an interaction of deaf with the Hearing. It proposes that this interaction, understood from a symmetric and horizontal communication in both cultures, provides a road to better conditions in diverse areas of the Deaf culture, especially in intercultural education.

Culture and deaf communities exist from early ages, and have been associated from the beginning to the hegemonic cultures in diverse grades. Nevertheless, with the course of the time, shades have been taking that constitutes in varied models of approach and levels of discrimination or assimilation. For the reasons that will be exposed in this article, each of these approaches, have been generated from the orality of the hegemonic culture. And it is most likely they have not considered the Deaf perspective and the Signs language in his investigation.

The present reflection proposes an analysis from the Chilean Language of Signs, emphasizing on one hand its relevancy as a fundamental tool of the Deaf culture and on the other hand, as an Intercultural tool of communication with the hegemonic culture. The principle that supports the interaction between both cultures would be associated with the actual come from the Linguistics and the Cognitive Psychology, with the proposal of *Embodied Cognition*.

For this purpose, it is emphasized that the body is the articulator axis of the reasoning and of the language in a search of debunking of the same one as an irrational category. It is proposed that deepening the matter of Embodied Cognition as present element in sign language and that might be a key to interaction with the Hearing

## 1. THE INVISIBILIZED MEMORY

The Secondary studies of the Deaf have been marked by attempts of reconstructing its history. Among them, Ladd (2003) has described some relevant stages that later affected the modern conception of the Deaf.

Of the predominant speeches in the history of the Deaf one stands out the Christian early speech, which marked the anteroom for development in time in the Oral Model. Thanks to this speech (widely accepted by the hegemonic culture), there was a strengthening of Christian Institutions of Boarding schools for the Deaf. His object was "oralization" of the Deaf, understood as the formal education of spoken communication. Ladd (2003) exposes the arguments of the era in Balestra's words: "We all are children of the only Christ who gave to us his example ... the secretary of Christ must open the mouth of the Deaf one. And I will add that for a catholic priest the mute ones must speak".

These oral approximations were translated in the first explicit actions of lack of recognition towards the Deaf culture, affecting with it the identity of this group. The importance of the recognition is analyzed by Taylor (1993), who indicates that our identity is molded partly, for the recognition.

Therefore the oralism has played a crucial paper in its first years, instilling the oppressive foundations of the modern perspective in the comprehension of the Deaf. The oppression stemming from the lack of recognition brought as consequence the first reactions of opposition.

The early Christian speech was indirectly promoted with the development of the Illustration. From the year 1750 both the Deaf people and the sign language became a point of reference for the theorization of the nature of the man and of language by the philosophers of Illustration. The problem arises from the philosophers' negative conclusions, as Kant (1781), which with his thought contributes to diminishing the possibilities of recognition of the Deaf culture. The basic idea that underlies this thought points out that *nature could be improved by reason*. This argument was focused on "the reification of the voice, centered on Christian speech, the inherent inferiority or cruelty of the Deaf, and the inadequacy of his language" (Ladd, 2003).

The Deaf subject did not manage to harmonize the ideal ones of illustrated thought, especially as for the oral argumentation. For the philosophers of the era the Language of Signs inherited to the Deaf one the inability to make public use of the reason and to accede to the truth by means of Illustrated Reasoning.

In consequence this increased their marginalization of the Illustrated Thought. This marginalization added to the lack of recognition was a reason of a breach between both cultures, where the differences get exalted and make the decline of the Deaf culture visible. At the same time, it masks the equalities through the use of sign language and can only be perceived in the presence of oral language.

Conscious of this scenario, the Alternative Deaf movement of the 20th century claims the return to the Education in Language of Signs, which originates the *Philosophy of Total Communication*. Though this new perception in the Education of the Deaf was designed to search for respect of the Language of Signs, in reality it did not end being more than a modification of the oral model. This proposal gave value to the deaf to the right of communicating, using the necessary functional means in order to interact with the Hearing. The problem takes root in that the implicit idea once again was the oral Model, making the Language of Signs dependent on the acquisition of spoken language. This concept reached its maximum expression with the creation of the *Bimodal* current, which establishes the visualization of the oral language in what it can be named an *oral signed language*.

The inadequacy of the Philosophy of Total Communication with the Deaf was translated during the 21st century into the birth of the current Bilingual Bicultural in the Education of the Deaf. Maybe as anticipation to what progressively transforms into the modern Bilingual Intercultural. This indicates the right of the Deaf to be educated in their mother language, establishing as last resort access to the oral language *only by means of reading*. The problem of the Bilingualism-Biculturalism is that it does not solve the question of cultural interaction. First, because the language per se cannot be considered a synonym for culture. For example, Paulston (1992) adds the following reflection:

An obvious difference between bilingualism and biculturalism is that when you speak Swedish or English, there is a very clear what set of rules is being used. But with conduct, it is not necessarily clear to what cultural system the rules of performance belong.

As the second motive, he proposes that the Bilingualism suffers from a practical problem, which arises in its educational application. And for the case of the Deaf, the Language of Signs, a visual modality—gestural silence, does not allow access to a written plane. In consequence, a great challenge for the current Special Bilingual Education consists in an epistemic approaching of this problem.

Then again, this difficulty is not a characteristic exclusive of the Deaf culture. Schmelkes (2002) exemplifies a similar situation for the case of certain indigenous Mexican cultures. The authoress indicates that "for the education of literacy certain difficulties exist. The first one has to do with the fact that the indigenous languages are preliterate languages". In consequence, he emphasizes the need to study the preliterate languages adding: "A language with little study can hardly be written (...) a language that one does not write, is not possible to be read. Full bilingualism in these conditions is impossible".

For the Alternative Deaf Secondary movement the resolution of this topic is fundamental, as it is the recognition of the fact of which its culture is measured by

the language of signs. And in this respect one must add the fact that groups with languages different from that of the majority have also different cultures.

The consequences of the visibilization of the Deaf history and the current problems of the Bilingualism Biculturalism imply important epistemic issues. They invite to the search of a Deaf epistemology. That is to say, what (Ladd, 2003) identifies as *the way of the Deaf of living in the world*, of conceiving this world and their own place within (both in act and in power).

Also, Hauser, O'Hearn, McKee, Steider and Thew (2010) add that the Deaf epistemology constitutes the nature of the knowledge that deaf individuals acquire to grow up in society that he entrusts principally in the Hearing to join to the daily life. And that deafness creates differences between persons more developed in the visual plane respect compared to those who resort to the auditive or hearing.

The problem is that the Hearing interact with deaf individuals assuming that the Deaf are acquiring knowledge in an equal way. Though any knowledge is not given in an absolutely different way either, some differences are observed. This added to the lack of recognition brings as consequence a dominant hegemony that imposes cognitive and linguistic status on a disadvantageous minority. It is precisely that one what makes fundamental the strengthening of the communication and the suitable establishment of the interculturality.

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## 2. DEAF MEMORY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCIENCES

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The recognition and development of the Language of Signs has been overlapped with the development and consolidation of Sciences like Psychology, Linguistics, Sociology and Neurosciences.

The 19th century was characterized by the accomplishment of the Congress of Milan and its consistent "abolition of the Deafness ". This was strengthened by the development of Behaviorism Psychology and the Structuralization in Linguistics, which they correlated especially to the Scientific Positivist Paradigm. Added to the ideas of universal man, come from the ideal ones of the French Revolution and from the Illustrated reasoning, they lead the formalization of the Oralism and its medical model of the disability.

Nevertheless, entering the 20th century, from the year 1960 begins a pioneering Liberal speech over of the Deaf topics and a strong empowerment of Psychology as a Science, besides the studies in Neurosciences. The above mentioned give the first precedents on correlates neurophysiological of the language of signs. Added to the development of Hermeneutic Paradigms of investigation they provoke a change in the way of understanding deafness and language.

This change comes its summit in the years 1950-1960, with the advance of Cognitive Psychology with later development in the Cognitive area and the interrelationship with Neurosciences. Artificial, Linguistic intelligence, Anthropology and Philosophy allow the consolidation of a Psycholinguistic Model in the academic world of the Language of Signs.

The Psycholinguistic Model favored a new speech, which sought to re-orientate the education of the Deaf based on having indicated that oral speech does not favor the Cognitive and Linguistic development of the child. This promotes the introduction of a cultural climate that stimulates acceptance, and even the reification of the multicultural speeches. In the same epoch, the development the Embodied Cognition, the Connectionism, the Enactment and the introduction of subject matters like Metaphors and Blending, allowed the conformation of a study of the Languages of Signs from the Cognitive Psycholinguistics. It added to the development of theories from the interculturality which offer today a new scene of approach for the study of these languages, and I consider three disciplines of interest which will be analyzed: Linguistics, Psychology and Interculturality.

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## 3. THE BODY SEEN FROM THE LINGUISTICS

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The study of the Signed Language reveals a series of questions that have not been exhaustively approached and that mark not only of differences between the different Languages of Signs, but also similarities. Among the similarities, Ladd (2003), indicates that all the languages of signs of the world that have been investigated until now present the same syntactic basic grammar. Another similarity points to the fact that the Deaf have a facility to adapt from one language of signs to another. In consequence, they might form a "global language of communication, which makes them truly citizens of the whole planet" (Ladd, 2003). It is probable that this facility has his base in a biological substratum, as Rubén (2005) indicates. The interesting part of this is that the idea of a biological common substratum between deaf and the Hearing, makes it plausible to suppose similar elements in the Hearing by means of the use of gestures.

Eventually these substrata can use as support to the communication between both cultures and the formation of some "global" system of communication since it was raising Ladd (2003).

The first approximations to the gestural language took place in the studies of gestures used by the Hearing (McNeill, 1992; McNeill, 2002). It has been described that for the Hearing the gestures and language happen in a synchronized tempo and, often, they have identical meaning (McNeill, 1992). Therefore it is possible to argue that for them, the comparison of language with

gestures produces an effect in the comprehension and the thought, something like of triangulation of the vision. For (McNeill, 2002) both manners (gesture and language) are the essential components of the psycholinguistic functioning. It would be treated as “a dialectic that naturally incorporates the spoken context in an integral way (...)” (McNeill, 2002).

This type of study has been promoted in such way that could become extensive to the indigenous Community. Davis (mentioned in Armstrong, 2011) developed a study with gestural language in indigenous communities in the North American valley. The study documents that every gesture contains in itself a meaning, rather than being a simple additional contribution to the spoken language. Wheeler, (2010) mentions the studies of Farnell (2009) with the Languages of Signs spoken in the Indian valleys of the Assiniboine culture (Nakota), which serve frankly as a language between several Native Americans of the greater valleys.

But the study of the Languages of Signs also faces certain difficulties, where the iconicity and the anthropomorphism stand out. The iconicity refers to the representation of a figure in the manual configuration of the user of the Sign Languages. For Taub (2001) in the iconicity, the parts of the modality are represented as analogous parts of the signed language form.

This situation cannot appear frequently in the oral language (though some of them exist few words iconic (i.e. to howl)), because the figures of the environment cannot always be associated to a typical sound.

Therefore the iconicity would be common in languages of signs as well as oral, and it is present in all the levels of the linguistic structure, “including morphology and syntax, as in individual words” (Taub, 2001). The author concludes that the iconicity exists only across mental efforts of the human beings; it depends on our conceptual nature and cultural associations.

With regard to the anthropomorphism, as the iconicity, one can consider it is a common resource and it occurs when they are assigned a human appearance and feelings of animated or inanimate objects (Sutton-Spence and Napoli, 2010). The linguistic processes as a base would be similar to those of the iconicity, and is rarely relied upon in the accomplishment of a task in the oral language.

As one can see, linguistics offers a series of tensions towards the role of the body in the configuration of language (especially language of signs). These tensions come from the iconicity and anthropomorphism. For example, Churchill, Nishino, Okada, and Atkinson (2010) plead for the built-in and ecologically integrated nature of gestures in the acquisition of a second language. The authors describe the incident of the symbiotic gesture in the acquisition of a second language. Other arguments in favour of this element come from the study of the metaphor (Brennan, 2005; Giuranna \*Giuranna, 2000; Jarque, 2005; Pizzuto, Russo and Giuranna, 2001; Wilcox,

1993, 2000; Snapdragon 2008) in ASL<sup>1</sup>, BSL<sup>2</sup>, LSC<sup>3</sup>, LIS<sup>4</sup> and LSCh, which demonstrates complexity and abstraction in Deaf reasoning stemmed from iconicity.

#### 4. THE BODY THROUGH PSYCHOLOGY

In the field of Psychology, the controversies today regarding cognition, language and meaning are also in an important phase. This discipline has generated critiques to the Cognitivism as a theory of the processing of information.

Though the Connectionism arises as response to this dualism, it does not manage to overcome the metaphor of the systems of calculation.

The tensions in relation to cognition, language and meaning go not only to the comprehension of the human mind in the body. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999), they point out to assume that the body is in the mind, and that through it we have representations with a precise content, which “they say to the external world, though not to the present world of each one of us, but to the world for (or through) this body, with its physical organs but also mental, was selected”.

The scope of these ideas is deeper even, on having indicated that the fact that the reason should be embodied it does not recount to the simple affirmation from which we need a body to reason. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that in itself the same structure of the reason comes from the details of our corporeity. Where “the same neural mechanisms and cognitive that allow us to perceive and to move also create our conceptual systems and manners of reasoning”.

The interrogations point to the existence of similar elements that can favor Intercultural communication between Deaf and the Hearing. And in this respect, the postulates of Lakkof and Johnson (1999) constitute a starting point. They indicate that: (i) The mind is inherently embodied<sup>5</sup>; (ii) Thought is mainly unconscious and (iii) Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical.

The suppositions of Lakkof and Johnson (1980, 1999) were translated into a particular way of understanding language in Psychology and Cognitive Linguistics, giving the body a fundamental place in the development of cognition and language. This theory of the role of the body in language and cognition has been named an embodied cognition. The theory stipulates that the mind is personified in an inserted corporality in a particular culture (Anderson, 2003; Clark, 1997).

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviation corresponding to the American Sign Language.

<sup>2</sup> Abbreviation corresponding to the British Sign Language.

<sup>3</sup> Abbreviation corresponding to the Catalan Sign Language.

<sup>4</sup> Abbreviation corresponding to the Italian Sign Language.

<sup>5</sup> The term used originally in English is embodied, term that traditionally has been translated like flesh-colored / flesh-colored but that will be translated here like embodied / embodied. [Note of the translator]

From this theory diverse concepts arise and studies that give life to the mentioned suppositions, and confirm its validity. In the field of the Language of Signs, they have begun to develop studies orientated from embodied cognition. For example Roush (2011) tries to understand how the American Language of signs (ASL) develops conceptual systems of abstract notions as a cognitive metaphorical map, and why the ASL has strong iconic devices (corporal) at its disposition. The author gathers a series of results that come from the application of the Conceptual Theory of the Metaphor (Lakoff and 1980 Johnson; Lakoff 1987; 1993; Wilcox 2000; Taub 2001; Steen 2007; and Steen, Dorst, Herrmann, Kaal, Krenmayr, and It Amazes, 2010) to an analysis of ethnographic and linguistic information. In the same topic, other findings from the presence of metaphors anchored in the corporal experience and iconicity of the ASL, BSL, LIS, LSCh, LSC among others (Brennan, 1994; Giuranna \*Giuranna, 2000; Jarque, 2005; Pizzuto, Russo and Giuranna, 2001; Wilcox, 1993, 2000; Snapdragon, 2008). Beyond its linguistic scopes, these findings show the presence of a language loaded with conceptualizations of abstract thought in Deaf subjects. It allows affirmation of the presence of an abstract thought in the Deaf, knocking down myths that were affirming a level of concrete thinking (Gilbertson & Kahmi, 1995; Iran-Nejad, Rittenhouse, & Morreau, 1981; Wolgelmuth, Kahmi, Boatner, & Gates, 1975; Conrad, 1979; Furth, 1973; Johnson & Myklebust, 1967).

As it has been seen, embodied cognition is a topic that makes sense in the investigation of the signed languages. This theory has wide support from Psycholinguistics as well as Neurosciences. The above mentioned support the vision of which the conceptual treatment is both linguistic and flesh-colored, with a trend towards incarnation (Louwerse & Jeuniaux, 2009).

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## 5. THE INTERCULTURALITY IN THE BODY: WHY INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION?

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Culture and interculturality are also controversial topics. Although the concept “culture” even does not achieve a wide consensus in its definition (Femenías, 2007 but in general terms, we can mention the words of García Canclini (2005), who indicates that:

On having proposed to study the cultural aspect we include the set of processes across which two or more groups represent and feel social aspects in an imaginary way, they conceive and manage relations with others, or the differences, arrange its dispersion and incommensurability by means of a delimitation that fluctuates between the order that makes possible the functioning of society, the zones of dispute (local and global) and the actors who open up possibilities.

The latter affirmation is a compromising idea, especially in the context of the precarious Education of the Deaf (in terms of the commanding oral speech). This reaffirms our duty to dedicate better efforts to the use and study of the language of signs in all the educational levels, a situation that does not occur in Chile. Traditionally, the efforts go to the access to the oral language, using as a resource of support the language of signs, which enclosed in certain occasions transforms it into an obstacle. In Chile, the unequal treatment that has been given to the Language of Signs sharpens the asymmetric position that is assigned to the Deaf. It marks the deterioration and linguistically and condemns (as in the indigenous cultures) the Deaf culture to exclusion.

But the abandonment of sign language as a mother tongue at the mercy of an imperious Spanish, is not an experience exclusive to the Deaf. Schmelkes (2022) details the same situation referring to the abolition of the indigenous language in favor of Spanish. It is what the author refers to as *Subtractive education* “where the mother tongue is substituted by the use and domain of the Spanish language”.

To avoid this abandonment of the Language of Signs, we must insist on his full use of all the educational levels. For this Schmelkes (2002) states it as an indispensable requirement, that the mother language must be an object of study, and also a vehicle of education. In the matter, the author adds:

“ It is not enough to teach the language, is necessary to teach in the language. If the model of reference is the bilingualism additive, then it is necessary to teach the indigenous language and is necessary to teach in the indigenous language, along the whole basic education. And it is necessary to teach Spanish and it is necessary to teach in Spanish along the whole basic education. Both languages must be in balance, also along the whole basic education. And it is convenient to rotate the language in which there are taught the different areas of the knowledge or subjects in order to obtain the appropriate vocabulary of each one of them in both languages. “

If for the mother indigenous language this is an important premise, it cannot be less so for the case of sign language, which has been recognized as another language. Therefore, for our case of Bilingualism, the School must teach Language of Signs in Language of Signs along the rest of the education. And this Language of Signs must reach an identical status to that of the oral language, in understanding that the goal is Intercultural Education. Here it must be emphasized that the learning of the Oral Language Written under no circumstance must be understood as the achievement of the writing of the LSCh. And in this respect it becomes necessary take charge of the problems that the Bilingualism offers to the Education.

On the basis of the previous argument, the present proposal is a Bilingual Intercultural Education for deaf children. The elimination of the concept Biculturalism owes to the inconsistency that this term offers, as already it has been exposed.

It is suitable meanwhile to ask oneself, why Intercultural Education?. The answer does not take stem only in the strong educational inequalities. Although it is a question of asymmetries that the “ Illustrated modernity “offers (García Canclini, 2005), these asymmetries are not sole exclusive to our country either. Even García Canclini (2005), when referring to the Mexican case emphasizes how the investigations show the unequal entry to school and its diverse utilization for different classes.

The Intercultural Education is sustained not only in the need to overcome the inequality (that demonstrates especially as socioeconomic inequality) and the difference (visibly mainly in the cultural practices). The Intercultural education offers as a valid alternative to eliminate the present disconnection between deaf cultures and the Hearing, giving place to the unification and cultural exchange, and in this case, from the offer of an embodied language. Following García Canclini (2005), the idea consists in “managing to connect without smothering their difference nor being condemned to inequality”.

The Interculturality therefore supposes an effort supported by this connection in favor of a cultural exchange between the Deaf culture and the Hearing, eliminating the supremacy of one over the other; eliminating the suppression of a minority language of corporal character in benefit of another dominant one. In the case of the Education of the Deaf one there is promoted a Bilingual Intercultural Education for:

- (a) *To value others as legitimately as another*: what allows to give self-identify in the Hearing as much as in the Deaf, is the awareness of being different, which would not be possible if the existence the other did not exist. And this exchange in the daily relation during school is the one that allows this recognition and self-identify.
- (b) *Communication*: interaction is not possible without both cultures (deaf and the Hearing) communicating. And in this context the Language of Signs is a powerful way of interaction, to which also the Hearing can access, being able with it to form a part of the Deaf culture. The access is enabled because the LSCh is (1) a visual modality - gestural perceptible for any hearing person without visual difficulties; (2) it presents some elements of conceptual mapping common to the Hearing (i.e: the good thing is above; the bad thing is below) and (3) it is anchored in the body.
- (c) *Conversation*: intercultural relations demand the abandonment of authoritarianism. Everything related to the coexistence requires the search of agreement across the dialogue. In such a case dialogue is absolutely necessary between the Deaf culture and the Hearing in an attempt of cultural exchange, more than a “normalization” with a “ill” culture or a “biological assimilation” (Femenías, 2007). It is a question of eliminating

the concept of disease - normality, giving in to the acceptance of the legitimate differences that come from a diversity of conditions for development. It is also about enhancing Bilingualism by eliminating any attempt of subordinating sign language to oral speech. This means giving sign language the corresponding status.

- (d) *Reciprocity*: it is hoped that to give and receive is the relation between societies, individuals, States or between human beings and the environment. In our case it is about reciprocity of experiences where both cultures can become mutually benefited, especially in the linguistic field. It is a question of sharing experiences in an exchange of knowledge that enriches its members.

These Interculturality principles in the Education of the Deaf contributes elements that allow a healthy tension between one's own things and foreign things, leaving aside the conception of the isolated own thing that reigns nowadays. The last sense must be the configuration of scenes of identification and action. As García Canclini (2005) indicates, must tend to consider interculturality as heritage.

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## 6. THE BODY AS MEMORY OF THE CULTURE

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Certainly, to construct others through antinomy black/white; Jewish/Catholic; healthy / sick; deaf / hearing in an exclusive system, can generate non desirable scenes. Femenías (2007) warns about the danger that once the identity in these parameters is assumed “should generate self-affirmation in terms of self-segregation, sectarianism, chauvinism, reversed racism”. The problem arises from the historicity of the Deaf, whose culture has fought tirelessly against such an antinomy, avoiding to distort their identity. In this battle they sought for the reification of the language of signs and its anchorage in the body. Nowadays it could mean accepting that Deaf reasoning follows almost the same principles of embodied cognition in the case of the Hearing (with the exception of hearing impairment). And it has been exposed in studies of iconicity and metaphors (Brennan, 2005; Pizzuto, 2001; Giuranna, 2000; Ibañez, Becerra, Sirlopu, and Cornejo, 2005; Jarque, 2005; Taub, 2001; Wilcox, 2000; Willcox, 1993; Becerra, 2008).

What one proposes is that only certain elements of the Deaf Episteme that could be common within the Hearing. For Ladd (2003), the aspects of the Deaf episteme are not caused by the Deafness in itself but actually by the “condition of Deafness”: understanding this concept as the “state of being deaf” (inside its historicity). This has a positive impact on how deaf individuals learn, as opposed to Oralism, and allow them to join society in a healthy manner.

To understand the way that the Deaf perceive the world, and to look for common points with the Hearing comes from a need of intercultural interaction with the majority. That can transform in a contribution to the education of the Deaf, contemplating their mother language and guaranteeing access to the intercultural curriculum.

For the achievement of this goal, Intercultural Education must be constituted as a starting point, strengthening the conservation of the language of signs and horizontal dialogue with the Hearing, leaving aside any assimilationist interests.

The offer takes root in the establishment of channels of communication between deaf and the Hearing. Channels that since have been determined, can depart from embodied language, in the search of common elements of linguistic exchange between the Deaf and the Hearing. Elements that also us can lead to the construction of some common epistemes. This new way of looking at the problem can transform it into a new theoretical offer regarding language and the intercultural communication, integrating topics from Psychology, Linguistics and Education.

Considering the exposed precedents, it is interesting to state the following interrogative: which are the elements of the embodied language that are common to the Deaf culture and the Hearing? The answer can open up a series of favorable scenes for Interculturality and conservation of the LSCh.

Since we have already seen, the body contributes with something more than the simple vital support of survival. Well (2001) reaffirms this on having indicated the following:

I am not saying that the mind should be in the body. What I say is that the body contributes to the brain with something more than the vital support and the modulating effects. It contributes with a content that is a fundamental part for the mechanisms of the normal mind.

Since for Lakoff and Johnson (1999) the body also is in the mind and a narrow relation exists between both, it is plausible to reaffirm the anchorage of the mind in a particular culture. For the case of the Deaf and the Hearing, though they present differences between both cultures, it is necessary to pay attention to the similarities. In fact, the only differences take root in the absence in the auditory input.

For example, Well (2001) adds in this regard:

If the first thing that the brain developed is to assure the survival of the body in a strict sense, at the time, when the brains capacity of thinking appeared, it started by thinking about the body.

And I suggest that to assure the survival of the body in the most effective way possible, nature met a very effective solution: to represent the external world in terms of the modifications of the basic representations of the body in the strict sense providing that an interaction takes place between the organism and the environment.

Paraphrasing Damasio, Well (2001) adds that “one’s being” is a biological condition which is “reconstructed repeatedly” and the best instrument that this being has to represent itself within this world is throughout the representation of its own body, which is its only form or pathway to interact with the world. Therefore if the body is the route of interaction with the world and the Deaf differ biologically only by the sense of hearing, it turns out to be exciting to look for other elements of corporal representation that are common to them with the Hearing. A possibility would be the common elements in the interaction between organism and environment, as was indicated by Pozo (2001).

Whichever our conclusions may be, the interesting part is to always look for means of Intercultural communication. Ways that, for arguments sake, are found in the body. As memory and support of the mind and the culture. Culture that for the Deaf one also is reconstructed from his history and Deafness (in Ladd’s terms, 2003).

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## CONCLUSION

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As one can appreciate, speaking about Bilingualism-Biculturalism imposes upon us a difficult barrier to overcome, having considered: (a) only two cultures (deaf and the Hearing) that coexist without a clear relation and (b) a visual gestural language that cannot be written down. Biculturalism assumes the values of a Multicultural position, more than Intercultural, by means of recognition of hearing as a supremacy over the Deaf culture. As Schmelkes (2002) states, the concept of Interculturality allows to go beyond multiculturalism, which refers to the coexistence of different cultures in one same territory or geographical area, but does not mention the relation between them and for this reason does not qualify this relationship. It assumes a respectful relationship from equal positions. It does not allow asymmetries of any type: political, economical nor social. Neither does it allow educational asymmetries.

Intercultural Education, as Schmelkes (2002) indicates, allows for us to fight in opposition to scholar asymmetries. Asymmetries that surpass themselves to the extent that they are applicable to the whole population.

We cannot educate the Deaf if we are not capable of educating the Hearing in a with the common and true intention of exchange. As Schmeke (2002) indicates “true education of interculturality is only given when it is destined for the whole population “.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to highlight the real sense of Education and the values that are implied from this reflection. In the matter, the need of an Intercultural Education of the Deaf stems from a long history of invisibilization. This experience has located the Deaf in a secondary situation and as an inferior, affecting their recognition. This has been especially demonstrated in Education. The asymmetry between the Deaf and the

Hearing has transformed Education in a precarious element, as much in curricular as in the social aspects. It has led to the offer of new educational concepts, where the Intercultural issue is constituted as an articulator axis. And Interculturality offers a favorable scene, not as equalitarian manner, but as a way of incorporating the Deaf in a process of reaffirmation of *the different*.

According to UNESCO (2006), Interculturality is defined as a dynamic concept that refers to the evolutionary relations between cultural groups. This alludes to “the presence and equal interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions acquired by means of dialogue and of an attitude of mutual respect” (UNESCO, 2006).

Though no formula exists for Intercultural Education, the substantial matter is to find the purpose of educating, in the whole complexity and depth that this means. This purpose is probably the one that also can re-orientates us towards a redefinition of Deafness, differential education and the collective imaginary of this issue.

Skliar (2009) proposes as the starting point, dialogue and coexistence: the same elements that UNESCO (2006) exposes in their approach to Interculturality.

Elements that somehow need major enhancing, especially in the National Chilean field. For Skliar (2009) the concept of coexistence implies the notion of relations of affection, of contradiction, friction and contiguity.

Nowadays one speaks about a weakening of coexistence precisely from the existence of relations of friction. It is as if coexistence was consisted only of sly formulae of good habits and customs, didactics of the well-being and of the good to say, “less intelligent and banal experiments of dialogue already pre-constructed” (Skliar, 2009). For the author, coexistence is much more than that and involves many relations of friction just as much as those of mutual agreement.

It is because of this fact that Intercultural Education needs to be approached with major force from coexistence. Coexistence that can take us to the enrichment of the dialogue, incorporating the Deaf as “legitimately another citizen”. It is a question of an understanding coexistence not from viewpoint of cancellation of differences. It is a question of understanding coexistence as a different way from the one that has been understood up to today, in a world that understands it “providing that (...) a prudential distance is kept, often tinted by words of order, such as tolerance or acceptance or recognition of others” (Skliar, 2009). This is because there is no relation, but an excess of distance or nonchalance.

The goal is to restore Intercultural Education from conception of the subject, where it is not a question of “one and the other, of excluded and included, of normal and abnormal and of the possible relations that too often are assumed like as a convergent force” (Skliar, 2009). Indeed, it is the question of an Intercultural

Education that takes upon itself to be united and to be from the historicity of all subjects. In a time and space of horizontal dialogue, between different pupils, assuming a conception of a historicized subject, independently from the communicative modality.

The challenge which we face today has to do with the path Intercultural Education begins to take, of the Deaf in Chile and Latin America, where the question is how to promote this horizontal dialogue through effective channels of communication. And the Education must form part of this dynamic, going beyond the pre-constructed speeches and euphemisms; going beyond the epistemic differences and the communicative barriers, in an endless search of linguistic tools for interaction and common elements of embodied cognition. Leaving behind the principles of normalization and irrationality of the body in an invitation to the Hearing to submerge themselves in the riches of the corporality of the language of signs, for which barriers do not exist.

For this purpose, it is possible to think of Education of Educational Special not under “the petty urgency of the utilitarianism of a certain moral obligation to be suffered, but as that time and that space that opens a possibility and a responsibility towards the existence of others, to all existence, to any existence” (Skliar, 2009). The horizontal dialogue must contemplate not only the ethnic minorities, but to all those cultures that systematically have been excluded by abstract universalism.

This conception of Interculturality of authentic horizontal dialogue, open also to the education of the Deaf might give a step towards the enrichment of a supposition that may have been lost in our modern society. This supposition that would allow to understand Education as “a responsibility and a desire for a “task of coexistence”, that “enables, that makes it possible, that gives a step, and allows to step forward, allows things to happen, that teaches, the possibility of putting giving common ground between the different forms and experiences of the existence” (Skliar, 2009). A supposition that allows to knocking down myths of compassion and temporary moral duty wrongly assumed.

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