

Performing Language and Semiotics in the Training of Actors in the ESAD Today. Regulatory Framework

Ekaitz Unai GONZÁLEZ URRETXU

(ORCID id: 0000-0003-2705-0270)

Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático y Danza de Euskadi, Dantzerti. Bilbao
egonzalez@dantzerti.eus

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Bachelor's degree in History, specialised in Ancient and Medieval History (Universidad de Deusto); higher degree in Dramatic Arts, speciality in Direction and Playwriting (Institut del Teatre) and master's degree in Advanced Theatre Studies (Universidad Internacional de La Rioja). From 2015 to 2018 he has been director of the ESAD in the Basque Country, where he is still a professor.

English translation, Neil CHARLTON

Abstract

The Higher Schools of Dramatic Arts (ESAD) are in a period of expansion through the autonomous community legislative development of the national framework regulations. Each centre provides a different range of training, according to its education project, respecting the common minimums established by this framework regulation. In terms of theoretical training, specifically performing language and semiotics, the praxis has resulted in the development of four different implementation models (initial, intermediate, final and circular). There are solid arguments to justify the theoretical training of actors and these implementation models have been analysed, concluding with a defence of the most appropriate model and the opening of several lines of research into the training of actors in the ESAD system.

Keywords: ESAD, higher school, dramatic arts, theatre education, theatre research, theatre theory, reflective practice, performing language, semiotics, course: performance and communication theories

Ekaitz Unai GONZÁLEZ URRETXU

Performing Language and Semiotics in the Training of Actors in the ESAD Today. Regulatory Framework

This article is a summary of the master's degree final project under the same title supervised by Dr. Javier Jacobo González Martínez and has required and enjoyed the assistance of the directors of most ESAD centres as well as professors Joan Casas Fuster and Roberto Romei. To all of them, my heartfelt thanks.

Introduction

In 2014, M. F. Vieites (2014a: 344) stated that “in Spain very different volumes have been published in the field of what could be called ‘Didactics applied to...’, but not in the field of the study of the production and development of the curriculum or the genealogy or evolution of the courses and subjects, even concerning their appearance, disappearance and recovery” in the framework of formal education, specialised and for theatre (Vieites, 2014b: 83 and 96), aimed at specifically theatrical academic and professional training. He referred to them again in 2015 (20) “as an urgent inventory”:

- [...] history of education practices and of pedagogic and theatrical thought underlining them [...]
- The history of the curriculum of theatre teaching, whether specific courses, [...]
- The development of the theoretical and conceptual framework, of the education and/or artistic discourse.

Given the proliferation of ESAD centres taking place in Spain, where under the protection of early 21st century legislation there are 15 in 12 autonomous communities, which lack common training criteria beyond the minimums proposed by the royal decrees that have established and organised this training, it is necessary to develop an overview of the network created to locate

the institutions and establish dialogues between them. These centres, whose existence and organisation have been questioned, having been relegated to an indefinite and complex space, carry out theoretical training for actors, which has been one of the main veins of criticism. We will try to understand the specific significance of the theoretical training, ranging from the source legislative framework to the actual application of the regulations in the curricula.

It is important to note the presence of ACESEA (Spanish Association of Higher Arts Education Centres), which since 1994 has brought together most of the arts teaching education institutions of the state but which seems more concerned with administrative-organisational questions than pedagogic-teaching issues.

Theoretical Training?

If Professor J. L. García Barrientos (2004: 14) had to assert the need to “reduce the distance between the academic world and the theatre world [...], the vitality of art and the seriousness of reflection on it,” which resulted in him “being labelled as a theatre man by academics and as an academic by theatre people”, our concern seems legitimate.

To this legitimate concern we should add the first words of J. Melendres in his famous *La teoria dramàtica. Un viatge a través del pensament teatral* (2006: 11-25) which, by way of genesis, serves as an introduction to a bible of theory when he points out that:

Whatever some holy texts may say, in the beginning was not the Word, but the Gaze [...]. The first gaze names things. [...] we need a second gaze, more clarifying, capable of really building up reality, of selecting. This second gaze forks immediately into two: that of art and science. [...] What separates them is not the contemplated object – the world –, but the viewpoint [...]; as the poststructuralist semiologist Herbert Blau argues, “in the act of vision there is already theory.” Ancient Greeks were already so convinced of this that the two concepts of theatre and theory were born from the same root (*thea*, which expresses the action of looking or contemplating) and the corresponding verb (*theáomai*). [...] Thus, in order to avoid redundancy – bearing in mind that theatre, as it is gaze, is already theory –, dramatic theory must be considered as metatheatre or – expressed passively – as theory of theory. [...] dramatic theory shares with scientific theory its main mode of action, which is the combined use of reasoning and the senses. [...] Dramatic theory occupies an outstanding place among its artistic sisters: it has been mainly formulated by practitioners.

We find the opposite stance in E. Pérez-Rasilla (2002: 287), who describes the work of an actor from three distinctly practical levels. However, a little later, the same author cites, albeit almost in passing, that it is in the schools and the formal training systems where “the need for a theoretical reflection on acting and theatre teaching models has been taken into consideration” (293). Indeed, indisputable voices point out (Trancón, 2006: 45) that:

Today theatre has more need than ever to reflect on itself, with much of its own evolution collapsed by the confusion and bewilderment in which professionals and spectators themselves live. [...] The confused coexistence of forms, texts, codes and heterogeneous and antagonistic aesthetics, which are consumed equally by an audience incapable of discriminating, is not proof of vitality and pluralism, but of bewilderment and stagnation.

The debate on this respect is set out by S. Trancón (2006: 43) himself when he argues that it is “frequent to hear in debates and read in texts that ‘theatre is not theory, but practice.’ The fact that this theory and thought are spontaneous, unconscious and uncorroborated or, in contrast, critical and elaborate, will directly influence the practice. Our thoughts and mental and theoretical structures are never innocent in terms of what we do or how we do it.” In the same line of thought, A. Ubersfeld (1989: 9), when defending the usefulness of semiotics for actors, argues that it allows them “to oppose the real or supposed tyranny of the director with the freedom provided by knowledge, when just before he had pointed out that for directors it means “the systematisation of their spontaneous or reasoned practice.”

Specifically, he cites semiotics as a meeting point between theory and practice, as both sides use systems of signs and their function is that of “decoding the signs and constructing meaning” (10).

Trancón (2006: 43) also dilutes any attempt to eliminate the theory when he states that “a practice without thought is impossible, just as there is no thought without a theory supporting it,” while U. Eco (1975: 102) goes further when talking of the usefulness of this reflection and points out that “just as inventive spontaneity nourishes scientific reflection, scientific reflection can enhance invention. No one has become a writer by studying linguistics, but the great writers study the problems of the language they use.”

In their turn, M. F. Vieites, M. Dapía and R. Fernández (2015) expressly mention the future challenges of ESAD graduates both in “the field of education and formal and informal theatre training” and that of “research for innovation and for creation.” Moreover, as M. F. Gil Palacios (2016: 727) denounces, they should be “capable of starting a professional career as actors, of teaching courses related to their studies in the private or public field, or having the necessary knowledge to do a master’s degree in research and, later, a doctoral thesis,” which demands a level of theoretical reflection that provides the foundations of a training that should be on an equal footing with (be equivalent to) the theoretical training of any other humanities degrees.

In the words of Professor J. L. Sirera (ACESEA, 2002: 170) “what we should never lose sight of is that an area of knowledge demands the combination of theory and practice, as, [...] without the former the minimum requisite of university rigour in the resulting research cannot be achieved.”

There is a “current paradoxical situation in which the academic and institutional rank of the centres does not correspond to the courses taught” (ACESEA, 2002: 16).

Thus, aware that the use of specific terminology is a fundamental problem in the actor-director relationship (Pellicer, 2010), that the reflection on

the action is fundamental for professional training (Vieites, 2015), and using Umberto Eco's semiotics as a methodology of the practice of the signs (Gutiérrez Flórez, 1993), the presence of the theoretical aspect in training actors is solidly argued.

We will not examine the historical evolution of education legislation already carried out masterfully by Professor Embid Irujo (ACESEA, 2002) but we will note some of the fundamental milestones since then:

1. An important setback with the Organic Law on Quality in Education (2002) that omitted any reference to the regulation of higher arts education, leaving the centres in the framework of secondary education.
2. The Organic Law on Education (2006), which established a coherent framework for Higher Arts Education, while instigating the creation in 2007 of the Higher Council of Arts Education, in which the Report on the Regulation of Higher Arts Education (Lemes, 2009) would be developed, resulting in a regulation of education structured in degrees and post-degrees.
3. The publication of RD 1614/2009, which establishes the regulations pursuant to Higher Arts Education, which recognised the situation.
4. The publication of the curricular royal decrees in 2010.
5. The Supreme Court's partial upholding, on 10 February 2012, of the appeal made by the Faculty of Fine Arts at Granada University on articles 7.1, 8, 11, 12 and the Seventh Additional Provision. Basically, it eliminated the denomination of "degree" in the qualification bestowed by ESAD centres.¹

Theatre Studies in Spain

Arts education in Spain includes music, dance, the visual arts, design, conservation and restoration studies of cultural assets (including the higher studies of ceramic and glass) and dramatic arts, with the Higher Council of Arts Education as the consultative and participatory body, and framed in the regulation of Spanish higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The ESAD are the public or private institutions where advanced studies in dramatic arts are taught in Spain, the main official academic theatre qualification in the country, along with the degrees offered by the Rey Juan Carlos University, University of Nebrija, European University of Madrid, University of Girona, etc. in a new concern by the universities with the performing arts that goes beyond the interests of the present article but deserves to be studied.

The qualification of Higher Arts Education is located at level 2 of MECES (Spanish Framework of Higher Education Qualifications), equivalent to a

1. Royal Decree 21/2015, of 23 January. However, the qualifications maintained their equivalence with degrees.

university degree (RD 1027/2011, of 15 July). In this way, “as long as the applicable regulations demand a university degree qualification, it will be understood that anyone who holds a higher qualification in arts education complies with this requisite” (Ministry of Education, n.d., p. 6).

Therefore, it is training aimed at professional practice (Vieites, 2015: 20-21), which includes teaching in performing arts, as well as the continuation of an academic career through master’s degrees and doctorates.

State Legislative Context

RD 754/1992

A direct precedent of the regulation currently in force, it details the minimum courses and their contents, which must support the common training foundation of all dramatic arts teaching in the speciality of acting and the number of minimum hours of teaching that they should occupy, out of a total of 1,800.

A critical reading of it draws the following conclusions:

- a. Through the reading of all the descriptors we can infer the proposal of contents and results of each of the four itineraries put forward, with specific courses, inexistent in the others, which give them the differential character sought.
- b. Our object of study is found in two specific courses: *Theatre theory* and *Art theory and history*
 - i *Art theory and history* maintains the same number of hours (90) in the four itineraries.
 - ii Its contents do not seem to be substantially different from those of the subject *Theatre theory*. In fact, it seems to be an extension of its contents, under another denomination corresponding to an academically solid degree, such as Art History.
- c. Both courses have an obligatory minimum presence in any of the four acting itineraries.
- d. The weight, in hours, of the course *Theatre theory* fluctuates considerably between itineraries. Thus, of the 180 hour minimum in text-based theatre, it is reduced to 90 in gestural theatre or object theatre, and 135 in musical theatre. In terms of contents, exclusively in that of text-based theatre, the theoretical study of the textual element is reflected, while in the musical itinerary there is a reference to the specific history of musical theatre.
- e. Only in the objects itinerary does another course appear, *Performing theory*, defined ambiguously halfway between a course on the practical application of theory and a pedagogical course. With the descriptors it is hard to understand its inclusion exclusively in one of the itineraries, or the number hours it involves.

RD 630/2010

It substantially changed the curricular design of 1992, once again regulating the basic content of higher education in dramatic arts, according to what is established in LOE, in force with the modifications incorporated by Organic Law 8/2013, of 9 December, for the improvement of education quality (LOMCE).

We highlight the following elements of this RD:

- a. It establishes three specialities for higher degree studies in Dramatic Arts: Direction and Playwriting, Set design, and Acting,
- b. It “highlights, in particular, the balance between conceptual knowledge, the development of technical skills and the understanding of the aesthetic and cultural principles that determine the arts phenomenon” (General provisions, paragraph 9).

This second point is interesting in relation to the set of arguments proposed at the start of this article. Even more so when in *Article 3. Purpose of degree arts education and professional profile*, Section 1 states that the “general objective will be the qualified training of professionals in the fields of acting, direction, playwriting, set design and those areas of knowledge and research linked to them,” adding in its section 2 that° the degree holder will have a profile of “a qualified professional who has attained maturity and technical and humanistic training necessary to fully develop the professional option most suited to his/her abilities and interests.”

Annex II. Basic training courses and *Annex III. Compulsory specialised courses. Acting speciality* account for a total of 132 ECTS (established for these studies by *RD 1614/2009, of 26 October - Article 4*, together with the issuing of the Diploma Supplement), with a value of between 25 and 30 hours of work that, as a minimum, must be divided between 18 basic training courses and 114 compulsory specialised courses.

If in 1992 the weight of the course *Theatre theory* accounted for 5% and 10% of the total regulated hours (between 2.5% and 5% of the total of the training), in 2010 the course *Performance and communication theories* accounted for 3.8% of the regulated credits or, put in its context, 2.1% of the total of the 240 credits that make up the courses.

Therefore, we should understand that the “balance between the knowledge” referred to by RD 630/2010 is based not on a comparison of the three facets that it claims to balance, in terms of credits, but on a more cross-cutting principle: on the inclusion in different courses of elements characteristic of the two courses that concern us. This can be deduced from the reading of the contents of all the regulated courses.

This inexplicit commitment should lead, at least, to an effect on the logical temporal location of the courses corresponding to the basic training that allows proper exploitation of the contents of the root course that have multiplied and dispersed in all courses.

Therefore, we can make the following interpretations:

- a. Our object of study is dispersed in the courses of the studies as a whole, even though we maintain the leading thread of two basic courses: *Performance and communication theories* (which replaces the previous *Theatre theory*) and *History of the performing arts* (which replaces the previous *Art theory and history*).

If in the 1992 regulation the division between both courses seemed strange to us, it seems even more so from this new perspective, in which the history course seems like a historical review of the contents of theory,² when the course *History and theory of dramatic literature* has been created in parallel, combining both aspects.

This becomes even more surprising when we see that the descriptors of the courses have been shortened, creating broad semantic fields for them.

- b. All the itineraries maintain a common base in number of credits (which, as we have indicated, do not need to have any direct correlation with the number of real class hours, but with dedication to the subject).

After having approached the regulation that serves as a generic framework, we understand that our object of study corresponds to the course called *Performance and communication theories*.

Autonomous Community Legislative Context

The legislation establishes that the education administrations will be responsible for the curriculum of Dramatic Arts education, so that we should look to the regulatory development by each autonomous community in order to analyse the materialisation in overall terms of the minimum elements established in RD 630/2010. We refer to the minimums, given that the education administrations must decide to create the highest number of centres (or support of a higher number of credits in the centres proposed) where the aforementioned elements can be developed.

We refer the reader to the laws available at the end of this article and confine ourselves exclusively to setting out the main conclusions of the cross-referenced reading of them, in terms of the course *Performance and communication theories*:

- a. In most cases the course specified by the RD retains the original denomination.
- b. In most cases (except in Andalusia, Asturias, Canary Islands and Murcia), the descriptors of the autonomous community decrees partially modify the contents of the RD.

2. Although it can open new and interesting perspectives, which broaden, complement and specifically ascribe the contents, sources, methodologies and conclusions to the spectacular context.

- i On occasions they are minimal variations (Extremadura and Valencia) in which a new and different element is included (Aesthetics of reception and Introduction to the communication theory, respectively).
- ii In the other cases the modification is substantial, whether due to the division of the course into two subjects between which the contents are divided, or because they have specific contents.
- iii There is a great concern with adapting the contents of the RD to the particular educational projects.

All of this summarised in a single table³ (Table 1), and grouped by similarities in how implementation has been designed results in:

Implementation Models

Identification of models

According to the groupings that can be seen in Table 1, we consider that there are 4 different implementation models of performing language and semiotics in the training of actors in the Spanish ESAD today. We will call these models: *a*) Initial, *b*) Intermediate, *c*) Final and *d*) Circular.

- a.* The ESAD in Madrid, the Basque Country and Canary Islands correspond to the initial model. They are characterised by offering a single course corresponding to the subject in the first academic year (first and second academic year in the case of the Canary Islands).
- b.* The ESAD in Extremadura, Eòlia, Galicia, Castile and León, and Murcia correspond to the intermediate model. They are characterised by offering a single course corresponding to the subject in the second and/or third academic years.^o
- c.* The ESAD of Andalusia (Malaga, Seville and Cordova), Asturias and Valencia correspond to the final model. They are characterised as offering two courses (one in the case of Valencia), in the third and fourth academic years.
- d.* The ESAD in Barcelona-Institut del Teatre and Balearic Islands correspond to the circular model. They are characterised by offering two courses corresponding to the subject, one at the start of the training (first or second academic year) and another in the final academic year.

3. The compilation of the following table presents diverse difficulties derived from the cited autonomous community organisation of each ESAD centre. The empty boxes correspond to the courses without specific contents of the subject *Performance and communication theories*, to which we refer.

Table 1. Comparison of distribution of the ESAD by courses, ECTS, hours/week and location by courses

School	Course	Character	1st		2nd		3rd		4th	
			ECTS	Hours/Week	ECTS	Hours/Week	ECTS	Hours/Week	ECTS	Hours/Week
RESAD	Performance and communication theories	Annual 30 weeks	5	2.5						
DANTZERTI	Theory and history of dramatic arts and dance. Methods and systems.	Annual 32 weeks	6	2.5						
ESAD Canary Islands	Performance and communication theories I	Six-monthly 16 weeks	3	2.5	4	3				
	Performance and communication theories II	Six-monthly 16 weeks								
Institut del Teatre*	Introduction to performance theories	Annual	5	75h*					3	45h*
	Acting theory	Six-monthly								
ESAD Extremadura	Performance and communication theories	Annual 32 weeks			5	2.5				
ESAD Galicia	Performance theories I	Six-monthly 18 weeks			4+4	3				
	Performance theories II	Six-monthly 18 weeks								
ESAD Eólia	Performance and communication theories I	Six-monthly 19 weeks			3+3	2				
	Performance and communication theories II	Six-monthly 19 weeks								
ESAD Castile and León	Performance and communication theories I	Annual 35 weeks			2	1	3	1.5		
	Performance and communication theories II	Annual 35 weeks								
ESAD Murcia	Performance and communication theories	Annual 35 weeks					5	2.5		
ESAD Balearic Islands	Performance and communication theories	Six-monthly 18 weeks			4	3			3	3
	Contemporary performing theory	Six-monthly 18 weeks								
ESADs Andalucía (Malaga, Córdoba and Seville)	Performance and communication theories I	Annual 32 weeks					3 (5) **	1.5 (2)	3	1.5
	Performance and communication theories II	Annual 32 weeks								
ESAD Asturias	Theatre semiotics	Annual 36 weeks					3.5	1.5	3.5	3
	Theatre sociology and anthropology	Six-monthly 18 weeks								
ESAD Valencia	Performance theories I	Six-monthly 15 weeks							3+2	3+2
	Performance theories II	Six-monthly 15 weeks								

*Number of weeks is not regular. **Only for the musical theatre itinerary.

Source: Own production.

4.2. Comparative Analysis

Table 2. Number of ESAD according to number of ECTS of the course *Performance and communication theories*

Number of ECTS	Number of ESAD
5 ECTS	5
6 ECTS	5
7 ECTS	3
8 ECTS	2
TOTAL	15

Source: Own production.

A first look at Table 2 gives the impression that most ESAD give the course *Performance and communication theories* more credits than those imposed by RD 630/2010 (10), and only 2 give the maximum credit to the course (8) and one third of them give it the minimum imposed (5). Most of the ESAD (8) occupy an intermediate position between the maximum and minimum.

If we look at the distribution of credits according to the model set out in the previous section (Table 3), we see that the models Initial, Intermediate and Final have at least 1 ESAD with the minimum of credits, and only one ESAD (out of 15) between the three models with the maximum of credits. The two schools we have placed in the circular model correspond to a school with maximum credits and one with average credits. It is not surprising, given that to divide the course into two subjects, separate in time, the need to allocate a higher number of credits to each of them is understandable.

Table 3. Distribution of the number of ESAD according to the model applied and the number of ECTS of the course *Performance and communication theories*

MODEL	Maximum ECTS	Average ECTS	Minimum ECTS	TOTAL
Initial	0	2	1	3
Intermediate	1	1	3	5
Final	0	4	1	5
Circular	1	1	0	2
TOTAL	2	8	5	15

Source: Own production.

There is a similar situation in the ESAD in Asturias, where by dividing the course into two different subjects, albeit the third and fourth academic years, it is necessary to increase the allocation to each of them to 3.5 credits, which is one credit below the maximum (7 out of 8).

What might be the underlying logic of each model? The director Javier Daulte points out in an interesting article recently published: “I believed, as many still believe, that theory came before practice, which is obviously completely wrong. Playwrights write and theoreticians follow slightly behind and equally as desperate, trying to name, categorise and give academic status to what these playwrights create” (Daulte, 2017). This maxim, which

refers to the idea that theory must be reached through practice, can be the argument that sustains the final model. Moreover, it is very possible that the intermediate model endeavours to apply this same principle by attempting to combine both processes, so that what is done practically can be at the same time the theoretical field of reflection.

So it seems in principle unquestionable that the choice of one of these two models can be the ideal approach. However, we must note that 30% of the ESAD opt for an initial or final model (which includes an early phase and a late phase, respectively). To understand this phenomenon we consider it essential to carry out a task that we deliberately have not approached at the start of this article: defining the concepts of performing language and semiotics, and trying to understand their interest in training the actor.

We understand semiotics as “a method of analysis of the text and/or the performance, focusing on its formal organisation, the dynamic and the establishment of the process of signification through theatre professionals and the audience,” which is concerned with “the mode of production of meaning throughout the theatre process that goes from the reading of the play by the director to the interpretative work of the audience”; in short “a mode of talking about the performance systematically and clearly” (Pavis, 2002: 410 and ff.).

In terms of performing language, if we have accepted the genesis of Professor Jaume Melendres, it is the tool through which we call, name, the performance elements.

All the ESAD centres understand the need for a reflection on theatre in the form of theory. Notice that the word *reflection* involves going back (etymologically it comes from the Latin *reflexio-nis*, from the verb *flectere* – turn, bend – and the prefix *re*, – again, going back).

However, we consider it reckless to propose a theoretical reflection by an actor at the start of training (what should he/she go back to?), but also to force the reflection while carrying out the practice - methodology that could lead to paralysing the practice. Even more, aware of the incapacity of human beings to recall almost nothing exactly how it really happened, we understand that the circular model is the most functional.

Thus, the initial model would respond to an “approach for and in its practical application”, while a final model would use “an approach to what has been applied, which becomes a product or artefact” (Vieites, 2015: 15), while the circular model would envisage an approach to the (future) practice, which should allow for a greater reflective awareness of what has been experienced and found in the practical process, as in the practice carried out, which could be driven by the conscious experience to finally generate RE-flection, processes that would not be incompatible with the possibility of the student becoming lost in the practical activity, as a channel for finding better and more original results.

In this same model, the theory at the start of training would be based on a perspective of the prior experience of the students in order to name the phenomena they know and open new perspectives on the realities and practices yet unknown to them so they can, when they explore them in depth

and go through them, become aware they are specific phenomena and avoid the temptation of thinking about the influence of the muses or, even worse, aping inventions existing already. Therefore, it is about managing a performing language that allows students to go through their training without being completely blind. According to the philologist J. L. Alonso Fernández (1986: 720-721):

Creation works as a system of well-defined verbalisation in linguistics. We understand verbalisation as the fact of putting a name to things, to the unnameable or the not yet named, in the end, to chaos; which is no more than a logical systematisation. Verbalisation in this sense acts, therefore, as a method of creation. [...] In other words, things exist but chaotically, [...] and it is the fact of signifying them that means that, automatically, things cease to be chaotic, separate and become logical, comprehensible.

This reflection time, however, seems far from the direct performing practice. From sociology of sport, and in the words of Professor R. Sánchez García (2009), “we discovered the way to combine theory and practice in a situation of temporal urgency” (which we make analogous to the performative situation). To this end, we use the premise that perception and thought are indiscernible operations for the nervous system, and that for a thought to exist the use of language is essential. Thus, verbalisation, which we identify as thought, “is not separate from the perception of what occurs in the course of the activity as it is the individual in action who acts and performs (sic).” Moreover, the professor points out that physical activity involves the use of technique (a mechanism that helps conscious intentionality), tactics (a play mechanism that helps conscious intentionality) and strategy (which involves a distancing from the activity, “a previous analysis of the game” and which is characteristic of the coach (i.e. director), although it can be developed by the performer (95):

The relationship of the strategy with the course of action does not occur naturally as in the case of technique or tactics. It involves the introduction of a theoretical temporality, the use of another language (reflexive verbalisation) that takes the player from the immediateness of the game (which in some moments can be harmful [...]).

Returning to Melendres (Pellicer, 2010: 295), on some occasions he began the academic year by referring to Lessing’s comments that those who reason well can also invent and those who want to invent must have the ability to reason. Reasoning consists of organising and structuring ideas through a mental process that, necessarily, requires a language and arrangement norms. We see, therefore, the need for training in performing language, as well as semiotics, as a study of creation of meaning (Ubersfeld, 1989).

Conclusions

J. L. Alonso de Santos (2016) used to say that the teacher must teach from doubt rather than from certainty. At the same time, we know that nothing can be built from absolute doubt. We must provide a series of clues, goals, that allow our students to recognise themselves, knowing how to name what, in the eyes of the ignorant, seems unnameable in order share it with others, pooling their experience, objectivising and verbalising it to be aware of it.

Robert Lepage (Ojeda, 2015) says that “theatre is like sex, an event,” and he adds that “to survive, theatre must be an event. There is a trend to systematise and code it, and this kills it.” Culture must serve to arrange, contextualise, understand, transmit, project, etc., the experience. Thus, we must change the paradigm of mechanised learning and commit to an inclusive, significant and functional learning (Torres Menárguez, 2013).

We should not forget, moreover, despite recalling the words of Josep Lluís Sirera, that practice must not be paralysed by a theoretical reflection, which is fundamental, valid, useful and precious to it. However, based again on Melendres’ reflection, we insist that “we must analyse, rationalise, because the irrational and emotional elements came by themselves during the work with the actor” (Pellicer, 2010: 300).

RD 630/2010, which regulates dramatic arts higher studies in Spain, noted that “the consolidation of lines of research and creation and the training of creators and researchers are essential aspects to be promoted and taken into consideration by the public and private institutions”, and in its Annex I it insists that “this professional will be qualified to carry out research.”

Considering the foregoing, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. That, following the related legislation, the specific place of higher academic training in dramatic arts seems to be the ESAD. They are training centres belonging to non-university higher education that are being redefined in terms of their institutional form and suitability.
2. That theoretical training for actors has a solid justification that supports, justifies and confirms it as a tool that enables actors to gain adaptability and opens to them a path for professional empowerment along with freeing them and confirming them in their role as artist-creators free of the control of the director-God, a paradigm that no longer works at all (Fischer-Lichte, 2011: 325).
3. The legislative framework that regulates the theoretical training of actors imposes some imprecise limits and minimums (from nearly 100 hours in the whole of the 1,800 corresponding to studies of 240 ECTS) that, nevertheless and thanks to the identifiable zeal in most ESAD, is specified and developed in less important regulations, deepening and expanding the strict legal limits.

That, moreover, most ESAD (10 out of the 15) are committed to giving to the course *Performance and communication theories* more than the 5 ECTS stipulated by the RD, although only 2 reach 8 ECTS, a reality

that is complemented with the freedom of the autonomous community legislative development to generate new spaces for theatre from which to approach issues related to performing language and semiotics.

That, despite the foregoing, there is still no development of the minimum contents of each course that ensure a common basic training in all ESAD, a development that, seemingly, began to be outlined until the objection filed by Granada University, which stopped the open processes.

And that, for all these reasons, it is necessary and urgent to develop a regulation that enables the ESAD to manage their evolution in the way they deem most appropriate.

4. That the praxis of theatre education has led to the shaping of four fundamental models of the implementation of the theoretical spaces in which the performing language and semiotics develop, which we have been able to detect, identify and systematise by naming them: initial model, intermediate model, final model and circular model.

That these models predictably correspond to different training paradigms and that, out of them, the final and circular models seem to be the most appropriate as they enable a reflection on the practice (a practice that is the true essence of theatre art) which might also involve the end of the dispute between practical and theoretical processes by arranging the functions and times of both processes.

5. That now we know and have been able to specify more explicitly, more clearly and in a contrastable way, some of the training principles that seem to govern the organisation of the Spanish ESAD so that we can have a slightly clearer image of the Spanish training map, although it is still excessively partial.
6. That we have clearly detected many ways of research beyond those indicated by other researchers, such as:
 - a. The regulatory development of the contents of the courses, from the descriptors of the royal decrees to their specification in the teaching guides, the true reflection of the real activity developed in the classroom.⁴
 - b. The tracking of the common contents developed in the teaching guides as a common base for the regulatory development of the minimum contents of the courses reflected in Royal Decree 630/2010.
 - c. Reflection on the great interest shown in recent years by universities in dramatic arts as an object of teaching, which has given way to a wide range of bachelor's and master's degrees in the performing arts, and their coexistence with the ESAD training range. Similarly, it remains to be investigated whether the training model of both institutions has parallels or is divergent, if there is room for

4. In this respect special attention should be drawn to the course *Performing language* taught for many years by Professor Joan Abellán i Mula, given that it is the only reference we have of a course specifically linked, as in its name, with the performing language, and which is a foundation for the reflection in this article both in its form and content.

both institutions, if there is the possibility of coexistence, if the immediate merging is advisable, and so on.

- d. Reflection on the provision of teachers for the ESAD, as well as their possible difference to or parallelism with the universities.

Finally, bringing together all the partial reflections made during the article, it is worth identifying a certain feeling of inferiority in dramatic arts higher studies that leads to the apparent need to give them an academic character, through inclusion in the 1992 regulation, of a subject called *Art theory and history*, not specifically linked to the performing arts and whose contents seem to be a development of those of the subject *Theatre theory*. This situation weakens the creation of a strong course that might be called *Theory and history of the performing arts and communication* and that enables in 10 ECTS an in-depth study of the theory, as well as a contemporary reflection full of personal experience at the end of the training that, undoubtedly, would involve a better understanding of theatre in the training of students and an improvement of the qualities of the final projects.

Moreover, the same strategy involves the risk of continuing to maintain the image of a minor branch of art history or the fine arts, far from helping achieve a space of specificity.

And as a just reward for the caution shown, it might be necessary to further develop research that sheds light on whether the reduction of theatre study from the text-based point of view for the itineraries of physical, object and musical theatre (that we saw in the 1992 regulation) has been maintained in the later legislation, given that it seems an impoverishment of training that is difficult to understand. We consider more appropriate the implementation in the curricula of a range similar to that of RESAD, in which many of the subjects are specific to their itinerary (theory and history of the dramatic literature of text-based theatre / gestural theatre / object theatre / musical theatre, etc.) relating to a set of common knowledge but with an enormous significant applied directionality (which could prevent false distances, reservations and notions of lack of reflection, necessity and even pertinence).



Bibliographical reference

National legislation and jurisprudence

SPAIN. “Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación”. Boletín Oficial del Estado (4 May 2006).

SPAIN. “Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, para la mejora de la calidad educativa”. Boletín Oficial del Estado (10 December 2013).

SPAIN. “Real Decreto 754/1992, de 26 de junio, por el que se establecen los aspectos básicos del currículo de las enseñanzas de arte dramático y se regula la prueba de acceso a estos estudios”. Boletín Oficial del Estado (25 July 1992).

- SPAIN. “Real Decreto 1614/2009, de 26 de octubre, por el que se establece la ordenación de las enseñanzas artísticas superiores reguladas por la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación”. Boletín Oficial del Estado (27 October 2009).
- SPAIN. “Corrección de errores del Real Decreto 1614/2009, de 26 de octubre, por el que se establece la ordenación de las enseñanzas artísticas superiores reguladas por la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación”. Boletín Oficial del Estado (6 November 2009).
- SPAIN. “Real Decreto 630/2010, de 14 de mayo, por el que se regula el contenido básico de las enseñanzas artísticas superiores de Grado en Arte Dramático establecidas en la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación”. Boletín Oficial del Estado (5 June 2010).
- SPAIN. “Real Decreto 21/2015, de 23 de enero, por el que se modifica el Real Decreto 1614/2009, de 26 de octubre, por el que se establece la ordenación de las enseñanzas artísticas superiores reguladas por la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación”. Boletín Oficial del Estado (7 February 2015).
- SPAIN. “Sentencia de 16 de enero de 2012, de la Sala Tercera del Tribunal Supremo, por la que se anulan los artículos 7.1, 8, 11, 12 y la disposición adicional séptima del Real Decreto 1614/2009, de 26 de octubre, por el que se estableció la ordenación de las enseñanzas artísticas superiores reguladas por la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación”. Boletín Oficial del Estado (6 March 2012).

Autonomous legislation

- ANDALUSIA. “Decreto 259/2011, de 26 de julio, por el que se establecen las enseñanzas artísticas superiores de Grado en Arte Dramático en Andalucía”. Boletín Oficial de la Junta de Andalucía (23 August 2011).
- ASTURIAS. “Decreto 43/2014, de 14 de mayo, por el que se establece y desarrolla el plan de estudios de las enseñanzas artísticas superiores de Arte Dramático en el Principado de Asturias”. Boletín Oficial del Principado de Asturias (22 May 2014).
- BALEARIC ISLANDS. “Decret 26/2014, de 13 de juny, pel qual s'estableix el pla d'estudis dels ensenyaments artístics superiors conduents al títol superior d'art dramàtic en l'especialitat d'interpretació i se'n regula l'avaluació”. Butlletí Oficial de les Illes Balears (14 June 2014).
- BASQUE COUNTRY. “Decreto 23/2016, de 16 de febrero, mediante el que se implantan las enseñanzas artísticas superiores de Arte Dramático en la especialidad de Interpretación y se establece el plan de estudios para la comunidad autónoma del País Vasco”. Boletín Oficial del País Vasco (13 April 2016).
- CANARY ISLANDS. “Orden de 14 de marzo de 2014, por la que se modifica parcialmente la Orden de 29 de abril de 2011, que aprueba con carácter experimental los Estudios Oficiales de Arte Dramático en la Comunidad Autónoma Canaria”. Boletín Oficial de Canarias (3 April 2011).
- CASTILE AND LEÓN. “Decreto 58/2011, de 15 de septiembre, por el que se establece el plan de estudios de las especialidades de Dirección Escénica y Dramaturgia e Interpretación, de las enseñanzas artísticas superiores de Grado en Arte Dramático en la Comunidad de Castilla y León”. Boletín Oficial de Castilla y León (21 September 2011).
- CATALONIA. “Resolució ENS/1547/2014, de 23 de juny, per la qual s'aprova el pla d'estudis dels ensenyaments artístics conduents al títol superior de dansa del Centre Superior de Dansa de l'Institut del Teatre”. Diari Oficial de Catalunya (9 July 2014).

- COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA. “Orde 22/2011, de 2 de noviembre, de la Conselleria d’Educació, Formació i Ocupació, per la qual s’establixen i autoritzen els plans d’estudis a l’Escola Superior d’Art Dramàtic de València, dependent de l’ISEACV, conduents a l’obtenció del títol de Graduat o Graduada en Art Dramàtic”. Diari Oficial de la Comunitat Valenciana (10 November 2011).
- EXTREMADURA. “Decreto 27/2014, de 4 de marzo, por el que se establece en la Comunidad Autónoma de Extremadura el plan de estudios de las enseñanzas artísticas superiores de Arte Dramático reguladas por la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación”. Diario Oficial de Extremadura (10 March 2014).
- GALICIA. “Orde do 30 de setembro de 2010 pola que se establece o plan de estudos das ensinanzas artísticas superiores de grao en arte dramática na Comunidade Autónoma de Galicia, e se regula o acceso ao dito grao”. Diario Oficial de Galicia (11 October 2010).
- MADRID. Decreto 32/2011, de 2 de junio, del Consejo de Gobierno, por el que se establece el Plan de Estudios para la Comunidad de Madrid de las enseñanzas artísticas superiores de Grado en Arte Dramático”. Boletín Oficial de la Comunidad de Madrid (13 June 2011).
- MURCIA. “Resolución de 25 de julio de 2013, por la que se establece para la Comunidad Autónoma de la Región de Murcia el plan de estudios y la ordenación de los estudios superiores de arte dramático, se completan los planes de estudio iniciados en los años académicos 2010-2011 y 2011-2012, y se regula la prueba específica de acceso”. Boletín Oficial de la Región de Murcia (16 August 2013).

Secondary sources

- ACESEA. *Actas del Congreso Internacional de ACESEA: Los centros superiores de enseñanzas artísticas y la reforma de las enseñanzas artística en Spain* (2002). <<http://www.acesea.es/www/files/Actas.pdf>> [Last accessed: 4 April 2017].
- ALONSO DE SANTOS, J.L. *Pedagogía teatral y la razón poética*. Opening presentation of the I Congreso Internacional de Pedagogía Teatral, Madrid, Spain. (2016). <<http://www.resad.es/eventos1617/folleto-congreso-pedagogia.pdf>> [Last accessed: 5 July 2017].
- ALONSO FERNÁNDEZ, J.L. “Funcionalidad prelegal del mito (Markbara de J. Goytisoló entre el “caos” y el “Ello”)” In: GARRIDO GALLARDO, M.A. (Ed.). *Crítica semiológica de textos literarios hispánicos: volumen II de las Actas del Congreso Internacional sobre Semiótica e Hispanismo celebrado en Madrid en los días 20 al 25 de Junio de 1983*. Madrid: CSIC, 1986, p. 719-726.
- DAULTE, J. “La palabra, el ruido y la música”. (Pausa.) *Quadern de teatre contemporani*, No. 39. <<http://www.revistapausa.cat/la-palabra-el-ruido-y-la-musica>> [Last accessed: 10 May 2017].
- ECO, U. “Elementos preteatrales de una semiótica del teatro”. In: DÍEZ BORQUE, José María and GARCÍA LORENZO, Luciano (ed.). *Semiología del teatro*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1975, p. 93-101.
- FISCHER-LICHTE, E. *Estética de lo performativo*. Madrid: Abada, 2011.
- GARCÍA BARRIENTOS, J.L. *Teatro y ficción*. Madrid: Fundamentos, 2004.
- GIL PALACIOS, M.F. “Estudio de la satisfacción de los estudiantes de Interpretación Textual de la Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Córdoba”. *Revista complutense de educación*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2016, p. 725-740.
- GUTIÉRREZ FLÓREZ, F. *Teoría y praxis de semiótica teatral*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1993.
- MELENDRES, J. *La teoría dramática. Un viatge a través del pensament teatral*. Barcelona: Institut del Teatre, 2006.

- OJEDA, A. "Robert Lepage: 'El teatro es como el sexo, un acontecimiento'". *El cultural*, 6 March 2005. <<https://bit.ly/2EUjsfw>> [Last accessed: 12 May 2017].
- PAVIS, P. *Diccionario del teatro. Dramaturgia, estética, semiología*. Barcelona: Paidós, 2002.
- PELLICER, G. "Jaume Melendres. La pedagogía de la dirección de actores". *Estudis Escènics*, No. 37, 2010, p. 129-144.
- PÉREZ-RASILLA BAYO, E. "Sobre el arte del actor y su formación: el actor de teatro en Spain hoy". *RILCE: Revista de filología hispánica*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2002, p. 287-294. <<https://bit.ly/2yzoOqG>> [Last accessed: 4 April 2017].
- SÁNCHEZ GARCÍA, R. "¿Qué significa pensar en acción?" *Apunts. Educación física y deportes*, 4th quarter, 2009, p. 88-96. <<https://bit.ly/2PexYU6>> [Last accessed: 5 June 2017].
- TORRES MENÁRGUEZ, A. "Es perverso decir que no hay que aprender las cosas de memoria". *El País*. Digital edition, 5 February 2013.
- TRANCÓN, S. *Teoría del teatro*. Madrid: Fundamentos, 2006.
- UBERSFELD, A. *Semiótica teatral*. Murcia: Cátedra. Universidad de Murcia, 1989.
- VIEITES, M.F. "Educación teatral: nuevos caminos en historia de la educación". *Historia de la educación: revista interuniversitaria*, No. 33, 2014a, p. 325-350.
- "Educación teatral: una propuesta de sistematización". *Teoría de la educación*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2014b, p. 77-101.
- "La investigación teatral en una perspectiva educativa. Retos y posibilidades". *Educatio siglo XXI: Revista de la Facultad de Educación*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2015, p. 11-30. <<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5294339>> [Last accessed: 4 April 2017].
- Vieites, M.F.; Dapía Conde, M^a D. and Fernández González, M^a R. "La inserción laboral de los titulados y tituladas de arte dramático de la ESAD". *Revista de estudios e investigación en psicología y educación*, Extra No. 7, 2015, p. 13-18. <<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5594741>> [Last accessed: 4 April 2017].