

Peculiarities of the voice use by school physical education teachers: origin and interactive function

Peculiaridades do uso da voz por professores de educação física escolar: origem e função interativa

Peculiaridades del uso de la voz por profesores de educación física escolar: origen y función interactiva

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Abstract

Introduction: Physical education teachers have the voice as work resource with peculiarities that distinguish them from other teachers: vocal use as an incentive to the physical activities of their students in the midst of organizational and environmental aspects differentiated from those found in the classroom. There are few studies about these professionals' vocal use origin. **Objective:** To discourse about the physical education military origin as determinant of the vocal manner adopted by the majority of teachers and the peculiarities related to these professionals' vocal use. **Method:** It is a bibliographical review article involving the search of theoretical texts on the origin of physical education, oral communication and voice of the physical education teacher in books, dissertations and theses specific to the areas of Education and Speech and Language Pathology. **Results:** The data found accentuate the encouraging characteristic of this professional voice that seeks to initiate and maintain the body movement of the students, in the midst of sound competition of the practical and noisy activities of the physical education classes, mostly in wide-open environments, or in improvised places with few suitable conditions for the vocal use. **Discussion:** The data alert to a professional practice with vocal use in high intensity. The non-

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recognition of the teachers as voice professionals supports the little care and voice training. **Conclusion:** Reinforces the idea that physical education teachers must have training for the adequate voice usage, both in undergraduate and in the course of professional practice.

Keywords: Voice; Teacher; Physical Education.

Resumo

Introdução: Professores de educação física têm a voz como recurso de trabalho com peculiaridades que os diferenciam de outros professores: uso vocal como incentivo à atividade física de seus alunos em meio a aspectos organizacionais e ambientais diferenciados dos encontrados em sala de aula. Há poucos estudos sobre a origem histórica do uso vocal desses profissionais. **Objetivo:** Discorrer sobre a origem militar da educação física como determinante do estilo vocal adotado por grande parte dos professores e das peculiaridades relacionadas ao uso da voz por esses profissionais. **Método:** Trata-se de um artigo de revisão bibliográfica envolvendo busca de textos teóricos e documentos oficiais sobre a origem da educação física, comunicação oral e voz do professor de educação física em livros, dissertações, teses e artigos científicos específicos das áreas da Educação e da Fonoaudiologia. **Resultados:** Os dados encontrados salientam a característica incentivadora da voz desse profissional que busca desencadear e manter o movimento corporal dos alunos, em meio à concorrência sonora das atividades práticas e ruidosas das aulas de educação física, na maioria das vezes em ambiente de grande amplitude, ou em locais improvisados com poucas condições apropriadas ao uso vocal. **Discussão:** Os dados alertam para uma prática profissional com uso vocal em forte intensidade. O não reconhecimento dos professores como profissionais da voz favorece o pouco cuidado e treinamento vocal. **Conclusão:** Reforça-se a ideia de que professores de educação física necessitam de formação para o adequado uso da voz, tanto na graduação como no decorrer do exercício profissional.

Palavras-chave: Voz; Docentes; Educação Física.

Resumen

Introducción: Los maestros de educación física tienen la voz como recurso de trabajo con peculiaridades que los diferencian de otros maestros: el uso vocal como incentivo a la actividad física de sus alumnos en medio a aspectos organizacionales y ambientales diferentes de los que hay en la clase. Existen pocos estudios sobre el origen histórico del uso vocal de esos profesionales. **Objetivo:** Discurrir sobre el origen militar de la educación física como determinante del estilo vocal adoptado por grande parte de los maestros y sobre las peculiaridades relacionadas al uso de la voz por esos profesionales. **Método:** Se trata de un artículo de revisión bibliográfica que engloba la búsqueda de textos teóricos y documentos oficiales sobre el origen de la educación física, comunicación oral y voz del maestro de educación física, en libros, disertaciones, tesis y artículos científicos específicos de las áreas de Educación y Fonoaudiología. **Resultados:** Los datos encontrados evidencian la característica incentivadora de la voz de ese profesional, que busca estimular y mantener el movimiento corporal de los alumnos en una concurrencia sonora con las actividades prácticas y ruidosas de esas clases, frecuentemente en ambientes de gran amplitud u en locales improvisados con pocas condiciones apropiadas al uso vocal. **Discusión:** Los datos alertan sobre una práctica profesional con uso vocal en fuerte intensidad. El no reconocimiento de los maestros como profesionales de la voz favorece el poco cuidado y entrenamiento vocal. **Conclusión:** Se refuerza la idea de que maestros de educación física necesitan formación para el uso adecuado de la voz, tanto en la licenciatura como en el transcurrir del ejercicio profesional.

Palabras claves: Voz; Docentes Educación Física.



Introduction

Teachers are professionals who have the voice as one of the most important instruments of work and are predisposed to vocal risk¹. Predominantly, studies aligned with this statement were developed based on the investigation of teachers from school disciplines other than physical education²⁻⁵, as this discipline is considered to have peculiarities that make it difficult to study these professionals along with other categories of teachers, in order to avoid false conclusions about the latter⁶⁻⁸.

The school physical education teachers were influenced by the military origin of Brazilian physical education⁹, which imposes a characteristic voice style – the Command Voice¹⁰ – with the aim to encourage the initiation and maintenance of the students' body movement, as a teaching-learning strategy, according to curricular guidelines¹¹.

It is intended, throughout this study, to relate the performance of this professional to the expression of a vocal style that is characteristic to this category of teachers, observed in the establishment of human interactions present in the teaching-learning process¹². Moreover, we have the aim to evidence that this type of vocal performance may have consequences due to its intense use in unfavorable environments and situations (which may outwear the teacher's vocal health) and to the lack of education and/or training regarding the proper use of voice by these professionals.

Description

To write this communication, a qualitative literature review was carried out to expose the peculiarities present in the practice of school physical education teachers, according to five themes: the origin of physical education in Brazil, the definition of Command Voice, the practice of school physical education teachers, the teacher-student interactions, and the professional voice of physical education teachers. Once the themes were outlined, we included four books that depict the history of physical education, the human interactions in teaching, and the teacher's voice; three official documents addressing the definition of Command Voice and the practice of school physical education; one thesis addressing the teacher's voice as teaching instrument, and 21 scientific articles available

from SciELO (keywords: voice, teacher, physical education), only the manuscripts that addressed the themes proposed were included.

The origin of the Command Voice

Since the Imperial period, Brazil has imported European gymnastics methods, such as German, Swedish and French¹³, to structure its physical education. These methods are all based on military precepts in order to attend specific needs from their origin countries, like territorial defense, the population's health and hygiene, and body training to attend the demand of the recent industrial era. The strategies of dissemination and adherence to these methods were directed to the population with the aim to stimulate the feeling of patriotism and belonging, instigating pride for the exacerbated nationalism and representing the ideal of healthy, vigorous people, with energy and morals¹⁴. The German gymnastics method was established in Brazil in May 1860, with the designation of a German lieutenant for the post of gymnastic foreman of the Brazilian Military School¹³, while the Swedish method was established defending that it would be the most appropriate to our students, based on academic publications and the opinion of prominent personalities, such as Rui Barbosa and Fernando de Azevedo. The French method was officially consolidated in 1921, although it had been used since 1907, with the arrival of the French Military Mission, which was in charge of instructing the Public Force of the State of São Paulo.

This brief report about the origin of physical education in Brazil, focused on the military influence of European gymnastic methods, link the performance of these professionals to the characteristic use of voice: the Command Voice. This voice is defined by the Brazilian Army as standardized forms by which the commander of a unit verbally expresses his will. The voice is the most commonly used means of command in military actions, since it allows simultaneous and immediate execution¹⁰. Considering that the term Voice of Command is commonly used in the training actions and maneuvers executed by the military companies, it makes sense that this voice is incisive, determined, and requires vocal power from the speaker.

The militaristic ancestry gave physical education a training character of "citizen soldier", ready

to obey and serving as an example to the young people who needed to be brave and courageous¹⁵.

In practice, classes used strategies of student control, giving the teacher a central role. Hence, military formations, such as lines and columns, started to be used, as well as groupings the so-called coverage – strategy of aesthetic organization that uses the arm length to determine the distance between students, which is performed after the command voice “cover”.

This type of organization of students preceded any practical action in class, as some sort of first moment of the day. Usually, the grouping followed a classification based on the height of students, as a reference of superiority and selection of the more capable. Groups were separated by gender and, at that time, it was mandatory for the students to wear uniforms.

It becomes obvious that, for order maintenance of this model of action, it is necessary to have a Command Voice, which is certainly a task trusted to the teacher.

Vocal Action in School Physical Education

The performance of the school physical education teacher is based on orientation and stimulus for the student's physical activity. From this assumption, he might be considered a professional who interacts with people¹², with the aim to initiate the teaching-learning process through the student's physical activity. Therefore, the practice of the physical education teachers has peculiarities of practical nature, as it counts on body movement as a prime factor for his teaching task¹⁶. While other school disciplines require a relative immobility of the students, who remain predominantly seated in the classroom, school physical education stimulates movement and the environmental exploration by the students.

The human interactions established in school physical education classes present specific characteristics that must be considered, since interacting with moving people in inadequate environment requires vocal effort from the professional and represents health risk factor^{17,18}. School physical education teachers have favorable situations that can benefit the teaching-learning process, as they count on a mostly relaxed environment, according to the educational guidelines that suggest that playful

activities are widely used as teaching strategy. Such fact facilitates the spontaneous participation and adherence by students, with little persuasion effort. When, however, they're attitude is not collaborative, the task of the school physical education teacher becomes difficult beyond the resistance to learning, since body movement is a fundamental element for learning. Thus, convincing the student to be willing to learn is not enough; it is necessary to stimulate him to perform the body movement, which requires efficiency in the established interaction, so the teacher can convince the student¹².

In the fulfillment of his professional obligation, school physical education teachers usually cannot count on audiovisual and written language resources to help. Their voice is the main communication instrument to teach their students, naturally scattered in large physical spaces dedicate to sports. There are still other practical challenges that influence their vocal use because, once the activities begin, the directions that follow are primarily oriented to the group, since the instructions/corrections are rarely offered individually to the students. The teachers, most of the times, speak to large groups using a strong and comprehensive speech. Individual interactions, although they may occur, do not represent the main form of intervention for these teachers, nor are the activities interrupted because of the necessary interventions made during the activities.

Emphasizing the implications that contribute for the verbal communication of the school physical education teacher to deserve to be analyzed according to its peculiarities, there is still other decisive factors, such as the working environment of this professional. Most of the times, the classes take place at open sports courts with large dimensions, usually facilitating sound dispersion, or at closed courts with tendencies to sound reverberation, or, yet, at improvised environments such as courtyards, sheds and corridors, inadequate to vocal use.

No matter how reserved a school facility is for physical education classes, it is rarely an environment totally restricted to the students and the teacher. Other agents interfere, even indirectly, in the space and dynamics of the class, contributing for an environment considerably noisy. There is also the dynamics of the activities used as class strategy, which are very similar to the dynamics of a sports/competition environment with dispute and vitality, in addition to spontaneous manifestations



of the involved, thus producing a sound competition to the necessary vocal interventions from the teacher.

Considering these factors, physical education teachers experience a paradoxical situation, since, by stimulating his students to the practice of physical activity, they end up creating a noisy environment that hinders their communication.

Human interactions in school practice

Inevitably, in pursuit of an efficient class management, the voice of the school physical education teacher has acquired imperative characteristics and, keeping the due proportions and objectives, reminds the Command Voice previously mentioned. However, the “blind” obedience of former students does not prevail nowadays. Social changes have determined other relationships between teachers and students, which are permeated by a consumer profile¹⁹, in which the students have the right to complain and to actively participate. Such attitude is incompatible with the strategies of control used in school physical education classes in the past. However, the teachers’ need to communicate with their students remains the same. The communication conditions have been modified, but not the need to communicate. In, in the past teachers used to establish verbal interaction with lifeless students, frequently in attention position, in a situation of complete submission, today this framework has become positively unthinkable.

Despite the advances towards the recognition of a rule of law, something unquestionable, in practice, the school physical education teacher is overloaded when trying to communicate with his students. The constant appeal to physical activity and its maintenance requires his voice to convey enthusiasm and encouragement to exercise, leading to effort and attrition. As voice is a behavior²⁰ and may, therefore, be modified, the teacher can control it, adapting to his objective and seeking to use it as a necessary support to the student, conveying confidence and credibility to the proposed strategy and to the class content.

Empathy between teacher and student surely is influenced by the teacher’s vocal utterance, and this may be a determining factor for failure or success of the educational goals. A voice compatible with the nature and demands of the class can positively contribute for the learning success of the student.

The voice might be modified by the speaker according to his objectives²⁰, therefore, to meet the vocal challenges, school physical education teachers need training to better use the voice, considering the adverse situations of his job.

Final considerations

Once characterized the vocal use of school physical education teachers and having presented its correspondences with questions regarding the risk of vocal wear due to peculiarities of this modality of teaching, it may be affirmed that there is a need for training on how to use oral communication and the voice in order to minimize the impact of specific conditions of his job.

Considering that voice professionals are those that intensely use it in their work activities, such as teachers^{21,22}, and that the interaction between teacher-student occurs mainly by oral communication in unfavorable environments that involve a huge range of variables, the vocal risks are eminent, as well as the need to prevent them^{21,23-25}. The lack of recognition of the teacher as a voice professional who is subject to this condition is established predominantly in Speech-Language Pathology studies, which indicate that this probably occurs because teachers are primarily involved in innumerable tasks in the teaching-learning process, rarely turning their own attention to the use of the vocal resource with a professional approach^{26,27}. Notwithstanding, there is the recent extension of their role due to educational reforms that suggest the extrapolation of their obligations beyond the classroom²⁷.

The collective and at the same time individual involvement with students, as well as the multiplicity of pedagogical and administrative tasks, require absolute dedication from the teachers to the fulfillment of their professional obligations. There is no way to “cheat” this fact before a large group who depends on their actions. By managing these demands, teachers end up prioritizing the primary tasks concerning the students, leaving for later issues that they judge not to be priority²⁸, such as their vocal health.

The fact that teachers do not recognize themselves as voice professionals makes it difficult to understand and emphasize the importance of the vocal resource in their activities, decreasing the chances of full use of voice and increasing the

vulnerability of this professional category regarding the risk for work-related vocal disorders due to its inappropriate use.

The awareness that the voice is an important professional instrument is something still longed for and raises the idea that the initial teacher training must contemplate knowledge about the proper vocal use to benefit the teacher as well as the entire teaching-learning process. Teachers' training to use the voice as a working instrument should be disseminated as fundamental knowledge in this profession, something that do not occur most of the times²⁷⁻²⁹.

Once the voice is recognized as a working instrument, the teacher can become agent of his own voice, acquiring autonomy over it and facilitating the preservation and application of the vocal resource with the property of those who recognize voice as a factor inherent to the profession²⁸. The fact is that programs following this direction have proven the benefits achieved¹.

The teachers' recognition that they are voice professionals may facilitate the understanding of aspects involving this resource, not only when there is manifestation of vocal disorders that hinder their performances, but also in the comprehension of broader concepts about the use of voice.

The historical inheritance determining the use of Command Voice, the need to encourage the body practice of students, the unfavorable performance environment, and the lack of recognition of voice as a main work instrument contribute to the recognition of school physical education teachers as a professional category that is vulnerable to voice alterations. Therefore, this study defends the idea that physical education teachers must receive the proper initial and continued training for the professional use of voice.

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