



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CONTRIBUTION OF PE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE SKILLS IN FIRST CYCLE STUDENTS

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#### ABSTRACT

This research falls within the field of Physical Education and Sports (PE) didactics and aims to study the contribution of PE to the development of language skills in lower secondary school students. Based on the observation that PE classes, although predominantly motor-based, also offer potential for expression, interaction, and verbal communication, this study analyzes teaching practices likely to mobilize and develop language skills among learners. Using a mixed-method approach (questionnaires and session observations), the results show that PE can provide a favorable framework for language development, through discussions on strategies, collective analysis of actions, and oral assessments at the end of the session. The languages used in PE are prescriptive, descriptive, and analytical. However, this potential remains underexploited due to a lack of specific teacher training in language didactics. The study recommends better integration of language objectives into the planning of PE sessions.

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, language is an essential tool for communication. When used effectively, it allows us to express our intentions and fosters human interaction. Without language, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to communicate easily. As Crystal (2003, p. 14) points out, "language constitutes the interface between the mind and the world, enabling not only the expression of thought but also its very structuring." Language can therefore be considered a crucial element in socialization and globalization. Language represents the unique human capacity to share intentions and collectively construct meaning, the foundation of all complex social cooperation (Tomasello, 2008). In the educational setting, language is a fundamental pillar of academic learning (Bautier and Rayou, 2009). Mastering oral and written expression is essential for students' success across all subjects and plays a vital role in their development as future citizens (Dolz and Schneuwly, 2009). However, many students encounter difficulties in this area, which hinders their academic progress and personal development (Bousquet, 2012). It is therefore clear that teaching disciplines must do everything possible to promote language proficiency among students. Physical Education and Sport (PES), being a school subject, is often considered primarily from the

perspective of students' physical, motor, and social development (Parlebas, 2001). Furthermore, the curriculum documents stipulate that students must use the resources of appropriate languages to express their feelings, knowledge, and understanding of the world, while respecting established conventions and the quality of spoken and written language. In simple terms, the school curriculum aims to develop students capable of communicating accurately and appropriately. While the benefits of Physical Education and Sport (PES) on health and certain psychosocial skills are well established (Cazorla, 2006; Hillman et al., 2009), its specific contributions to language development remain largely unexplored. Yet, PES involves numerous communication situations: giving or understanding instructions, explaining strategies, debating tactical choices, arguing for a decision, and analyzing completed actions (Gréhaigne, Wallian, and Caty, 2010). These various forms of verbalization, directly linked to motor activity, could be powerful tools for strengthening students' language skills, both oral and written. Therefore, it is necessary to ask how Physical Education and Sport contributes to the development of students' language skills at school. From all these reflections, several questions have arisen. How do teachers use language in their physical education teaching? What forms of verbalization (instructions, debates, summaries, etc.) most influence the structuring of students'

discourse? What types of language are used during physical education classes?

**Objective and theoretical framework:** The objective of this study is to analyze how Physical Education and Sport contributes to the development of students' language skills. It will allow us to understand the types of teaching practices that specifically encourage the development of language skills (oral and written) in students and how PE teachers use language in their teaching. Specifically, the aim is to identify the teaching practices in PE that engage and develop students' language skills; and then to determine the types of language used during PE sessions. To analyze the contribution of Physical Education and Sport (PE) to the development of language skills in lower secondary school students, a theoretical framework was chosen: the didactics of language according to Dolz and Schneuwly (2009). Dolz and Schneuwly (2009) advocate a functional conception of language: language skills are built through the practice of discursive genres in authentic and disciplinary contexts. Each discipline can become a site for language learning, provided that relevant verbal activities are integrated within it. She is interested in the conditions and methods of language learning, particularly at school, and proposes tools to help students master different genres of discourse, both oral and written. According to these authors, learning to speak or write is not just about learning vocabulary or grammar, but above all about learning to produce oral or written texts adapted to concrete and varied communication situations.

**Didactic sequences:** Didactic sequences constitute the central teaching tool developed by Dolz and Schneuwly to organize the teaching and learning of oral and written expression. According to the authors, a didactic sequence is "a set of school activities organized systematically around an oral or written text genre." This approach aims to give students the means to better master a genre that they are unfamiliar with or have not yet mastered sufficiently. The structure of the didactic sequence is organized around four essential components. The first stage is the presentation of the situation, which defines the communication project and prepares the initial production. The initial production constitutes the second stage of the sequence. It allows the teacher and students to assess the skills already acquired and to become aware of the difficulties of the task. The modules form the core of the teaching sequence. Each module addresses a specific problem in text production identified during the initial production. The final production concludes the sequence by allowing students to put into practice the knowledge acquired in the modules. Dolz and Schneuwly emphasize that this final production should not be identical to the first but should allow for the transfer of learning to a new situation.

**Textual genres:** Textual genres occupy a central place in the didactic theory of Dolz and Schneuwly. The authors define genres as "mega-tools" that enable language use in communicative situations. They consider genres to be "relatively stable forms of utterances" that have developed in the various spheres of human activity. For Dolz and Schneuwly, genres constitute the primary focus of French language teaching because they are the meeting point between social practices and academic learning. Genres allow for a social purpose to be given to linguistic and textual learning while providing a structuring framework for teaching. The authors assert that "it is through genres that language practices are embodied in learners' activities." Genres also constitute privileged teaching tools because they allow for the articulation of the different dimensions of language learning. Each genre mobilizes specific language skills while being grounded in authentic social situations. The authors emphasize that genre teaching should not be limited to the acquisition of formal models, but should enable students to understand the social and communicative implications of each genre.

**The concept of language skills:** Language skills are a central concept in Dolz and Schneuwly's theory. The authors define these skills as the "abilities required of the speaker for the production of a genre in a given interactional situation." They represent the various cognitive and linguistic operations that a speaker must master to produce a text

adapted to the communicative situation. Dolz and Schneuwly distinguish three levels of language skills that are hierarchically and interactively structured. Action skills correspond to the cognitive operations necessary to adapt the production to the communicative situation. Discursive skills concern the mobilization of discursive models to plan and organize the content of the text. Linguistic-discursive capabilities relate to local text-making operations and the management of linguistic units. Each genre requires a specific set of language skills, justifying a teaching approach organized around genres rather than abstract competencies. This approach also allows for individualized instruction by precisely identifying the skills to be developed in each student.

**Interplay between oral and written language:** The interplay between oral and written language is a major concern in Dolz and Schneuwly's didactic theory. The authors oppose a view that treats oral and written language as two completely separate subjects of instruction. Instead, they advocate for a didactic complementarity between these two modes of language production, while acknowledging their respective specificities. According to Dolz and Schneuwly, the didactic interplay between oral and written language can take several forms. Oral language can serve as preparation for writing by allowing for the exploration of ideas, collective discussion of writing problems, or the collaborative development of texts. Conversely, written material can support oral expression by providing notes, outlines, or texts to be read aloud. This complementarity allows learning in both modalities to be mutually enriched. The authors also recommend a contrastive approach that allows students to become aware of the specific characteristics of each modality. By comparing the oral and written versions of the same genre, students can identify the necessary adaptations depending on the mode of production and develop a metalinguistic awareness of the resources specific to each modality. This contrastive approach contributes to better mastery of both oral and written expression by avoiding confusion and inappropriate transfers.

**State of the problem:** Language is a fundamental tool that allows human beings to think, communicate, and develop. It serves to transmit ideas, express emotions, understand the world around us, and interact with others. From childhood, language contributes to intellectual and social development because it structures thought and enables learning. Language occupies a central place in school learning. It is simultaneously a vehicle for communication, a tool for structuring thought, a mediator of access to knowledge, and an instrument of socialization. At school, it is essential for following instructions, formulating answers, explaining reasoning, and arguing. Even in subjects like Physical Education, language is crucial: it helps to understand rules, cooperate, analyze performance, and express strategies. Mastering language skills at school largely determines student success. It is through language that students understand instructions, structure their knowledge, argue their ideas, collaborate with their peers, and produce knowledge. The Common Core of Skills, Knowledge, and Culture (MENJS, 2020) thus affirms that "mastery of languages for thinking and communicating" constitutes one of the five fundamental areas of student education. All subjects must contribute to this, without exception. Furthermore, it has been observed that students struggle to select information in space and time, to implement strategies, to act quickly and make decisions on the fly, to respect the rules of the game, and to consider others. Students have difficulties with oral language. They rarely use complete sentences to express themselves, to answer questions, or to rephrase instructions. This makes it difficult for them to describe and explain actions or processes. Their vocabulary is limited and highly repetitive. Numerous studies have highlighted the difficulties students encounter in mastering academic language. According to Bautier and Rochex (1998), a significant proportion of students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, do not spontaneously access the language forms expected by the school: decontextualized language, complex syntax, abstract vocabulary, and coherent discourse organization. These language gaps are often the root cause of persistent educational inequalities. Bousquet (2012) emphasizes that language difficulties hinder access to disciplinary knowledge,

particularly in traditional teaching situations where the student is not very active in their expression. In this context, the issue of language development cannot be reduced to the sole responsibility of French teachers. All disciplines, including those with a practical or physical focus such as physical education (PE), are called upon to play a role in this dynamic. Far from being incompatible with linguistic expression, PE, on the contrary, offers authentic and motivating situations where students can describe, explain, justify, debate, and analyze. Several researchers (Gréhaigne, Wallian & Caty, 2010; Brière-Guenoun, 2017) have already shown that verbal practices in PE (reflections on actions, debates, peer observations) foster the development of rich and structured academic discourse.

Furthermore, the Common Core (MENJS, 2020) legitimizes this contribution by affirming that PE fully participates in the development of oral expression, comprehension of instructions, argumentation, and verbal cooperation. It is therefore a discipline which, in addition to developing motor and social skills, also contributes to the student's language training, in a cross-curricular approach. However, this potential remains largely untapped, particularly in the early years of middle school, where Physical Education (PE) often remains focused on motor performance. Working on language skills in PE not only diversifies learning methods but also helps combat language inequalities. This dissertation is situated within this perspective, aiming to analyze the language practices used in PE and examine their actual contribution to the development of language skills in early middle school students.

**Research Question:** How does Physical Education contribute to the development of students' language skills at school?

**Specific Questions:** What types of PE activities engage and develop language skills in students?

-What forms of language are used in PE?

#### Hypotheses

- Debates on strategies, collective analysis of actions, and oral summaries at the end of sessions are practices that engage and develop students' language skills;
- Prescriptive, descriptive, and analytical language are the languages used in Physical Education.

**Methodological approach:** This cross-sectional study is based on a mixed-methods approach, that is, both quantitative and qualitative. It is quantitative because we used questionnaires and qualitative because of the observations made during the sessions.

**Study population:** The objective of this step is to define the sample to be interviewed and questioned in order to obtain the necessary and effective information. For this study, we chose teachers and students from the city of Porto-Novo, where our training school is located, to facilitate travel and ensure our availability for other academic commitments.

**Sampling method and technique:** Non-probability sampling was used for both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling. Purposed sampling led to the definition of three inclusion criteria for each case. For teachers: participants must have 5 years of professional experience; have taught at least one lower secondary class for three consecutive years; and be a certified physical education teacher. For students, they must be in lower secondary school, regularly attending physical education classes, and come from the class of a teacher included in the study. Using the method and technique described above, the sample size is 25 teachers for 25 students, or one student per selected teacher.

**Data collection techniques:** Three (3) data collection techniques were used: document review, lesson observation, and a questionnaire survey.

**Document analysis:** The document analysis was based on a systematic review of official texts and writings on language skills, followed by an analysis of dissertations and other articles related to this topic. It allowed for a review of the existing documentation relevant to this study.

**Questionnaire:** The survey questionnaires sent to teachers and their students included questions whose headings would allow us to achieve each of the objectives of this study (use of specific technical vocabulary; situations that most encourage student participation; learning new words through physical education classes, etc.). To gather more relevant information, we observed two (2) sessions with the teachers (specifically, those who are also school activity leaders).

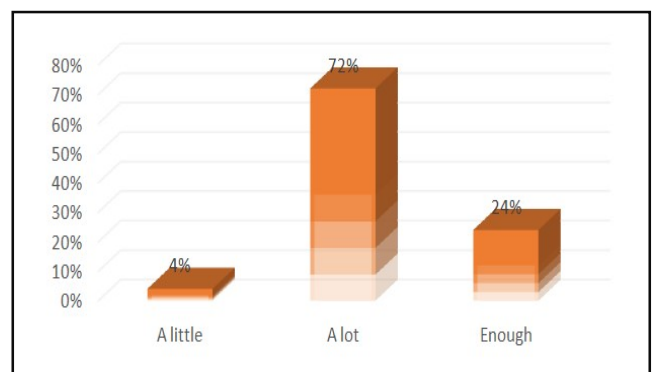
**Observing the sessions:** For effective observation of the sessions, we used an observation grid containing indicators to be observed (students' requests for oral expression; use of vocabulary specific to physical education; verbal interaction between students; time allotted for reflective expression; type of language used, etc.), which allowed us to obtain readily usable information.

**Data processing:** This phase includes processing the questionnaire and observations to create a database, data entry, and analysis of the results. The data collected through the questionnaire will be coded, entered, and saved in an MS Excel 2019 spreadsheet after coding and processing. Once the database is built, descriptive analyses (frequency tables and diagrams) will be performed using IBM SPSS version 26. As for the qualitative data from the observations, the concrete examples observed will be subjected to content analysis aimed at identifying recurring situations that require language and the specific uses of each type of language. An analysis grid will then be developed to progressively refine the understanding of the observed elements.

## RESULTS

**Presentation and interpretation of the results obtained through the questionnaires:** These questionnaires were sent to students and teachers.

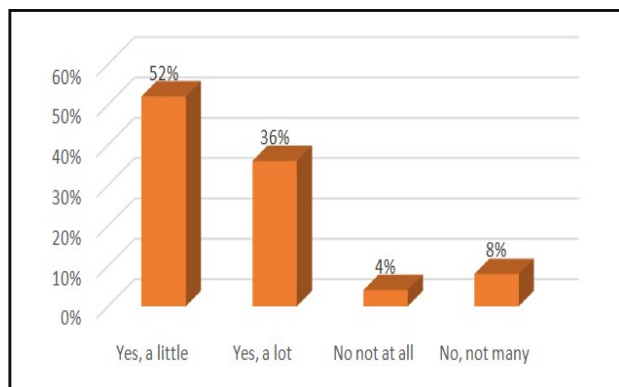
**Results obtained through the questionnaire sent to students:** Graph 1 presents the levels (a little, quite a bit, a lot) of appreciation of physical education classes by the students.



Source: 2025 Field Data

**Figure 1. Students' Appreciation of Physical Education (PE)**

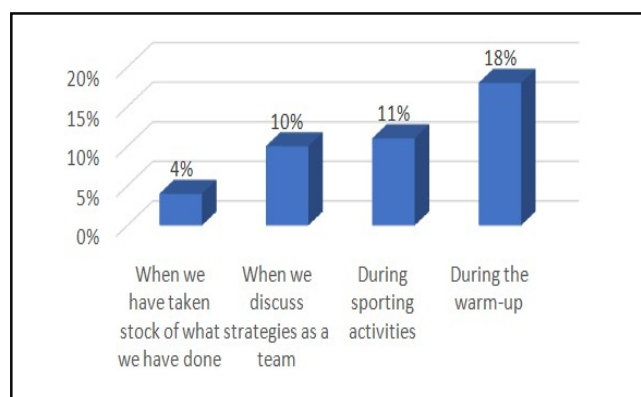
It can be seen that 72% of the students surveyed "really" like PE. At the same time, 24% of students say they "quite like" PE, while 4% say they "somewhat like" it. The graph analysis thus reveals a largely positive appreciation of PE, as the majority of students enjoy it. This strong support reflects the intrinsic appeal of PE, which is often perceived by students as a space for physical expression, relaxation, and enjoyment, in contrast to the more static nature of other subjects. Figure 2 shows the frequency with which students participate in physical education classes. This figure indicates that 52% of the students surveyed speak a little during physical education, 36% speak a lot, 8% speak very little, while 4% do not speak at all.



Source: 2025 Field Data

**Figure 2. Frequency of student participation in physical education classes**

The conclusion is that the majority of students participate in physical education classes.



Source: 2025 Field Data

**Figure 3. Student speaking times**

Figure 3 shows the times when students spoke. According to this figure, the most frequently cited time was the warm-up (18 mentions), followed by the sports activities (11 mentions), strategy discussions (10 mentions), and finally, the debriefing sessions (4 mentions).

Analysis of this result shows that students spoke at all times during the physical education class, but to varying degrees. Students even spoke during physical activity to coordinate, encourage each other, adjust team movements, take a stand, and defend their strategies. This table presents students' perceptions regarding the frequency with which they are asked to perform various verbal or written activities in Physical Education. The results show that the majority of these activities are occasional rather than systematic. We classify them into three categories:

**Activities mostly practiced "sometimes":** Three practices stand out due to their frequency of "sometimes":

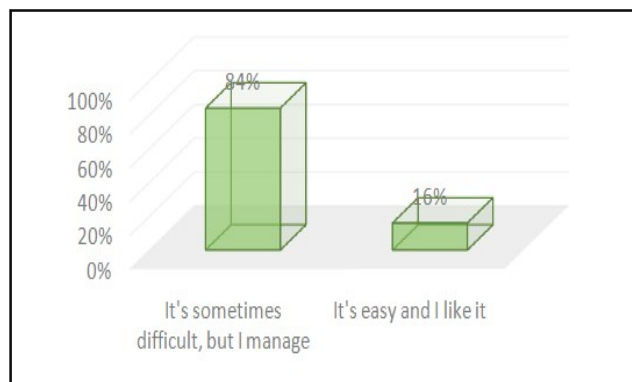
- Explaining how to perform a movement: 48% of students say they do this sometimes, while only 20% do it always. This suggests that students are occasionally asked to describe technical movements, but that this form of expression is not systematic.
- Giving their opinion on a strategy: 48% also respond "sometimes," but the rates of "rarely" (24%) and "never" (8%) are notable. This data shows a low regularity in students' involvement in strategic thinking, which is nevertheless essential to their learning.
- Analyzing their performance: here, 40% of students state that they "sometimes" analyze their performance. This reflects a tendency to encourage reflection on performance, without establishing it as a regular practice.

**Infrequent or absent activities**

Some activities appear to be implemented very infrequently:

- writing a session summary: no student has done this "always"; 44% even say that it is rarely requested, and 20% "never." This shows a lack of interest or time devoted to written formalization, which is nevertheless useful for structuring learning.
- using precise technical terms: 36% say they do this often, which is encouraging, but the 32% who answer "sometimes" indicate an inconsistency in the requirement for lexical precision.

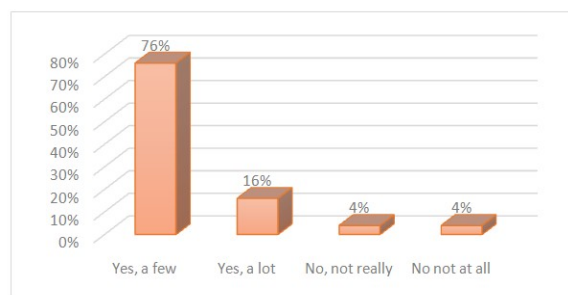
**A slightly more regular activity: discussing the rules:** With 24% of responses saying "always" and 32% "sometimes," discussing the rules of the game is relatively more frequent than other activities. It seems to be part of more established teaching practices, which is consistent with the educational approach of Physical Education focusing on citizenship and respect for rules.



Source: 2025 Field Data

**Figure 4. Students' perceived ease of explaining an action or content in physical education**

The results in the figure show that the majority of students (84%) report that they sometimes find it difficult to explain in Physical Education, but that they manage to do so nonetheless. Conversely, only 16% consider it easy and that they enjoy it. This distribution highlights several important points. On the one hand, students seem to demonstrate effort and perseverance, since they engage in verbalization even when they find it difficult. This may reflect a form of active engagement, but also a lack of fluency in oral expression in a technical or sporting context. On the other hand, the low proportion of students who feel comfortable (16%) suggests that few of them actually possess the language skills and confidence necessary to clearly explain a movement, a rule, or a strategy.



Source: 2025 Field Data

**Figure 5. Students' perceptions of vocabulary enrichment through physical education classes**

Figure 5 presents the level of vocabulary enrichment students experienced through physical education classes. The results show that 92% of students acknowledge having learned vocabulary through physical education classes, with 76% reporting having learned "a few words" and 16% "a lot." These figures reveal that physical education

sessions, although focused on motor skills, contribute significantly to vocabulary development, particularly technical or descriptive terms (e.g., names of movements, rules, positions, strategies, etc.). Conversely, 8% of students report having made little or no progress in expanding their vocabulary, which, while still marginal, raises questions about the consistency of teaching practices.

Public speaking (speaking in front of others) appears to be the most developed skill: 56% of students report having developed it "a lot," and 42% "a little," totaling 98%. This clearly demonstrates that group activities in Physical Education promote ease in speaking in front of others. Regarding the ability to better justify their choices, 44% feel they have acquired this skill a lot, and 44% a little. This suggests that situations where students have to justify technical or tactical choices are relatively well utilized by teachers. The skill of "better understanding explanations" is also viewed positively by a majority: 84% of students report that they are able to do this at least "a little" (32% a lot). This demonstrates a certain effectiveness of teachers in their way of conveying instructions or explaining rules. The skill of "better explaining one's ideas" also received generally positive feedback: 64% said they could do it "a little" and 20% "a lot," but 16% felt they couldn't, which may indicate a need to increase opportunities for individual expression. Finally, 60% of students stated that physical education helps enrich their vocabulary, while 40% said that physical education doesn't really enrich their vocabulary, or doesn't enrich it at all.

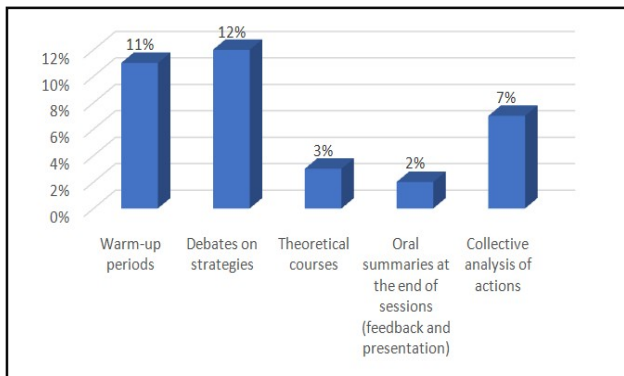


Figure 6. Situations most inspiring students to speak or explain

Figure 6 presents the situations that most encourage students to speak or explain. According to this figure, Strategy Debates (12 mentions) come out on top, indicating that strategic discussions generate the most communicative engagement. Next are Warm-up Activities (11 mentions): very close to the first, suggesting that preparation or warm-up phases are conducive to discussion. Collective Action Analysis (7 mentions): represents a moderate level of engagement for collective reflection phases. Finally, the situations that generate the least communicative interest are Theoretical Lessons (no mentions) and Oral Summaries at the End of Sessions (no mentions).

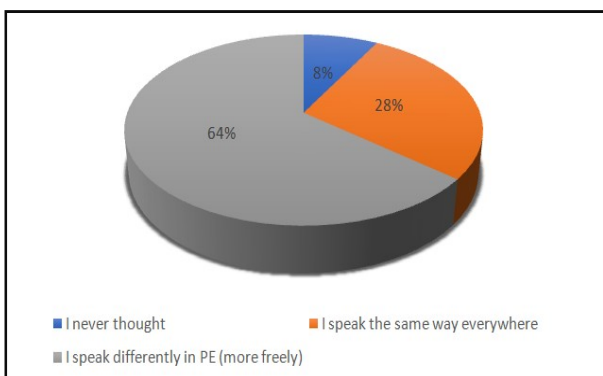


Figure 7. Comparison of expression in physical education and other subjects

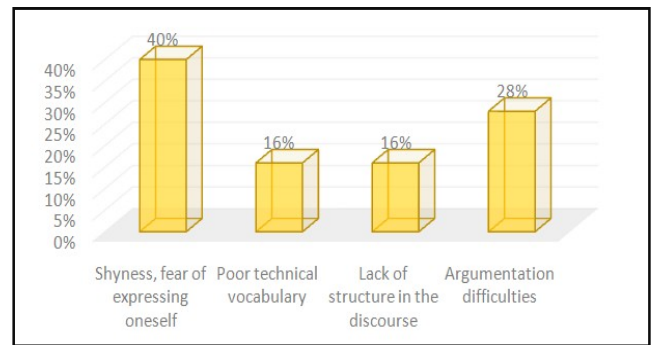
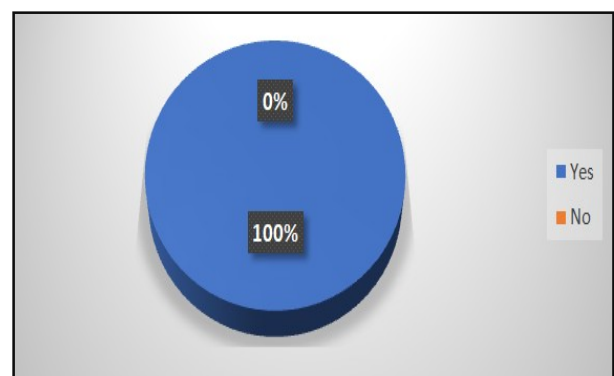


Figure 8. Difficulties students experience speaking in physical education classes

The results show that the majority of students perceive a significant difference in their expression during physical education classes compared to other subjects. Indeed, 64% of students report speaking differently in physical education, notably feeling freer. This suggests that the often more active and collective setting of physical education encourages more spontaneous oral expression among students. 28% state that they express themselves in the same way in all subjects. This may reflect either consistency in their oral fluency or a lack of differentiation between educational contexts. Finally, 8% indicate that they have never thought about it, which may reflect a lack of critical reflection.

Figure 8 presents the difficulties students experience speaking in Physical Education classes. It is noted that shyness and fear of speaking appear to be the most prevalent, with a score of 40%. This reflects a significant psychological barrier for students. Argumentation (28%), which involves the ability to defend an idea or point of view, is also a notable difficulty. A score of 16% shows that slightly more than a quarter of students have problems structuring their reasoning convincingly. This can be explained by a lack of experience in constructing a coherent argument or supporting their statements with specific examples or facts, which is nevertheless essential in the context of sports analysis or debate. The specific vocabulary of Physical Education also represents a barrier for some students (16%).

**Presentation and interpretation of the results obtained through the questionnaire sent to teachers**



Source: 2025 Field Data

Figure 9. Use of explicit instructions

During Lessons According to this figure, all the teachers surveyed stated that they use explicit instructions during their lessons. But are these instructions given using specific technical vocabulary? The configuration of Figure 10 clearly shows that teachers use specific vocabulary related to physical activity, such as trajectory, support, balance, etc. In fact, almost all (92%) of the teachers who participated in this survey stated that they use specific technical vocabulary. Only 8% do not.

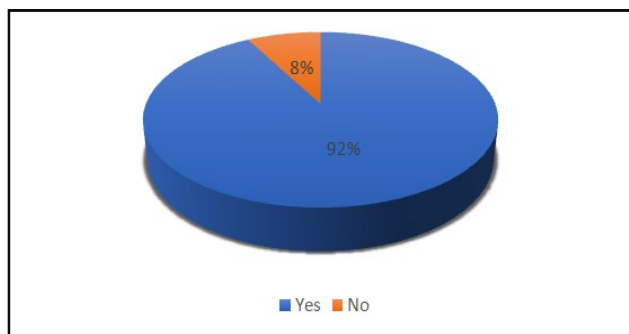


Figure 10. Use of specific technical vocabulary

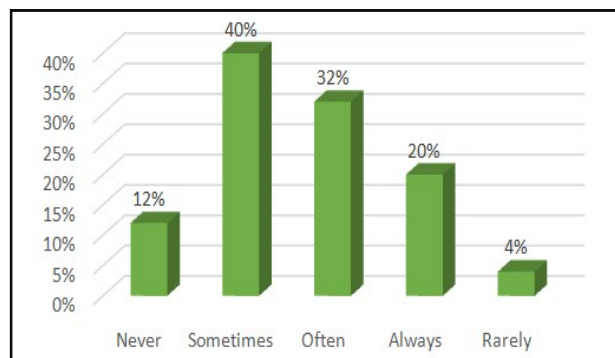


Figure 13. Frequency of use of strategy debates

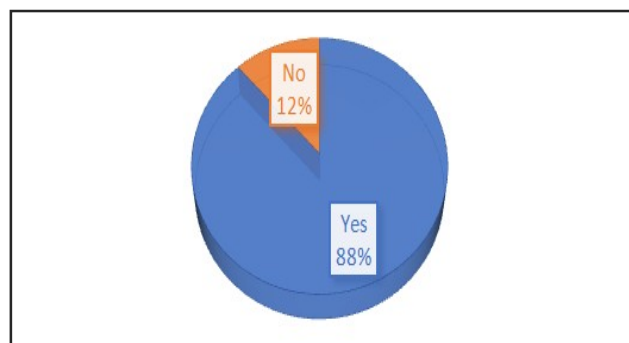


Figure 11: Integration of student note-taking into physical education lessons

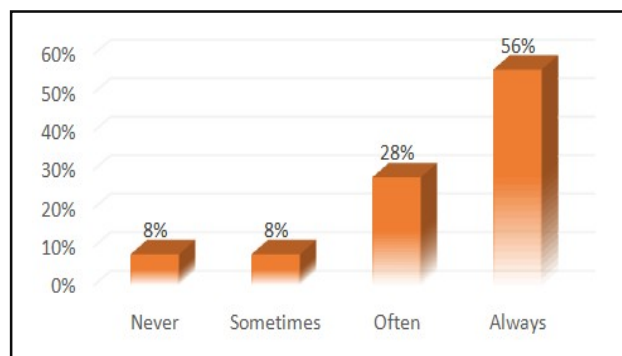


Figure 14. Frequency of use of verbalizing instructions

Regarding the integration of note-taking into physical education lessons, 88% of respondents reported incorporating written notes into their lessons, compared to 12% who did not. The following figure illustrates the impact of theoretical lessons on improving students' language skills.

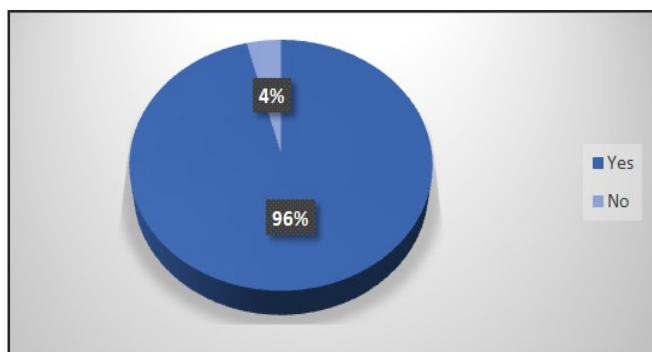


Figure 12. Effect of theoretical lessons on improving students' language skills

While a small minority (4%) held a contrary opinion, a large majority (96%) of those interviewed believed that theoretical lessons can improve students' language skills. For these respondents, theoretical lessons in Physical Education are beneficial in several ways. Among other things, they facilitate better assimilation, allow learners to gain in-depth knowledge of different concepts, and increase students' exposure to new words, their understanding, and their optimal use. This contributes to enriching their vocabulary and thus improving their language skills. Furthermore, theoretical lessons provide a formal framework for discussions, thereby strengthening oral and written skills. The following figure highlights the frequency of the use of debates on strategies.

Analysis of figure 13 reveals that 32% of respondents report using strategy debates regularly, but not systematically. That is, often. Another 40% state that they use them occasionally. A further 20% report using strategy debates regularly (always). However, some

teachers rarely use them (4%), and 12% never use them. Analysis of the data collected on the frequency with which teachers verbalize instructions reveals an overall positive trend. Indeed, 56% of teachers report doing so "always," demonstrating a strong awareness of the importance of this practice in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, 28% of respondents indicate verbalizing instructions "often," which also reflects a significant commitment to clarifying educational expectations for students. Thus, it can be considered that nearly 84% of teachers adopt a regular, even systematic, approach to verbalizing instructions. In contrast, only 8% state that they do so "sometimes," while another 8% report never having done so. This would suggest that a significant minority of teachers remain relatively uninvolved in this practice, which is essential for students to understand instructions.

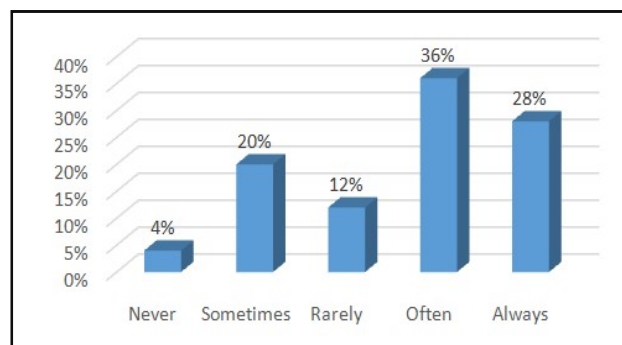
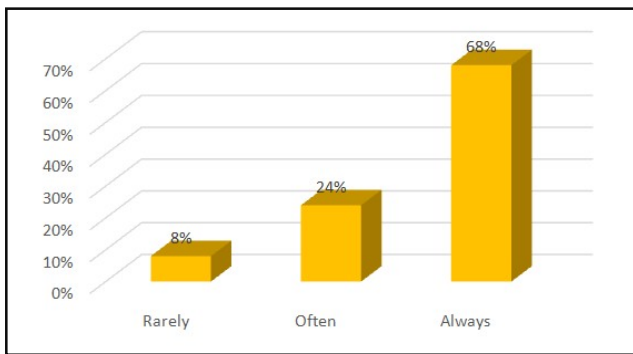


Figure 15. Frequency of use of rephrasing instructions or rules

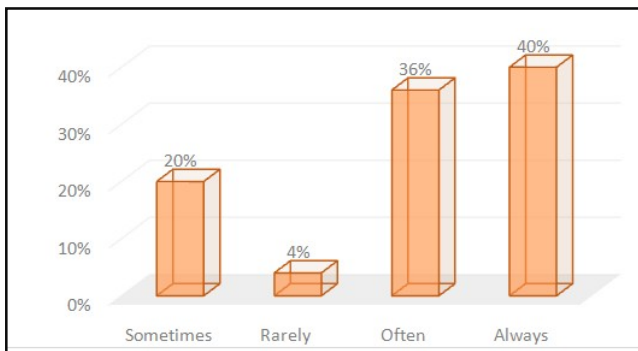
The analysis of data concerning the frequency with which teachers rephrase instructions or rules reveals a relatively well-integrated practice, but one that is still unevenly distributed. Indeed, 36% of teachers report using rephrasing "often," while 28% say they do so "always." These two categories together represent 64% of respondents, indicating that a majority of teachers recognize the importance of rephrasing instructions to improve student understanding. However, 20% of teachers say they do so only "sometimes," reflecting a more occasional practice, potentially dependent on the context or the complexity of the activity. More

concerning, 12% of respondents indicate that they "rarely" rephrase instructions, and 4% "never" do so. These figures show that nearly one in six teachers do not sufficiently integrate reformulation into their teaching approach, even though it is an essential lever for preventing misunderstandings, strengthening the clarity of instructions and promoting learner autonomy.



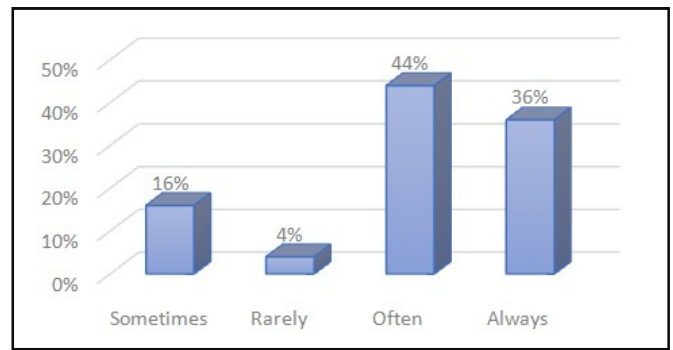
**Figure 16. Frequency of use of end-of-session oral summaries**

Analysis of the data relating to the frequency with which teachers conduct end-of-session oral summaries reveals a largely positive trend. Indeed, a strong majority (68%) of the teachers surveyed report systematically conducting these summaries at the end of their sessions. This significant proportion reflects a clear pedagogical commitment to concluding learning sequences with a phase of feedback, synthesis, or verbalization of acquired knowledge. In addition, 24% of teachers state that they do so "often," meaning that more than 9 out of 10 teachers (92%) consider oral summaries a regular practice, integrated into their professional approach. This pedagogical habit helps to encourage students to speak, memorize information, reflect, and structure their knowledge. However, 20% say they do it "sometimes", and 8% "rarely", which reveals that, despite general support, a significant minority of teachers do not frequently use this essential phase of learning.



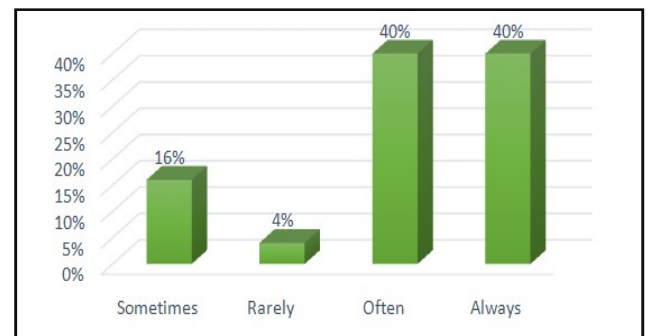
**Figure 17. Frequency of use of theoretical lessons**

The results of the figure on the frequency of use of theoretical lessons in Physical Education (PE) show a significant presence of this teaching method within pedagogical practices. Indeed, 40% of teachers report using theoretical lessons "always," while 36% use them "often." Thus, 76% of the PE teachers surveyed regularly integrate a theoretical dimension into their lessons, demonstrating a desire to strengthen understanding of the content related to physical activity. This trend shows that, contrary to the common misconception that PE is solely focused on practice, teachers place great importance on the transmission of theoretical knowledge, necessary for a conscious, reasoned, and sustainable practice of physical activity. This also allows students to develop transversal skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, and decision-making in real-world situations. However, 20% of teachers say they "sometimes" use these theoretical courses, while 4% "never" use them. Analysis of the data on the frequency with which teachers use student questions reveals a largely positive trend. Indeed, 44% of teachers report doing so "often" and 36% indicate doing so "always," meaning that 80% of



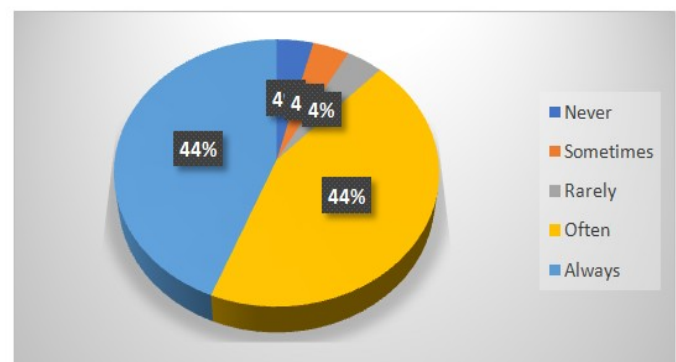
**Figure 18. Frequency of use of student questions**

respondents regularly and systematically use this pedagogical practice. Questioning is a central tool in teaching, as it not only stimulates student participation but also verifies their understanding, encourages reflection, and fosters classroom interaction. The fact that a significant majority of teachers use it demonstrates an active consideration of the students' role in knowledge construction. However, 16% of teachers report using questioning "sometimes," and 4% also "sometimes," which appears to reflect a data entry or categorization error. If one of these answers were to correspond to "rarely" or "never", this would highlight the existence of a minority of teachers for whom this practice remains occasional or infrequent.



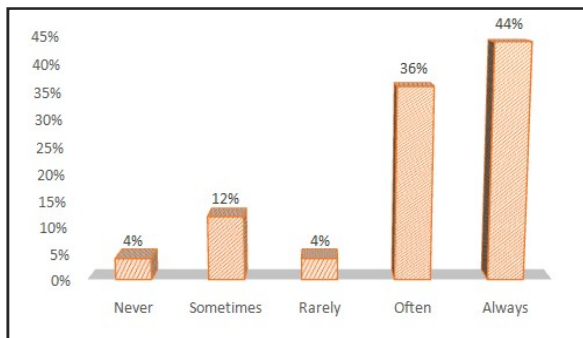
**Figure 19. Frequency of use of encouragement to argument**

Encouraging argumentation stimulates personal reflection, develops analytical skills, and promotes the expression of a well-reasoned viewpoint, which is particularly useful in debates, collective decision-making, and reflective assessments in physical education and sports (PES). This high proportion of teachers practicing argumentation confirms a shift towards active, student-centered pedagogies focused on the co-construction of knowledge. However, 16% report encouraging students to argue "sometimes," and 4% also "sometimes," suggesting redundancy or a categorization error in data entry. If one of these categories corresponded more accurately to "rarely" or "never," it would indicate that a small minority of teachers assign only a limited role to argumentation in their teaching approach.



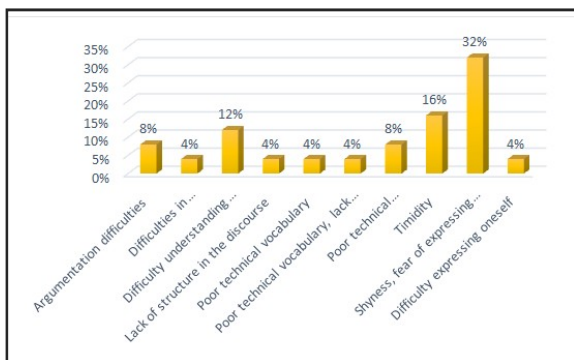
**Figure 20. Frequency of use of specialized vocabulary correction**

Analysis of the results concerning teachers' correction of specialized vocabulary reveals a widespread and valued pedagogical practice. Indeed, 44% of teachers report "always" correcting the specific terms used by students, while 44% state that they do so "often." Thus, 88% of teachers regularly practice this correction, demonstrating a strong commitment to terminological precision and mastery of subject-specific language. The correction of specialized vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the development of language skills specific to each learning area. In Physical Education, for example, this concerns terms such as "warm-up," "support," "cadence," "balance," etc., the proper understanding of which is essential for effective and safe practice. This attention to language also contributes to strengthening intellectual rigor and preparing students for more demanding forms of assessment.



**Figure 21. Frequency of use of collective action analysis**

However, 4% of teachers report doing it "sometimes" (mentioned twice, which appears to be a typo), and 4% "never", for a total of 8% who rarely or never use this practice. The data from the figure on the frequency of use of collective action analysis reveal a practice that is generally well integrated by teachers. Indeed, 44% of teachers report using this approach "always," while 36% state that they do so "often." Thus, a total of 80% of respondents regularly use collective analysis, demonstrating a strong pedagogical interest in this reflective method. Collective action analysis involves a shared review of students' behaviors, choices, and performance in order to identify successes, errors, and areas for improvement. It not only reinforces motor skills (particularly in Physical Education), but also develops transversal skills such as communication, argumentation, cooperation, and critical thinking. However, 12% of teachers say they use it "sometimes", 4% "rarely" and 4% "never", which constitutes a minority (20%) for whom this practice remains occasional or absent.



**Figure 22. Main language difficulties of students according to their teachers**

At the top of the list, 32% of teachers identified shyness and fear of speaking as the main difficulty. This result reflects the significant psychological barriers to speaking in a school context, particularly in an environment like Physical Education, where verbal interactions are sometimes underestimated in favor of physical activity. The fear of making mistakes, of being judged by others, or of the teacher's judgment can lead some students to withdraw, thus reducing their oral participation. Next, 16% of teachers identified a dual obstacle: a

limited technical vocabulary and shyness. This combination exacerbates the difficulties: even when students overcome their shyness, their contributions remain imprecise or poorly formulated, which hinders the quality of the educational exchange and the understanding of key concepts in the discipline. Finally, for 12% of respondents, difficulty understanding instructions is a major obstacle. This can stem from a poorly mastered vocabulary, overly complex syntax, or a lack of attention. In any case, this difficulty has direct consequences on the effectiveness of motor learning, since misunderstanding instructions can lead to incorrect, or even dangerous, execution. The other types of difficulties mentioned in the responses each account for no more than 4%, which justifies considering them secondary compared to the three main trends identified.

### Presentation of observation results

The observation took place in a classroom setting. The first session focused on wrestling and the second on handball.

#### Session 1: African Wrestling

Table 5: Physical Education teaching practices that engage and develop students' language skills in the first cycle of middle school. Observations show that students are encouraged to speak during group time with questions such as, "What did you notice about your opponent?" This practice allows students to express their observations and feelings. However, students did not rephrase instructions during this session. Justification of tactical choices is present, illustrated by the question, "Explain your strategy for unbalancing your opponent," allowing students to verbalize their tactical reasoning.

Instructions are formulated clearly and progressively, facilitating student understanding. Checking comprehension reveals that students sometimes initially execute instructions incorrectly but manage to correct themselves after further explanation from the teacher. The use of physical education-specific vocabulary is present, with the introduction of technical terms such as "throw," "immobilization," "combat area," and "support."

Working in pairs encourages verbal interaction, particularly through the instruction "Observe your partner and tell them what you see and what's wrong." Verbal cooperation between students is manifested through spontaneous exchanges: "Stop messing around," "Observe your opponent," "You can do it!" A review of the session is organized at the end of class with reflective questions: "What did you learn today?" and "What difficulties did you encounter?" No written materials are used, favoring oral communication and practical application. Prescriptive language appears frequently, primarily at the beginning of a session and during technical corrections. Observed examples include "One group has their back to me and another group is facing me" and "We don't throw the opponent." Descriptive language is also common, present during demonstrations and student observations, with examples such as "We take one of the opponent's feet, unbalance them, and gently bring them to the ground" and "You grab their leg and bring them to the ground." Analytical language is used occasionally, especially during interim reviews and individualized corrections, illustrated by "You succeeded because you maintained your balance" and "If you lose your balance, it's because your feet aren't the right distance apart." Argumentative language remains rare, limited to moments of debate about strategies, with the example "This technique is more effective because it uses less force." Metacognitive language is also rare, mainly occurring at the end of the session during the reflective review, with verbalizations such as "I have trouble keeping my balance when I want to bring him to the ground" and "Now I can better sense when he's going to lose his balance."

#### Session 2: Handball

Table 7: Physical Education Teaching Practices that Stimulate and Develop Students' Language Skills in the First Cycle of Middle

**Table 1. Physical Education teaching practices that engage and develop students' language skills in the first cycle of middle school**

| Observed dimensions                               | Indicators                                     | Elements to observe  | Observation methods                    | Yes | No | Comments / Examples  |
|---|--|--|--|-----|----|--|
| Encouraging students to express themselves orally | Students' speeches                             | The teacher gives students the opportunity to express a feeling, a strategy, or an observation.        | During group or review times           | ×   |    | What did you notice about your opponent?   |
|   | Reformulation                                  | The teacher asks the students to rephrase an instruction or a rule.                                    | After the instructions have been given |     | ×  |  |
|   | Justification of choices                       | The students explain their tactical, technical, or behavioral choices.                                 | During or after the activity           |     | ×  | "Explain your strategy for unbalancing your opponent"  |
| Understanding and clarity of the language used    | Formulating the instructions                   | The instructions are formulated in a clear, progressive and accessible manner.                         | During the setup of the situations     | ×   |    |  |
|   | Understanding check                            | The students correctly follow the instructions   | After the instructions                 | ×   |    | Sometimes instructions are poorly executed, but they correct themselves after the teacher explains again.                |
| Specific vocabulary used in Physical Education    | Disciplinary vocabulary and lexical enrichment | Use of activity-specific terminology   | In the explanations and corrections    | ×   |    | "Projection", "immobilization", "combat surface", "support"  |
| Verbal interaction between students               | Work in pairs or groups                        | The teacher organizes situations for verbal exchange (instructions between peers, co-assessment, etc.) | During collaborative exercises         | ×   |    | "Observe your partner and tell them what you see and what's wrong."  |
|   | Verbal cooperation                             | The students talk to each other to organize themselves, help each other, or correct each other's work. | Direct observation of interactions     | ×   |    | "Stop playing around," "Observe your opponent," "You can do it!"   |
| Time for reflective expression                    | A look back at the session                     | The teacher organizes an oral review session where the students express what they have learned.        | End of session.                        | ×   |    | "What did you learn today?", "What difficulties did you encounter?"  |
|   | Use of written records                         | The teacher provides resources to give information to the students                                     | Before, during or after the activity.  |     | ×  | No written materials were used during this session; emphasis was placed on oral communication and practical application. |

**Table 2. Types of language used in Physical Education**

| Language type | Observable indicators  | Concrete examples noted during the session   | Frequency of occurrence | Notes / Contexts of appearance   |
|---------------|--|--|-------------------------|--|
| Prescriptive  | The teacher gives clear instructions on the tasks to be completed (what to do, how to do it) | -One group has its back to me and another group is facing me.<br>-You don't throw the opponent.  | Frequent                | Primarily at the beginning of the session and during technical corrections   |
| Description   | The teacher or student describes what they observe or do                                     | -You take one of your opponent's feet, unbalance them, and gently bring them to the ground.<br>-You grab their leg and bring them to the ground. | Frequent                | During demonstrations and student observations   |
| Analytical    | The student or teacher identifies the causes of success or failure                           | - You succeeded because you kept your balance.<br>- If you lose your balance, it's because your feet aren't the right distance apart.            | Casual                  | Especially during interim assessments and individualized corrections   |
| Argumentative | The student or teacher supports their point of view with arguments                           | This technique is more effective because it uses less force.   | Rare                    | Moments of debate on strategies, discussions between experienced students  |
| Metacognitive | The student verbalizes their difficulties, strategies, or progress.                          | -I have trouble keeping my balance when I want to bring him to the ground. Now I can better feel when he's going to lose his balance.            | Rare                    | Primarily at the end of the session during the reflective review, or during spontaneous exchanges between students |

**Table 3. Physical Education Teaching Practices that Stimulate and Develop Students' Language Skills in the First Cycle of Middle School**

| Observed dimensions                                     | Indicators                                     | Elements to observe  | Observation methods                     | Yes | No | Comments / Examples   |
|---|--|--|---|-----|----|---|
| <b>Request for expression orale des élèves</b>          | Students' speeches                             | The teacher gives students the opportunity to express a feeling, a strategy, or an observation.              | During group or review times.           | ×   |    | "How did you manage to score that goal?", "What do you suggest for better defending?"                                       |
|   | Reformulation                                  | The teacher asks the students to rephrase an instruction or a rule.  | After the instructions have been given. | ×   |    | "Can someone explain the 3-second rule to me?", "Tell me again the conditions for a penalty kick".                          |
|   | Justification of choices                       | The students explain their tactical, technical, or behavioral choices.                                       | During or after the activity.           |     | ×  |   |
|   | Formulating the instructions                   | The instructions are formulated in a clear, progressive and accessible manner.                               | During the setup of the situations.     | ×   |    | The instructions are simplified so that they can be understood by the students.   |
|   | Understanding check                            | The students correctly follow the instructions   | After the instructions.                 | ×   |    | Most students follow the instructions correctly.  |
| <b>Use of vocabulary specific to Physical Education</b> | Disciplinary vocabulary and lexical enrichment | Use of activity-specific terminology   | In the explanations and corrections.    | ×   |    | "Support", "Passing trajectories", "Pivot", "Winger", "Counter-attack", "Defensive positioning", "Screen", "Body feint"     |
| <b>Verbal interaction between students</b>              | Work in pairs or groups                        | The teacher organizes situations requiring verbal exchange (instructions between peers, co-assessment, etc.) | During collaborative exercises.         | ×   |    | "Advise your goalkeeper"  |
|   | Verbal cooperation                             | The students talk to each other to organize themselves, help each other, or correct each other.              | Direct observation of interactions.     | ×   |    | Constant communication: "Pass", "I'm free", "Watch out behind you", "Get back on defense"                                   |
| <b>Time for reflective expression</b>                   | A look back at the session                     | The teacher organizes an oral review session where students express what they have learned.                  | End of session.                         | ×   |    | "Which strategies were effective?", "What have you improved compared to the previous session?", "What difficulties remain?" |
|   | Use of written records                         | The teacher provides resources to give information to the students   | Before, during or after the activity.   | ×   |    | Theoretical lesson at the beginning of the session and note-taking by the students.   |

**Table 4. Types of language used in Physical Education**

| Language type        | Observable indicators  | Concrete examples noted during the session   | Frequency of occurrence | Notes/Contexts of appearance  |
|----------------------|--|--|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Prescriptive</b>  | The teacher gives clear instructions on the tasks to be completed (what to do, how to do it) | - Look before you make your pass<br>- Respect the 6-meter zone   | <b>Frequent</b>         | Game situations   |
| <b>Description</b>   | The teacher or student describes what they observe or do                                     | - You take three steps then you shoot<br>- The dribble is done with one hand by pushing the ball along the ground without carrying it      | <b>Frequent</b>         | During demonstrations, observations of game situations, technical corrections |
| <b>Analytical</b>    | The student or teacher identifies the causes of success or failure                           | - You make a successful pass because you look at your partner before making the pass.<br>-This defense works because you communicate well. | <b>Frequent</b>         | Downtime, assessments after each situation                                    |
| <b>Argumentative</b> | The student or teacher supports their point of view with arguments                           | - I think we need to play more as a team because we're losing possession too often.  | <b>Casual</b>           | Time for consultation between teams   |
| <b>Metacognitive</b> | The student verbalizes their difficulties, strategies, or progress.                          | - I understand that I need to look before I pass. - I realize that I need to communicate more with my teammates.                           | <b>Casual</b>           | Moments of reflection, exchanges between teammates                            |

School. Students are encouraged to speak up through analytical questions such as, "How did you manage to score that goal?" and "What do you suggest for better defense?" They also use reformulation with explicit requests like, "Who can explain the 3-second rule?" and "Repeat the conditions for a penalty." However, justification of individual tactical choices was not observed during this session. Instructions are simplified to ensure student understanding, and most students correctly follow them. The use of specific vocabulary is rich and varied, including terms like "support," "passing trajectories," "pivot," "winger," "counter-attack," "defensive positioning," "screen," and "body feint." Collaborative work is also encouraged with instructions such as, "Advise your goalkeeper." Verbal cooperation is constant during the game, with communications such as: "Pass!", "I'm free!", "Watch out behind you!", "Get back on defense!". The debriefing session is structured around evaluation questions: "Which strategies were effective?", "What have you improved compared to the previous session?", and "What difficulties remain?". A theoretical lesson is given at the beginning of the session, with students taking notes. Prescriptive language is common during game situations, with instructions such as "Look before you pass" and "Respect the six-meter zone." Descriptive language frequently appears during demonstrations, observations of game situations, and technical corrections, illustrated by "Take three steps, then shoot" and "The dribble is done with one hand, pushing the ball along the ground without carrying it." Analytical language is frequent, present during timeouts and debriefings after each situation, with examples such as "You made your pass because you looked at your teammate before passing" and "This defense works because you communicate well." Argumentative language is occasional, observed during team discussions: "I think we need to play more as a team because we're losing possession too often." Metacognitive language is also used occasionally, during debriefing sessions and discussions among teammates, with verbalizations such as "I understand that I need to look before passing" and "I realize that I need to communicate more with my teammates."

**Analysis and interpretation of results:** This section concerns the results of the questionnaires (students and teachers) and the observations.

**Analysis and interpretation of questionnaire results:** The questionnaires were sent to physical education teachers and students in the first cycle of middle school. The objective was to determine the teaching practices related to the development of language skills through physical education and the types of language used during physical education classes. Among the teachers, the results revealed that the majority of them recognize that physical education can contribute to the development of language skills, particularly through the use of explicit instructions, encouraging student participation, and the gradual introduction of subject-specific vocabulary. A large proportion report incorporating oral questioning (review, explanation of strategies, reformulation) into their lessons. However, some acknowledge that these practices are more prevalent in certain sports (such as team sports) than in others. Few teachers use written materials or systematically organize structured debates or discussions among students. From the students' perspective, the majority report understanding oral instructions, being encouraged to speak during lessons, and learning new technical vocabulary. However, few report frequently having the opportunity to explain their choices or strategies, and even fewer participate in reasoned debates or discussions. Students' voices are thus solicited, but remain primarily prescriptive or descriptive. More elaborate forms of language (analytical, argumentative, metacognitive) appear to be less systematically used, which partially confirms the hypothesis that current practices are centered on functional language (prescriptive, descriptive), to the detriment of more reflective and constructive uses. These findings align with the work of Bucheton and Soulé (2009) on language use in teaching situations, highlighting the importance of verbal interactions for structuring thought and facilitating learning. They also confirm the crucial role of the teacher in implementing strategies that encourage participation and the use of subject-specific language.

**Analysis and interpretation of observation results:** Two physical education sessions were observed: one in African wrestling, the other in handball. These observations allowed for the identification of actual classroom practices related to language use, and especially the types of language employed in physical education. In the African wrestling session, students' oral expression is encouraged, particularly through group discussions ("What did you notice about your opponent?") and requests for justification of tactical choices ("Explain your strategy to us"). Verbal interactions between peers are also present, although the reformulation of instructions and the use of written materials are absent. Technical vocabulary is used ("throw," "immobilization," etc.), and several types of academic language are employed: prescriptive, descriptive, and analytical, but very little argumentative or metacognitive language. In the handball session, there is a greater richness of verbal exchanges between students, notably thanks to the collective dynamic of the sport. The teacher provides clear and progressive instructions, encourages reformulation ("Who can explain the 3-second rule to me?"), and incorporates a written theoretical component. Interactions are frequent during the game ("Pass!", "I'm free!"), and oral debriefings allow for some reflective verbalization. Here again, prescriptive and descriptive language dominates, but analytical forms are observed more frequently, and argumentative and metacognitive forms are seen only occasionally. Thus, observations confirm that Physical Education (PE) mobilizes a plurality of academic languages, but their frequency of appearance varies according to the activity, the teaching style, and the time of day within the lesson. The observed practices largely validate the second hypothesis, according to which prescriptive, descriptive, and analytical language are the most prevalent in PE, while more complex language forms remain underutilized.

## DISCUSSION

The results from the questionnaires and session observations allowed us to meet the specific objectives of this study, namely: to identify the teaching practices in Physical Education (PE) that engage and develop students' language skills and to describe the types of language used during PE sessions. The comparison between the results from the questionnaires and those from the observations reveals an overall consistency, but also some interesting discrepancies. On the one hand, both data collection methods confirm that PE engages students' language skills, particularly through oral instructions, the description of actions, and the verbalization of observations. On the other hand, some differences emerge. For example, some teachers state that they encourage students to justify their choices and participate orally, but these aspects are not always visible or systematic in the observed sessions. In general, the data shows that physical education (PE) provides a favorable environment for oral expression, particularly through instructions, oral debriefings, group activities, and certain forms of interaction between students. The teachers interviewed overwhelmingly stated that they use practices designed to encourage student participation, such as questioning about strategies or reformulating rules. However, these practices are neither systematic nor in-depth, and the most complex forms of language are rarely employed.

Observation of the two sessions (African wrestling and handball) confirmed these trends. Prescriptive language (instructions and guidelines) and descriptive language (description of gestures or actions) are frequently used. Analytical language, which involves reflecting on the reasons for success or failure, appears less frequently. Conversely, argumentative and metacognitive language, which respectively allow students to defend a point of view and reflect on their own learning, are rarely used. Furthermore, the use of vocabulary specific to physical education is evident in both observed sessions. The technical terms used by the teachers ("projection," "feint," "pivot," "defensive repositioning," etc.) are integrated into the learning situations, but their appropriation by the students remains underdeveloped. Therefore, the introduction of written materials (such as a theoretical lesson in the handball session) and the emphasis on reformulation are particularly valuable teaching practices, as they

expand opportunities to use more reflective and structured language. These practices, however, remain uncommon in all the situations observed or described. The results obtained align with several scientific studies that recognize the central role of language in learning, including in physical education. Indeed, Dolz and Schneuwly (2009) emphasize that any school subject, as long as it utilizes discursive genres and communication situations, can become a site for language learning. This study confirms that physical education, through its dimensions of interaction, verbalization of actions, explanation of rules, and reflective feedback, can effectively contribute to the development of language skills. The observations also corroborate the conclusions of Bucheton and Soulé (2009), who highlight the importance of the teacher's role in implementing "professional language practices" that promote the reformulation, explanation, and verbalization of strategies. In our study, the teachers interviewed expressed a clear pedagogical intention to encourage student participation, but the observed actual practices did not always reflect this intention consistently and in depth. However, some discrepancies emerged. While some teachers stated that they encouraged students to justify their choices or engage in reasoned discussions, these aspects were rarely visible in their lessons. Another point of interest lies in identifying pedagogical moments conducive to verbalization, such as warm-up phases. This phase of the lesson sometimes seemed to offer a relevant framework for introducing vocabulary, asking questions, and preparing students for the task, which partially aligns with Récopé's (2015) suggestions regarding the cognitive value of warm-ups. Finally, the difference between the disciplines (wrestling vs handball) shows that the type of physical activity strongly influences the richness and nature of language exchanges. Team sports offer more opportunities for spontaneous verbal interaction, collective adjustment, and strategic discussion, which fosters the emergence of varied forms of language, as already highlighted in the work of Schneuwly and Dolz (2004). In short, these results confirm the initial hypotheses: physical education teaching practices do indeed call upon students' language skills, but to varying degrees depending on the situation, the teachers, and the discipline. The most frequently used types of language are prescriptive, descriptive, and analytical forms, while argumentative and metacognitive forms are less developed. These results suggest the need for a more explicit integration of language considerations into physical education sessions, in line with the current curriculum requirements.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, we focused our research on identifying teaching practices that encourage and promote the development of language skills in early middle school students. To achieve this, we adopted a methodological approach based on questionnaires and observation. One questionnaire was sent to teachers and another to students. We surveyed 50 participants (25 students and 25 teachers) to gather the information necessary for our study. The data collected were analyzed according to the theory of language teaching developed by Dolz and Schneuwly (2009). The results of this research show that Physical Education and Sports, although traditionally oriented towards motor development, has real potential for developing language skills in early middle school students. This finding aligns with the work of Dolz and Schneuwly (2009), who argue that any discipline can become a space for language learning provided it incorporates discursive genres adapted to its context and objectives. Questionnaires and observations reveal that teachers primarily use prescriptive and sometimes descriptive language. However, more complex language skills, particularly discursive skills (discourse structuring) and linguistico-discursive skills (lexical choices, syntax), are underutilized due to a lack of structured teaching activities centered on reflective verbal production.

Furthermore, while teachers claim to encourage oral exchanges, observations have shown that these interactions are often limited in duration and depth, and do not involve genuine, authentic communication situations such as the teaching sequences recommended by Dolz and Schneuwly. This reveals a discrepancy between stated pedagogical intentions and actual practices. Physical education (PE) should go beyond simply transmitting instructions to become a space for constructing discourse where students learn to describe, analyze, argue, and reformulate experiences within a school setting. This requires the implementation of comprehensive teaching sequences, integrating initial productions, modules targeting language difficulties, and assessable final projects. Teacher training in language teaching methodology, the development of authentic language learning situations, and the systematic integration of oral and written discourse genres into PE sessions appear to be essential levers for strengthening this dimension. This research has certain limitations due to time constraints. The sample studied is relatively small, and the observation method was based on only two sessions, which limits the generalizability of the results. Nevertheless, these results allowed us to validate our hypotheses, even though we acknowledge some potential biases.

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