

**INSERTION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE LANGUAGE AREA:  
UNDERSTANDING OF TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL OF  
MUNICIPALITY OF NOVA CRUZ/RN**

INSERCIÓN DE EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA EN EL ÁREA DE LENGUAJE: COMPRENSIÓN DE  
DOCENTES EN LA ESCUELA PÚBLICA DEL MUNICIPIO DE NOVA CRUZ/RN

INSERÇÃO DA EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA NA ÁREA DE LINGUAGENS: COMPREENSÃO DOS  
PROFESSORES DA REDE PÚBLICA DO MUNICÍPIO DE NOVA CRUZ/RN

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**Manuscript received on:** April 3, 2023.

**Approved on:** December 5, 2023.

**Published on:** January 7, 2024.

**Abstract**

This research aims to understand the idea of Physical Education as a curricular component of Language by teachers of elementary school II of the public school system in the city of Nova Cruz, Rio Grande do Norte. For this, we opted for the qualitative approach with exploratory and descriptive types of research. As an instrument for data collection, a questionnaire was applied via the Google Forms online platform, which was answered by 5 Physical Education teachers in the city of Nova Cruz/RN. From the answers of the responding professionals, dialogues were raised according to the available literature that deal with questions involving the theme. It was verified a limited understanding, on the part of the professors, about the insertion of the Physical Education curricular component in the field of Language, which, although some professionals are aware of this insertion, it was not possible to identify, from the listed answers, the reasons that led Physical Education to be in this area. There was also a strong proximity between the curricular component and the field of Natural Sciences, based on responses that treat the body as a uniquely biological being. Furthermore, in relation to Physical Education as a Language through an interdisciplinary perspective with

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the components of the area in question, there was a lack of practical proposals developed by professionals in their fields of activity, which, in turn, strengthens the distancing of Education Physics of the Language Niche.

**Keywords:** Physical Education; Language; Elementary School.

## Resumen

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo comprender la idea de Educación Física como componente curricular de Lengua por parte de profesores de la escuela primaria II del sistema escolar público en la ciudad de Nova Cruz, Rio Grande do Norte. Para ello, optamos por el enfoque cualitativo con tipos de investigación exploratoria y descriptiva. Como instrumento para la recolección de datos, se aplicó un cuestionario a través de la plataforma en línea Google Forms, que fue respondido por 5 profesores de Educación Física en la ciudad de Nova Cruz/RN. A partir de las respuestas de los profesionales que respondieron, fueron planteados diálogos de acuerdo con la literatura disponible que tratan cuestiones que envuelven el tema. Se verificó una comprensión limitada, por parte de los profesores, acerca de la inserción del componente curricular de Educación Física en el campo del Lenguaje, que, aunque algunos profesionales son conscientes de esa inserción, no fue posible identificar, a partir de los listados, responde, las razones que llevaron a la Educación Física a estar en este ámbito. También hubo una fuerte proximidad entre el componente curricular y el campo de las Ciencias Naturales, a partir de respuestas que tratan al cuerpo como un ser únicamente biológico. Además, en relación a la Educación Física como Lenguaje desde una perspectiva interdisciplinar con los componentes del área en mención, faltaron propuestas prácticas desarrolladas por profesionales en sus campos de actuación, lo que, a su vez, fortalece el distanciamiento de la Educación Física. del Nicho de la Lengua.

**Palabras llave:** Educación Física; Lenguaje; Enseñanza fundamental.

## Resumo

A presente pesquisa tem como objetivo compreender a ideia da Educação Física enquanto componente curricular da área das linguagens por parte dos(as) professores(as) do ensino fundamental II da rede pública de ensino da cidade de Nova Cruz, Rio Grande do Norte. Para isto, optou-se pela abordagem qualitativa tendo como tipos de pesquisas exploratória e descritiva. Como instrumento para coleta de dados, utilizou-se um questionário aplicado via plataforma *on-line Google Forms*, o qual foi respondido por 5 docentes de Educação Física do município de Nova Cruz/RN. A partir das respostas dos profissionais respondentes, foram levantados diálogos de acordo com a literatura disponível que tratam das questões que envolvem a temática. Constatou-se uma limitada compreensão, por parte dos docentes, acerca da inserção do componente curricular Educação Física no campo da linguagem, que, embora alguns profissionais tenham ciência desta inserção, não foi possível identificar, a partir das respostas elencadas, os motivos que levaram a Educação Física a estar nesta área. Notou-se também uma forte proximidade do componente curricular com o campo das Ciências Naturais, a partir de respostas que tratam o corpo como um ser unicamente biológico. Ademais, em relação à Educação Física enquanto linguagem através de uma perspectiva interdisciplinar com os componentes da área em questão, evidenciou-se uma escassez de propostas práticas desenvolvidas pelos profissionais em seus campos de atuação, que, por sua vez, fortalece o distanciamento da Educação Física do nicho da linguagem.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação Física; Linguagem; Ensino Fundamental.

## Introduction

The issues inherent in the field of school physical education (PE) and its conceptions have been the subject of research over the last few decades. In this sense, from the 1980s onwards, there was a scenario of major transformations in favour of the democratization of Brazilian society, and a so-called renovationist movement also emerged within the Brazilian Physical Education community. This, in turn, was characterized by a strong criticism of the role assigned to Physical Education in the school curriculum (Bracht, 2010).

Prior to the renewal movement, the understanding of PE content was marked exclusively by the idea of physical activity, whose main objective was to improve students' physical fitness. This understanding gave PE a different character from other subjects, such as Portuguese Language, Arts and Foreign Language.

These components are characterized by a more or less stable body of knowledge, recorded and systematized in textbooks or textbooks, including systematic records by students in their notebooks and written assessments (Bracht, 2010). Therefore, since PE is understood as a physical activity, it became incoherent to implement these elements, since there was no didactic knowledge to be recorded, but an activity that directly influenced the students' bodies and behavior.

Faced with this mechanistic scenario and influenced by the renewal movement, the literary production of PE broadened its field of experience beyond the empirical-analytical model - around 1987; this, in turn, was predominantly responsible for the academic productions related to PE previously. From then on, in the mid-1980s, pedagogical approaches gained strength in opposition to the technicist, sportivist and biologicist model, guiding the practice of PE through new teaching concepts.

Subsequent to the 1990, new discussions on curricular policies began, as well as the approval of the Guidelines and Bases Laws (Brasil, 1996). In this sense, following the formulation of the National Curriculum Parameters (Brasil, 1996; 1998;

2000), PE was included in the area of Languages, Codes and their Technologies alongside the disciplines of Portuguese Language, Arts and English Language. Currently, in continuation of these changes, the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) has emerged, which regulates national education, being the product of several other regulatory documents, covering the areas of languages, Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Human Sciences and their technologies.

However, as it is an official curriculum guidance document for Brazil, the BNCC still lacks a more solid definition in order to justify the belonging of school Physical Education to the area of languages (Oliveira et al., 2021). In line with this criticism, Neira (2018) expands on it and points to a fragile and insufficient textual dedication to the conceptual elements that underpin the conception of Physical Education in the document.

Therefore, in order for bodily practices to be understood not only as cultural texts that can be read and produced (Brasil, 2018), it is necessary to move away from conceptions that understand language as a process of writing and speaking only (Oliveira et al., 2021). From this perspective, this study seeks to understand the idea of language on the part of Physical Education teachers who work in elementary school II in the public school system in the municipality of Nova Cruz/Rio Grande do Norte (RN).

Thus, the reason why we sought to investigate the understanding of Physical Education teachers in the public school system in the municipality of Nova Cruz, regarding the inclusion of the curricular component in the area of languages, was based on two perspectives:

- the first alludes to the fact that, due to the cultural context that permeates reality, this component has always been closely linked to the practice of sports, with perfecting technique being the main objective to be achieved in class;
- the second refers to the identification of the progress in the inclusion of the most diverse themes arising from the Body Culture of Movement present in the BNCC, during Physical Education classes, in the municipality of Nova Cruz/RN.

Given this situation, this research could make a positive contribution to the academic community of professionals in the area of languages, making it possible to identify/recognize the field of activity of PE, as well as greater interdisciplinarity between the components of languages and all the other subjects in the school curriculum. It will also facilitate greater systematization of Physical Education classes in the school environment. In addition, it will fill a gap that is still very present in PE, which is the lack of organization of themes throughout the grades of basic education by teachers and the school community, unlike subjects such as Portuguese Language, Arts and Foreign Language.

As far as contributions to society are concerned, this research will make a difference in the school sphere for the field of PE, given that there is a traditional education based on a perspective that predominantly values student performance. This traditional teaching model, in turn, leaves the socio-historical aspects inherent to human beings in the background.

In this sense, and engaged by the debate about the inclusion of Physical Education in the field of language, this study aimed to identify the understanding of elementary school teachers in the city of Nova Cruz/RN about the inclusion of the Physical Education curriculum component in the area of languages, in addition to discussing the possibilities for Physical Education in this scenario, as well as analyzing how this relationship is reflected in the daily classes of this curriculum component on the school floor.

## Theoretical Context

Language, as an area of knowledge that encompasses human gestures and movements, is established in the field of PE as a means of expressing various social practices without necessarily having to use words as a form of communication. This results in the subject interacting with others and with themselves, making it possible to pass on values, knowledge and cultural aspects. Therefore, gestures and movements are part of the communication resources that human beings use to express their emotions and personality, communicate interpersonal attitudes and transmit information (Matthiesen et al., 2008).

The discussion of Physical Education as a language is broad and needs to be further solidified in the field of scientific research. Given this scenario, it is necessary and important to investigate this perspective of language and PE in the conceptualization of the body as a focus to be thought about. In this sense, Barros (2017) points out that the productions still remain entrenched and that there are few investigations in the field of Physical Education that really operate with the meaning of language.

But what is language anyway? Different authors defend the idea that it is understood as a group of codes and symbols that can be disseminated and reached through speech, writing, reading, art and the body. Added to this idea is the statement by Ramos (2000) apud Matthiesen et al., (2008), according to which language is like a set of verbal and non-verbal symbols, which is present throughout the educational universe.

From this perspective, it is pertinent to emphasize the multiplicity of meanings and representations resulting from language in physical education, which varies according to the culture of the subjects. This means that, curiously, different manifestations of dance, gymnastics, wrestling and games, for example, are often incomprehensible to people from different cultures, as are the popular dances of each country or the popular games peculiar to each region (Matthiesen et al., 2008).

In addition, according to Neira and Nunes (2021), there is a relationship between words and things that allows us to interpret the world. This is because we learn from culture what things mean or represent. This relationship does not only occur through spoken or written words, but also through other forms of language, such as sounds, images, gestures, etc. It can therefore be seen that culture has an impact on the construction of subjects, their perceptions of themselves and the world, with language providing the elements for such understandings.

Although it is understood as a discipline in the area of languages, PE still lacks a more solid definition and practice on the part of teachers, students, the school community and society as a whole. In this scenario, as a result of limited knowledge about PE, there is often an erroneous view that language manifests itself exclusively through textual elements.

This mistaken and reductionist understanding disregards movements, gestural and sound representations, symbols and codes as a means of communication and, above all, expressions that can be interpreted. It is therefore necessary for schools to explicitly explore the multimodality of language (Cope; Kalantzis, 2009).

Against this backdrop, it is understood that, in order for a pedagogical practice to be successful at school, it is necessary, in addition to other perspectives, to encourage contemporary social learning as fundamental elements of this experience, which is marked by cultural, linguistic and technological diversity, requiring numerous skills and procedures. This perspective of learning calls for pedagogies that take account of this diversity, such as multilingualism, proposed by the New London Group (Cope; Kalantzis, 2000).

This theory arose with the aim of expanding the notion of traditional literacy to a more comprehensive proposal about language as a discursive genre<sup>4</sup>, taking into account the various semiotic resources (Catto, 2013). In this way, there is a need to think about new literacy mechanisms, that is, an approach that goes by the name of "multiliteracies", which relates the contemporary context to immense cultural and social diversity.

Given this scenario, there is an urgent need to understand the idea of multilingualism, through which subjects are creators of meaning, as they experiment, conceptualize, analyse and apply the various languages and representations they learn and transform them through critical thinking (Oliveira et al., 2021). In this sense, Cope and Kalantzis (2009) establish language categories with a multimodal perspective, i.e., as Catto (2013) points out, a set of practices that considers this broadening of focus from verbal language to other semiotic modes, in order to satisfy the multiplicity of knowledge.

Thus, as categorized by Cope and Kalantzis (2009), the theory of multilingualism assumes the multimodality of language as one of its founding elements, unfolding from written and oral language as well as visual, sound, tactile, gestural, self and spatial representations (Oliveira et al., 2021).

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<sup>4</sup> Focused predominantly on reading and writing skills in verbal language.

Therefore, embracing the concept of multimodal literacy and its categories in PE classes demonstrates a concern with students' participation in the most diverse practices of body movement culture. In this way, including the multiple linguistic and cultural varieties present in multimodal pedagogy in the school environment will enable the discovery of new knowledge and new skills. In addition, they will experience different productions of meaning (Catto, 2013), which, in turn, breaks with stereotypes that reduce the practice of this discipline of multiple possibilities.

However, for this scenario to be consolidated, there is still a long way to go. According to Oliveira et al. (2021), in their studies on language and Physical Education in the BNCC, there is a limited theoretical understanding of the notion of language in Physical Education. In addition, there is little exploration of multiple languages, either throughout the school years or in the thematic units.

According to Grellmann (2021), when working with Physical Education as a curricular component in the area of languages, there is a gap in the field of scientific research. This reflects a reduced understanding of the contributions to the diversity of knowledge, breadth of communication and cultural construction of the subjects involved in the educational process. When dealing with PE from the perspective of language, it is pertinent to present language as a communication system that allows students and teachers to express themselves and represent reality.

This reality is aligned with the historical perspective of PE, which in turn was based on a purely biological approach, which determined the education of the body<sup>5</sup> as the only predominant factor and was based on militaristic gymnastic methods and the habits that exercise alone would enable a healthy body<sup>6</sup> (Soares, 2020), thus making it difficult for students to become part of the Body Culture of Movement.

Based on this predominantly biologicist scenario, in which PE had as its object the full physical and moral development of its practitioners, it was proposed to perform physical exercises without the performers understanding the bodily and

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<sup>5</sup> Aqui vale destacar o entendimento de educação do corpo enquanto uma tradição pautada nas ciências biológicas, tendo sua origem a partir de uma concepção naturalista do homem ao longo do século XVIII e XIX e que perdura até a contemporaneidade.

<sup>6</sup> Esse corpo saudável parte da ideia de uma ação formadora pautada na criação de virtudes e correção de movimentos ou comportamentos tidos como defeituosos para os ditames sociais estabelecidos.



cultural elements to which they were inserted. In this sense, Soares (2017) explains that this perspective, which is still very present in PE classes, is the result of transformations in modern society, in which the solely biological being still predominates at the center of the new society.

Thus, as Grellmann (2021) points out, PE only rose to greater importance in the pedagogical field when it ceased to be a curricular component on the margins of other disciplines of knowledge, assuming its leading role in the process of training students and gaining value in human development due to its importance in the Language Area (Santos; Funzii, 2019).

In this context, when inserted as a language, PE, based on the knowledge derived from the Body Culture of Movement, encompasses a wide range of perspectives. This scenario contributes positively to the formation of the subject as a transforming agent of their society and builder of their own history in the social and cultural sphere.

From this perspective, according to Barros (2017), "[...] language carries living content full of meanings [...], making reality clearer, due to the fact that it opens up new horizons". From this perspective, it is understood that the different codes, gestures and symbols present in language and found in the manifestations of Body Culture of Movement, generate a panorama of harmony in interpersonal relationships, which, in turn, facilitates communication and the interpretation of being and feeling (Ladeira et al., 2013).

In this sense, Oliveira et al., (2021, p. 3) state that to:

the initial years of elementary school, more specifically the 1st and 2nd years, are the ones with the greatest variety of languages and representations and consequently have the most dialogue with a multimodal perspective of language. However, in the final years, there is a complete lack of mention of terms that relate to written and oral languages, as well as terms/words that can elucidate visual and/or sound representations.

This statement by Oliveira et al. (2021), in line with the thinking of Ladeira et al. (2013), makes it increasingly necessary, as stated by Grellmann (2021, p. 41):

developing playful bodily activities that have a recreational, sporting, cultural and social meaning, allowing bodily movement to have a reflective practice of the content worked on, leading the student to perceive themselves as a biopsychosocial being and not fragmented under a biologist and competitive approach. In this sense, it is up to teachers to understand the meaning of the physical activity carried out, experiencing the reflection and constant transformation of bodily practices as cultural and social practices present in the Language Area.

For Neira and Nunes (2021), body culture is seen as a system of representation with a specific form of language: body language. This is different for each practice, i.e. there is no single, immutable and universal meaning for a given body practice because, being arbitrary, the definition of its meanings is totally subject to a given social and historical moment. Its representations are therefore open to change.

In addition to this, there is interdisciplinary work, in which Scortegagna and Gilz (2013) point out that curricular components are often fragmented at school. In this way, students are unable to develop knowledge between the various contents worked on in each specific component, as well as the interrelationship between the contents of the discipline itself, which makes the acquisition of knowledge increasingly difficult.

Furthermore, as stated by Coelho et al. (2015), teachers from different disciplines do not need to know the content in depth in order to carry out interdisciplinary work with teachers from the specific area, but they do need to know if they will have the possibility of working in an integrated manner. In this sense, it is necessary to know which theory of knowledge underpins the classes, and the teaching method used in them becomes a necessary condition for collective work between teachers (Coelho et al., 2015).

In the interdisciplinary field of language, Grellmann (2021, p.44) points out that the most current documents guiding education, such as the PCN's and the BNCC:

bring a conception of language that goes beyond the specific concepts of each component of the Language Area, in other words, it has transdisciplinarity at its core, acting in an individual, collective, cultural and social formation.

From this perspective, in relation to the Physical Education curriculum component, more specifically, it is up to the teacher to approach the understanding of this idea in their professional practice. In this way, considering language with a more comprehensive and dynamic understanding, the teacher will move towards an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspective, which will consequently promote a wider range of learning and experiences for the students, fostering their insertion in the Body Culture of Movement, as well as guaranteeing access to various other themes of knowledge.

Therefore, aligning an interdisciplinary perspective between PE and the components that belong to the area of languages could, in addition to numerous advantages, guarantee greater consolidation of this discipline in the current scenario. Furthermore, it is pertinent, as Pereira (2014) states, to make the school a multimodal environment, which, according to this author, multiplicity would not only be given by the presence of different languages in education, but by the dialogues between/within different languages and meanings and by the ability to move through them, to translate them, to mix and blend them. In other words, making words into gestures; movement into sound; writing into sensations; life into art.

## **Methodology**

This section deals with the methodological procedures used to carry out and analyze the study, through reflection and scientific treatments, with the aim of investigating the understanding of teachers in the city of Nova Cruz/RN about the inclusion of Physical Education in the field of language.

With regard to the objectives, the type of research used was exploratory, since, according to Gil (2008), it aims to provide greater familiarity with the problem, with a view to making it more explicit. In this sense, it aims to get to know the facts and phenomena related to the topic, as well as being carried out when there are still few studies on what is being investigated. In addition, it can be classified as descriptive, since its purpose is to identify the characteristics of what is being studied.

In terms of approach, the research is qualitative because, according to Flick (2014), it is applied to discover and describe issues in areas or structures in routine and practical processes. In this sense, it is not concerned with numerical representativeness, but seeks to deepen understanding of a particular issue under study. For Minayo (2001), qualitative research works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables.

For data collection, the *Google Forms* online questionnaire was used as a research tool in 2021, as it is easy to use. It is important to point out that, given the pandemic context in which the world found itself, due to the outbreak of SARS-CoV-2, and thus the need for social isolation and compliance with biosafety protocols, it was substantial to apply the questionnaire completely virtually.

The survey instrument consists of nine objective questions and six discursive questions, the first three of which seek to characterize the teacher's profile, such as gender, length of time in the profession and place of training. The following questions seek to understand the teachers' understanding of the inclusion of Physical Education as a curricular component in the area of languages and its possibilities for interdisciplinarity with other areas of knowledge.

Public school teachers working at municipal and state level in the municipality of Nova Cruz/RN who teach PE took part in this study, i.e. they were the research subjects. Initially, the schools in the city that offered Physical Education were mapped, initially in the early years of elementary school. However, due to the lack of professionals working in this setting, it became necessary to redirect the research towards elementary school teachers, which comprised five professionals.

## Results and discussions

This section presents the main results of the survey. As for the profile of the teachers, a total of five were willing to answer the questionnaire, three of whom were male and two females. Of the group of participants, one only has an undergraduate degree, four said they specialized in the area and only one teacher is in the final stages of obtaining a master's degree.

About years of experience as a PE professional, less than half of the participants - two of them - have worked in the field for up to five years. One professional has between five- and 10-years' experience, another between 10 and 15 years and the last has more than 15 years. This shows a group that has a certain amount of experience in their field.

About the area that PE fits into, two teachers considered it to be Sports, as well as Health. One of the teachers considered Physical Education to belong to the Social Sciences scenario, which seeks to reflect on the student's reality in the environment in which they live. Finally, all the respondents (five teachers) considered PE to be a subject in the language niche.

The initial responses show that there is unanimity on the part of the professionals that PE belongs to the field of language. It can also be seen that two of the answers adopt a more sports-oriented and biologist character, a factor that may be linked to the historical profile of the curricular component. Therefore, it is understood that the concept of belonging to a particular area of knowledge of the component is still quite diverse and subject to different interpretations.

For the teachers to be able to express their understanding of the content of PE as a curricular component of languages, four groups of content were made available so that they could select those that were most relevant from this perspective. Thus, the option of "rhythmic activities" was chosen by all the participants. This was followed by "gestures" and "visual, sound and tactile representations", each with four ticks. The "textual elements" group was ticked by three teachers and was considered the least representative of the options available.

Given this picture, although the majority of teachers ticked most of the options, the ideal in this scenario, with the aim of covering a real understanding of the content of PE as a language, was for all the options to be ticked.

Another question concerns the changes identified by the teachers regarding the inclusion of the Physical Education curriculum component in the area of languages. Given this situation, only three of the five teachers were able to identify changes. Thus, one of the respondents identified, in short, changes in the insertion of new concepts such as "body language, sign and symbol, text and rhythm" within the scope of PE. From this perspective, Neira and Nunes' (2007) understanding stands out:

man created symbols and thus succeeded as a species. These symbols are transmitted and created all the time. Creation is lived, imagined and represented. Representation manifests itself, becomes action and is transformed into bodily expressions. By playing, dancing and running, men and women communicate and transform human movement into language. Each cultural group creates its own style of playing, dancing, fighting, etc. It expresses its culture through these practices and thus develops new communication codes. These codes are signs that are inscribed on the bodies of each cultural group.

This teacher also took a closer look at the body and its relationship with languages, based on the following fragment: "the body has gestures, which function as a means of expression and communication". In view of the above, it is understood that:

When communicating, human beings use a range of texts and forms of expression, in other words, they use words, gestures and expressions, using their whole body as a communication tool. Gestures are instruments that allow human expression, the transmission of information and the construction of knowledge. These gestures, considered body texts, are surrounded by interpretations that involve the cultural context in which the person is inserted. (Grellmann, 2021, p. 21)

Faced with this multiplicity of possibilities arising from gestures, Gonzáles and Fraga (2009) point out that these gestures lead students to experiment, get to know and appreciate different systematized body practices, understanding them as dynamic and diverse cultural productions.

The position of another teacher stands out when he points out changes in the implementation of theoretical classes for the subject of Physical Education. In addition, according to this professional, theoretical classes for the component in question will lead to "more content, being able to delve deeper into it, generating knowledge for the students".

From this last excerpt of the teacher's speech, it can be understood that the inclusion of PE in the area of languages has, in short, changed the character of the classes, leaving the niche of practical approaches and coming to be understood as a component that works with theory and practice. Even though the teacher understands that this change bears good fruit, such as deepening content, there is a limited understanding of the effectiveness of PE as a language, given the countless possibilities to be explored, even during practical lessons, because of this integration.

In this sense, it is necessary to understand that PE in the area of languages does not happen through the increase of theoretical classes for this component, that is, its relationship between theory and practice, but in the understanding that the manifestations of Body Culture of Movement are realized in the most diverse languages. This perception corroborates Oliveira et al. (2021), who point out that:

language is not a finished phenomenon with techniques or a juxtaposition of signs, but occurs through the act, in gesture, being indirect and expressing itself through what is said and what is not said in words, a continuous process that goes beyond a code, with communication taking place when there is a continuation of the other.

In addition, this perspective highlights the idea of multilingualism, according to which subjects are creators of meaning who experiment, conceptualize, analyze and apply the various languages and representations they learn and transform them through critical thinking (Oliveira et al., 2021).

The last respondent said that "when it is worked on in the area (languages), it becomes more difficult to work on physical education as a subject that helps students' cognitive and motor development". In this context, Santos et al. (2012, p.3) warn that the inclusion of Physical Education in the area of languages "is justified by the ability of this discipline to contribute to the development and integral formation of students, covering cognitive, affective and motor aspects".

As we can see, some of the teachers, when detailing their answers about the changes in physical education as a language, showed a limited and confused understanding of the proposed theme. However, one teacher was able to identify the presence of symbols, gestures, and signs in PE body practices. In this sense, according to Neira and Nunes (2007):

Symbols are transmitted and created all the time. [...] Gesture communicates because it is structured as a practice of language production. [...] In the theorization of language, the elements that make up a language, the signs, do not make sense in isolation, so the sign is an element that represents something, its object.

The last teacher had a certain difficulty in dealing with PE content as a language, because he felt that such an approach limited students' cognitive and motor development. In this sense, his response reveals a traditionalist view of PE, i.e. a lack of understanding that knowledge of biology and sport can also be understood as language, which in turn disregards the plurality of subjects as creators of meaning and significance.

From this perspective, Neira and Nunes (2007) provide an understanding of Physical Education in which the body has:

a long tradition based on the biological sciences. Anchored in the ideals of a civilizing process idealized by the bourgeoisie, a formative action was advocated for the body in order to guide the creation of virtues and correct any possibility of the emergence of movements or behaviors considered defective and inconvenient to the established social dictates. It was necessary to control any affective eruption or spontaneous movements and thus not only discipline the body, but also annul any possibility of sensory experiences.

Regarding the teachers' view of the inclusion of PE in languages, all five teachers considered a certain grouping to be "good". When asked about the changes that have taken place because of the integration of PE into languages, three teachers saw changes in the daily routine of their classes. One of them said he didn't see any kind of change, and another said that, yes, there are changes, but only a few.



Given this situation, one can see that there is a paradox in the response of one of the professionals, given that, when considering the integration of PE with languages as "good", it is understood that, necessarily, some change has occurred in the daily routine of the classes, aiming to justify such insertion, however little, if anything, was observed in practical proposals for certain positions.

This difficulty in relating PE content to other language disciplines can be explained by what Neira and Nunes (2007) call the Hegemonic Culture of Physical Education, which means that this component is linked to parameters for carrying out a certain practice, whether in the educational sphere or not. In addition, in hegemonic culture, the instrumental character of actions, performance, merit and functional doing prevail, actions that are still very much present in contemporary PE. Therefore, based on these definitions, it is possible to understand, in part, the "why" of the greater proximity in the responses of the PE teachers to biological content - given its historical context based on the Biological Sciences - to the detriment of the area of languages, in addition to, above all, not identifying passive reading, interpretation and communication actions in these (biological) contents.

About the interdisciplinary pedagogical practices developed by teachers with subjects in the area of languages - Portuguese Language, English Language and Arts - four professionals reported having already developed activities in this scenario. According to Pombo (2003), interdisciplinarity is evoked every time we realize the limits of the territory of knowledge and when we need to broaden our knowledge and perspectives of new knowledge.

In addition, based on the responses from teachers in the public school system in the city of Nova Cruz/RN, although still little explored by themselves, it is important to work on Physical Education content in conjunction with other language disciplines. From this perspective, interdisciplinarity is at the heart of the world's complexity, so there is a need to foster interrelationships between the sciences, with the aim of seeking solutions that best suit educational challenges (Grellmann, 2021). In this way, interdisciplinarity between the components that make up the language niche will make it possible, in addition to other advances, to promote a wider range of learning possibilities for students, as well as legitimizing PE as belonging to languages.

## Conclusion

Although the discussion of the inclusion of PE in the area of languages has been gaining ground in academic circles and in the guiding documents for basic education, it can be seen from this investigation that it is still a distant topic for teachers in the public school system in the city of Nova Cruz/RN.

Although public school teachers in the city of Nova Cruz/RN are aware of Physical Education as a language, the analysis carried out by this research shows a limited understanding of language, specifically Physical Education as a curricular component of the area. These limited understandings hinder pedagogical practices, which in turn disqualify the teaching and learning processes, generating weaknesses, especially in student learning.

It should also be noted that the inclusion of Physical Education in the area of language is still the subject of controversy and countless discussions. This is in line with the results of this investigation, given that professionals working in the area, with a consolidated pedagogical "background", still often fail to conceive of PE as a language.

In addition, although the professionals understand the importance of working on Physical Education content together with the other language disciplines in order to better integrate and consolidate PE in the area, their answers showed that there were few practical interdisciplinary proposals developed within the school. Given this situation, it is possible to see great difficulty in establishing relationships with the other disciplines that make up the area.

From this point of view, there was a paradox in some of the teachers' responses to the problem, since they pointed out the importance of applying interdisciplinary strategies, but in practice they haven't even developed any proposals in this scenario.

Therefore, when considering PE as a curricular component in the field of language and its possibilities in teaching work in an interdisciplinary approach, there was a certain distance between this discipline and the disciplines that make up the

area discussed. The lack of practical proposals on the part of the respondent teachers makes it difficult to link ideas and opinions, which in turn ends up eliminating the possibility of a broad formation of knowledge in the pedagogical sphere. Furthermore, professionals in the municipality of Nova Cruz/RN consider interdisciplinary activities that work with the area of knowledge of the natural sciences to be more productive.

Another situation that was also present during the investigation was in relation to some opposing positions of professionals regarding the insertion of the curricular component exposed to the area of language. Given this scenario, we can see a weakness of Physical Education as a language for professionals in the city of Nova Cruz/RN, as well as evidence of the greater proximity of PE in the pedagogical work of these professionals to the area of Natural Sciences, as already explained in their responses.

In this sense, there is a scenario of difficulties regarding the interaction of PE with the disciplines of Languages and Arts, which can be understood not only through the pedagogical practices developed in schools, but mainly through the analysis of the processes and programs for training PE teachers at university centers.

The studies resulting from this investigation also led to the understanding that, for teachers in the city of Nova Cruz/RN, the inclusion of PE in the field of language takes place from the moment that theoretical content is worked on in class. This scenario confirms the perception that the professional respondents do not realize the breadth and potential Physical Education as a language, which is a discipline that is extremely conducive to developing knowledge in both the theoretical and practical fields.

Thus, given that this investigation used an *online* questionnaire as a tool for obtaining data due to the pandemic situation that was ravaging the whole world, it is necessary to broaden the debate with teachers, managers and even the student community, through interviews that enable dialog and in-depth questioning with the target audience.

Therefore, as a suggestion for future studies, it is necessary to understand how these misunderstandings and contradictions regarding Physical Education as a curricular component of language occur on the part of teachers in the city of Nova Cruz/RN, which this study was unable to achieve using the tools used. In addition, it should be noted that this study is localized, i.e. it highlights gaps in a specific region. Due to its own dynamics, it is important to incorporate it into the body of work that deals with the theme presented here, in view of the possibility of expanding and sharing understandings about the object of study.

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