

Lessac Kinesensics Training: A Pedagogy for Training the Nigerian Student-Actor's Speaking Voice

ABIMBOLA ADETOLA STEPHEN-ADESINA

Abstract

Lessac kinesensics training is viewed in this paper as a psychophysical approach, developed by Arthur Lessac as a voice, body and mind work that concentrates on two energies: Vocal energy and Body energy (NRG). These energies help to create an embodied actor. However, the essence of any vocal pedagogy is to develop an embodied actor for character believability. But how organically is the character development?

Psychophysical approach deals with awareness, de-patterning from habits, an organic process to incorporate the senses, mind, concentration on self, and the build-up of body energies to develop effective vocal dynamics for performance. There is the assumption by student-actors that phonetics training as a cognitive learning process ends in the classroom which may not be carried over to performance and real life situations as a result of its rigidity. Due to this detachment from character development and embodied actor training, they however, create an imaginary gap.

The imaginary gap which psychophysical process fills is what few scholars suggest in order to realise an embodied acting which embodies and shapes the breath and energy at work for the actor. This paper discusses the need to test run this concept, with a view to integrating the basic principles of Lessac kinesensics training on the Nigerian student-actor's voice, body and mind as a psychophysical approach for optimal vocal performance.

INTRODUCTION

A common goal in the training of an actor, whether student or professional, is to produce an actor who has achieved a harmonised functioning and an integration of voice, body and emotion. Corrigan expounds that the fusion of energies (voice, body and emotion) “has the potential to enable the individual actor to freely and effortlessly express acting texts of any style or period” (1992:1221). Training the voice, speech and body of an actor begins from understanding what is to be trained. Shewell describes the voice as:

A two-way psychosomatic phenomenon; it is shaped by the speaker’s (actor’s) psyche (our personality and current emotions) and soma (the health, shape and usage of our bodies). As the bridge between our inner and our outer worlds, it also affects the psyche and soma of the listener (2009:4).

No matter how an actor appears on stage, if her voice is monotonous, tense, rough, lacks rhythm, this may affect her body, thereby creating tension. The voice is the component that expresses all that the actor portrays before the audience. It demands rigorous retraining from old patterns of speaking to an audience, because it is dynamic from culture to culture.

Voice is a universal experience...in every country of the world breath plays on vocal folds and becomes resonance, which is cut up into speech by the lips and tongue. In every part of the world people feel emotions. Different cultures, however, then shape and control vocal and emotional expression in a myriad different ways to become whatever kind of communication is appropriate to that culture (Linklater, 2012:1).

Regardless of the culture, gender and social status of the actor, training approach should be made either universal or indigenous so that there is a sense of inclusion of the actor’s identity: as voice and speech training is accepted as one of the main actor training processes. It should not be static, and actors have to be willing to adjust to different sounds, oral

postures, rates, rhythms, and accents to character development in vocal and body dynamics. It is, however, an embodied training in voice, speech, breath, body, mind, and gesture.

Voice and speech training has long been a part of the fabric of actor training and the training of those whose task it is to persuade through voice – primarily actors, politicians, lawyers, and other public speakers (Saklad, 2011:3).

The training of voice and speech (sometimes referred to as vocal training) is to integrate the voice, body and emotion since one of its aims is to persuade, and this can be challenging for actors as a result of the rigorous training it usually entails. It may pose a threat to the actor if the vocal apparatus are misused, thereby refusing optimal functioning for character or accent development. Student-actors are usually not aware of the body wisdom: an approach described by Lessac in relation to the use and training of the human body through a new organic/sensory learning process (1990:1). He further adds that:

It may be characterized as representing and stressing particular 'kind' and 'quality' of physicalized inner intelligence that beneficially and creatively affects one's behaviour, attitudes, and the transmission of energy with our personal environment – an inner world all its own (1992:207).

What can be deduced is that there is some form of energy from the inward to the outward which is not imitated or forced – it is what the body and mind really yearn for and sometimes hope to achieve. This sensible judgment of the body and mind is what Lessac work refers to as body wisdom. Hurt (2014:21) expresses that body wisdom ensures that "the actor's body knows what is healthiest not only throughout her life, but also in her experiments with vocal tone, pitch, articulation, breath, and movement." Basically, it is not what an instructor informs her body, but what her body senses as good. An example is when we sit in a car for long hours and finally arrive at our destination, we are not told to yawn or stretch but our body knows what it wants – to loosen

the tension and, therefore, we carry out the process of yawning and stretching.

Essence of Defining or Integrating a Vocal Pedagogy

Without adequate training on specific vocal development, actors very often dive deep into various vocal techniques mechanically. Trying so hard to achieve a goal without patiently exploring, they often push too hard to aim at performance demands without an embodied approach, only to fall back to old habitual patterns. They are ignorant of the benefits of the possible technique(s) in use for performance space and real life situations. What is often experienced is an 'end-gaining' of an intellectual (cognitive) process and more of being conscious rather than being aware or feeling the psychophysical process which will be discussed extensively in the body of this study.

On the other hand, vocal training goes beyond intellectually understanding individual sounds from a phonetic perspective, for articulation or pronunciation, as some vocal instructors often find themselves guilty of. Shewell (2009:80) observes that some vocal teachers often "focus intensively on the articulation of speech sounds without recognising that underlying the unclear vowels was an overall tendency to hold tension in the tongue and throat, which itself was related to a generally tight body." Vowels are also not necessarily the essence of vocal training as they may target towards accent realisation. Vowels vary from one speaker to another but they are usually the determining factor for a change in pronunciation – accent. Lessac (1997:67) supports that, there is room for error in the formation of vowel sounds. This tightness in the body, which Shewell observes, is as a result of tension whereby the actor finds difficulty in letting go (in oral posture, mental, behaviour, and body posture) or reaching the desired goal in body, mind, feeling and emotion. Hurt reports that in speech training,

She (the actor) may utter a 'T' consonant by holding her breath and pressing her tongue forcibly on the upper gum ridge. These tensions prevent her from developing the 'T' optimally and in accordance with what instinctively feels good (2014:22).

Obviously, this is dependent on how the actor feels and experiences sounds and emotions resonating in her body generally before transmitting it to the audience. Speech cannot be established when the voice hits the mouth and phonation or articulation is made. Catford points out that speech is a continuum; a continuous flux of initiatory, phonatory, and articulatory states and movements, constantly changing, often overlapping and interpenetrating and influencing each other (2001:163). Collins and Mees on their part define speech from the function of the organs of speech. They observe as follows:

But one curious thing about the organs of speech is that none of them started out that way. They are all 'designed' for purposes other than speech. For example, the lungs are primarily intended for breathing; the teeth and the tongue for chewing up food and passing it down to the stomach. This has sometimes led scientists to call speech an 'overlaid function'. Nevertheless, the human being is uniquely a *speaking* animal, and in the course of evolution, all the organs of speech have developed in very specialised ways often quite remote from their original purpose (2013:29).

While this is true, the actor, as a 'speaking animal', must retrain her speech organs as a multifaceted tool to accommodate different performance situations. Skinner clarifies that:

Voice and speech are more than any other qualities, the actor lays bare before an audience the soul of the character impersonated. The voice must be flexible...it must communicate the nuances of the most hidden emotions being portrayed in the most effective and convincing way that is possible (1990:iii).

For the purpose of bringing these qualities to reality, through vocal training, the speech of a character must be brought to life in utterance by the voice (sound), mood, emotions, body and other aspects, synergistically. On his own part, Lessac describes vocal actor training as the process which,

when truly integrated, involves the optimal exploration of the human skills and talents, be they physical, emotional, artistic, intellectual, intuitive; and provides a creative problem-solving resource for such related area as...physical training, body-voice-speech therapy, and research in identifying body synergies, among other areas (1997:3).

It is necessary to state here that Lessac's definition of vocal actor training, in particular, is the only art form that makes optimal use of the total human instrument. It requires the mastery of movement, sensitivity, vocal life, nonverbal communication, and character development. Lessac work, when optimally utilised, will enhance performance space and can be a carryover to 'real life' situations, thereby elevating human behaviour for the actor. It is a healthful approach to training and equipping actors as well as underpinning earlier vocal training. In this case, vocal training for the speaking voice demands an engagement of more than the vocal apparatus to the whole body – mind, emotions and behaviour as they embrace performance. Morrison defines vocal training as:

That form of verbal communication which may be anticipated in any given environment. It draws the least attention to the way in which a speaker communicates while expressing the message of the speaker with maximum control over his environment; and realisation of all his objectives in terms of response from his audience (2001:172).

Morrison's definition controls only the diction of the actor but is not concerned about her feeling process and the use of the whole body as an instrument to break away from habitual patterns that may hinder performance. The use of speech is, however, for an audience member in a theatre. It is to communicate the thought of the playwright in a convincing and persuasive manner that does not just sway the audience by the aesthetic rendition of the actor, but after rigorous rehearsals, is able to preserve every message in the vocal apparatus of the actor through embodied actor training. Turner informs that:

Speech in the theatre must be governed by the necessity of speaking to large numbers of listeners at one and the same time, so that every word

carries convincingly; and yet it must be controlled that the illusion of reality is not destroyed (1993:7).

The ability to convey message and communicate without destroying the illusion of reality may be rigorous, laborious, experiential and complex, yet it is part of the essence of the speaking theatre voice, and this definition does not relate to how the whole human instrument is retrained for vocal performance. It also demands creation of the vocal life of the character organically for it to be convincing. "For a new characterization it is essential to break out of one's own mind-set in order to experience what the playwright has written" (Park, 1997:1518). The speaking voice in the theatre demands character development through the use of the human instrument, i.e. voice, body, mind, emotions and how dynamic this can be achieved through the actor's artistry. It further demands the use of energy.

LESSAC KINESENSICS PEDAGOGY

The theory and praxis of any training in an educational theatre is possibly to situate them in a context that meets the demands of the trainee, culturally, politically, socially, and to understand how knowledgeable the trainer is about the teaching of a method or pedagogy. Turner defines pedagogy as

...either the art or science of teaching, and as such, has significant political, social, and economic implications for those who are being taught. The teaching of voice and body is no different (2009: 375).

The art and science of voice and speech is to consider the implications speech is likely to have on the individual, in performance context and real life. Life itself is energy. "Breath is energy that fuels us" (Hurt, 2014:22). Energy is not something that can be seen but rather felt. It is a phenomenon that radiates when optimally utilised. Everything we do demands energy. The singing voice demands energy in order to reach a high pitch, key, sustain a note and make the actor's voice reach the

last row in the theatre. The scenario is somewhat the same for the speaking voice, but with a little digression. Crockett posits that:

The speaking voice must gain this skill if she wants her speeches remembered and if she wants to gain the admiration of the audience. Since we know that emotion takes energy, the speaking voice must learn and practice the skills needed to be effective (2012:2).

Lessac kinesensics training is a pedagogy that employs the use of energies. These energies are in two parts: vocal energy or body energy (NRG as a means of sensing the possible sounds in the word energy). When this is experimented upon, it develops an embodied actor application for underpinning and enhancing student-actor vocal training. Under the two NRGs, Lessac training distinguishes the vocal into three forms: Consonant, Structural and Tonal, while the Body energy is grouped into four parts: Buoyancy, Radiancy, Potency and Inter-Involvement.

Understanding the Body Energy States of Lessac Kinesensics Pedagogy

These energies develop the student-actor's body and mind for vocal performance. Unlike Crockett who posits that its goal should be to consciously achieve the sole aim of gaining admiration from the audience, Lessac argues that when these energies are explored, it is for the actor to ask herself if she feels good about her exploration in preparation for performance. It requires an awareness approach which will result in a well-developed total human instrument. If otherwise, it will lead to frustration and throwback to old habitual patterns that will not develop effective vocal performance skills. It may result in a complex outcome which one can term an intellectual process – 'a cut to chase' - if well integrated, it will be beneficial to the actor and the audience. For Morrison, vocal training is a "complex aspect" of theatre training.

The study of voice and speech can be complex. It is a subject beset by attitudes ranging from fear to bewilderment at its mystique. This bewilderment comes from the inability to understand the human

anatomy or organs responsible for voice and speech production in the theatre (2001:128).

Morrison's definition may be true in the light of the student-actor understanding the human anatomy or organs, i.e. bones, tissues, muscles, and postures responsible for vocal performance. However, the purpose of speech in the theatre is to perform and communicate to an audience who may be able decode the accent, mood, energy, character and the language of the dialogue. Major aspects to consider in the training for vocal performance are the human anatomy responsible for shaping sounds, muscles for expression and neurological components responsible for change in human behaviour. Many practitioners of voice and speech anchor their training on an intellectual process which may be rigid, depending on how it is taught to the actor; it can also be a hindrance for her in equipping herself for new acting approaches. Hurt, through her years of actor training, informs that:

It never occurred to me to approach acting on a non-intellectual level. This resulted in a disconnection between my cognitive understandings of the process and my physical portrayal of the character – i.e., the acting! I always thought my mind was supposed to learn movement and then coerce my body into imitating my teachers (2014:1).

Hurt is a Lessac Certified Trainer and has taught acting and Lessac kinesensics training at colleges across the United States. In her doctoral research, which she later published as a book titled: *Arthur Lessac's Embodied Actor Training*, she discusses, her personal challenges and growth as an actor, as well as integrating Lessac kinesensics to training and teaching. Many vocal practitioners face similar challenges in embodying actor training personally before they are able to share their personal experiences towards assisting the student-actors relate to different acting training techniques, especially in regard to the vocal demands. This paper further discusses the implication and application of Lessac kinesensics to the Nigerian student-actor training. The emphasis of the application is not to encourage an imitation process which will not be embodied in actor training.

This paper goes further to discuss the training of the speaking voice basically in an educational theatre, while focusing its findings in relation to student-actors. Actor training and voice and speech training continue to crisscross, but there are places where they intersect. Saklad records that:

Both seek a connectedness of self-self, and of self to other, to the moment and the audience; both seek clear communication and connectedness to the text and the imaginary world of the play; both emphasized the importance of the actor's groundedness, healthy alignment, strength, dexterity, stamina, physical freedom, and an expansive range of expressiveness (2012:12).

Although, this may be contextualised as an integral part of the whole process of voice, speech, body and mind training. It is also worthy to note that the Nigerian student-actors hardly develop on their own without the instruction of basic principles of a pedagogy, coaching, or imitating of fellow actors. There are also factors that may be militating against her fluidity and flexibility in character portrayal/development. This may be conditioned to how responsive her body and mind are to new trainings/approaches – breath, posture, movement through space and connecting energy and emotions to others on stage. The major gist of Lessac kinesensics as the vocal training approach discussed is for connectedness of self-self and self to others, to the moment and to the audience. Many pedagogical tools aim at an intellectual process: a method of arriving at a problem, thereby creating another problem; if not done creatively (due to lifeless techniques), that leaves a lacuna for other pedagogues to develop models to meet specific demands of the actors.

However, Lessac kinesensics pedagogy aims at teaching the actor, individual performer and instructor, to explore ways that will make her feel good inside out. Hurt reports that,

Arthur Lessac was an American developer of a voice, speech and movement practice known as 'kinesensic training'. Lessac work relies on what he calls the "feeling process," in which the performer senses the vibrations of tone, muscularity, flexibility of the cheeks, and

Abimbola Adetola Stephen-Adesina: Lessac Kinesensics Training: A Pedagogy for Training the Nigerian Student-Actor's Speaking Voice

consonant contact as they resonate against her bones. Lessac states that his training "is based on recognition and consequent control of physical behaviour patterns naturally produced when the body as a whole is functioning most efficiently" (2014:2).

Kinesensic is a term coined by Lessac who refers to it as "an intrinsic sensing process where energy qualities are physically felt and perceived, then tuned and used for creative expression" (1997:3). This expression comes from the response the student-actor can readily relate to; her habitual patterns that she struggles to get rid of before retraining them for creative purposes. According to Lessac,

Kinesensic is better described as a neurophysical sensing process: kine, for movement and motion; esens for basic meaning, nature, cognition; sens, for spirit, inner energy, involvement; sic, for familiar occurrences (ibid.: 4).

The kinesensic's feeling process becomes an in-built tonic control factor in human instrument development. Hurt informs that:

Kinesensic training involves ongoing discoveries of the significant core of sensation of the voice and body as they synergize. The body determines meaning from these perceptions and the actor develops her voice and movement with them and not by copying someone else (2014:2).

Copying, which can be likened to imitation, is a common norm or habit by student-actors as well as vocal practitioners. Nevertheless, if the actor is not allowed to imitate, there is a huge demand from her as well as from her instructor due to her vocal artistry. Knight, (2012: ix-x) reports that the needs of the actor within performance are "constantly changing and are never fixed...the only 'standard' that we can set for speech training is intelligibility." Saklad also adds that, in the midst of a very fast-paced world, with its "gotta get a quick fix" mentality, teachers run to keep up with the changing needs of the students (2011:13). If intelligibility is what the actor has to focus on for effective

communication in performance, how then does the student-actor achieve this in a convincing manner? Crannell, (2012:1275) corroborates that unintelligibility, one of the common characteristics of poor voice and speech habits, results from “not giving speech sounds (particularly vowels and diphthongs) enough time in production.” Lessac describes intelligibility in relation to consonant sounds that create room for it.

Consonants are the anatomical ‘spine’ of words in vocal life. They are the interpreters that convey the meaning of speech – they make the spoken word intelligible...They can also bring healthful, enlivening energy to our speech when they are felt, tasted, and enjoyed as a sensory, or kinesensic, experience (1997:67).

The essence of vocal training during actor training for student-actors in educational theatre is mainly to solve major problems (habitual patterns) they encounter as well as research into the voice, body and mind that will synergise the actor to her character for character portrayal development. This can be termed as a “transformative and restorative value.” Moraitis defines this as:

A value of vocal training widely recognised in theatrical environments where the training focuses on unlocking habitual tensions that impede creative communication and allow actors to alter physical and vocal behaviour (2009:387).

Lessac kinesensics as pedagogy describes the habitual tensions as destruct patterns. As part of its principles termed ‘body wisdom’ and ‘vocal life’, habitual patterns are also known as destruct patterns which have the power to force the attrition of body wisdom. These destruct patterns stem from:

- A loss of relationship and empathy with our body organism and a loss of qualitatively communicating with it;
- The conditioned patterning of our perceptive capacity and general body functioning by outside constraints, inhibitions, and super-imposed standards;

- The premature deterioration of body's systems and Stradivarius talents due to misuse or non-use, which generally leads, unknowingly, to imitation, suppression, surface functioning, and extrinsically-ordered behaviour (Lessac, 1997:250).

The fact remains that the student-actor has the capacity to rediscover, perceive, and coordinate all the body's inborn potential which does remain a natural and embryonically instinctive one. She has the potentials to reiterate, through retraining which is still reclaimable, the ability to build upon her body intelligence and body languages and establish a foundation for awareness that may be characterised by going beyond habitual patterns to becoming flexible, fluid, and focusing them on the day-to-day need for positive and healthy progress. This progress is an organic communication that represents and stresses a particular kind of physicalised body (inner) intelligence that beneficially and creatively affects one's behaviour, attitude, and actions through an awareness process.

PSYCHOPHYSICAL APPROACH TO ACTOR TRAINING

There are many documented approaches to training the speaking voice around the globe. They range from the theatre voice traditions of Linklater (1976), Berry (1973), Lessac (1997) and Rodenburg (2000), which focus on the experiential and holistic nature of vocal production, to more recent programs of Estill Voice Training Systems (1997) and Christine Shewell (2009), which have a functional focus and concentrate on the individual mechanics or areas of vocal production. (Madill, 2013:275).

In accordance with Madill's assertion quoted above, the study of voice and speech in character development in this paper is from a psychophysical perspective, as we are aware that there are numerous approaches that are exotic and unfamiliar to the Nigerian student-actor. This paper's perspective hinges on psychophysical training; training based on perception and awareness in that it encourages positive behavioural change in the student-actor personally, while

rediscovering and retraining rather than imitating an instructor or teacher of voice and speech. Furthermore,

The study of speech perception is a behavioural science. The essential elements and assumptions of the methodology are the same as those in other behavioural sciences (Kintsch, Miller & Polson, 1984). The key element of research in behavioural science is to make repeatable observations. In speech perception this requires maintaining control over the details and conditions of stimulus presentation, the responses or task required of the listener, and any attributes of the listener relevant to the task, including instructions (Lass, 1996:526).

Psychophysical is from the word psychophysics which is a sub-discipline of psychology dealing with the relationship between physical stimuli and their subjective percepts. Kingdom & Prins inform that:

The term psychophysics was first coined by Gustav Theodor Fechner. In his *Elements of Psychophysics* (1860/1966) Fechner set out the principles of psychophysics, describing the various procedures that experimentalists use to map out the relationship between matter and mind...Psychophysics can be applied to any sensory system, whether vision, hearing, touch, taste, or smell (2010:1).

The sensory system of psychophysics applied to acting is psychophysical. Corrigan points out that many voice teachers currently employ psychophysical techniques when teaching voice production because these techniques are methods which engage some aspect of a person's physical, mental, or emotional functioning (1997:1222). Webster's Dictionary defines psychophysical as "when we conceive physical and psychical stimulation to exist together; a sharing of mental and physical qualities." Psychophysical techniques demand the incorporation of the body, mind, imagination, feeling and perception inside the actor's body and her environment. Hurt supports that psychophysical training is that training that 'involves mind, body, spirit, awareness, imagination, feelings and breath (2014:12). She further stresses that "the actor tunes into her breath and follows it while meditating on her psychophysical processes, including how she feels

emotionally and physically” (Ibid:22). However, if an actor lacks the understanding of optimal use of these aspects mentioned, she is not likely to reach the goal to be attained as a well-coordinated and developed actor.

There are a couple of pedagogic practices that employ psychophysical methods, some of which are Yoga, T'ai Chi, Chi Kung, Aikido, Suzuki Method, Feldenkrais Technique, Alexander Method, Stanislavsky Practice, Rolfing, The Alexander Technique, and Lessac kinesensics and a handful of 21st century pedagogies. Stanislavsky practice which is often used by some Nigerian student-actors has been misinterpreted to mean a ‘get out of your head’, ‘don’t think, do method.’ Acting teachers often presume his work was largely about the psychological investigations of character, observation and text analysis. Hurt further clarifies that what they lack in their teaching is:

The incorporation of the actor’s senses, use of meditation and concentration on self and surroundings at once, and recognition that Stanislavsky’s foundation comes from the use of imagination as felt throughout the actor’s whole self, not just seen in the mind’s eye.

Stanislavsky’s practice as an actor training method focuses on experiencing, not just thinking, feeling and reflecting. It demands the actor actively engaging her whole self through each of her actions and how she relates to surroundings and other people. Blair adds that Stanislavsky sets out a six-stage process as follows:

Stimulation of the ‘will’ to create a commitment to the text; the use of personal material, i.e. emotion and sensory memory, connected to the text; the merging of the actor’s personality with the character’s; physicalisation, in which the actor finds the embodiment of the character; integrating these inner and outer aspects of the character; and delivering this effectively to the audience (Blair, 2008:30).

Psychophysical practice is a stimulation of feeling, emotion that comes from a well-developed meditation that proceeds from learning from the inner self to the outer self that co-actors and the audience can relate to.

Feeling arises from action. It is not what we can do that matters, but, as Corrigan clarifies, psychophysical practice embraces the assumption that it is a question of “not what we can do, but what we think we can do” (1997:1270). These pedagogies do not advocate for tension from psychological to physical. They encourage creativity at its optimal level. Merlin states that breath makes a great deal of contribution to training.

If your physical body is tense, it's quite likely that your psychological apparatus is also tense...Once you're in a state of relaxation, your body is much more likely to be at your creative beck and call, and (looking at it from the other way round) if you're physically relaxed, you'll probably be more psychologically open (2007:32).

Lessac kinesensic consists of three energies felt in the oral cavity: consonant, tone, and structural vowels. Consonant energy “sharpens the perception and expression of the individual qualities of the consonants by an association of the physical sensations of each one with a different instrument of the orchestra.” The student-actor aims to learn her consonants, vowels by feeling the inherent musicality through sensory explorations. According to Shapiro,

Fechner's view about psychophysics has been retained by psychophysicists and they retain that claim to be searching for laws relating our sensory experience of the world to physical magnitudes in the world. Treisman (1964) offers a neurological interpretation of psychophysics, according to which psychophysical equations relate neural states to stimuli (1994:47).

Stimuli, in this research, is to study how student-actors respond to what they feel when developing voice, speech, mood, imagination, feeling and breath through the three energies felt in the oral cavities. In Lessac training, when an actor employs the feeling process, it results in an explorative process where she has to trust in her natural self – body and voice and speech, as opposed to imitating or following a cognitive process. Lessac adds that:

The artist must have the knowing and the feeling of how the body's systems work and how its creative instrumentalities function. The artist must acquire this inner intelligence and experience with gutfelt and heartfelt awareness; he or she can have the technical knowledge of these fundamentals but can understand them organically and vitally only by physically experiencing the feeling while at the very same time behaviourally feeling the experience (1997:1).

In student-actor training, there are stages in character development which is commonly attained through intellectual process, intended to develop many abilities and talents in the student-actor. Knight describes the actor as an enactor of human behaviour, a scavenger of all behaviours and therefore of all speech actions (2012:3). The result is that there is a world of difference and phases of student-actors' work in vocal training; this may vary inadequately representing the level of her performance due to vocal habitual patterns to change, and how she understands the way her body works. Lessac presents four concepts that are integral to 'vocal life' actor training:

- Body aesthetics (as differentiated from body anaesthetics)
- Inner harmonic sensing
- Organic instructions to body
- The 'familiar event' principle

These concepts may be difficult to grasp at first but, with patience, the actor learns to accommodate and utilise them. They function from an environment of two worlds called the inner and outer environments. According to Lessac & Kinghorn,

On the one hand, there is a huge outer environment, with everything and everyone else in it; its widely varied cultures, its unexplored territories, its powerful energy forces (nuclear, electrical, solar, water, etc.), and its conditioning and patterning, which shape the way you think and act. On the other hand, there is your vast inner environment, with only you in it, your personality, your unexplored inner wilderness,

and your intrinsic body energies which promote vitality and create health and well-being (2014:7).

Suppose that without the application of psychophysical training, the actor gradually experiences these four concepts through her vast knowledge of basic vocal training, which may not be satisfactory, but that at the same time her practices in vocal life are below standard as her two worlds are not harmonizing with her performance, she falls into a risk of poisoning her environments. It may easily happen that her excellence in the one respect may sufficiently overbalance her deficiency in the other to cause the voice and speech instructor to give her a satisfactory build-up. Thus student-actors may pass through various instructors who may be certified (as the term is often used for practitioners of vocal training) instructors or 'an oral tradition' instructor without being compelled to correct her most glaring errors in vocal delivery for effective communication as this is the goal of vocal communication resulting in poor vocal artistry. To be sure, it is undesirable for the instructor to painstakingly put the student-actor through rigours of exercises for only pronunciation without helping to develop the mind, body, spirit, awareness, imagination, feelings, energies and breath for performance space or real life situation.

Body NRGs as a Psychophysical Sensing Process

Lessac kinesensics as a psychophysical approach aims at helping the student-actor establish a more effective voice, mind and body unity through sensorial awareness. It provides a psychological reorganisation to be less conscious of what she is exploring but over a long period will reap the benefits of what has transpired in the whole body and mind through a self-awareness approach. With these considerations, student-actors will understand the benefits of training the voice, speech, body and mind towards performance and healthful living. Any pedagogy devoid of basic tools for an embodied actor training for present and future performances will create a gap for contemporary student-actor. Three main things are paramount that is intended to be integrated as an acceptable pedagogy for training student-actors: Lessac kinesensics principles, the musicality of the human anatomy and diction (de-

patterning, habitual awareness, body energies, and vocal dynamics) for performance. To achieve this; the hope is that the Nigerian student-actor's vocal training should focus on developing body energies that align with vocal energies through the means of consonant energies, as consonants are the spinal cord to vocal life. These have been well explained by Lessac but described in practical terms by Tocchetto de Oliveira (2009) as follows:

- **Buoyancy** is the energy state in which we experience the absence of weight, as if the body was filled up in oxygen and was lighter than air. It feels like an active relaxation, different from the type of relaxation in which we feel the body as heavy and sluggish. The sensation that corresponds to the state of buoyancy is weightlessness, and some of the psycho-physical states that frequently appear to be associated to this sensation are calmness and serenity.

This energy is usually not exhibited by the Nigerian student-actor that displays her vocal or body performance on the stage. Many a times, there is a cultural, social, or psychological influence in her character development. However, there is need for invested discipline for the actor.

- **Radiancy**, another body energy state, is characterised by the vibrating excitement of one's body, that can be more sophisticated or subtle, like a smooth and light trembling of one's body or as an electric personification of liveliness and body skills, or even as a state of alertness and anticipation. Its characteristics are surprise, excitement, great energy, and a childlike attitude when playing.

This energy is displayed by Nigerian actors when playing comic characters. A lot of times, student-actors exhibit them when seriously attempting to play for accent, thereby losing out the essence and message being crafted in the play by the playwright.

- Potency is another energy state that produces the sensation of muscular power. A familiar event for this energy is the extension of the arms and legs with a yawn that revitalises the body, extending and relaxing its muscles “with a sense of fierce and deep intensity.”

To achieve this energy state optimally, there should be no force, push or tilting of any part of the body in a brutal form. Nevertheless, culturally, socially or psychologically, the observation is that student-actors display this energy state in everyday conversation due to the economic situation in which they find themselves. There is tightness even in their vocal delivery. It is not an organic process, more so, not a psychophysical process.

- Inter-involvement which is the last energy state described by Lessac, and explained by Tocchetto de Oliveira through her experience is an energy state that has to do with the organic communication of our internal environment with the external one. It is the need to relate with our external environment that makes the person synthesise all her internal experience systems while focusing on his goals, without being conscious of the use he makes of his energy states or of the other aesthetic and expressive elements that improve his performance. The body does not charge itself with energy like in the three other states, but in this case it is the interlacing of the states by the emotional system.

This last energy state has a combination of internal and external communication. That is, adding up the three energy states but organically to achieve a desired goal with a brutal force or anaesthetic results. Interlacing emotion is the order of the day. With Tocchetto de Oliveira’s experience in the Lessac Summer Intensive workshop and a carry over to everyday activity, it is paramount to encourage the Nigerian student-actors as well as individuals to be substantially grounded in one pedagogy at a time and importantly, to create a self-

awareness in an organic ongoing process rather than attempting at a goal for admiration. Student-actors, who aim to employ two or more pedagogical tools without observing the compatibility of two or more vocal techniques, achieve less of an embodied acting. In other words, these pedagogies are likely to create conflict of ideas that may, at the end, be confusing to her.

The following observation is from the point of view of Zarrilli – one who has dedicated decades to investigating embodiment in actor training. Hurt reports that Zarrilli's argument is clear in that

He does not dismiss Stanislavsky's work and contribution to actor training (which he explains was psychophysical in nature), but stresses that today's 'post-dramatic' scripts call for actor training that prepares for more than psychological investigations of character.... He proposes that development of the bodymind through embodied actor training "will allow [today's actors] to solve acting problems of both conventional 'dramatic' as well as 'post-dramatic' dramaturgies such as Sarah Kane and Martin Crump" (2014:14).

The bodymind is a conceptualised approach to understand the relationship of the human body, which as it exists, is constantly and continuously changing to the environment in which it is situated at every given instance. "The fluid interrelationship between the bodied being and the environment culminates in a multimodal bodymind. It is this bodymindedness that calls for embodied pedagogies" (Munro, 2018:1). This, therefore, supports the motion that, as the actor is desirous for embodied training, she is mindful of her environment, the information she receives through her senses and, therefore, engages with her bodymind to stimulate the minds of an audience.

Now, a prospective student-actor must endeavour to be trained and to research into eras and style of speaking for accents realisation in order to train others. She may meticulously correct herself, yet there are challenges in focusing on her commitment and attention to her most conspicuous faults. Nevertheless, the student-actor is not compelled to outgrow these habits within a short duration of training. However, it is paramount for the student-actor to let go during rehearsals and

performance; as the aim is to develop an embodied actor for accuracy in vocal qualities, specificity and intelligibility, which leads to a carryover to other performances and real life situations in order not to fall back to old habitual patterns.

To minimise issues arising from underutilised voice, body and mind for character development and portrayal, the student-actor in the university is encouraged to participate in productions. However, with the absence of a vocal instructor or a standard vocal training model, the student-actor suffers on account of inaccuracies which have become habitual; as a result, she becomes an unfortunate reflection on a rigidity process, while other student-actors may have peculiarities and shortfalls. The point is that a single composite mark for the student-actors' performance in any given text is to undergo vocal and body explorations so as to completely lend themselves to the correction of individual destruct patterns.

Conclusion

The paper has highlighted and discussed the body energy states of Lessac kinesensics training. It has also examined and considered various definitions of voice and speech. It further discussed how they relate to the acting for the stage, and posits that Lessac kinesensics be proposed as an underpinning pedagogy to enhance student-actor's vocal training with the existing training method for the speaking voice. The discussion in this paper encourages the integration of a vocal pedagogy and advises that the principles can be domesticated to aid optimal performance for the voice, speech, body and mind of the student-actor. It also gives room for deeper study on the principles of Lessac kinesensics which are: The 'Human Likeness', The Human 'Musical Instrument', The Principle of 'Inner Harmonic Sensing', The 'Perceptive Awareness', The 'Habitual Awareness', The 'De-Patterning', and The 'Balanced Muscle-Tonicity'.

It behoves the discussion that a psychophysical approach with its principles is guaranteed to assist the Nigerian student-actor 'not to force' but organically develop a vocal and body and mind dynamic for character portrayal. What this concludes is that, student-actor training at the University of Ibadan and the country at large need not be

deficient in growing an embodied actor that is supposed to encapsulate the use of voice and speech, body and mind, for effective vocal artistry, but make it the main focus of the training for the speaking voice. Student-actors must work towards embodying the principles of pedagogy in performance space and everyday situation.

References

- Berry, Cicely. *Voice and the actor*. New York: Wiley Publishing Inc. 1973
- Blair, Rhonda. *The actor, image and action: acting and cognitive neuroscience*. New York: Routledge. 2008.
- Catford, John C. *A Practical Introduction to Phonetics*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press. 2001.
- Collins, Beverley. And Mees, Inger M. *Practical Phonetics and Phonology: A Resource Book for Students*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge. 2013
- Corrigan, Mary. Psycho-Physical techniques and their relevance to voice training, in Marian Hampton & Barbara Acker. (eds.) *The vocal vision: voice in tomorrow's theatre*. Eds.. New York: Applause Books. 1221-1385. 1997
- Crannell, Kenneth C. *Voice and articulation*, 5th ed. Cengage Learning: Kindle Edition. 2012
- Crockett, L. *The Artistic Speaker*. Lexington: Woman with a Past Productions. 2012
- Hurt, Melissa. *Arthur Lessac's embodied actor training*. New York: Routledge Publishers. 2014.
- Kingdom, Frederick. A. A. & Prins, Nicolaas. *Psychophysics: A Practical Introduction*. San Diego: Academic Press Publication. 2009

- Knight, Dudley. *Speaking with Skill: An Introduction to Knight-Thompson Speechwork*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2012
- Lass, Norman .J. Ed. *Principles of experimental phonetics*. St. Louis: Mosby. 1996
- Lessac, Arthur. & Kinghorn. Deborah. *Essential Lessac; Honouring the familiar in body, mind, spirit*. Barrington; RMJ Donald. 2014
- Lessac, Arthur. "From Beyond Wildness to body wisdom, vocal life, and healthful functioning: a joyous struggle for our discipline's future", in Hampton, M & Acker, B (eds.). *The vocal vision: voice in tomorrow's theatre*. Eds New York: Applause Theatre and Cinema Books. 1997
- _____. *The use and training of the human voice: a Bio-Dynamic Approach to Vocal Life*. 3rd ed. California: Mayfield Publishing Company. 1997
- _____. A New Definition of Dramatic Training. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 55.2: 116-25. 1969
- _____. *Body wisdom: the use and training of the human body*. 2nd ed. California: International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. 1990
- Linklater, Catherine. The Embodied Voice: Given at the Inauguration of the 5th Annual Voice Meeting of CEUVOZ Mexico City (July 16th) 1-7. 2012
- Madill, Cate. "Spoken Voice Training Research – An Australian Perspective", *Voice and Speech Review*. 7:1, 275-279. 2011
- Merlin, Bella. *The Complete Stanislavsky Toolkit*. London: Nick Hern Books. 2007.
- Moraitis Katerina M.2009. "The Impact of Lessac Voice Training within a Socially Excluded Community", in Munro, M. Turner, S. Munro, A & Campbell, K. (eds.) *Collective Writings on the Lessac Voice and Body Work*. United States of America: A festschrift. Llumina Press. 2009
- Morrison, Malcolm. *Clear Speech: Practical Speech Correction and Voice Improvement*. 4th ed. London: Performance Books. Kindle Edition. 2009

- Munro, M. "Principles for Embodied Learning Approaches" *South African Theatre Journal*, DOI: 10.1080/10137548.2017.1404435. 2018
- Munro, Marth. Turner, Sean. Munro, Allan & Campbell, Kathleen. 2009. *Collective Writings on the Lessac Voice and Body Work*. United States of America: A festschrift. Llumina Press. 2009
- Park, Sue A. "Voice as a Source of Creativity", in Hampton, M & Acker, B. (eds.) *The Vocal Vision: Voice in Tomorrow's Theatre*. 1997. New York: Applause Theatre and Cinema Books. 1387-1570. 1997
- Saklad, Nancy. *Voice and Speech Training in the New Millennium*. United States of America: Applause Theatre and Cinema Books. 2011
- Skinner, Edith. *Speak with Distinction*. New York: Applause Theatre and Cinema Books. 1990
- Shapiro, L. A. 1994. PSA: Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association, Volume Two: Symposia and Invited Papers : 47-57
- Shewell, Christina. *Voice Work: Art and Science in Changing Voices*. United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell. 2009.
- Tocchetto de Oliveira, Maria R. "The Body Energies in the Actor's Performance", in Munro, M. Turner, S. Munro, A & Campbell, K. (eds.) *Collective writings on the lessac voice and body work*. United States of America: A festschrift. Llumina Press. 2009.
- Turner, Clifford J. *Voice & speech in the theatre*. London: A&C Black (Publishers) Ltd. 1993.
- Turner, Sean. "Pedagogical Explorations and Other Applications", in Munro, M. Turner, S. (1990:iii) Munro, A & Campbell, K. (eds.) *Collective writings on the lessac voice and body work*. United States of America: A festschrift. Llumina Press. 2009.