



The use of voice in Pankararu indigenous rituals

O uso da voz nos rituais indígenas Pankararu

El uso de la voz en los rituales indígenas Pankararu

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Abstract

Introduction: The voice is essential for the preservation and maintenance of the culture of social groups. The Pankararu people link their mother language to religious rituals. The main way of transmitting the oral tradition is through singing in the rituals of Praiás. **Objective:** To rescue the use of voice by Pankararu singers in the Praiás ritual, considering the traditional and scientific knowledges. **Method:** Qualitative study, history life, autobiography design, which individual and collective memories of the Pankararu community were accessed, considering the characterization of the people, environment, and voice use in the rituals. **Results:** The singers use their voices intensely and continuously, without hydration, and smoking pipes during the ritual. The “terreiro” is the place where they sing, an open space, exposed to wuthering and dust. They are based on traditional knowledge for taking care of their voices, in a different view of scientific knowledge, in which voice represents their culture and identity. In this perspective, habits described in the literature as harmful are considered healthy, demonstrating a unique conception of health. **Conclusion:** Scientific knowledge, in parallel with the traditional one, can contribute to establish care aimed at the vocal health of the Pankararus. I will be able to offer to my people, who have health demands, scientific knowledge providing a better quality of voice and life.

Keywords: Voice; Indigenous Culture; Traditional Medicine.

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Authors' contributions:

ATC: conception, study design, analysis, and interpretation of data; preliminary versions of the manuscript; final approval of the published version; agreement on all aspects of the work in terms of accuracy and integrity of the information.

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Resumo

Introdução: a voz é essencial para preservação e manutenção da cultura de grupos sociais. O povo Pankararu, vincula sua língua-mãe aos rituais religiosos. A principal forma de transmitir a tradição oral é através dos cantos nos rituais dos Praiás. **Objetivo:** resgatar o uso de voz pelos cantadores Pankararu no ritual dos Praiás, à luz do saber tradicional e científico. **Método:** estudo qualitativo, do tipo história de vida, autobiográfica, no qual foram acessadas memórias individuais e coletivas da comunidade Pankararu, considerando a caracterização do povo, do ambiente e o uso de voz nos rituais. **Resultados:** os cantadores utilizam a voz de maneira intensa e contínua, sem hidratação, e fumam cachimbo durante o ritual. O local onde cantam é um terreiro, espaço aberto, exposto às intempéries da natureza, com presença de poeira. Para cuidar da voz, baseiam-se no saber tradicional, apresentando uma visão distinta do conhecimento científico, no qual a voz representa sua cultura e identidade. Nesta perspectiva, hábitos descritos pela literatura como deletérios, são considerados saudáveis, demonstrando uma concepção singular de saúde. **Conclusão:** o conhecimento científico, paralelamente ao tradicional, poderá contribuir para estabelecimento de cuidados que visem à saúde vocal dos Pankararus. Poderei oferecer ao meu povo, o qual apresenta demandas de saúde, conhecimentos científicos proporcionando uma melhor qualidade de voz e vida.

Palavras-chave: Voz; Cultura Indígena; Medicina Tradicional.

Resumen

Introducción: la voz es fundamental para la preservación y mantenimiento de la cultura de los grupos sociales. La gente de Pankararu, vincula su lengua materna a los rituales religiosos. La principal forma de transmitir la tradición oral es a través del canto en los rituales de Praiás. **Objetivo:** rescatar el uso de la voz de los cantantes de Pankararu en el ritual Praiás, a la luz de los conocimientos tradicionales y científicos. **Método:** estudio cualitativo, del tipo de historia de vida; Se accedió a las memorias individuales y colectivas de la comunidad Pankararu, considerando la caracterización de las personas, el entorno y el uso de la voz en los rituales. **Resultados:** los cantantes utilizan sus voces de forma intensa y continua, sin hidratarse, pipas de humo durante el ritual. El lugar donde canta el terreiro, un espacio abierto, expuesto a la intemperie de la naturaleza, con presencia de polvo. Para cuidar la voz, se basan en los conocimientos tradicionales, presentan una visión diferente del conocimiento científico, donde la voz representa la cultura y la identidad. En esta perspectiva, los hábitos descritos en la literatura como nocivos, se consideran saludables, demostrando una concepción única de la salud. **Conclusión:** El conocimiento científico, además del conocimiento tradicional, puede contribuir al establecimiento de cuidados dirigidos a la salud vocal de los Pankararus. Podré ofrecer a mi gente, que tiene demandas de salud, conocimientos científicos que brinden una mejor calidad de vida.

Palabras-clave: Voz; Cultura Indígena; Medicina Tradicional.

Introduction

There are 896,900 indigenous people in Brazil, who speak 274 languages and are grouped into 305 ethnic groups spread throughout the national territory¹. These people constantly fight for their lands, seeking the legitimate right to life, which represents their identity, culture and spirituality, facing genocide and ethnocide that are more widely disseminated today.

Many different indigenous groups live in Northeast of Brazil, who managed to survive after the colonists invaded their communities². The Pankararu people are one of these indigenous

groups and live near the São Francisco River Valley, in the State of Pernambuco. The villages of this group are located in a region between the municipalities of Tacaratu, Jatobá and Petrolândia, located 459.4 km from the capital Recife². The Pankararu area consists of the following villages: Brejo dos Padres, Brejinho da Serra, Bem Querer de Cima, Bem Querer de Baixo, Macaco, Folha Branca, Cacheado, Espinheiro, Agreste, Saco dos Barros, Serrinha, Pinhancó, Barrocão, Logradouro, Caldeirão, Barriguda, Mundo Novo, Carrapateira, Tapera, Lagoinha, Brejinho dos Correias, Jitó, Porterão, Baixa do Lero, Olho d'água do Bruno and Carrapateira³.

As a result of the entire colonization process, the Pankararus were forced to stop speaking their mother tongue. Although people do not use their own language in everyday life, it remains alive in religious rituals and is transmitted orally between generations. In this way, the main way to preserve the oral tradition is through the chants present in the rituals of Praiás. Thus, the voice is a fundamental element for the preservation of the culture of these people and the presence of the singer is essential for the rituals to take place.

According to Behlau⁴, the voice is produced as a result of the harmony of the entire phonatory system and constitutes a unique expression of each subject's personality. The author also reports that the voice is understood as normal when it is produced without effort, presenting a good sound quality for the listeners⁴. Based on this issue, it should be noted that voices produced through inadequate adjustments or lack of knowledge of the vocal apparatus may result in unwanted vocal alterations⁴, being characterized as dysphonia. This condition worsens when the voice is used as a fundamental instrument in the life of the individual, such as the singers of this indigenous people. Thus, some vocal well-being actions are essential to avoid possible dysphonia, especially hydration, vocal warm-up and cool-down, in addition to avoiding screaming or speaking at high intensity⁵.

However, scientific and traditional knowledge have different views regarding health care. While scientific knowledge uses established methods and knowledge to understand a health risk or benefit, traditional knowledge uses day-to-day learning or knowledge passed on from one's ancestors. It should be noted that both forms of knowledge are valid, which allows us to infer that both can be contemplated and contribute to the well-being of society. As indigenous communities have their peculiar way of seeing, understanding and treating aspects related to health, there is an interpretation as a religion, and the knowledge coming from ancestors, territory and indigenous culture are interconnected with voice care. In addition, it is necessary to think about how Speech-Language Pathology can assist in the preservation of the vocal quality of these individuals, thus preserving the oral tradition worshiped until the present day.

Thus, this study is justified due to the lack of literature related to the Pankararu people, especially about the use of voice in the rituals of the Praiás,

since there is a fear of losing their history without written records. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to report how the Pankararu singers use their voices in the Praiás ritual, discussing traditional and scientific knowledge.

Methodology

This is a retrospective experience report of the autobiographical life story type, on the use of the voice of the Pankararu singers in the Praiás ritual. The study will present and discuss memories referring to the traditional festivals of the people to which I belong and the use of voice in this context. Given the autobiographical nature of the study and the non-involvement of humans, in addition to the memory of the main author [ATC], the study was not submitted to the Research Ethics Committee. The experiences in the rituals detail a lifetime as an indigenous resident in one of the communities of the Pankararu people. This study will also address reflections on voice and how I began to observe its use in these rituals, as a speech-language pathologist and audiologist.

In this way, which is appropriated by the scientific literature, this study is included in the field of qualitative research which Silva et al.⁶ refer to it as a methodology constituted from the existing relationship between the researcher and the researched individual, through conversation that addresses the subjective experiences of individuals.

Thus, life history as a method aims at a historical review, providing the analysis of subjective aspects, such as existing cultural experiences and conceptions⁷. This method makes it possible to obtain specific information about a person, providing information both about the situation experienced by the subjects and their points of view related to the same experience, as it allows individuals to freely discuss what is being requested⁸. In addition, life history as a scientific methodology also aims to understand the relationship established between individual and/or collective stories⁶.

Thus, Silva and Barros⁹ reported that the narratives of the researched subject allow obtaining data on an event or phenomenon that occurred in a given society in a specific time or period of history. In this context, the material can be collected through interviews or testimonies, with a logic that builds, organizes and justifies the point of view of the subjects.

The review of memories allows the individual to give a new meaning to their journey and, when building their narrative about certain facts, they are building, deconstructing and reconstructing themselves according to the experiences acquired throughout their lives⁶. According to Nogueira et al.¹⁰, the memories reported by the subjects are related to their experiences and also include affective elements that are constitutive of each one. As a qualitative research, the biographical approach aims to recall the stories arising from the subject's individual experiences, with memory being an essential instrument in the construction of the narrative⁶.

As such, memory makes it possible to access both the present and the past, allowing subjects to report their individual and collective experiences in the relationship with the other and in the events of a lifetime¹⁰. According to Souza¹¹, based on the subjects' own narratives, life history aims to reconstruct the historical processes that took place in different contexts.

In this sense, this method was chosen because it allows the researcher to be the subject and object researched, reviewing their experiences. In the case of this study, which addresses the rituals of the Praiás, the review of experiences establishes the relationship between traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge, from a different perspective as an indigenous person and a speech-language pathologist.

In order to achieve the objectives of this article, a script was prepared for the application of the method, aiming to guide the research and recall events experienced during the participation in the Pankararu rituals. The questions explored in this script guided and facilitated the development of the work, establishing aspects that should be reviewed and reflected on the use of voice in the indigenous traditions of this people, as follows: a) characterization of the people; b) characterization of rituals;

c) the environment of the rituals, according to the dimension of the physical space, organization of the participants in that space, what is around the place, whether the environment is outdoor or indoor; d) questions regarding the use of voice in rituals were also elaborated, which address the frequency in which the singers usually sing, the care with the voice during the ritual, if there are changes in the voice during the singing and the number of consecutive hours that they sing.

Results

Characterization of the people

Similar to many other indigenous peoples in Brazil, the Pankararu people also suffered the impacts of colonization on their lands and culture. As a result of the Portuguese invasion and the catechization imposed by them, these people no longer speak their mother tongue in everyday life. However, even after 520 years, their language is still alive, being transmitted between generations orally through chants in religious rituals.

In this way, the language is kept alive mainly through the torés and toantes that are sung in the rituals of the Praiás (FIGURE 1). In these rituals, the entire body of male Indians is covered by clothes made from "caroá" fiber (a plant used in the production of clothing). There are many of these clothes in all of our communities and each one of them represents an enchanted one. In turn, each Praiá has a caregiver who is responsible for taking care of the person, and the caregivers are chosen by the enchanted. Therefore, these caregivers are called "father of Praiá". The Pankararus believe that the enchanted are spiritual protectors who inhabit the forests and visit the people through rituals, bringing advice, healing and other blessings that we need.



Tacaratu, Pernambuco, 2020. Personal archive

Figure 1. Praiás Indian Rituals *Pankararus*

Characterization of rituals

The most important ritual of our people is called “Corrida do Imbu” (Imbu Run), which takes place once a year over four consecutive weekends. This ritual was called “run” precisely because they occur one after the other. So, the elders named it “Imbu” because it comes from the umbu fruit (Brazilian plum), which is abundant in our villages and quite resistant to drought. Although there is no specific date for this ritual to take place, it usually takes place on the first weekend of Carnival. This ritual has great spiritual importance, as the purification of the indigenous people takes place, where they are burned with *cansanção* (a plant that can cause severe burning and pain) at the time of the dance. The Praiás also dance together, but they don’t get burned.

The “Corrida do Imbu” also includes the *tubibas*, which is a ritual that differs from the others, as the Praiás dance together with the women, making the steps in reference to the animals existing in our village. Each animal has its specific song and dance and, similar to the run, this ritual takes place

once a year. In order for the “Corrida do Imbu” to be performed, there is another ritual that must be performed before, which is called “imbu” arrowing. This ritual is performed when any individual of the Pankararu people finds the first “imbu” in our lands. In this opportunity, the fruit is taken to the place where one of the oldest Praiás is located, and a date is set to hit it with an arrow. On the day of this ritual, the Praiás must shoot an arrow at the “imbu”, but if they do not succeed, the other men of the village must try until they succeed. When the fruit is finally hit with an arrow by the man or Praiá, it is delivered to the oldest woman who is present in the worship place at that moment. We believe that when an arrow hits the “imbu”, bad things move away from our communities.

The ritual also includes the “Puxada do Cipó” (similar to the tug-of-war) on the same day, in which the Praiás pull on one side and the men on the other. If the Praiás are the winning side, it means that it will be a good year for our people, at peace, with health, in addition to being a good year for planting and harvesting. Otherwise, if men are the winning side, it suggests that the enchanted



will be a little further away to protect us. As in all rituals involving the *Praia*s, dancing and singing are present in this ritual.

There is another ritual in which the *Praia*s dance which is called “Menino no Rancho” (“Boy on the ranch”), which can take place on any weekend throughout the year. This ritual symbolizes the protection that will be given to the boy by an enchanted one, who will protect him throughout his life, in addition to initiating him in our traditions. This ritual occurs when there is a request from the enchanted one, or in case of illness of the child in which the parents ask for the protection of their child.

As such, these are some of the most important rituals of our people, although there are still many others. There are other rituals that can also take place on a specific date or at any time during the year, such as the “Três Rodas” (“Three Wheels”), in which the *Praia*s dance to celebrate the Grace obtained.

It should be noted that the presence of the singer is essential for these rituals to take place, as they sing the *toantes* and *torés* for the *Praia*s to dance. The singers are men or women from the village who sing throughout the ritual, and they sing in a worship place that will vary according to the party, as each of the aforementioned rituals is usually performed in different places, since each enchanting person has their own.

During the festivities, the singers make continuous use of their voices, singing for at least six hours per ritual. There is a singer who is always leading the ritual and sings longer, but there are other singers who also participate in the ritual and will also be available to sing, usually one at a time.

In the vast majority of cases, the ritual takes place due to a promise to be paid to the enchanted, when an Indian in a moment of need makes a request to the enchanted one, hoping that it will be granted. These requests range from curing illnesses to obtaining a job or other earnings, and a party is held to give thanks when the goal is achieved. The party can also be held just for joy, to bring the community together and celebrate something related to the village, such as achievements in the territory, graduation from indigenous schools, good harvest, among other reasons.

After the Grace is obtained, the day of the *Praia*s ritual is set, and caregivers must be informed of the date, time, place and type of ritual. During

this same period, the singers must also be informed about the party, as they need to be present for the ritual to be carried out. Generally, one to three singers are called to the *Praia*s ritual.

After all those involved are duly informed, the preparation of the caregivers, the singers and the “*moços de Praia*” (men who wear the clothes of the *Praia*s) begins. On average, the preparation for the “Três Rodas” and “Menino no Rancho” rituals takes eight days. In addition to these people, this preparation involves women, who also play an important role as they accompany the songs, dance in the worship place and prepare the food to be served at parties. During the preparation days, the participating Indians should not have any type of sexual intercourse, as we believe that sexual intercourse would make the Indian impure to participate in rituals in which the enchanted, considered pure, are called to bless the village. In addition to this restriction, there are many other preparations with internal and secret rituals that are not revealed to other people. It should be noted that this preparation occurs in all the rituals of the Pankararu people.

The Environment of Rituals

Each *Praia* has their own worship place, where rituals take place (as shown in FIGURE 2), which is an open-air place, usually surrounded by trees and houses, mostly surrounded by mountains. In addition, the floor is made of compacted soil, causing a lot of dust during the rituals and warming the feet of the *Praia*s, as they are always barefoot. Before the ritual takes place, the worship place is always clean, to remove dirt and, especially, stones, precisely to prevent the *Praia*s from getting hurt.

As for the moment of the ritual, the *Praia*s always dance around the worship place in a circle. The only ritual that does not involve this is in the “*parêa*” dance, which has this name because the *Praia*s dance in pairs with an indigenous woman, unlike the other dances. Although the singer’s presence is essential in the worship place so that any ritual can be started, there is no specific place for them. In general, they usually choose to place them in places where there are shades of trees, but even if there is no such place, they continue to sing in the sun or rain, during the day or night.

There are always other indigenous people in the worship places where the *Praia*s dance, or even non-indigenous people, who are distributed in the surroundings to admire the ritual. There is



no specific size for the worship place, as this will depend on the space that the caregiver of each *Praia* has available, but the land is generally similar to a football field.

Another important place in the rituals of *Praia*s is the *poró*, which is reserved only for men and is

commonly located in the forest that surrounds the worship place. As a reserved place, what happens in this space is also a secret of the community. This detail is essential, as secrecy is important for the preservation and maintenance of indigenous culture.



Tacaratu, Pernambuco, 2020. Personal archive

Figura 2. Terreiro where rituals are performed *Praia*

The use of voice in rituals

The voice is one of the fundamental elements for the *Praia*s ritual, since it is necessary to sing throughout the event. In this way, this function is performed by the singer, who is an essential person in the ritual, since they must sing continuously so that the *Praia*s can dance, which can last for more than six consecutive hours. The singer always sings at a high intensity so that all the *Praia*s who are dancing in the circle can hear the *toante* (singing). At the same time of the singing, a *maraca* is swung by each *Praia* that is dancing and the *pipe* (harmonica), another sound instrument, is also used during the ritual. Therefore, the singer must always sing at a high intensity due to the use of these instruments.

In addition, the singers usually smoke the pipe, which is considered sacred at the time of the ritual (FIGURE 3) and represents health for the *Pankararu* people, allowing them to talk to the enchanted, in addition to its use in healing rituals. The size of the pipe is similar to that of a pen, but it can be smaller or larger, depending on the indigenous person's choice.

The singers also do not have the habit of drinking water during the ritual. The only liquid consumed is *garapa* (sugarcane juice), which is a tradition in this ritual, and can be made from *rapadura* and/or sugar cane, served right after the *pirão* (fish broth and cassava flour porridge), which is the traditional food of the *Pankararu* rituals.

As for the use of voice in the *Praia*s ritual, there are many factors that the scientific community understands as harmful to the voice, such as dust, lack of hydration, pipe smoking and intense use of voice. However, the *Pankararus* believe that all these elements are healthy, since they are part of their rituals and traditional knowledge. In addition, the singers prepare their voices through their traditional knowledge, whether through the pipe, teas made from local plants or through their faith. During the ritual, the singers usually use their voices at a high intensity and high pitch, with no signs of straining to sing. In addition, no vocal alterations, such as hoarseness, breathiness or harshness, are observed after the end of the ritual.



Tacaratu, Pernambuco, 2020. Personal archive

Figure 3. Pipe *Pankararu* used in rituals

Discussion

Traditional knowledge and health

By addressing an indigenous population, which has its cultural specificities and subjective ways of life, there were some limitations to the production of this study. In order to respect the confidentiality of the practices of the Pankararu people, certain issues addressed throughout this article could not be deepened, due to the confidentiality existing in their rituals. In addition, the lack of studies on the use of voice by indigenous communities, especially in the field of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, is another significant limiting factor.

It should be noted that this study addresses issues such as pipe smoking, intense and continuous use of voice, exposure to dust, among others, which, on the one hand, are understood to be harmful to the voice by scientific knowledge; but, on the other hand, are understood as healthy for the traditional knowledge of the Pankararu people.

Thinking about the vision of health for indigenous populations, the anthropology of health emerges based on plural knowledge. Thus, there is no single anthropology, but several anthropologies that result from the subjective histories of an individual or collectivity, at a given time, place and region¹². When thinking about a subject's health-disease process, it is necessary to consider cultural practices and individual care in their uniqueness¹³, according to their peculiarities.

Thus, it should be noted that these people have a particular culture and that, unlike other societies, they have their own way of seeing the world, in addition to having ancestral knowledge that allows them to be who they are. According to Buchilet¹⁴, it is essential to respect the cultural conception of health and disease of these peoples. Therefore, the enormous variety of Brazilian indigenous culture results in different ways of being and living and, consequently, provides countless ways of perceiving and understanding issues related to health and disease¹⁵.

Thus, with regard to scientific knowledge, it can be said that it is essential to determine the speculation of new principles of knowledge¹⁶. While scientific knowledge focuses on mainly quantitative work to prove theories related to health care, the indigenous populations base their knowledge on their daily lives in the community and on the learning acquired in relationships with

their ancestors, as reported by Lorenzo¹⁵. In traditional popular cultures, the practices used in each community are the result of empirical knowledge that occurs in everyday life, in addition to being transmitted from generation to generation, mainly from the learning of older individuals, who have experiences that only they can describe. It is no different in the indigenous tradition with regard to care related to the preservation of the health of its members. In addition to using their knowledge, they often consult their spirituality to achieve the desired cure¹⁵.

In this sense, I must say that, when talking about indigenous peoples, I am talking about several cultures, since each of these people has its own culture. Therefore, their health-related practices can be the same, similar or different, thus becoming peculiar. It is very common to hear from my Pankararu people that “the doctor treats and the enchanted person is the one who truly cures”, an expression used mainly by the elders of the community. According to Lopes¹⁷, who carried out his Master's thesis work with the Pankararu people, the enchanted one solves the problem and the doctor has the primary role of treating the physical signs and symptoms. Based on this statement, I start to reflect on the relevance of a combination of scientific and traditional knowledge, given that this affects the better quality of life of individuals.

Thus, I place myself as an indigenous and speech-language pathologist and audiologist, in order to be able to favor respect for the cultural practices of a people, but also, through the knowledge acquired in my professional qualification, to contribute to the health of the Pankararus, valuing the ancestrally conceived knowledge. In this way, I will be able to offer my people, who have so many health demands, including those related to Speech-Language and Hearing Sciences, scientific knowledge from the Higher Education, but always respecting traditional knowledge. Through both, I believe I will be able to enable a better quality of voice and life for these individuals, in order to contribute to the preservation of the culture and health of the Pankararu people.

The Voice

subjectivity, in addition to allowing individuals to position themselves in a given society. According to Bragion, Foltran and Penteadó¹⁸, the voice is present in everyday life in a fundamental way in the

socialization processes, providing a better quality of life. The voice presents individual characteristics of each subject, which represents the subjectivities, characteristics and emotions of a person. It can be said that, in addition to its anatomical and physiological production, the voice demonstrates the individuality, personality and qualities of the human being¹⁹.

Regarding the indigenous voice, it is crucial to be aware of the cultural, religious and identity specificities that are present in these voices, since it makes it possible to understand the meaning of this for an entire people. In view of the relevance of the voice in Pankararu rituals, voice care is essential for cultural preservation.

Voice Care

Vocal health is characterized by rules that assist in the voice care, preventing the unwanted onset of alterations in the vocal folds. A series of aspects are described in the literature as a set of elements that indicate good vocal quality. Focused on the scientific knowledge, it is important to understand harmful habits and avoid them, in order to have a good voice. There are many factors described as harmful in the scientific literature, such as: smoking, use of alcohol and other drugs, pollution and inappropriate vocal behavior²⁰. In addition, there are other issues related to daily routine, environment and general health that are directly associated with a healthy voice²¹.

Relating these deleterious habits, this study will address the questioning of the factors present in the Pankararu rituals. First, it is interesting to observe that these people understand the habit of smoking as healthy, since it is included in healing rituals existing in the community. On the other hand, smoking is considered highly malignant in the scientific literature, being related to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases^{22,23}, and is currently considered the main cause of preventable diseases. In addition, smoking is harmful to the voice due to the inhalation of smoke, which attacks the vocal folds and can cause coughing, edema and infections, including cancer of the larynx and lung²⁰. The habit of smoking a pipe is common among indigenous peoples, and about 20.1% of these individuals smoke frequently today.

Similar to smoking, alcohol consumption also causes irritation in the vocal tract. With an immunosuppressive action, alcohol consumption causes

a reduction in the body's defense responses²⁰, in addition to being one of the main causes of cancer, especially in the mouth²⁵. When associated with smoking, alcohol consumption can cause malignant lesions and cause difficulties in articulating words²¹. One study showed that the estimated rate of alcohol consumption in the indigenous population is 19.2%, with a frequency of once a week or more²⁶.

In addition, it is possible to observe during the rituals that the singers are exposed to dust and do not have the habit of drinking water while they are participating in the tradition. In this sense, the literature reports the importance of frequent ingestion, so that the vocal folds are hydrated, thus avoiding the appearance of lesions²¹. A well-hydrated body improves the vibration and flexibility of the vocal folds, thus leading to better vocal quality²⁷.

There is a tradition among the Pankararus that people who are directly involved in their rituals must always be fully clothed, which means that the singers wear pants and shirts, for example. Often, pants can be uncomfortable and tight, which also hinders good vocal production, as reported by Gomes²¹ (2017), who states that tight clothing will hinder and make breathing movements difficult.

The use of their own voice is also a significant factor, since Pankararu singers sing for consecutive hours, at high intensity, sometimes causing the so-called "vocal abuse", which is harmful to the voice²⁷. According to Goulart, Rocha and Chiari²⁸, individuals who use their voice as singers do need to have good preparation of the vocal apparatus, as singing requires great effort from the vocal apparatus. In the preparation of Pankararu singers, singing is basically related to drinking teas before rituals.

Environment and use of voice

The environmental conditions, that is, the worship place where the Pankararus sing, is exposed to nature's weather and the presence of a lot of dust. As an open space, the environment requires people to use their voices at high intensity. In addition, there is also the use of sound instruments, used concomitantly with the singing, in addition to the noise coming from the speech of the other subjects who participate in the rituals.

According to Guidini et al.²⁹, it is a harmful habit for vocal quality, since it causes changes in the structures responsible for voice production and can lead to vocal damage over time. Additionally, when singing is performed in an environment

where there is external noise, the conditions require increasing vocal intensity, thus generating greater vocal load/friction.

Despite the aspects presented being considered harmful by the health field, the Pankararu indigenous understand otherwise, according to their religion and traditional knowledge. On the contrary, they see these characteristics as healthy aspects that contribute to their better quality of life. According to Eloy et al.³⁰, traditional knowledge has always existed, with knowledge about plants that not even scientific knowledge can explain, and this form of knowledge is essential for the preservation of identity, cultural traditions and, as such, the preservation of a whole group.

In this context, the environment can also be considered as a possible predisposing factor to the onset of vocal alterations, since noise, dust and temperature are aspects that corroborate³¹ and are present in Pankararu rituals.

Final considerations

Given the aspects addressed and the discussions, it should be noted that, for scientific knowledge, there are several factors present in the Pankararu culture considered to be sickening. On the other hand, these same habits are understood as healthy from the perspective of the traditional knowledge of this people. In view of these two aspects, each with its own way of thinking and acting, it should also be noted that both perspectives can coexist, so that there is no hierarchical overlap of knowledge, and that one knowledge is not considered inferior to the other, since they are complementary. Considering issues related to general health and, especially, vocal health, these two forms of care must exist together, providing a better quality of life for subjects and their communities.

As an indigenous of this people and as a speech-language pathologist and audiologist, I am directly inserted in this double place and, in this way, I realize that I will be able to assist in the vocal health of the Pankararu singers, contributing to the cultural and identity preservation of my people, and respecting the existing ancestral knowledge. Finally, further studies investigating and monitoring vocal quality and fatigue during the rituals of Praiás can provide important information to understand the particular conditions of vocal use of the Pankararu ethnic group, offering

the necessary care that science can provide without opposing traditional knowledge.

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