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# THE CONTRIBUTION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUPILS' LITERATE SUBJECTIVITIES

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## INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that the educational process is based on language, which is the primary medium of learning and instruction (Halliday, 2007). Christie (1999) points out that every educator is - consciously or not - a language teacher, because he is involved in showing his pupils how to use language in various subjects in school. Besides, according to Koutsogiannis (in pr.), the teaching process is constituted by a complex of social practices and language plays a determinative role concerning their realisation. Of course, these are true for the subject of Physical Education (PE), too.

A landmark concerning teaching PE was 1966, when Muska Mosston published Teaching Physical Education, where he presented a framework for teaching which he called the "Spectrum of teaching styles", which incorporates ten teaching styles based on the degree to which the teacher or the student assumes responsibility for what happens during a lesson. This describes a continuum, where at one end there is the direct, teacher-led approach and at the other lies a much more open-ended and student-centred style where the teacher acts only in a facilitatory role. Mosston and Ashworth (2008)[1] point out especially practical reasons concerning the necessity of Spectrum. For example, the fact that every teacher has various teaching goals which could be reached through very different ways of teaching, or the fact that every pupil is a special person with his own needs and desires. Of course, this means that a decisive element for the usefulness of Spectrum is his relation with modern ideas about learning, which emphasise that the way a pupil learns, affects the way we teach (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2003).

In our paper we combine the Spectrum school of thought[2] with certain views of educational linguistics and especially those of the School of Sydney (Martin, 2009) which suggests that we could examine every teaching unit as a macrogenre consisting of a series of classroom episodes. Mosston and Ashworth (2008), describing the anatomy of the different teaching styles refer to series of episodes (for example, the introduction made by the teacher about what will be taught and how it

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[1] In this paper we follow Mosston and Ashworth (2008), which is the most updated edition of Mosston (1966). For a presentation of M. Mosston's theoretical explorations, see Digelidis (2007).

[2] See the Spectrum of teaching styles at http://www.spectrumofteachingstyles.org/

is related with previously acquired knowledge, the instructions about how the pupils will position themselves before and during practicing, the discourses between the teacher and the pupils about how a certain physical exercise could be done more effectively etc.) which facilitate the accomplishment of the objectives of every style. We will try to show that PE teaching styles is something more than just useful tools for impartment and consolidation of knowledge but they are related with certain Discourses[3] and they are accomplished as certain series of teaching-learning (or textual) episodes. We argue that every one of these series "exercises" pupils in a different way concerning the limits or the kind of their interaction (linguistical or not) into the classroom or generally as members of a certain society in which they are (or will be) integrated. This means that certain teaching styles affect in a different way the development of pupil's ability to form or adopt certain identities.

Last but not least we take into account Koutsogiannis' (2010a; 2010b; in pr.) proposal of reading and analysing of pedagogic discourse, according to whom "every teaching process . . . is a macrogenre, unfolding in a certain way, in order to transmit knowledges to children, or to make them aware of certain things etc. But, besides...it belongs to (a) certain teaching tradition(s). Consequently, it belongs to certain pedagogic Discourses or it triggers the emergence of new ones... For the accomplishment of these teaching macrogenres certain teachers'[4] identities are required. And on the other hand certain teachers'[5] identities exist, because they create and make use of certain teaching macrogenres, which inevitably belong to certain teaching viewpoints (or Discourses)" (Koutsogiannis, 2010a, p. 352).

Koutsogiannis tries to creatively combine, amongst others, the tradition of the School of Sydney with the model of critical discourse analysis of Fairclough (2003) and argues that his proposal: 1) helps us analyse, through a post-structuralist point of view, the (linguistic and the not only) education which is provided into the classroom and the kind of literate subjectivity who is formed through the use of certain learning material, and 2) contributes to the integration of discourse (or teaching) schemas (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2007; Fairclough, 2003), like IRE/F or goal-achievement, as organic elements of teaching macrogenres.

## AIM OF RESEARCH

We compare two teaching styles of PE - the command style (CS) and the reciprocal style (RS): a) as teaching macrogenres, and b) in relation with the

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[3] Discourses are systematically organised sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Besides that, they define, describe and delimit what is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension - to do or not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally. A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area and organises and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object process is to be talked about. In that, it provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual actions (Kress, 1989).

[4] We would add "and pupils'"

[5] We would add "and pupils'"

teaching schemas which regulate them. We will try to show that different teaching styles could have different results concerning pupils' development of: a) language, and b) the ability to form or to adopt certain social (and literate) identities.

## METHODOLOGY

We apply Koutsogiannis' (2010b) post-structural way of "transcription" of pedagogic discourse. Of course we have adjusted this model to the data of teaching PE. We first present the macrogenre descriptions which result through the above mentioned model and then we compare them concerning the quantity and the quality of the language interaction(s). Next we discuss our findings concerning: a) teaching schemas, and b) the development of language and of different kinds of pupil or social identity.

In our macrogenre descriptions we use the following abbreviations: F=feedback, E=exercise, data, OWD=oral and written data, T=teacher, I=Introduction, Ex=execution, M=macrogenre, P=pairing of the students, S=student, OD=oral data, g-a=goal achievement schema, Λ=obligatory episode, *=optional episode.

## MACROGENRE ANALYSIS OF TEACHING STYLES

### CS

In the introduction the teacher demonstrates the whole task, its parts and its terminology, and he explains the movement sequences or details necessary for efficiently or safely understanding or performing the task. Through this teaching episode the model for the performance is established. Next, the pupils execute the exercise following the command signals and the rhythm support procedures conducted by the teacher. Finally (if needed) the teacher offers feedback to the pupils about the performance of the task (Mosston & Ashworth, 2008).

A macrogenre description of a teaching unit with only CS could be the following:

$$M=I^T(OD1^T)\Lambda E^{T+S}(OD2^T\Lambda Ex^{T+S})*F^T(OD3^T)$$

that is, teacher ($^T$) makes an Introduction (I), which includes some oral data (OD) about the subject of the lesson (for example, the teacher shows the children a sequence of movements saying, e.g. "Put one foot to the start line, place the second foot alongside the first foot so that the toes of the second foot are on the same level with the front of the heel of the first foot.") and the positioning (P) of the children. Once an 'on your marks' position is established, the students ($^S$) are asked to practice in a similar manner, executing (Ex) teacher's oral commands (OD2). Finally, an oral feedback F(OD3) may (*) be offered by the teacher.

In CS, the teacher makes all impact decisions and the students follow these decisions. They affect the teaching process and the learning result only by executing the exercises following teacher's commands. It is characteristic that there is a ratio

of 4 to 1 between T and S[6]. This means that the active participation of the students to the development of the "how" of the learning procedure is very low. Besides, index S does not accompany any of the episodes where use of language plays an important role (ODs), meaning that in the level of verbal interaction the participation of the students is very limited: they just understand and apply teacher's commands and they may cause feedback if they show that they haven't rightly understood teacher's initial instructions (I).

It is obvious that CS is regulated by the teaching schema IRE/F, that is a teacher-led, three-part sequence which begins with the teacher initiating (I) by providing some data or giving instructions or commands (in our case OD2). Students respond (R· in our case Ex) and the teacher evaluates (E) and/or (in our case) gives feedback (F) (Lemke 1985).
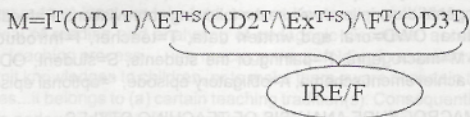
$$M = I^T(OD1^T) \wedge E^{T+S}(OD2^T \wedge Ex^{T+S}) \wedge F^T(OD3^T)$$

IRE/F

**Figure 1**
CS and IRE/F.

IRE/F is a typical characteristic of the traditional - face-to face - way of teaching (Adgers, 2001), and CS is the most traditional way of teaching PE. It's a teaching style that offers pupils no chances for any initiation concerning their interaction (linguistic or not) into the classroom. This could lead to the formation of literate subjects who aren't used to critically asked questions not only in the context of a school class but more generally in the broader context of the society where they belong. Actually, Papaioannou, Theodorakis, & Goudas (2003) connect command style with contexts broader than this of the school Education, by pointing out that this style was highly promoted in suppresive regimes or in societies where the citizen's ability of conformity or uniformity was considered to be a very important issue (concerning, for example, the availability of obedient soldiers).

In the frame of educational linguistics we could argue that CS exercises children to a Discourse of which a main characteristic is the execution of already taken decisions without any argumentation or critical thinking. Besides, it is not difficult to parallelise command style with recognition literacy, that is the traditional form of literacy where pupils learn just the pairing of sounds with letters or of orthography

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[8] In our macrogenre descriptions, the indexes T and S are used only if the teacher or the students affect decisively an episode of the teaching procedure. E.g. ODs in CS are accompanied only by a $^T$, because they are formed only by the teacher, but Ex is accompanied by both indexes, because both the teacher and the students influence the development of this episode.

with linguistics forms and just grammatical rules and language is seen as a list of types and not as a system with meaning potentials or as a means for empowering people to participate effectively in social processes constructing and decoding meanings. The ideals of recognition literacy demand pupils who are not likely to ask questions and who are willing to follow whatever authority, in the guise of the teacher, leads them (Halliday, 1996; Hasan, 1996). Also in the case of CS the ODs are considered to be something that it holds in any case and it must be just executed. It is a well-known form the history of Education that for a lot decades the recognition literacy and CS were both parts of curricula in a lot of countries.

## RS

The defining characteristics of RS are social interactions, reciprocation and receiving and giving immediate feedback (guided by specific criteria provided by the teacher). Teacher's role is to make all subject matter, criteria and logistical decisions and to provide feedback to the observer. Pupils' role is to work in partnership relationships. They are organized in pairs with each member being assigned a specific role. One member is designated as the doer and the other as the observer. The doer performs the task and initiates questions to the observer, while the observer offers him immediate and on-going feedback according to criteria sheets designed by the teacher.

A macrogenre description of a teaching unit with only CS could be the following:

$$M=I^{T+*S}(OWD1^T \wedge P^{*S}) \wedge E^{S+T}(Ex^S \wedge OWD2^S) \wedge F^{S+T}(OWD3^S+OD2^T)$$

that is, teacher ($^T$) makes an Introduction (I), offering some oral data about the subject of the lesson, explaining the need for a reciprocal relationship and how the pupils will select their partners, and of course distributing the criteria sheets and some explanation to observers about how to use and fill them (OWD1). Next, the doer performs (Ex) and the observer offers him (helping) instructions orally but also according to the criteria sheets (OWD2; for example, "Racquet starts knee high and finishes nose high" or "Hit like the serve" in case of teaching tennis spin and smash shots). Besides, the observers fill the criteria sheets using even small sentences such as "He misjudges ball by loosing focus of ball". Additional feedback (F) may be provided by the teacher who observes the doers' performance, hears the observers' feedback comments and helps them repeat the feedback in the proper manner, if needed.

It is pointed out that the teacher communicates directly only with the observer and so does the doer, too. The teacher does not communicate with the doer, to avoid usurping the observer's role. Of course it is difficult for the teacher to be in the proximity of the doer and see either a correct or incorrect performance without offering feedback; however, he must not interfere with the observer's role and the decisions shifted to the observer, because a very important characteristic of RS is that a lot of decision making is shifted from the teacher to the pupils. It is very

important that the teacher deliberately shifts something that normally belongs to him - the implicit power of feedback - to the learner, who therefore, must practice and learn to use this power responsibly, when he gives and receives feedback with peers (Mosston & Ashworth, 2008). This is very important concerning the identity ability, because, actually, this way, the pupils practice the adoption of different identities inside the same social context.
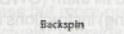
| Tennis |
|---|
| To the doer: |
| Practice the shot 10 times, receive feedback from your observer after each shot. |
| Observer: |
| 1. Observe the performance, use the criteria (below) to analyze the performance, and offer feedback to the doer. |
| 2. Offer feedback after each shot. Practice 10 shots. |
| 3. At the completion of the task, switch roles. |
| Sample verbal behavior for the observer: First , acknowledge what was done well, and then offer corrective feedback about the errors. |
| 1. Your racquet swing went from low to high, well done. |
| 2. Although you cut through the ball, your racquet is not tilted back. |
| 3. Your feet are together, move left foot in front. |

| Spin and Smash Shots | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Task Description | Skill | Cue | Alternate Cue | Common Error |
| Racquet swings high to low | Topspin | Racquet swings low to high | Racquet head perpendicular | Swinging level |
| Racquet is tilted back | | Candy cane swing | I swing | |
| | | Racquet starts knee high and finishes nose high | Shake hands with a friend, and finish shaking hands with a giant | |
| Cut through ball | Backspin (slice) | Racquet swings high to low | Racquet is tilted back | Swinging level |
| | | Cut through ball | | |
| Backspin | Overhead smash | Hit like the serve | Refer to serve action | |
| | | Racquet back to neck | | |
| | | Left foot in front— power with left foot | | Power comes from both feet or back foot |
| | | Point elbow to ball with left hand | | Misjudging ball by losing focus of ball |
| Observer 1 Comments | | Observer 2 Comments | | |

**Figure 2**

A criteria sheet in tennis (Mosston & Assworth, 2008, p. 126).

In what concerns verbal behavior, Mosston and Ashworth (2008) point out that the decision distribution of RS invites pupils to develop conversation and

interaction skills. The criteria and the accompanying content feedback comments serve as models for future interaction and generally the primary focus of RS is teaching learners how to socialize and interact. The intentions of this style have been achieved, when students can communicate to others exhibiting patience, tolerance, and an understanding of the context of interactions. When negative social interactions occur —always visible as verbal or physical expressions— it is imperative that the appropriate decisions that accompany social interactions and communication be reviewed. So, a focus of the teacher observation, while circulating among the pairs, is to listen to the verbal behavior exchange between the partners and to respond when he hears abusive, impatient, or crude comments, or when feedback is withheld, extremely picky and obsessive.

Besides, it is very important that the data of the lesson are offered as a material which must be used with critical thinking, because the observer does not just read some instructions from a criteria sheet but he must use them selectively, in order to give the proper feedback. It is characteristic that the teacher asks the observer to describe or to explain why the doer performs correctly, or not, the exercise. Concerning verbal behavior or interaction it can be noticed that index [s] accompanies 2 OWD events and it is very important that these OWDs belong to the basic part of the learning process (E and F). This difference from CS is related to the different goals of the two styles and it is well known that different (curricular) goals call for different styles of linguistic interaction (Wells, 2006).

Another important aspect of the kind of interactions of RS is that pupils are encouraged to use critically certain stretches of speech which are found in the criteria sheets and are based on the official school register. This way even pupils who enter the educational system with a lack of experience with the linguistic demands of the tasks of schooling and without being familiar with ways of structuring discourse that are expected in school - and for this reason they may usually be categorised as low academic achievement pupils - have the chance to practice in using selectively and intentionally language means which are based on the standard educational discourse, in order to perform efficiently in certain context of situations, to gain a better control of some linguistic resources that are powerful for maintaining or challenging the current social and educational order (Schleppegrell, 2004). For example, according to a criteria sheet by Papaioannou et al. (2003), they must combine everyday speech sentences such as Hold the ball with your fingers stretched with stretches of speech including words or phrases of the school language such as One of your feet should be diagonally positioned in relation to the other one.

Finally, the observers are encouraged to produce feedback or comments as much as possible clear and understandable by the doers. We believe that this way children develop a more reflective awareness of the importance of the precise meaning of what they say. Besides, they further discover the power of symbolic representation for posing and resolving problems or achieving goals of many

different kinds (Wells, 2006) - in our case the goal is the development of a certain PE skill and a method for achieving this, is by practicing according to certain feedback and comments by the observer.

The above means that another important difference between CS and the reciprocal one is that the latter is regulated by the schema goal-achievement (Fairclough, 2003). IRE/F is not absent but the important is that it does not "run through" the whole teaching unit but it appears only locally and - this is even more important - it is realised not by a teacher and a pupil but by two pupils - the observer and the doer.
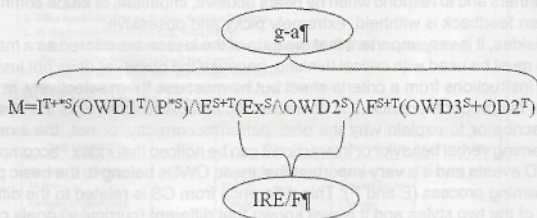
$$g\text{-}a\P$$

$$M=I^{T+*S}(OWD1^T \wedge P^{*S}) \wedge E^{S+T}(Ex^S \wedge OWD2^S) \wedge F^{S+T}(OWD3^S+OD2^T)$$

$$IRE/F\P$$

**Figure 3**
RS and the goal-achievement schema.

Consequently, we see that in case of RS IRE/F is applied not in its traditional form but in a context where the hierarchical relations between the teacher and the learner are different because of the shift of a very critical part of decision making to the responsibility of the observer.

## CONCLUSIONS

The comparison between CS and RS shows that the application of different styles leads to different series of teaching events, which constitute different macrogenres. Actually, different teaching styles lead to different forms of understanding and constructing socially situated meanings through the different oral or written texts used in the frame of each style. For example, when the teacher allows pupils to play a basic role in the configuration of the teaching process, the lesson has a different social meaning both for the teacher and the pupils, concerning the way we learn and the way we can further - and critically thinking - use the already offered or acquired knowledge. It is characteristic that in RS the knowledge is a result of cooperative learning and not of the transmission from a person hierarchically superior (the teacher) to a person hierarchically inferior (pupils), as it happens in

the case of CS. During this kind of learning process language is used much more functionally and with a certain goal orientation: the right performance of an exercise and not just the understanding and the execution of the teacher's commands.

According to all the above, we could argue that Discourse in RS offers a lot of chances for deviation from the traditional teacher-oriented way of teaching and increases the social identities on the adoption of which the pupils could practice. It goes without saying that this practice is very important for a society desiring that its future citizens will not be just performers of commands coming from above but able to critically use the various data, in order to shape by themselves the reasons and the results of their action.

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