



BODY LITERACY IN MILITARY EDUCATION: THE UNITED ORDER IN THE MILITARY POLICE OF THE STATE OF TOCANTINS



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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes body literacy and its intersection with the teaching of drill training in the Military Police of the State of Tocantins (PMTO). The research contextualizes the concept of literacy, differentiating it from multiliteracy and highlighting the importance of body language in military training. The central problem of the investigation lies in the theoretical and practical gap regarding how body literacy contributes to the technical and disciplinary preparation of military police officers. To address this, the adopted methodology was qualitative, based on a literature review and the analysis of pedagogical practices applied in PMTO training. The results indicate that body literacy, applied through drill training, fosters the development of motor, disciplinary, and communicative skills essential for the professional performance of military personnel. Additionally, this pedagogical approach strengthens cohesion, hierarchy, and responsiveness in operational and social scenarios. The conclusion reinforces the relevance of drill training as a tool for body literacy, highlighting the need for further studies on the relationship between body language and police training to enhance teaching methods and formative processes within PMTO.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of literacy has been widely debated in linguistic and educational studies, going beyond the simple acquisition of writing and encompassing different forms of communication, such as visual, auditory and body languages. With the evolution of these studies, multiliteracy emerges, which emphasizes the need to adapt to the various forms of expression and socially constructed communication (Soares, 2003; Rojo & Moura, 2019; Almeida et al. 2024). Among these modalities, body literacy stands out as a fundamental field for the motor, cognitive, and social development of the individual, since it allows the understanding and use of the body as a means of communication and expression (whitehead, 2019).

The relevance of body literacy has been widely studied in various educational contexts, especially in childhood, where its practice is essential for the integral development of students. According to Silva, Sousa and Dias (2025), body literacy plays a fundamental role in learning, promoting greater body awareness, motor improvement and development of socio-emotional skills. This process not only improves coordination and interpersonal communication, but also contributes significantly to student engagement in educational and social activities.

In the military context, the united order is a clear example of pedagogical practice based on body communication. Military instruction uses verbal commands combined with synchronized gestures and movements, requiring discipline, readiness, and precision from the military. This practice's main objective is to reinforce the hierarchy, discipline and cohesion of the group, developing motor and cognitive skills essential for the exercise of the profession (Castro, 2016; Silva & Menezes, 2021). However, despite the relevance of body literacy in military education, there is still a gap in the literature on its application in police training, especially within the scope of the Tocantins Military Police.

In view of this scenario, this study aims to analyze the role of body literacy in the teaching of united order in the Military Police of Tocantins, highlighting its benefits for disciplinary training, communicative efficiency and operational cohesion of military police officers. To this end, the research adopts a qualitative approach, based on bibliographic review and analysis of the pedagogical practices employed in military instruction.

The study analyzes, first, the theoretical foundations of literacy and multiliteracy, contextualizing their applications in communication and learning. Next, the importance of the united order as an educational practice in the military environment is discussed, highlighting its methodological principles and pedagogical objectives. In the third section, the relationship between body literacy and military education is examined, showing how

body communication impacts the training of police officers. Finally, the final considerations are presented, synthesizing the contributions of the study and pointing out possibilities for new research on the subject.

METHODOLOGY

The present research adopted a qualitative approach, based on a literature review and analysis of the pedagogical practices applied in military education. The deductive argumentation method was used, which allows, from established theoretical premises, to infer conclusions about the applicability of body literacy in the training of military police officers. This methodology enables a deeper understanding of the concepts of body literacy and united order, as well as their intersections in the context of military education.

The main methodological strategy consisted of bibliographic research, with a survey of studies in recognized scientific databases, such as the CAPES Portal, ScienceDirect and Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO). The keywords used in the search were: "body literacy", "united order", "military training" and "body language in the military police". In addition, academic works and institutional documents were consulted, such as the Manual of the United Order of the Brazilian Army (Brasil, 2019), to complement the theoretical foundation.

The literature review was carried out following the criteria of relevance, timeliness and quality of the sources consulted, ensuring that the data analyzed were scientifically based. According to Marconi and Lakatos (2017), literature review is an effective method for understanding complex and interdisciplinary phenomena, allowing researchers to explore different theoretical perspectives and emerging trends.

For data analysis, an analytical approach was adopted, in which the information was categorized and evaluated in relation to its relevance to the central theme of the study. The methodology was also based on the concept of theoretical triangulation, where the findings were confronted with different approaches to the literature, enabling the identification of convergences and divergences among the authors. This procedure broadens the understanding of the importance of body literacy in military training, in addition to strengthening the theoretical inferences of the study (Brito, Oliveira and Silva, 2021).

The interpretation of the data followed a deductive logic, considering the practical implications of body literacy in the training of military police officers. The deductive method is indicated for research that aims to infer practical solutions from general theoretical concepts, allowing a better understanding of the relationship between body language and professional development in the military context. In this way, the results obtained contribute

to the improvement of pedagogical practices in military education, reinforcing the importance of body literacy in the training and performance of police officers.

ASPECTS OF LITERACY AND MULTILITERACY

Several scholars who are dedicated to the study of language, especially with regard to literacy, distinguish the traditional concept of literacy from multiliteracy. This differentiation is due to the recognition that, while literacy refers to the ability to understand and produce written texts in a given sociocultural context, multiliteracy broadens this conception by incorporating various forms of communication, including visual, auditory, digital and bodily elements (Soares, 2003; Rojo & Moura, 2019).

In this sense, it is essential to understand how this conceptual evolution impacts education and professional training, promoting new approaches to teaching and learning.

CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF LITERACY

The concept of literacy arose from academic reflections that sought to answer the following question: can every literate person be considered literate? This question has led scholars to differentiate between the processes of literacy and literacy, highlighting that, although they are interconnected, they have distinct characteristics.

In this sense, Soares (2003, p. 8) clarifies this differentiation by stating that, in Brazil, the discussion of literacy is always rooted in the concept of literacy, which has led, despite the differentiation always proposed in academic production, to an inadequate and inconvenient fusion of the two processes, with the prevalence of the concept of literacy, [...] which has led to a certain erasure of literacy that, Perhaps with some exaggeration, I call the disinvention of literacy.

Thus, literacy is not limited only to the mastery of reading and writing skills, but also involves the ability to use these skills in a functional and meaningful way in the social context.

In this context, literacy is not limited to the simple mastery of reading and writing, but refers to the continuous process of interaction of people with written culture in different social situations (Araújo and Miguel, s/a).

According to Soares (2003), it is incorrect to say that a person is completely illiterate, since all people, in some way, are in contact with the universe of writing. However, there are different levels of literacy, which vary according to the cultural reality and the degree of exposure of the individual to the social uses of reading and writing. Thus, literacy is a dynamic process, directly influenced by the context in which each person is inserted.

Therefore, literacy can be defined as the use of writing, reading or other languages to meet social purposes, functioning as a means or mechanism for the resolution of specific demands within society.

In this sense, Azevedo and Costa (2019, p. 154) state that literacy can be conceptualized as

[...] the result of the action of teaching or learning to read and write: the state or condition that a social group or an individual acquires as a consequence of having appropriated writing. Therefore, unlike the literate, being the one who has only learned to read and write, literacy involves the use of reading and writing as responses to the demands demanded by society, that is, the use of these skills, in different genres and with different functions, as an effective social and cultural practice.

Thus, while literacy refers to the process of learning to read and write, literacy is directly related to the functional use of these skills in various social and cultural contexts, enabling the active participation of the individual in society.

CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF MULTILITERACY

Multiliteracy is based on the use of multiple forms of language in social and cultural interactions, going beyond traditional reading and writing. With globalization and the advancement of communication technologies, it has become essential to rethink the concept of language and its multiple manifestations in contemporary society, expanding its understanding to encompass visual, sound, gestural and digital aspects.

In this sense, Daley (2010, p. 491) argues that

The concept of a language composed of elements that are not words and texts is neither fundamentally new nor especially revolutionary. In fact, this concept is an evolution of the ideas and practices that have been with us since ancestral efforts to leave records and tell stories.

This perspective reinforces the idea that multiliteracy is not an unprecedented concept, but rather the expansion of the way texts and languages are understood and used over time. Barbosa (2012, p. 11) corroborates this view by stating that

Multiliteracies are teaching practices composed of the various aspects of literacies, whether in the context of the apprehension and social use of texts (oral, written, visual), or by understanding the execution of these texts in their multimodalities and cultural diversity.

In addition, Silva, Sousa and Dias (2025) highlight that multiliteracies play a fundamental role in the adaptation of individuals to new forms of communication, allowing

them to develop skills to interpret and produce meanings in different sociocultural contexts. For the authors, understanding and using diverse languages is essential for active participation in contemporary society, where interactions occur on multiple platforms and formats.

In this way, multiliteracy can be understood as the integrated use of different languages in different social and cultural environments, aiming at solving demands and expanding communication in the globalized context.

EDUCATION BASED ON THE UNITED ORDER

Education in military institutions is a structured pedagogical process that aims at the integral formation of students, both individually and collectively. This educational model is not restricted only to the transmission of technical or academic knowledge, but also seeks the development of physical and behavioral skills essential for discipline and military hierarchy. The formation of students occurs through the practice of bodily activities that contribute to physical conditioning, motor coordination and the execution of synchronized commands and movements, fundamental for efficient performance in individual and collective actions.

In this sense, Castro (2016, p. 90) highlights that the united order aims to "Promote the integral formation of our students through discipline, hierarchy and qualified education, providing their inclusion in the social environment, enabling them to absorb the principles of civility and citizenship."

In addition to motor improvement, education based on the united order has a strong pedagogical bias aimed at building fundamental values in military life, such as discipline, respect for hierarchy, leadership, teamwork, confidence, knowledge, understanding, motivation and motor competence. This pedagogical approach goes beyond physical training, incorporating elements of world-reading and socialization, allowing students to apply the knowledge acquired not only in the military environment, but also in different social contexts.

Castro (2016, p. 59) reinforces this idea by describing the practice of the united order as a training aimed at discipline, leadership development, and the strengthening of esprit de corps among the military, in this sense he states that

[...] they referred to the training of the United Order, a military procedure that aims to develop and exercise discipline, leadership and esprit de corps among the troops. Its realization required that a class be gathered in the external area of the school, so that they could have space to move. The training consisted of responding to the commands of a leader, who guided them on what movements should be made by classmates through voice commands.

[...] In addition to evaluating the harmony of the movements, the person responsible for leading the United Order should observe the energy and disposition of the colleagues when performing the movements. The person in charge of guiding the exercise, who could be an informal leader or the class leader of the time, trained his or her attention and leadership skills in front of the rest of the class.

In this way, the united order plays a central role in military training, as it not only enhances the readiness and operational efficiency of police officers but also contributes to the development of cognitive and socio-emotional skills.

Through this training, students are encouraged to understand the importance of obedience to commands, synchrony of movements and team interaction, consolidating their preparation to act in different scenarios inside and outside the corporation.

BODY LITERACY AND THE UNITED ORDER

Body literacy is a fundamental concept to understand how individuals develop motor skills and use body language as a form of communication and interaction in the social environment. According to Whitehead (2019), this competence is intrinsic to the human being and involves the development of confidence, motivation and physical fitness, allowing the individual to perform various activities with autonomy and body awareness.

Body literacy, therefore, is not limited to the practice of physical activities, but is related to the ability to interpret, understand, and respond to environmental stimuli through the body.

Corroborating the understanding, Silva, Sousa and Dias (2025) highlight that body literacy not only improves motor coordination and spatial perception, but also contributes to the integral formation of the individual, preparing him to act in different social and professional contexts. For the authors, this form of literacy enables individuals to develop a repertoire of movements that favor their insertion in collective practices, ensuring greater efficiency in the execution of tasks that require precision and discipline.

In this sense, Whitehead (2019) emphasizes that body literacy is directly related to motivation and physical competence throughout life. Individuals who develop this skill demonstrate greater confidence in their motor skills, perform daily activities more easily, and participate in physical practices with awareness of the benefits that these experiences provide.

In addition to being an essential tool for individual development, body literacy also plays an important pedagogical role. Vygotsky (2001), when discussing the acquisition of written language, argues that communication is not limited to writing and orality, but manifests itself in various ways, including gestures and body movements.

In the military context, the united order is an example of pedagogical practice that uses body literacy as a teaching tool. This methodology works on the development of physical and collective skills, allowing students to acquire fundamental skills for professional and social life. The execution of the united order requires discipline, precision in movements, synchrony with the other members and the understanding of verbal and gestural commands, characteristics that directly reflect the principles of body literacy.

As Silva, Sousa, and Dias (2025) point out, the united order not only improves the physical conditioning and responsiveness of the military, but also contributes to the internalization of values such as hierarchy, respect, and esprit de corps. In this way, the body literacy present in the united order goes beyond the simple execution of movements, becoming an essential instrument for the training of military police officers.

The practice of the united order, therefore, seeks to improve the symmetry of movements, strengthen motor coordination, deepen knowledge about gestures and commands, develop mathematical precision in counting steps, and reinforce the specific language used in the military. Thus, body literacy becomes an indispensable element for military training, promoting not only physical improvement, but also the understanding of body communication as a strategic resource for discipline and operational efficiency.

PRACTICAL TRAINING OF LITERACY IN MILITARY EDUCATION OF THE MILITARY POLICE OF THE STATE OF TOCANTINS - PMTO

The pedagogical training of the Military Police of the State of Tocantins is based on body literacy, reflecting the need for dynamic training adapted to the demands of the police profession. Police activity requires precise communication, which cannot always be expressed through verbal language. In this context, body language becomes an essential element for the execution of operational functions, allowing police officers to act quickly, with discipline and efficiency in different situations, whether they are everyday or highly complex.

Body literacy in the PMTO is developed mainly through the united order, a structured training that provides police officers with the ability to operate in a coordinated manner, both individually and in groups. The united order is not restricted to simple marches or formations, but works as a mechanism for improving discipline, hierarchy, and esprit de corps, values that are indispensable to police activity (Whitehead, 2019). Constant practice of this technique enables service members to acquire a repertoire of gestures, signs, and postures that facilitate communication and increase their efficiency in the performance of operational functions.

In addition, Silva, Sousa, and Dias (2025) point out that body literacy in military education not only strengthens the physical readiness of police officers, but also enhances their ability to interpret commands and respond in a synchronized and coordinated manner. This learning is essential for police work, which requires agility in decision-making and precision in the execution of movements, especially in patrol operations, control of civil disturbances, and events that require nonverbal communication skills.

In order for students to acquire this competence, when they enter military training, they are subjected to individual and collective training of a united order, where they learn to interpret and respond to verbal commands, signals and body postures. This systematic practice allows service members to develop effective body reading, internalizing movements that will be applied in various operational situations. As described in the Brazilian Army's United Order Manual, this training aims to develop synchronized patterns of movement, body discipline, and collective cohesion, as well as fundamental values such as morale, esprit de corps, and proficiency (Brasil, 2019).

The relationship between united order and body literacy in police training can be understood from the reflections of Vygotsky (2001), who highlights the importance of multiple forms of language in learning. Just as written and oral language are essential for communication, body language is configured as an instrument of interaction in the military context, allowing police officers to express themselves and understand commands efficiently, even in situations where verbal communication is limited or impractical.

In this sense, Barbosa (2012) argues that multiliteracies include diverse social and cultural practices, going beyond writing and orality to incorporate gestures, postures and other forms of communication. This perspective reinforces the importance of body literacy as a skill that goes beyond the military, also influencing the way police officers interact with society.

In addition to individual improvement, body literacy strengthens the capacity of police officers to act collectively, preparing them for group interventions with maximum efficiency and synchronism. This coordination is essential for actions that involve crowd control, rescues, tactical formations, and strategic team deployments.

In this way, the united order not only structures the education of students, but also consolidates body literacy as a fundamental element of police practice in the PMTO. Continuous training ensures that police officers develop not only motor and cognitive skills, but also a form of body reading that is essential for the execution of their activities. This knowledge becomes a differential both in professional performance and in other spheres of



the police officer's life, consolidating itself as an indispensable technique for communication, teamwork and operational effectiveness.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Finally, it is concluded that body literacy is a branch of literacy that stands out within the context of multiliteracy, as it expands the traditional conception of language by emphasizing communication through the body. This approach is especially relevant in environments that require precision, coordination, and discipline, such as the military.

The analysis carried out showed that the concept of literacy has expanded to meet the contemporary demands of society, giving rise to multiliteracy, which recognizes the diversified use of language in different contexts. In the military environment, this expansion is manifested through the united order, which is configured as an important pedagogical instrument for the development of body communication and collective organization.

It was evident that pedagogy based on the united order is directly interconnected with body literacy, as its practice involves the learning and application of commands, postures and gestures, fundamental elements for military training. This method contributes to the development of motor, cognitive, and disciplinary skills, allowing military police officers to acquire greater body awareness and improve their performance both individually and as a team.

The Military Police of the State of Tocantins widely uses this approach in its training, making body literacy an essential component of military education. The discipline of united order stands out as a pedagogical strategy that integrates technical knowledge and motor development, preparing students for operational challenges and reinforcing fundamental values, such as hierarchy, discipline and esprit de corps.

Thus, it is concluded that body literacy in the PMTO not only improves the physical capacity and non-verbal communication of police officers, but also consolidates itself as an indispensable tool for the effectiveness of public security actions, contributing to the professionalization and strengthening of the institution.

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