

An abstract watercolor splash on a white background. The splash starts with bright yellow and orange at the top, transitions through pink and magenta in the middle, and ends with deep blue and purple at the bottom. The colors are blended and textured, with visible brushstrokes and watercolor grain.

# **LANGUAGE IN BIODANZA**

**KATEŘINA STRNADOVÁ**

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**Pilsen 2025**

## **Language in Biodanza**

Kateřina Strnadov

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# Preface

The topic of this monograph was born during a conversation with Donald Charles Kiraly whom I met at The Future of Education conference in Florence in 2018. While I was giving a talk about my work in the area of teaching translation to opera singers, Don, who has made a name for himself primarily in the field of translatology, changed the topic of his talk at the last minute and presented with utmost enthusiasm the results of applying an approach to foreign language teaching that he developed and called Scaffolded Language Emergence (Kiraly & Signer, 2017). Don's approach to foreign language teaching incorporates aspects of previously established approaches such as the Structuro-Global Audio-Visual Method (SGAV), the Natural Approach, the Total Physical Response (TPR), the Notional-Functional Approach and the Communicative Approach. Scaffolded Language Emergence (SLE) is a complex approach that moves the emotional dimension to a prominent position in the classroom and that builds on the concept of emergent knowledge and skills while delaying the introduction of linguistic jargon and even grammatical rules. This change in focus immediately caught my attention. After returning home to the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen (UWB), I enthusiastically talked about Don at the Institute of Applied Language Studies, where I work as the Vice-Director for Strategy and Development and also as a teacher of Italian. I started looking for ways to bring Don and the approach he had created to Pilsen.

A year later, just before the introduction of the most stringent anti-Covid measures, I managed to organize a small but international conference called A Day with Languages at UWB. Don, in view of the rapidly spreading epidemic and restrictions, chose not to attend in person but agreed to participate virtually. Not only did he present to us the origins and basics of his approach – Don calls SLE strictly an approach, not a method – in an online webcast with live interpretation in the conference hall, he even managed to train two native Spanish speakers in using the SLE approach. They let conference attendees literally experience the SLE approach in three consecutive one-hour demonstrations, in which some twenty linguists participated mentally and physically as they grappled with the objective of allowing Spanish to 'emerge' within them. Then followed a year when we could forget about meeting on site altogether, but in 2021 I received a small grant that allowed me to invite Don to Pilsen for a week and offer a full week of SLE training to any colleagues who were interested. By that time, Don and I had already begun a several-month journey to complete all the formalities that would allow him to move to Pilsen as a visiting professor for the entire year of 2022 after completing his career at Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz in Germany.

The same year I met Don, I also met Biodanza. My 'first time' came in the form of a one-day seminar focused on sensuality, held in a beautiful studio in Beroun and led by Aneta Končulová, the very first Czech woman to receive an international certificate and start spreading awareness of Biodanza in the Czech Republic. A friend, who took me to the workshop, and I really wished that such an activity was available in Pilsen, but Aneta had two small children at the time and it was not feasible for her to commute to Pilsen regularly in the evenings. However,



my friend managed to arrange and organize three separate evening lessons with Aneta, which I definitely could not miss. At that time Aneta had already come up with the idea of opening a Biodanza school in the Czech Republic. At first I was not at all keen to start the study again, which was to be a three-year course, with the prospect of teaching someone, as I was already a teacher for the most part. But before Aneta arrived in Pilsen again in the spring of 2019, this time with a one-day workshop aimed at promoting the newly opened school, I had a clear idea: If I wanted Biodanza to be a part of my life, there was no choice but for me to start commuting to Biodanza.

Aneta Končulová, together with Markéta Hrabalová, another Czech who offered regular classes and weekend workshops in Prague, opened the first ever Biodanza school in the Czech Republic in September 2019, and I, along with more than forty of my classmates, entered the first year. At first I perceived Biodanza as a nourishing bath for myself, but gradually I began to feel the desire to spread to others what Biodanza has to offer.

In January 2022, Don arrived at the UWB as my colleague and shortly afterwards I started my third year of Biodanza studies, in which the curtain was gradually lifted on the methodological principles on which the Biodanza system is built. On the one hand, I increasingly applied the SLE approach in my Italian classes, gradually daring to include physical activities and an emotional dimension, to use real objects and to increase interaction within the group; on the other hand, one day I realized that I was beginning to design my lessons according to the physiological principles of Biodanza. I have often enthusiastically told Don about my studies and mentioned how many similar aspects I find when comparing SLE and Biodanza. Until one day he asked why I didn't combine the two approaches and use Biodanza to teach the language. I immediately started arguing that no, that's not what Biodanza is for, convinced that the participant must fully and accurately understand what is being said. It wasn't until I realized that I actually had no solid evidence for my belief. And that's when I started to look to see if this topic had been worked on in the scientific domain. I was aware of attempts to combine foreign language teaching with physical activities such as yoga, but in the context of Biodanza, which is much more than just a physical activity, this topic has not yet been addressed.

Under Don's methodological guidance, I prepared an online questionnaire for my classmates at the Biodanza school, focusing on language use in Biodanza, which was to become the source of data for my qualitative research. However, the first attempt to collect data, conducted with two classmates who had dropped out of the study shortly before, failed; their answers to my questions were very brief and evasive. It was clear that after the covid era, when so much activity had moved into virtual space, people had no desire to even turn on a computer, let alone type anything on a keyboard. So I decided to convert the questionnaire into a more human form and interviewed another classmate who was no longer participating in the study via an app that allowed remote communication.

Face to face and with the possibility to ask additional questions, to take into account the intonation and even the extra-linguistic expressions of the interviewee, I got much more extensive and usable answers. Every time I sat down at the computer to transcribe the

interview with one of the participants, it was like going for coffee together, hearing the voice of the person again, recalling his or her gestures, discovering the parasitic words, realizing which topics evoke the strongest emotional response in him or her. When I decided to work on my topic in a qualitative way, I did not know that this quality would also consist in looking into the soul of the other person. I almost had the feeling that the interviews could also be used for psychological analysis. And although everyone was asked the same set of questions, each of the participants approached my topic in a completely distinctive way. Each added some detail that I hadn't even included in the questions, which drew my attention to the breadth of the topic. In the end, I came to the conclusion that the topic, which was originally intended to be dealt with in an article, was sufficiently voluminous and revealing to merit being treated in the form of a monograph.

# Introduction

Biodanza as a system for the development of human potential has its origins in the 1960s in Chile. Biodanza was created and perfected until the end of his life by the Chilean educator, psychologist and anthropologist Rolando Toro (1924–2010) whose full name was Rolando Mário Toro Araneda. As will be evident especially in the opening chapters of this book, Toro's personality combines the scientist's urge to experiment, observe, explore, and develop the richness of theoretical knowledge along with the creative energy of a painter, poet, and dancer. Even before the creation of the Biodanza system, Toro was a public figure with a wide circle of friends among both scientists and artists, and he was also considered a philanthropist. He also referred to Biodanza as a fusion of art, science and love (Toro, 2020, p. 21).

The Biodanza system has its basis in scientific knowledge, especially in biology, and already during Toro's lifetime Biodanza was the subject of research. This was mainly due to Marcus Stück (usually quoted as Marcus Stueck) from the Universität Leipzig, Germany, who later also founded the Biodanza school in Riga, Latvia. In a review study, *Biodanza Effects on Stress Reduction and Well-Being – A Review of Study Quality and Outcome* (Stueck & Tofts, 2016), Stück and his co-author report that between 1999 and 2016, thirteen studies and one systematic review of studies were conducted on Biodanza of which ten were conducted and published at the Universität Leipzig, one in Portugal, one in Italy and one in Brazil. Stück and his team aim is not only to continue the eight-point research plan proposed by Rolando Toro before his death, but also to maintain an international network of Biodanza researchers under the name Bionet (Bionet, 2023).

In addition to the countries already mentioned, Biodanza research has spread to other areas of the world. The Web of Science citation database offers 41 entries in the full-text search for the keyword Biodanza by the end of 2022. Of these 41 results, one was excluded because Biodanza only appeared in the profile of one of the authors, not in the body of the text. Of the 40 results, six were conference abstracts, two were conference proceedings papers (Greaves et al., 2016; Silva & Nadais, 2019), two cases of meta-analyses (Laird et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020), six cases of systematic reviews (Altamirano Quevedo et al., 2021; Cadenas-Sánchez & Ruiz-Ruiz, 2014; Calçada & Gilham, 2022; Ferraro et al., 2021; Hickman et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2019), three works were a combination of meta-analyses and systematic reviews (Bravo et al., 2019; Murillo-García et al., 2018, 2022), and 21 were journal articles. Of these 21 articles, nine fell in the field of medicine and health (Carbonell-Baeza et al., 2010, 2012; Chiesi et al., 2021; Illesca Pretty et al., 2019; López-Rodríguez et al., 2012, 2017; Rosa, de Vita, et al., 2018; Rosa, D'Andria, et al., 2018; Segura-Jiménez et al., 2017), seven in the field of sport (Constantino Murillo & Espada Mateos, 2021; Hernández López et al., 2018; Rosa et al., 2019; Rosa & Madonna, 2020b, 2020a; Tafuri et al., 2019; Vergeer et al., 2021), three in the field of education (Castillo Retamal et al., 2019; Stueck, 2011; Stueck et al., 2013), and two in the field of psychology (Stueck et al., 2016, 2019). None of the articles or other results belong to the field of linguistics. Only one article from the field of social psychology describes the

impact of Biodanza on the expression of emotions and needs (Stueck et al., 2019). However, Biodanza is viewed within this research as a non-verbal component of communication as opposed to a verbal method leading to increased empathy in communication, such as respectful communication. Of the 40 results examined, seven were published in Spanish and the rest in English.

The Scopus citation database offers a total of 31 results when one searches for Biodanza in titles, abstracts or keywords again at the end of 2022, of which in 21 cases there is an overlap with the results of the Web of Science database. Of the remaining results, two were excluded. In the first case, the article was on the topic of human rights and Biodanza was mentioned as only one of the possible activities that older people engage in. In the second case, it was the inclusion of singing and dancing in five-minute stretches during work breaks to increase work productivity. The description given and the music used clearly had nothing to do with Biodanza, only one article on Biodanza was cited in the references, probably a misinterpretation by the authors of what could be considered Biodanza. Of the remaining eight results, two were book chapters (Chathuranga et al., 2019; Stueck & Villegas, 2017), one was a systematic review (Bidonde et al., 2018) and five were articles. Of these articles, three fall in the field of health (López-Rodríguez et al., 2013; Rosa et al., 2020; Schmidek et al., 2019), and two in that of psychology (Abad Robles et al., 2014; Giannelli et al., 2015). None of the articles or other results here fall into the field of language and linguistics either. Of the eight results examined, one was published in Italian, two in Spanish and the remaining five in English.

Published research related to Biodanza focuses mainly on the health benefits of Biodanza. Here, topics such as pain reduction (Hickman et al., 2022; Murillo-García et al., 2018, 2022; Segura-Jiménez et al., 2017), stress reduction (Chathuranga et al., 2019; López-Rodríguez et al., 2017; Stueck, 2011; Stueck & Tofts, 2016) or immunity enhancement (Stueck et al., 2013; Stueck & Villegas, 2017) predominate. Many studies also address the benefits of Biodanza on mental health, such as the development of emotional intelligence (Abad Robles et al., 2014; Calçada & Gilham, 2022; Constantino Murillo & Espada Mateos, 2021; Greaves et al., 2016; Stueck et al., 2019), and, most importantly, on overall well-being (Laird et al., 2021; Stueck & Tofts, 2016). Exceptionally, Biodanza has also been studied from the perspective of psychomotor development in the field of experimental pedagogy (Rosa et al., 2019). Research on the health benefits and positive psychological impact on Biodanza participants has been conducted on specific groups, including children (Greaves et al., 2016; Rosa et al., 2020; Stueck, 2011; Stueck et al., 2013, 2016; Stueck & Villegas, 2017), adolescents (Chathuranga et al., 2019; Rosa & Madonna, 2020b), students (López-Rodríguez et al., 2017), teachers (Rosa & Madonna, 2020a), visually impaired (Schmidek et al., 2019) or patients with neurodegenerative diseases (Chiesi et al., 2021; Rosa, de Vita, et al., 2018) or with chronic diseases such as autism spectrum disorders (Rosa, D'Andria, et al., 2018) and especially fibromyalgia (Bidonde et al., 2018; Bravo et al., 2019; Cadenas-Sánchez & Ruiz-Ruiz, 2014; Carbonell-Baeza et al., 2010, 2012; Kim et al., 2019; López-Rodríguez et al., 2012; López-Rodríguez et al., 2013; Murillo-García et al., 2018, 2022; Segura-Jiménez et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2020).

The list of papers dedicated to the use of Biodanza could be expanded by citing those that have not been indexed in the two databases mentioned above, but that are disseminated through professional online platforms such as Academia.edu or Researchgate.net. Many books have also been written on Biodanza, a number of journals are published regularly in relation to Biodanza and the latest knowledge on Biodanza, its theory and practical applications, is also shared at local and international conferences, congresses and symposia. Since its beginnings, when it was closely linked to Latin American countries, Biodanza has spread to five continents and has grown into a worldwide phenomenon.

From the above it follows that Biodanza is mainly seen in the context of its effects on the human body or on the human psyche, but no special attention has been paid to its linguistic aspects. This is despite the fact that awareness of Biodanza is spread by word of mouth or in writing, Biodanza itself is a system based on a theoretical model that is based not only on empirical research and observation, but also on the study of many written sources, and even the Biodanza lessons themselves are conveyed to the participants through language. While Biodanza works with the body, using specific movements in response to specific music, and thus communication is largely non-verbal, verbal expression is also an integral part of it.

Language is used in many different situations and aspects of Biodanza. Each Biodanza session includes a theoretical introduction and oral sharing. Although the individual dances and exercises are usually demonstrated to the participants in Biodanza classes and workshops, they are also introduced orally. Biodanza participants who choose to study in one of the Biodanza schools also work with written materials and are encouraged to write in the form of diaries. At the end of their studies, they then submit their own thesis, called a monograph, which is also written.

The aim of the present volume, which is also the author's Biodanza monograph, is to: show the maximum breadth of linguistic aspects related to Biodanza, present the possibilities that Biodanza offers in the field of language education, highlight its linguistic specificities and outline the possibilities for further research of the language in Biodanza. The book thus answers the basic research question: What is the potential of language in Biodanza? This question is then approached from three perspectives, which represent the sub-questions: What is the role of language in Biodanza? How does Biodanza affect the language of the participants? What contribution can Biodanza make in the field of language education?

This book is divided into two parts, the first of which treats the topic of language in Biodanza theoretically. The aim of this part is to cover as much breadth of the topic as possible, including subtopics that may inspire other researchers to elaborate on it in more detail. This section is based primarily on a study of the works of Rolando Toro and his followers, whose ideas are related to the use of language in Biodanza and its possible absence, as well as to the question of the influence of Biodanza on language. In order to illustrate the language situation in Biodanza, in specific places also quotations from other sources are used, such as mainly the theses of students of Biodanza schools, Biodanza handouts, websites of Biodanza organizations and schools, or articles published outside journals included in the Web of Science and Scopus databases.

In the second part of the thesis, following the theoretical assumptions established in the first part, research is presented on the topic of language in Biodanza, which was conducted in the specific conditions of the Czech Republic, where the first ever Biodanza school was opened in 2019. The research took place between 2022 and 2023, when Czech students began to study the methodology and gradually began to conduct Biodanza lessons themselves. Therefore, the research results reflect the changing perspective of the participants of the school, which is conducted in the Czech language, in a situation where the study materials are still being translated, new vocabulary is being introduced, and the participants' perspective is not burdened by previous experience with or a tradition of Biodanza in a given language and culture. The attachments include transcripts of all interviews conducted with research subjects, which can thus serve as inspiration or a source for extending existing research.

The work is being published in English, in order to be accessible to the widest possible range of readers, from linguists and language teachers to students or participants of Biodanza anywhere in the world, and also in Czech under the title *Jazyk v biodanze*.

Unless otherwise stated, all the texts referred to in this book were translated by the author from Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French, and German into English. The English text was then subjected to a professional and linguistic revision by Donald Charles Kiraly, and the theoretical section to a content check by José Mariano Neves, the current president of the International Biodanza Federation. In order to make all the titles of the works presented comprehensible to the reader, their translations, which do not yet exist in English, are given in parentheses.

# THEORETICAL SECTION

The theoretical part analyzes the linguistic aspects of Biodanza. The theoretical part aims to describe as wide a range of these aspects as possible, which may inspire other researchers to elaborate on them in more detail. This section is divided into four chapters, the first providing background information on the Biodanza system and the remaining three focusing on the three areas of language used in this system: the absence of language and spoken and written language. The different themes and sub-themes are presented through Rolando Toro's and his followers' ideas, focusing mainly on the language-related ones.



# 1 Language portfolio of Biodanza

The Language portfolio of Biodanza chapter introduces the Biodanza system from a language perspective. Subchapter 1.1 Origin of Biodanza is devoted to the origins and development of the name of this system, closely linked to Latin American countries. Subchapter 1.2 Spread of Biodanza focuses on the gradual spread of the system to five continents and lists the countries where Biodanza schools have been opened. Subchapter 1.3 Rolando Toro's work and language introduces Toro's written legacy, including a chronological order of his works and their translations into other languages. Subchapter 1.4 Definitions and objectives of Biodanza highlights the variety of definitions of Biodanza and the differences in the different language versions. Subchapter 1.5 Theory and terminology of Biodanza presents the basic concepts of the system and their linguistic specificities. Subchapter 1.6 Studies of Biodanza describes the conditions and possibilities for studying the system, including oral and written expression. Subchapter 1.7 Translations and interpretations in Biodanza looks at the linguistic diversity of this worldwide system.

## 1.1 Origin of Biodanza

Rolando Toro Araneda was born on 19 April 1924 in Concepción, Chile. In 1943 he graduated from the first Chilean school that trained future teachers, the Escuela Normal Superior José Abelardo Núñez, located in Santiago de Chile. From 1944 to 1957 he worked as a teacher in various Chilean localities (International Biodanza Federation, 2023a).

From the beginning of his teaching career, Toro took an experimental approach to education and enjoyed teaching in nature. As attested to by contemporary newspaper articles, Toro had an innovative spirit and developed creativity in his pupils. This is evidenced by the first Festival del niño, a festival for children, which he helped to promote in the 1950s, during which children had the opportunity to hold exhibitions of paintings and ceramics and to experience live music or didactic games in the heart of Santiago de Chile. Already at this time, Toro perceived that the human mind could not be separated from the rest of the organism, or that mind and body were two different names for the same reality (Cazzulo & Castagnoli, 2022, pp. 100–104).

If we look for the initial inspiration or, as Umberto Eco used to say, the seed idea that germinated outside the author's consciousness long before the creation of the work, then the precursor of the system that is now registered under the trademark Biodanza® can be found in Rolando Toro's letter to his wife from 1952.

“Calle Larga, Los Andes (Chile), 1952.

My beloved Pilarcita:

At times I go out into the yard to look for you, to think of you. Lying on the straw, I wait for news. Today I looked at the wandering clouds, they left me with a feeling of joy, of serene and luminous life.

Here the school is very lonely. Next Monday, the children will arrive.

I have thought of a rhythmic science that arranges musically the natural movements of the body and above all the ‘acts’, so that under noble and spiritual forms it distributes the time, the intensity and the force – something like provoking the musicality of being.

What do you think, do you like it? Oh, my adviser, my love, all this makes no sense except when I can express it and discuss it with you!

I thought of reviving in childhood the great aerial, atmospheric myths that lie dormant in the ancestral depths of every being, of reviving in the unconscious ‘the passing cloud’, ‘the aerolites’, ‘the morning star’, ‘the man of fire’ – thus, giving birth to the illuminated drawings. I looked at my face, as one who observes a path. In the end, I discovered the joy of loving you and of being loved terribly. It is not the years, nor the work, nor my behavior, but my love that has shone as if through stone, on my face.

Soon I will be at your side, my love, I will kiss and embrace you until you are weary of such tenderness.

Rolando”

36 years later, Pilar Acuña wrote to Rolando:

“Fribourg, Switzerland, 28-7-1988.

My dear Rolando:

Who could predict how many times the stars would pass over this golden haystack... I felt that a hundred years ago we were already talking about the same thing!!! Biodanza will go around the world many times!!

Pilar”

(Terrén & Toro, 2008, pp. 21-22)

Already in his role as an educator, Toro was considered an innovator by the contemporary press, and in his educational outline he spoke of awakening the potential and importance of art. Toro’s experimental educational model encompassed science, art and technology. Unexpectedly, he was invited by the dean of the Universidad de Concepción to give a series of lectures and subsequently to create the Laboratorio de Psicología at the local Escuela de Educación. This opportunity motivated Toro to embark on his studies in psychology at the Instituto Pedagógico de la Universidad de Chile, which he completed in 1964 (Toro, 2012, p. 39).

In 1965 Toro was appointed Associate Professor at the Centro de Estudios de Antropología Médica de la Escuela de Medicina de la Universidad de Chile, where he worked until 1973. At that time, he was commissioned by the Sandoz pharmaceutical company to study the effects of LSD on creative activity in a project involving two hundred artists. Years of using this substance for therapeutic purposes provided Toro with important insights into states

of expanded consciousness, creativity, identity and regression. These insights now partially form the basis of the methodology of Biodanza, but with the difference that Toro found a way to achieve transcendent and creative states through expanded consciousness using music, dance and experience, but without the use of drugs (Cazzulo & Castagnoli, 2022, pp. 104–107).

During the same period, Toro also conducted research on violence in the prison Penitenciaría de Santiago and was a member of the research institute Instituto de Investigación del Hospital Psiquiátrico de Santiago. In 1966 he was appointed professor of psychology of expression and psychology of art at the Instituto de Estética de la Universidad Católica de Chile (International Biodanza Federation, 2023a).

Through his work in the fields of psychology, psychiatry and medical anthropology, Toro became familiar with various forms of psychotherapeutic techniques such as music therapy, Gestalt, psychodrama and many others. He applied the different techniques in the Hospital Psiquiátrico de Santiago, but in his words, none of them managed to penetrate the soul of the patient; they only touched his behavior. Toro then began to offer patients dancing to different types of music, which elicited different responses from the patients. Thus, in the 1960s, based on the records of his observations, he found that euphoric music stimulated the neurovegetative sympathetic adrenergic system, while soothing music stimulated the parasympathetic cholinergic system. In this way, Toro established the basic axis of what later evolved into the theoretical model that underpins the entire Biodanza system (Toro Araneda et al., 2014, pp. 26–27).

Further observation and participation in bold experiments during repeated visits to therapy centers in the United States led Toro to elaborate on the theme of dissociation and to place transcendence at the center of the two opposites of the neurovegetative system. Then, at a congress on psychodrama held in Buenos Aires, he introduced caressing as a method leading to personality change and as a therapeutic current for patients suffering primarily from psychosomatic disorders. His lecture caused a scandal and was met with considerable opprobrium. Toro presented this method at a time when – as he says – the importance of affection in laboratory rats was demonstrated, but only later did the results of René Spitz's research on children become known, followed by experiments with depressed and elderly people. When caressing was shown to be good for rats, children, the elderly and depressed people, Toro extended the benefits of tenderness to other, ordinary individuals (Toro Araneda et al., 2014, pp. 28–30).

The transition from psychiatric patients to the general population occurred gradually. Patients were first joined by staff and then Toro began to offer his experiments to groups of family members and friends. In those years, however, he did not use the name Biodanza for his activities, but *Psicodanza*. Thus, alongside *Psicodanza* applied in clinical and university settings, the *Juegos de Psicodanza*, a form of theatrical *Psicodanza*, began to develop, from which the so-called sequential dances survived in Biodanza (Cazzulo & Castagnoli, 2022, pp. 111–125).

The theatrical plays *Juegos de Psicodanza* were first created directly in Toro's home, which was thus transformed into a kind of laboratory. Musically, Toro aimed to eradicate musical rigidity, so that the participant would become more sensitive to the music of any era or genre, so that, for example, a lover of soul could feel moved even when listening to a Brazilian batucada, or a lover of low culture could appreciate a Beethoven quartet or a Bach sonata. In its final stage, the *Juegos de Psicodanza* took the form of a theatrical performance consisting of eight acts. Beginning in January 1973, these plays were staged in the major theatres of the Chilean capital and continued until the coup d'état in September of that year. These plays, as evidenced by the contemporary press, were accepted with great success by a part of society as a transgressive therapeutic art but were, at the same time, criticized and condemned by another part (Toro, 2012, pp. 58–83).

After Pinochet's coup, Toro was questioned by the police. Chilean police had records of Toro's actions for more than twenty years, whether anti-war or anti-militant, including newspaper cuttings. Fortunately, Toro was met with relatively humane treatment during his interrogation but was nevertheless advised to leave the country (Toro Araneda et al., 2014, p. 62).

In 1974, Toro moved with his family from his native Chile under its dictatorial regime to Argentina. There he offered the system to mastectomy patients as part of the Liga Argentina de Lucha Contra el Cáncer. His activity was eventually crowned by his appointment as professor emeritus at the Universidad Abierta Interamericana in Buenos Aires (International Biodanza Federation, 2023a).

During his years in Argentina, Toro also traveled and presented the developing system in Brazil. At that time, he already perceived that the name *Psicodanza*, which referred to the soul, was not ideal for a system involving the whole organism. Based on a careful semantic analysis on a trip back from Brazil to Argentina in 1977, he chose a new name for this emerging discipline, which replaced the original inadequate term during the following year. Biodanza, with its Greek prefix *bio-*, thus refers to life, while the French term *danza* refers to 'integrated movement filled with meaning'. This gave rise to the metaphor of Biodanza, the dance of life, which, according to Toro, was fully in line with Roger Garaudy's concept of 'dancing life' (Toro Araneda, 1991, pp. 4–5).

## 1.2 Spread of Biodanza

In 1979, Toro moved to São Paulo, Brazil. There he founded the private institute Instituto Privado de Biodanza and worked at the Hospital Juqueri (International Biodanza Federation, 2023a). In addition to working with psychiatric patients and working for ten years in a private institute where he trained new Biodanza facilitators, Toro worked again with post-mastectomy patients during this period, further refining his system (Cazzulo & Castagnoli, 2022, pp. 127–128). In 1980, the Biodanza system was also used in a unique therapy for patients with Hansen's disease (leprosy), which the medical team of the Lauro de Souza Lima hospital in Bauru determined to be significantly beneficial at the level of psychological and

psychomotor rehabilitation, which increased the patients' self-confidence and communication skills (Toro Araneda & Toro Acuña, 2020, pp. 18–19).

However, even in Brazil, Toro had to face military dictatorship and the denigration of Biodanza, both by moralists and especially by the government council for the supervision of psychological practice Conselho Federal de Psicologia. As Biodanza was practiced by a number of psychologists, who, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, were in danger of losing their degrees, many abandoned the system and Toro was again interrogated by the police. In spite of this, three of Toro's lectures were held, which again convinced many people of the effectiveness of Biodanza, and in April 1980 an initial strategy for the dissemination of Biodanza in Brazil was outlined (Nousiainen, 2007).

Toro recruited capable collaborators in Brazil, such as Cezar Wagner de Lima Góis, Maria Lúcia Pessoa and Ruth Cavalcante, who headed the first Biodanza association Associação Latino-Americana de Biodanza – ALAB, founded in 1981. With their organized support, Toro was able to further develop the theory of Biodanza, which he linked to the Biocentric principle he had already formulated. He then translated his experience into the structure of the theoretical model, whose original form dates back to 1982 (Góis, 2009, p. 7).

On October 19, 1982, Rolando Toro and Cezar Wagner de Lima Góis founded the first Biodanza school, named the Escola Nordestina de Biodança – ENEB, located in Fortaleza. Fortaleza was chosen because it was equidistant from all major cities in the Northeast of Brazil and also because it was the center of Biodanza activities in the Northeast (Nousiainen, 2007).

Since 1983, Toro has been studying the experience of fear and the courage to face it through specific self-expression exercises. He called this work the Minotaur Project, a reference to a Greek myth. Thus, using mythical and archetypal language, Toro created challenges to the inner Minotaur, a way to face the greatest fear, the fear of one's own identity, of oneself (Góis, 2009, pp. 7–8).

In 1984, Toro's daughter Verónica Toro and her husband Raúl Terrén went to Europe to introduce Biodanza for the first time. They stayed in Fribourg, Switzerland, and in 1986 they were invited to a congress in Evian, France, where several Italian participants became enthusiastic about Biodanza, which led to its first presentation in Lido di Venezia, Italy, in 1987. The couple and their children moved to Venice in 1988 and in May of that year Rolando Toro made his first European visit. He arrived in Italy with his wife, daughter Viviana and several close associates, who subsequently became directors of the first European schools. During Toro's first visit, in addition to Italy, Biodanza was also danced in France and Switzerland. Over the next two years, Toro and his collaborators returned to Europe on and off until he finally moved to Italy in late 1989 and early 1990 (Cazzulo & Castagnoli, 2022, p. 129).

In 1990, the first European school of Biodanza was founded in Switzerland under the leadership of the Swiss philosopher and therapist Alain Antille (Toro, 2020, p. 19). A year later, the second European and first Italian school of Biodanza was opened in Italy under the leadership of Eliane Matuk (Sculatoro Unipib, 2022). Interest in Biodanza in Italy grew

rapidly, with another school opening in Padua in 1994 and the creation of the first European association of Biodanza Associazione Europea degli Insegnanti di Biodanza – AEIB a year later (Biodanza® Bologna Blog, 1997). In Italy, Toro worked, among other things, with patients suffering from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease and oversaw the creation of schools in Switzerland, Italy, France, Germany and England (International Biodanza Federation, 2023a).

In 1998, Toro returned to Chile, which he had always considered 'his country' (Toro Araneda et al., 2014, p. 95). From there, he directed the Biodanza movement, whose schools continued to be established in Latin America and Europe, and eventually in the United States, Canada, Russia, Israel, South Africa, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. In 2001, Toro was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in Biodanza and Biocentric education (International Biodanza Federation, 2023a).

After 2000, a large organization with tens of schools on several continents led Toro to register the brand Biodanza Sistema Rolando Toro, for which the creator himself drew the logo in the form of a heron. In an effort to maintain uniformity in the training of Biodanza facilitators and, above all, to ensure the awarding of an internationally valid certificate under one brand, Toro decided to create one organization, in addition to the two existing associations – the South American ALAB and the European AEIB – that would cover all existing and emerging national associations of facilitators anywhere in the world. Thus, in 2003, the International Biocentric Foundation (IBF) was created (International Biodanza Federation, 2020).

In 2006, Toro was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Universidade Federal da Paraíba, Brazil, and in 2008 he was appointed professor emeritus at the Universidad Metropolitana del Perú. Rolando Toro died on 16 February 2010 at the age of 85 in Santiago de Chile (International Biodanza Federation, 2023a).

The IBF foundation successfully managed a 'world biocentric project' of 180 schools on five continents with almost 230 directors after Toro's death, but it was not officially registered as a foundation but as a company. In 2017, the decision was made to dissolve the IBF due to the incompleteness of the process of inheriting the property and trademark of Rolando Mário Toro Araneda to his potential heirs. There followed a period when the former management and a number of Toro's associates tried to communicate with other directors and associations, which resulted in the creation of two new entities. One is the Organización Internacional de Biodanza SRT, also known as Biodanza Rolando Toro (BRT) (Biodanza Rolando Toro, 2017d) and the other is the world federation of national associations of Biodanza schools, known as International Biodanza Federation (IBFed) (International Biodanza Federation, 2023f). Both bodies claim Toro's legacy, ensuring the opening of new schools, the approval of possible new extensions and applications of Biodanza, the awarding of international certificates to new facilitators and the dissemination of Biodanza through congresses and other activities.

At the time of this writing, Biodanza is a global phenomenon. In the table below, the countries where new facilitators are being trained in Biodanza schools are listed. The number of schools is not given as it is constantly changing, however, at the beginning of 2023 there are almost 200 schools in more than 40 countries. The largest number of schools are

in the Latin American countries where Toro lived, Chile, Argentina and Brazil, and in Europe in Spain and Italy. In addition to the individual schools, there are also a number of national associations. Biodanza is also danced by people in many other countries where schools have not yet opened, such as Ukraine, Thailand and India (Escuela de Biodanza Sistema Rolando Toro VIDA en Granada, 2022).

**Table 1.** List of countries where Biodanza schools exist at the beginning of 2023 (data obtained by comparing the list of BRT and IBFed schools)

<b>Continent/Area</b>	<b>Country</b>
South America	Chile
	Argentina
	Brazil
	Colombia
	Venezuela
	Uruguay
	Ecuador
	Paraguay
Central America	Peru
	Costa Rica
	Nicaragua
	El Salvador
Caribbean	Dominican Republic
	Cuba
	Martinique
North America	Mexico
	USA
	Canada
Africa	South Africa
Oceania	Australia
	New Zealand
East Asia	Japan
Western Asia	Israel
Northern Europe	Norway
	Sweden
	Latvia
North-Western Europe	United Kingdom
	Ireland
	Belgium
	Netherlands
South-Western Europe	Portugal
	Spain
Western Europe	France
	Luxembourg
Southern Europe	Italy
South-East Europe	Greece

Central Europe	Germany
	Switzerland
	Austria
	Slovenia
	Poland
	Czech Republic

### 1.3 Rolando Toro's works and language

"Rolando Toro expressed himself in Spanish, and he did so with passion, vigour and enthusiasm, sometimes even with fervor."

(Toro Araneda et al., 2014, p. 147)

According to the written legacy and a number of videos available on the internet, Toro communicated strictly in Spanish, despite the fact that he lived for many years in Brazil and Italy and traveled to many other countries outside his native Chile. If he attended conferences, gave lectures, or gave classes in non-Spanish speaking areas, he was accompanied by an interpreter. The role of the interpreter was often filled by Toro's associates. These include Dorotea Pok, who has been active in spreading the Biodanza system in North America, giving classes in Spanish, English, French, and Portuguese in Biodanza schools around the world, especially in Montréal, Canada. In addition, Hélène Jeanne Lévy Benseft, who is fluent in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Hebrew, is co-director of the Biodanza Méditerranée school in France. In Italy, it was Eliane Matuk, director of the Biodanza school in Milan.

As far as Rolando Toro's written works are concerned, there is much evidence of Toro's work as a teacher, experimenter, and later promoter of Biodanza in the form of articles, manifestos, and interviews published in the contemporary press. Some of these documents have been collected and published by Toro's children, such as Rodrigo Toro Sánchez, who is the director of the Biodanza school in Madrid and current co-president of the Biodanza Rolando Toro organization, in the book *Rolando Toro: Orígenes de Biodanza* (Rolando Toro: The origins of Biodanza). The book was published in Spanish and some of the published material was taken over by Riccardo Cazzulo, director of the Biodanza school in Liguria, Italy, who published the book accompanied by a series of explanatory cards in Italian entitled *Satoyama: La Biodanza in carte* (Satoyama: Biodanza in cards).

Toro wrote notes by hand or on a typewriter for most of his life. Editors of his written works sometimes illustrate the author's original ideas by printing handwritten diagrams and texts. This is the case, for example, of the book in *Neurobiología y Biodanza* (Neurobiology and Biodanza), co-authored by Cecilia Toro Acuña, a biologist who worked at the Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de Chile and is co-director of the Biodanza school in the Cordillera de Los Andes in Chile.



Among the surviving texts can be found a published article on the results of a six-year experiment on the effects of LSD, which was administered to more than two hundred artists under Toro's supervision during his time at the Universidad de Chile. To this article, Toro later added handwritten notes and a number of deletions that made the text about the drug a text about Biodanza. Instead of the original statement

"Esto hace pensar que el descubrimiento de los efectos de las drogas expansoras de la consciencia, y el logro de la síntesis química del LSD 25, la psilocibina, la mescalina, etc. representan para la humanidad la más grande esperanza." (This suggests that the discovery of the consciousness-expanding effects of drugs and the achievement of the chemical synthesis of LSD 25, psilocybin, mescaline, etc., represent the best hope for humanity.)

can be read:

"Esto hace pensar que el empleo de Biodanza como acceso a la Experiencia de Totalidad representa para la humanidad la más grande esperanza." (This suggests that the use of Biodanza as an approach to the experience of wholeness represents the best hope for humanity.)  
(Toro, 2012, p. 49)

Although Toro had been developing the Biodanza system since the 1960s, and as a scientist, he kept detailed records of his experiments, it took quite a long time before any of his extensive writings were made available to the general public. In 1982, Cezar Wagner de Lima Góis, also a psychologist by training, collected notes on Biodanza, which by then were scattered around Brazil and Argentina. He organized these notes into 15 notebooks and published them in Portuguese, with the permission of Rolando Toro, under the title *Coletânea de Textos de Biodança* (Collection of Biodanza texts), as part of his work at the Escola Nordestina de Biodança in Fortaleza, Brazil. After six months of study and systematization, the collection contained both the theory of Biodanza and a list of exercises and music. In 1991, Góis then selected the most relevant of these texts, resulting in the two-volume collection *Teoria da Biodança: Coletânea de textos* (Theory of Biodanza: A collection of texts), published again in Portuguese in Fortaleza in collaboration with the ALAB association (Toro Araneda, 1991, p. IV).

This collection can be seen as a summary of the basic texts on which Biodanza still relies today. Portions of it can be found in subsequent theoretical works devoted to Biodanza, as well as in manuals that contain both theory and practical guidelines for students of Biodanza schools around the world, including the *Official List of Exercises, Music and Instructions* given to graduates of these schools. The collection, even in its simplified 1991 version, is a grouping of texts of various natures, which corresponds to the alternation of the author's speeches. We find here parts written in ich-form:

"While studying cultural anthropology, I was intrigued by the frequent use of music and dance by primitive populations in rituals celebrating life and for healing purposes."  
(Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 4)

In addition to the first person of singular, Toro occasionally uses the plural of modesty:

“Biodanza is based on physiological knowledge of self-regulatory functions and only enhances these functions, facilitating and enabling their progress, which is already programmed by millions of years of evolution. Therefore, Biodanza does not include the breathing exercises of Prana Yoga, macrobiotic methods or other external diets, nor oriental relaxation techniques or Schultz, Jacobson, or Benson-type techniques. Any interference of the will with the automatisms appears to us as a violation of primordial harmony and an act of prepotency motivated by the pathologies of the ego: the quest for power, imperialistic domination, and the segregationist domination of the mind over the body.”

(Toro Araneda, 1991, pp. 8–9)

Although most of the text is in an impersonal vein, there are also recordings of lectures given in the second person plural with respect to the audience:

“The sitting position is not suitable. The appropriate position is movement. You, many of you, have heard talk of *Psicodanza*, which is part of a larger discipline called Biodanza, which follows the general rules of life. Biodanza is based on the study of the most primitive origins of dance.”

(Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 50)

The collection also contains a number of tables, diagrams, various case studies, transcripts of questionnaires, and even explanations in the form of questions and answers:

“Question 3: Does Biodanza use magic rituals?

RT: Biodanza has no magical connotations. It is based on conventional science, on biology, neurology, advanced psychology, anthropology, sociology, ecology and political science. But there is no magic in it, because things that we cannot explain in accordance with science are not taken into account.”

(Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 53)

Toro’s language here oscillates between genres. At times it is purely technical:

“The American School of Neurophysiology has been intensively involved in the study of the neurodynamic basis of emotion. Within emotional behavior, the intervention of the limbic system and especially the hypothalamus is very important. According to Mac Lean, the frontotemporal part of the limbic cortex is responsible for oral and self-preservation activities, to the extent that in the most posterior regions (cingulate gyrus and hippocampus) it is limited to sexual behavior and its affective components. This whole limbic region thus represents the neurodynamic background of instincts, emotions and vital tone, which is inhibited, controlled and modulated from the cerebral cortex.”

(Toro Araneda, 1991, pp. 80–81)

At times Toro uses poetic language or direct quotations of poems, since:

“The world of emotions is the least known in psychotherapy and the best explored in literature and poetry. Those who work with emotions in psychotherapy should be most familiar with Dostoevsky, Kafka or Virginia Woolf.”

(Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 136)

Toro himself was a poet and a great connoisseur of poetry. He published a number of collections, and his poems are often quoted in theoretical works, in the monographs of the students of the Biodanza schools, and in Biodanza journals published in various countries around the world. For Toro, anything could have a poetic connotation. Everything that happened was a poem for him. As he said himself, poetry for him was not limited to finding precise expressions to express things, but was instead a way of living, a therapy. For example, he might wake up at three o'clock in the morning and was unable to fall back asleep. So, he would get up, write two or three poems, and then fall asleep like a baby. At the same time, he never worried about their publication, because there was always a friend who was enthusiastic about the poems and took care of their publication. So, most of Toro's poetry collections were published in countries outside Chile. Toro literally enjoyed the fact that, while no one in Chile knew him as a poet, the Mexican City Hall even organized an event in his honor as a writer, while back in 2003 no one in Mexico knew him as the creator of Biodanza (Toro Araneda et al., 2014, p. 106).

As far as the publication of Toro's Biodanza-related work is concerned, the situation is similar. For a text to take on the form of a book at all, an editor and often a translator were needed to take care of the publication. This is also why a large number of publications related to Biodanza were published only in the author's later years or even after his death. The Biodanza theory, which was published in Brazil thanks to Góis's efforts, was published in Italian in 2012 thanks to the translation by the co-director of the Roman school, Virgilio Piras, when, unlike the Portuguese original, the two volumes were published as separate books (Toro Araneda, 2014c, 2014d). Paradoxically, this sum of theory has never been published in Toro's native Spanish.

The work, which is now considered the imaginary bible of Biodanza, is thus somewhat more modest in scope, but more comprehensive in content, published under the title *Biodanza* with various subtitles and in many editions, into which the author's later ideas were gradually incorporated. The editor of the first ever edition was Eliane Matuk, who states in the preface that when she met Rolando Toro, he was 'finishing his writing of the book'. However, another eighteen years passed before its actual publication, as Toro felt the need to continuously verify the results of the application of the system and wanted to wait until its effectiveness was proven (Toro, 2016, p. 9).

The book was published for the first time in 2000 in Italian under the subtitle *Musica, movimento, comunicazione espressiva per lo sviluppo armonico della personalità* (Music, movement, expressive communication for harmonious personality development). Two years later, its Portuguese version was published with a different subtitle, *Integração existencial e desenvolvimento humano por meio da música* (Existential integration and human development through music). The French version was published under the subtitle *Intégration existentielle*

*et développement humain par la musique, le mouvement, l'expression des émotions et des potentiels génétiques* (Existential integration and human development through music, movement, expression of emotions and genetic potential) in 2006, one year after the second Portuguese edition, which had already been published under the simple title *Biodanza*. It was only in 2007, the same year that the second Italian edition was published under this simple title, that the first translation into Toro's native Spanish saw the light of day. In two consecutive years, two more Spanish editions and one Dutch edition were published, which essentially retained the original subtitle *Muziek, beweging en expressieve communicatie voor een harmonische ontwikkeling van de persoonlijkheid* (Music, movement and expressive communication for harmonious personality development). In the year of Toro's death, the book was also published in German translation, but under the title *Das System Biodanza*. Subsequently, other Italian editions were published, which reverted to the original subtitle, as well as another German edition.

As far as Toro's other publications are concerned, again thanks to the editorial work of Góis, Toro's book on the Biocentric principle was published in the 1980s, but again only in Portuguese. Only in 2014 did readers see the Spanish original on the subject, edited by Cecilia Toro Acuña, *El principio biocéntrico: Nuevo paradigma para las ciencias humanas – la vida como matriz cultural* (The Biocentric principle: A new paradigm for the humanities – life as a cultural matrix). The concept of the Biocentric principle was already developed by Toro in the 1970s. Indeed, Toro's vision of the cosmos is not anthropocentric, but precisely biocentric; at the center of the universe is not man, but life. Biodanza, which is a methodology for applying the Biocentric principle, is based on a theoretical model. This model has been refined by Toro throughout his life, and Toro Acuña has published in a book a form sketched by Toro by hand (Toro Araneda, 2014b, p. 59). Toro also built on the Biocentric principle by reflecting on Biocentric education, which he also put into practice in several schools during his lifetime.

Although Toro's text on working with inner fears was also published in the 1980s, the book was published again in Portuguese, under the title *Projeto Minotauro: Abordagem Terapêutica do Sistema Biodança* (The Minotaur project: The therapeutic approach of the Biodanza system). Here, Toro demonstrated the great role that the active approach of the individual plays in personal development, as he or she must be the protagonist of his or her own existence, not just a passive therapeutic tool (Toro Araneda, 2018, p. 17). This publication had to wait until 2011 to be translated into Italian, and its Spanish version was published only eight years after Toro's death. Today, the Minotaur Project is one of the extensions of the basic Biodanza system. Other publications dedicated to extending Biodanza into new areas and applying Biodanza to specific groups also include *Presentimiento del Ángel* (Angel's presentiment) (Toro Araneda, 2013), *Biodanza y los 4 elementos* (Biodanza and the 4 elements) (Toro Araneda, 2014a) and *Biodanza: La danza de la vida para niños* (Biodanza: The dance of life for children) (Toro Araneda & Toro Acuña, 2009). The books were published in Spanish.

Another important concept that Toro has brought to the world is Affective intelligence. Readers only learned about it two years after Toro's death in a book entitled *La inteligencia afectiva: La unidad de la mente con el universo* (Affective intelligence: The unity of the mind

with the universe), which has already been published in four Spanish editions and also in an Italian translation. Affective intelligence permeates thematically all of Toro's previously mentioned areas of interest, from biocentrism to art. Within the development of the concept of intelligence, it is not, as it might seem, another kind of intelligence. Rather, according to Toro, the different types of intelligence – motor, spatial, social, etc. – have a common basis in affectivity. The concepts presented in the book form a very complex view of the human species, and Toro's ideas here take on the interdisciplinary character that is so typical of this author. The language of the book also exhibits the aforementioned genre diversity. As Cecilia Toro Acuña states in the preface, the day before his death, her father reread the index to her and declared:

“This is my best book...”

(Toro Araneda, 2021, p. 14)

In the table below, the most detailed overview of Toro's publications with their respective editions and translations is given. It is clear from the reported data that most of Toro's written legacy exists in Spanish and Portuguese or Italian. The titles of individual works in this chapter and throughout the book are given in brackets in the translation for greater clarity, although they have not been translated into English. Only an unofficial translation of the basic *Biodanza* book into English is available on the internet.

**Table 2.** Rolando Toro's literary works and their translations

(data obtained by comparing the information given on publishers' websites, book covers and book jackets, and by comparing bibliographies of all works cited in this book)

1952	<b>La noche</b> (poetry), Editorial Carmelo Soria, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – <b>Spanish original</b>
1982	<b>Coletânea de Textos de Biodança</b> , Cezar Wagner de Lima Góis (editor), Escola Nordestina de Biodança, Fortaleza (Brazil) – <b>Portuguese original</b>
1991	<b>Teoria da Biodança</b> : Coletânea de textos, Cezar Wagner de Lima Góis (editor), Editora ALAB, Fortaleza (Brazil) – <b>2nd Portuguese edition</b>
2012	<b>Teoria della Biodanza</b> : Raccolta dei testi a cura della A.L.A.B., Volume I + Volume II, Nuova Prhomos, Perugia (Italy) – <b>Italian translation</b>
2014	<b>Teoria della Biodanza</b> : Raccolta dei testi a cura della A.L.A.B., Volume I + Volume II, Nuova Prhomos, Perugia (Italy) – <b>2nd Italian edition</b>
1986	<b>Princípio Biocêntrico</b> : Cadernos de Vivência, Cezar Wagner de Lima Góis (editor), Editora Bio's, Recife (Brazil) – <b>Portuguese original</b>
1988	<b>Projeto Minotauro</b> : Abordagem Terapêutica do Sistema Biodança, Edição Vozes, Petrópolis (Brazil) – <b>Portuguese original</b>
2011	<b>Progetto Minotauro</b> , Pietro Pintore Editore, Torino (Italy) – <b>Italian translation</b>
2018	<b>Proyecto Minotauro</b> : Abordaje terapéutico del sistema Biodanza, Raúl Terrén, Valentino Terrén Toro (editors), Diseño, Buenos Aires (Argentina) – <b>Spanish translation</b>
1992	<b>Éxtasis del renacido</b> (poetry), Editorial Galac, Caracas (Venezuela) – <b>Spanish original</b>

1995	<b>Lo imposible puede suceder</b> (poetry), Oasis Editorial, Oaxaca (Mexico) – <b>Spanish original</b>
1995	<b>Tra los pasos de Afrodita</b> (poetry), Oasis Editorial, Oaxaca (Mexico) – <b>Spanish original</b>
1997	<b>Auf den Spuren von Aphrodite</b> , Lonopono, Wien (Austria) – <b>German translation</b>
1997	<b>L'alfabeto della vita: Poetica della Biodanza</b> (poetry), Giovanna Benatti, Nicola Franceschiello (coauthors), Scuola di Biodanza Rolando Toro di Padova, Padova (Italy) – <b>Italian original</b>
2000	<b>Biodanza: Musica, movimento, comunicazione espressiva per lo sviluppo armonico della personalità</b> , Eliane Matuk (editor), Red Edizioni, Milano (Italy) – <b>Italian original</b>
2002	<b>Biodanza: integração existencial e desenvolvimento humano por meio da música, do movimento e da expressão dos potenciais genéticos</b> , Olavobrás, São Paulo (Brazil) – <b>Portuguese translation</b>
2005	<b>2005 Biodanza</b> , Olavobrás, São Paulo (Brazil) – <b>2nd Portuguese edition</b>
2006	<b>Biodanza: Intégration existentielle et développement humain par la musique, le mouvement, l'expression des émotions et des potentiels génétiques</b> , Éditions Le Vivier (Belgium) – <b>French translation</b>
2007	<b>Biodanza</b> , Red Edizioni, Milano (Italy) – <b>2nd Italian edition</b>
2007	<b>Biodanza</b> , Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – <b>Spanish translation</b>
2008	<b>Biodanza</b> , Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – <b>2nd Spanish edition</b>
2009	<b>Biodanza</b> , Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – <b>3rd Spanish edition</b>
2009	<b>Biodanza: Muziek, beweging en expressieve communicatie voor een harmonische ontwikkeling van de persoonlijkheid</b> , Uitgeverij De Zaak, Groningen (Holland) – <b>Dutch translation</b>
2010	<b>Das System Biodanza</b> , Tinto Verlag, Hannover (Germany) – <b>German translation</b>
2013	<b>Biodanza</b> , Red Edizioni, Milano (Italy) – <b>3rd Italian edition</b>
2016	<b>Biodanza: Musica, movimento, comunicazione espressiva per lo sviluppo armonico della personalità</b> , Eliane Matuk (editor), Red Edizioni, Milano (Italy) – <b>1st Italian edition, updated version</b>
2016	<b>Biodanza</b> , Tinto Verlag, Hannover (Germany) – <b>2nd German edition</b>
2017	<b>Biodanza: Integrazione esistenziale e sviluppo umano attraverso la musica, il movimento, l'espressione delle emozioni</b> , Red Edizioni, Milano (Italy) – <b>2nd Italian edition, updated version</b>
2020	<b>Biodanza</b> , Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – <b>4th Spanish edition</b>
2005	<b>Balada del ángel caído</b> (poetry), Independently published, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – <b>Spanish original</b>
2005	<b>L'homme qui parle avec les roses: Entretiens avec Hélène Lévy-Benseft, Bruno Ribant et Bruno Giuliani</b> , Hélène Jeanne Lévy Benseft, Bruno Ribant, Bruno Giuliani (coauthors), Independently published, Tourrette-sur-Loup (France) – <b>French original</b>
2006	<b>L'uomo che parla con le rose: Conversazioni di Rolando Toro Araneda con Hélène Lévy-Benseft, Bruno Ribant e Bruno Giuliani</b> , Hélène Jeanne Lévy Benseft, Bruno Ribant, Bruno Giuliani (coauthors), Imprimix, Nice (France) – <b>Italian translation</b>

- 2014 **El hombre que habla con las rosas:** Entrevistas con Hélène Lévy Benseft, Bruno Ribant y Bruno Giuliani, Hélène Jeanne Lévy Benseft, Bruno Ribant, Bruno Giuliani (coauthors), Liberis – **Spanish translation**
- 2014 **Der Mann, der mit Rosen spricht...**, Hélène Jeanne Lévy Benseft, Bruno Ribant, Bruno Giuliani (coauthors), Tinto Verlag, Hannover (Germany) – **German translation**
- 
- 2007 **Epifanía de la diosa** (poetry), Independently published, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **Spanish original**
- 
- 2008 **Biodanza: La danza de la vida para niños**, Cecilia Toro Acuña (coauthor), La flor de Oro, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **Spanish original**
- 2009 **Biodanza: La danza de la vida para niños**, Cecilia Toro Acuña (coauthor), La flor de Oro, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **2nd Spanish edition**
- 
- 2009 **La nota única** (poetry), Independently published, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **Spanish original**
- 
- 2012 **La inteligencia afectiva:** La unidad de la mente con el universo, Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **Spanish original**
- 2014 **La inteligencia afectiva:** La unidad de la mente con el universo, Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **2nd Spanish edition**
- 2017 **L' intelligenza affettiva:** L'unità della mente con l'universo, Nuova Phomos, Perugia (Italy) – **Italian translation**
- 2019 **La inteligencia afectiva:** La unidad de la mente con el universo, Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **3rd Spanish edition**
- 2021 **La inteligencia afectiva:** La unidad de la mente con el universo, Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **4th Spanish edition**
- 
- 2013 **Presentimiento del Ángel**, Verónica Toro Acuña (editor), Diseño, Buenos Aires (Argentina) – **Spanish original**
- 
- 2013 **Biodanza y los 4 elementos**, Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **Spanish original**
- 2014 **Biodanza y los 4 elementos**, Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **2nd Spanish edition**
- 
- 2014 **El principio biocéntrico:** Nuevo paradigma para las ciencias humanas – la vida como matriz cultural, Cecilia Toro Acuña (editor), Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **Spanish original**
- 
- 2015 **Neurobiología y Biodanza:** Ayudar a crecer, Cecilia Toro Acuña (coauthor), Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **Spanish original**
- 2019 **Neurobiología y Biodanza**, Cecilia Toro Acuña (coauthor), Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **2nd Spanish edition**
- 
- 2015 **Antología poética** (poetry), Câmara Brasileira de Jovens Escritores, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) – **Spanish original**
- 2018 **Antología poética**, Câmara Brasileira de Jovens Escritores, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) – **2nd Spanish edition**
- 
- 2021 **Educación biocéntrica**, Cecilia Toro Acuña (coauthor), Cuarto Propio, Santiago de Chile (Chile) – **Spanish original**
-

## 1.4 Definitions and objectives of Biodanza

Former director of Biodanza schools in Madrid and the Canary Islands, Margarita Karger, in her book *Biodanza Projections: A dynamic of feeling*, titled the chapter on defining Biodanza *The Thousand and One Definitions of Biodanza*, knowing that defining Biodanza is as difficult as defining love, art or life. She then offers readers a variety of possible statements by which to define Biodanza, such as:

“A discipline that aims to achieve internal control of our evolutionary process making no reference to external guidance.

A method to learn how to move, express yourself, connect and feel.

A technique that teaches how to dance your own life within the broad cosmic dance.”

(Karger, 2017, pp. 3–4)

Toro himself referred to and defined Biodanza in various ways. Apart from the already mentioned connection between science, art and love, in his books, one can find labels such as:

“Biodanza is the dance of life.

Biodanza is the poetry of human encounter, the semantics of transmutation.

It is a system of intervention in the epigenetic process through an enriched environment of love (affective contact) and existential self-regulation.”

(Toro Araneda, 2014b, p. 178)

Or:

“Biodanza is a multi-faceted field of affective re-education, rehabilitation and psychotherapy based on the experiences evoked by music. In its broadest sense, it is a ‘biology of existence’. Its aim is to learn to dance life and to have access to the joy of living.”

(Toro Araneda, 2021, p. 82)

Toro’s own words also show what was behind the creation of Biodanza. He had loved dancing since childhood, but it was during the Second World War that he felt a persistent need to intervene in what he saw as a catastrophic social development. The Second World War, along with the Holocaust, the atomic bomb and the bombing of Dresden, all seemed so stunning and terrifying to Toro that he thought something needed to be done. However, at first, he did not have the right tools, so he began to study and educate himself in all sorts of psychotherapy (Toro Araneda et al., 2014, p. 25).

However, completely opposite perceptions and experiences contributed to the creation of Biodanza. Just as, on the one hand, Toro perceived a conspicuous crisis of Western culture, on the other hand he himself had experiences of love and ecstasy. These experiences were also manifested in his life through fatherhood or in his contact with the first organizations that dealt with ecology. Faced with the abysmal contradictions of humanity, he felt the desire to find a way to paradise, to a shared paradise, and it was unacceptable for him to contemplate a solitary evolution (Toro, 2020, p. 21).



Biodanza is therefore not a path of individual evolution, but of the evolution of the human species. Biodanza is therefore an open transgression of contemporary cultural values, the dictates of alienating consumer society and totalitarian ideologies. It aims to restore in the human being the original bond with his species as a biological whole, and with the universe as a cosmic whole (Toro, 2016, p. 21).

And although Toro always emphasized that it was not he who had created Biodanza, but that it was Biodanza that found him, that emerged, he also admitted that it was a process of gradual discovery. And this discovery was based on observation, with the aim of creating a system that would stimulate the joy of life, improve the connection between spirit and body, and strengthen the bond between people. Toro carried out countless observations, including ones of couples in deep crisis. He has observed flashes of perception that have enabled them to reconcile. He made observations during every Biodanza lesson, and when he returned home at night, he wrote everything down. And so, today, Biodanza is a system that has effects on fundamental aspects that are inherent in any clinical setting and any type of behavior: Biodanza for children, Biodanza for adolescents, Biodanza for drug-addicted adolescents, Biodanza for adults, Biodanza for single women or for men who find love with great difficulty, Biodanza for those advanced in age, Biodanza for those affected by Parkinson's disease, Biodanza for the mentally disabled, Biodanza for those with psychosomatic disorders... Today there are countless specializations created on the basis of observations (Toro Araneda et al., 2014, pp. 31-33).

What is typical for Biodanza and what makes this system very different from the others is the action on the healthy part of the individual. Biodanza does not work with symptoms. It develops the part that has remained healthy so far, such as impulses of freedom, hints of sincerity, creative potential, tenderness, grace of movement, remnants of self-esteem, equanimity, enthusiasm, etc. In this system, human misery is not analyzed, but rather the greatness of the human being is highlighted (Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 10).

Toro incorporated everything he found useful into the Biodanza system or adapted it to achieve the desired effects. From the Chinese martial art of Tai Chi Chuan, for example, he adopted the movements of flow, from Gestalt therapy the concept of 'here and now'. From Freud he took the importance of early childhood for future development, the teachings on the role of sexuality in neuroses, the feelings of discomfort associated with culture, and the struggle between Eros and Thanatos. He also adopted and applied Jung's theory of archetypes, although he disagreed with the theory of the search for the Self, which he saw as a path of autonomy leading to the transformation of man into a member of a class of autocratic kings rather than a brother. From the system created by Gerda Alexander, eutony entered Biodanza and from Wilhelm Reich the importance of sexual liberation allowing the experience of sexuality without fear (Toro Araneda et al., 2014, pp. 34-38).

However, Biodanza also has an official definition, which Toro also called academic. Its roots go back to the time when he presented his activities under the name *Psicodanza* with the following description in 1978:

**“PSICODANZA: A NEW SENSITIVITY TO LIFE**

*Psicodanza* is a system of integration and human development. It is based on the experiences induced by dance, music and group communication exercises, so that one can take into one's own hands the process of one's own development, so that the time will come when one will not have to turn to a guru, a counsellor or a psychiatrist because one will be very clear about one's place in the world. This attitude is not well accepted by all, because some say: if the dependence between therapist and patient is lost, we will starve. Yes, this statement is a bit facetious, but there is much truth in the idea. People who practice *Psicodanza* rarely then turn to a therapist.”

(Toro, 2012, p. 85)

The definition, which can be read in the original collection of texts arranged by Góis, reads:

“Biodanza é um sistema de integração afetiva, renovação orgânica e reaprendizagem das funções originárias de vida.” (Biodanza is a system of affective integration, organic renewal, and relearning of original life functions.)

(Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 2)

In the basic texts of Biodanza Toro, along with the above definition, he always gave a shorter or more extensive explanation of the three basic concepts contained in the definition, which are affective integration, organic renewal and original life functions.

By the term affective integration, Toro imagined the restoration of the lost unity between perception, motor, affective and visceral functions. Affectivity, which affects the limbic-hypothalamic regulatory centers, was the cohesive core of his approach.

In more recent texts, the term human integration is used instead of affective integration, to which the term affective re-education is added:

“La Biodanza è un sistema di integrazione umana, di rinnovamento organico, di rieducazione affettiva e di riapprendimento delle funzioni originarie della vita.” (Biodanza is a system of human integration, organic renewal, affective re-education and relearning of original life functions.)

(Toro, 2016, p. 30)

By human integration, Toro conceived of a process that takes place in Biodanza by stimulating the primordial function of connection with life, which allows the individual to self-integrate, to integrate into the species and the universe. By the concept of organic renewal, Toro referred to the ability of the living organism to renew itself and to create new levels of equilibrium. Manifestations of this renewal can be observed, for example, in cases of rejuvenation of the elderly caused by lifestyle changes, in the regaining of functional balance after certain diseases, or in the case of certain spontaneous remissions in cancer patients. Biodanza supports this recovery by stimulating homeostasis, or internal balance, and reducing stress factors. Toro considered affective re-education necessary in view of the distortion of modern man's affectivity, which is manifested at all levels of society, for example, by

violence in families, in schools, in cities, in politics, not to mention in states of war. Biodanza thus aims to stimulate the formation of affective bonds with others. With the relearning of original life functions, Toro basically meant sensitizing people to basic biological instincts. Despite the cultural tendency to associate them with irrationality, he regarded instincts in particular as a kind of biological wisdom of our species endowed with a logic of its own. He did not regard the liberation of instincts as dangerous, but instead regarded acting in accordance with innate impulses as a naturally harmonious response to organic needs leading to the maintenance of health, as in the case of hunger or satiety (Toro, 2016, pp. 30–35).

The explanation of the above concepts and objectives by Toro was usually followed by a mention of the methodology by which these objectives are achieved in Biodanza:

“Its methodology is to induce integrative *vivencias* (activation of the affective core) through music, singing, dance and group encounters.”

(Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 2)

Toro later deepened the initial definition with additional statements, one of which was:

“Biodanza è un sistema di accelerazione di processi integrativi a livello cellulare, immunologico, neuroendocrino, metabolico, ormonale, corticale ed esistenziale mediante vivencia integranti, indotte in un ambiente arricchito dalla musica, dalla danza, dalla comunicazione affettiva e dalla presenza del gruppo.” (Biodanza is a system of accelerating integrative processes at the cellular, immunological, neuroendocrine, metabolic, hormonal, cortical and existential levels through integrative *vivencias* induced in an environment enriched by music, dance, affective communication and the presence of a group.)

(Toro, 2016, p. 36)

He also sometimes stated this statement in the version:

“Es un sistema de Aceleración de procesos integrativos a nivel molecular, celular, metabólico, neuroendocrino e inmunológico, mediante un Ambiente Enriquecido, formado por ecofactores específicos: Líneas de Vivencia, y por la interacción social.” (It is a system of accelerating integrative processes at the molecular, cellular, metabolic, neuroendocrine and immunological levels through an enriched environment consisting of specific ecofactors: lines of *vivencia* and social interaction.)

(Toro Araneda, 2014b, p. 178)

Toro added further enrichment to the definition by considering aspects that characterize the human being:

“La Biodanza è un sistema di attivazione degli universali umani, qui intesi in senso biologico e legati al patrimonio genetico del genere umano.” (Biodanza is a system of the activation of human universals, understood here in a biological sense and related to the genetic heritage of humanity.)

Among *universalis umani* (human universals), Toro included not only instincts, the body, the capacity to love or identity, but also *linguaggio* (language), which, according to Toro, develops to different levels, the highest of which is poetic language. Ordinary language can convey information and communicate thoughts and feelings, but poetry represents a semantic impulse towards the essence (Toro, 2016. pp. 36–37).

Organizations that are now spreading Toro's legacy to many countries around the world have different versions of the basic definition of Biodanza on their websites. The IBFed uses a definition that it lists on its website in five languages. In Toro's native Spanish, it reads:

“Biodanza es un sistema de integración humana, renovación orgánica, reeducación afectiva y reaprendizaje de las funciones originarias de vida. Su metodología consiste en inducir vivencias integradoras por medio de la música, del canto, del movimiento y de situaciones de encuentro en grupo.” (Biodanza is a system of human integration, organic renewal, affective re-education and relearning of original life functions. Its methodology consists of inducing integrative *vivencias* through music, singing, movement and group encounter situations.)

(International Biodanza Federation, 2023b)

In other Romance languages, i.e. Portuguese, Italian and French, the definition sounds similar. The English version refers to the ‘human integration system of organic renewal’ instead of the ‘sistema de integración humana’ (system of human integration) and ‘renovación orgánica’ (organic renewal), instead of ‘metodología’ (methodology), it mentions ‘application’ and describes ‘inducir vivencias’ (introducing *vivencias*) as ‘leading *vivencias*’, with particular emphasis on the term ‘*vivencias*’:

“Biodanza is a human integration system of organic renewal, of affective re-education, and of re-learning of the life original functions. Its application consists in leading *vivencias* through music, singing, movements and group encounter situations.”

(International Biodanza Federation, 2023c)

On its website, the organization BRT lists two forms of the definition in four languages. The 2002 academic definition differs in Toro's native Spanish from the IBFed's version by referring to an ‘ambiente enriquecido’ (enriched environment):

“Biodanza es un sistema de integración humana, renovación orgánica, reeducación afectiva y reaprendizaje de las funciones originarias de vida en ambiente enriquecido. Su metodología consiste en inducir vivencias integradoras por medio de la música, del canto, del movimiento y de situaciones de encuentro en grupo.” (Biodanza is a system of human integration, organic renewal, affective re-education and relearning of original life functions in enriched environment. Its methodology consists of inducing integrative *vivencias* through music, singing, movement and group encounter situations.)

(Biodanza Rolando Toro, 2017a)

The Italian and Portuguese versions are also similar in this case. The English version also refers to the ‘human integration system of organic renewal’ instead of ‘system of human

integration' and 'organic renewal', mentions 'application' instead of 'methodology' and describes 'inducing *vivencias*' as 'leading *vivencias*'. In addition, however, it describes the 'funciones originarias de vida' (original functions of life) as 'life primordial functions':

"Biodanza is a human integration system of organic renewal, of affective re-education, and of re-learning of the life primordial functions. Its application consists in leading *vivencias* through music, singing, integral body movements and group encounter situations."

In addition to this, the BRT organization provides the latest update of the 2009 definition, which represents a further mutation of the above definitions:

"Biodanza es un sistema de aceleración de procesos integrativos a nivel celular, metabólico, neuroendocrino, inmunológico y existencial, mediante ambiente enriquecido, con músicas específicas, movimiento integrado, caricias y encuentro en grupo, que deflagran *vivencias* integradoras." (Biodanza is a system of accelerating integrative processes at the cellular, metabolic, neuroendocrine, immunological and existential levels through an enriched environment, specific music, integrated movement, caresses and group encounters that ignite integrative *vivencias*.)

(Biodanza Rolando Toro, 2017a)

The Spanish and Portuguese versions correspond in this case, but the Italian and English versions give a different order of process levels. Moreover, instead of 'group encounters', the Italian version speaks of 'group presence' and the English version of 'group interactions'. The term 'neuro-endocrino' is not even translated in the English version:

"Biodanza is a system that accelerates integrative processes at the cellular, immune, metabolic, neuro-endocrino and existential level by providing enriched environment including selected music, integrative movement, caress and group interactions."

(Biodanza Rolando Toro, 2017c)

However, another version of the definition appears in the manuals given to students of Biodanza schools around the world. This includes 'affective integration', 'organic renovation', 'original life functions' and omits 'methodology' (in some versions even 'music'):

"Biodanza is a system of affective integration, organic renovation and relearning of the original life functions, based on *vivencias* induced by dance, singing and encounter situations in a group."

(Toro Araneda, n.d.e, p. 18)

## 1.5 Theory and terminology of Biodanza

The term '*vivencia*' appears frequently in Biodanza's definitions. Toro took this term from the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, who defined *Erlebnis* as 'lived moment', referring to an experience lived 'here and now'. Thus, this type of experience is experienced in the moment when one is living it. Experience, according to Toro, arises spontaneously and freshly, like water flowing down a slope, and involves the whole body. Experiences are not under the control of consciousness and cannot be induced by will (Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 121).

Within the framework of Biodanza theory, Toro already in 1968 redefined the concept of *vivencia* as an experience lived by an individual with great intensity in the present moment, which includes emotional, cenesthetic and organic functions (Toro Araneda, 2014b, p. 67). It is *vivencia* that gives to each individual's subjective experience that pulsating existential quality of the 'here and now'. The Biodanza system is structured to evoke *vivencias* leading to the integration and development of humans (Toro, 2016, p. 25).

The Spanish term *vivencia* is sometimes translated with the English term *experience* or the German *Erlebnis*. In view of the characteristics of *vivencia* as defined by Toro, however, it seems preferable to retain the term *vivencia* referring to the Latin verb *vivere* (to live) and defining an intense, subjective experience 'here and now' as opposed to the more general term 'experience'. The concept of *vivencia* is fundamental to the terminology of Biodanza, and in addition to experience, it is also used to refer to every Biodanza lesson, or at least the experiential part of it. When translating the definition and terminology of Biodanza into other languages, this term is retained. In Portuguese, it takes the form *vivência*. In Italian, in view of the rules of Italian pronunciation, the transliteration *vivenzia* including the plural *vivenzie* was sometimes used (for example, in Virgilio Piras' translation); later, the use of the original Spanish term *vivencia*, even retaining the plural *vivencias*, became established. The same rules are applied to French, English and German.

The lexeme *vivenc-* or *vivenz-* is also found in other word types in Romance languages. In addition to verbs such as *vivenciar* in Spanish and Portuguese, the Italian *vivenziare* (also in the form of *vivenciare* in Piras) and the French *vivencier*, including their respective reflexive forms, have also arisen. Portuguese and Spanish also have the adjective *vivencial*, known in Italian as *vivenziale* and in French as *vivencielle* (also in the form *viventielle*), in English *vivential* or *vivencial*.

Music, movement and *vivencia* form the basic elements of Biodanza, a unified structure whose components are in a dynamic relationship with each other and have a specific effect. This is because *vivencia* induce changes in visceral regulation, perception and forms of human communication (Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 2). These changes include areas ranging from organic homeostasis, postural structure and lifestyle to sociocultural processes (Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 4). Biodanza exercises stimulate these changes through the five *linhas de vivência* (lines of *vivencia*), which are vitality, affectivity, sexuality, creativity and transcendence. This method reinforces the positive lines of *vivencia*, rather than their opposites: hatred, anger, fear, guilt, repression, egoism, and anxiety, which cause strong neurovegetative imbalances and negative stress (Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 8).

While studying the different lines of *vivencia*, Toro also gradually defined the concept of 'protovivencias', which include experiences during the first days to six months of an individual's life, or even earlier. According to Toro, after birth (or even before it) a person enters a twofold process. One is the cognitive process, already explored in detail by Piaget, Timbergen, and other ethologists at the time of the emergence of Biodanza theory. The other is precisely the vivential process, grounding the child's emotional experiences. The *protovivencias* that Toro observed in children included, in the line of vitality, stimuli of movement; in the line of affectivity, nourishment and feelings of security; in the line of sexuality, various forms of contact; in the line of creativity, stimuli developing expression and understanding; and in the line of transcendence, experiences of harmony (Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 125).

In addition to *vivencias*, *protovivencias* and lines of *vivencia*, the participants of the lessons (*vivencias*) and especially the students of the Biodanza schools encounter a variety of expressions that they do not know from common speech, including Toro's neologisms and technical terms. In his theoretical works, Toro commonly used terms familiar in biology, psychology or anthropology, such as 'cenesthesia', 'endogenous', 'visceral' or 'integrative adaptive limbic-hypothalamic system'. Some of Toro's formulations may thus be difficult to understand for readers unfamiliar with the terminology involved, such as:

"To this complex mechanism of proprioceptive and exteroceptive integration, it is necessary to add affective and instinctive components, regulated by the limbic-hypothalamic system and by the neuro-sensory-motor context related with the impulses of action and existential motivation."

(Toro Araneda, n.d.i, p. 6)

Therefore, some authors of theoretical works in connection with Biodanza also provide an interpretation of those terms that they themselves consider difficult to grasp or not used in common language. An example is the *Glosario de términos utilizados en Biodanza* (Glossary of terms used in Biodanza) in *Biodanza: Poética del encuentro* (Biodanza: Poetry of encounter), written by Verónica Toro and Raúl Terrén, directors of the Biodanza schools in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Burgundy, France, originally in Spanish (Terrén & Toro, 2008, pp. 133-140). The book was subsequently translated into French (Terrén & Toro, 2013, pp. 151-158) and German.

Toro was aware of the fact that he had based the system on a theory that required some effort to understand. He expressed himself on this matter as follows:

"The student will have to learn new terminology and enter into a certain type of relationship that involves a revision of the cultural values he has believed in up to that point."

(Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 401)

Toro's terminology has also evolved over the years. It was not only the name of the developing system that changed from the original form *Psicodanza* to Biodanza. Also, every dance, every exercise, gesture or position has a name in Biodanza, which may or may not have been the same from the beginning as it is today. In some cases, Toro himself provided justification for any change in the *Official List of Exercises, Music and Instructions*:

“The name Circle of communication was changed because I found the term ‘communication’ inadequate. Communication may take place over the phone, with gestures, with an object, but it is not really a deep psychological process. Nowadays communication is largely linked to technological systems such as television, telephone, internet etc. The word ‘communication’ does not capture the idea I want. In this sense, it is more accurate to speak of ‘sharing.’”

(Toro Arandeda, 2012, p. 20)

The term ‘Biodanza’ itself has also become part of some thematic dictionaries. This is the case of the publication *Glossário temático: Práticas integrativas e complementares em saúde* (Thematic glossary: Integrative and complementary health practices), published by the Brazilian Ministry of Health. It lists the following entry:

“Biodança, fem. An expressive physical practice that promotes integrative experiences through music, singing, dancing and group activities aimed at restoring the affective balance and organic renewal necessary for human development.

(Fig. 14) ( ...)

Notes: i) Starting with the issuance of ministerial decree GM No. 849 of 27 March 2017, Biodanza is included in the list of new practices institutionalized in the National Policy of Integrative and complementary practices in SUS. ii) It works on coordination and physical and emotional balance through dance movements.

See Circle dance; National Policy on Integrative and Complementary Practices in SUS; Expressive health practices; Integrative and complementary health practices; Integrative health.

In Spanish: biodanza.

In English: biodanza; biodance.”

(Brasil. Ministério da Saúde. Secretaria-Executiva. Secretaria de Atenção à Saúde., 2018, p. 30)

Portuguese actually vacillates between the spellings *Biodança* and *Biodanza*. Italian retains the Spanish form *Biodanza*, French sometimes has *Biodanse* alongside the transcription *Biodanza*, and German has settled for just *Biodanza*, English sometimes writes *Biodance* in addition to *Biodanza*. However, all forms of spelling except *Biodanza* should be considered unofficial. In Spanish, a person who is involved in Biodanza is called a *biodanzero/biodanzera* or a *biodanzante*, in Portuguese a *biodança(rino)/biodança(rina)* or a *biodança(n)te*, in Italian a *biodanzatore/biodanzatrice* or a *biodanzante*. In German, the term *Biotänzer* is somewhat timidly promoted, just as the English biodancer or the French *biodanseur/biodanseuse* are little used. The verb *biodanzar* is treated similarly in the different languages. Biodanza, with its rich and sophisticated theory, is now such a worldwide phenomenon that Margarita Karger even speaks of ‘biodanzology’. She considers herself a ‘biodanzologist’ and the neologism ‘biodanzologist’ was coined, in her words, by Dr. Rodolfo Ladaga Aramburu (Karger, 2017, p. 107).

A Biodanza teacher is usually referred to by the term facilitator. Toro sometimes uses the term *professor* (teacher), but then returns to the term *facilitador* (facilitator):



“The relationship between teacher and student in a Biodanza classroom must have all the qualities of good human communication: sincere, natural, joyful. The approach of the facilitator must be warm, emotional, contact. Traditional forms of authoritative relationship must be completely excluded.”

(Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 422)

Góis, in his book *Biodança: Identidade e vivência* (Biodanza: Identity and *vivencia*), also notes that the term facilitator is more appropriate than teacher or coordinator because it more clearly emphasizes the function of facilitating and simplifying the learning process. The role of the facilitator is to enter into the flow of the group and facilitate its development, encouraging and supporting the participants to dance life, to express themselves and to encounter each other. Biodanza facilitators may not be psychologists or psychiatrists, but that does not mean that their training is superficial, irresponsible or unorganized. Their training is well-structured and responsible, taking place over three or four years of study and experience (Góis, 2009, p. 60).

Thus, the facilitator does not teach or instruct anyone. Toro refers to the activity he or she performs as facilitation, or the facilitation of a process in which the facilitator himself or herself is a participant:

“I have always considered as incompetent those people who, under the name of ‘guru’, ‘spiritual leader’, ‘psychotherapist’, ‘counsellor’, ‘psychologist’, carry out directive action towards other people called ‘patients’ or ‘mentally ill’. Who is who in this process? The only healthy relationship between people is the affective relationship through which individuals have the opportunity not only to know themselves, but essentially to ‘be’ themselves. In Biodanza we do not speak of ‘patients’, those who are ‘patient’, because each participant is an active person within Biodanza. Everyone participates in their own healing and contributes to the healing of others. Each student, without being asked, becomes a therapist, an actor of health. The classic ‘doctor-patient’ or ‘therapist-patient’ relationship does not exist in Biodanza. The relationship is ‘friend-friends’ or ‘brother-brothers’. The therapeutic relationship is therefore symmetrical. The Biodanza facilitator is another member of the group. The therapeutic relationship in Biodanza is affective, not authoritative.”

(Toro Araneda, 1991, p. 102)

In most languages, the term facilitator is widely used in addition to the verb facilitate in the respective linguistic modifications. Only in Italy is the term *operatore/operatrice* (operator) also used for the facilitator of Biodanza. The reason for this is the need to use this designation within an accredited profession that has its own code of ethics and associations. Under the Italian legal system, in accordance with Law No. 4 of 14 January 2013, a facilitator can also obtain the certificate of *Istruttore Tecnico del Benessere Specializzazione in Biodanza* (Instructor technician of wellness with specialization in Biodanza) (SBL Scuola Biodanza Liguria IBF, 2022).

The table below lists the basic terms of Biodanza in six languages:

**Table 3.** Basic terms used in Biodanza

(data obtained by comparing information given in professional publications and on the websites of Biodanza schools in different languages)

Português	Español	Italiano	Français	English	Deutsch
Biodança/ Biodanza	Biodanza	Biodanza	Biodanza/ Biodanse	Biodanza/ Biodance	Biodanza
biodançar	biodanzar	Biodanzare	biodanser	–	–
biodançarino/ biodançarina, biodançante	biodanzero/ biodanzera, biodanzante	biodanzatore/ biodanzatrice, biodanzante	biodanseur/ biodanseuse	biodancer	Biotänzer/ Biotänzerin
vivência	vivencia	vivencia/ vivenzia	vivencia	vivencia	vivencia
vivenciar	vivenciar	vivenciare/ vivenziare	vivencier	–	–
vivencial	vivencial	vivenciale/ vivenziale	vivencielle/ viventielle	vivential/ vivencial	–
facilitador/ facilitadora	facilidor/ facilidadora	facilitatore/ facilitatrice, operatore/ operatrice	facilitateur/ facilitatrice	facilitator	–
facilitar	facilidar	facilitare	faciliter	to facilitate	–

## 1.6 Studies of Biodanza

The path to becoming a facilitator takes at least four years. The actual study at any of the Biodanza schools in the world takes three years. For the first two years, students are introduced to the theoretical topics that cover the knowledge needed to pursue the profession of facilitator. The theory discussed covers a wide range of topics, from the Biocentric principle, theoretical model and definition of Biodanza, to the biological, physiological, and psychological aspects of Biodanza, to the different lines of *vivencia*. The classes are structured into modules that are implemented on weekends and there are at least twenty-eight modules in total. In addition to the theoretical topics, each module offers several experiential parts (*vivencias*) during which participants internalize the principles studied. Specific sessions aimed at developing movement skills may also be included. In the third year of study, the methodology needed to design and conduct one's own Biodanza lessons or seminars is discussed. At this stage, students are given the opportunity to practice introducing individual dances and conducting whole or parts of lessons.

In the table below, an overview of the topics of the modules that are offered in Biodanza schools around the world is given:

**Table 4.** Topics of the Biodanza school modules

(data obtained by comparing the titles of the modules in the schools regulated by IBFed and BRT)

Order	Name of the module
1	Definition and Theoretical Model of Biodanza
2	Biocentric Principle and the Vital Unconscious
3	The <i>Vivencia</i>
4	Biological Aspects of Biodanza
5	Physiological Aspects of Biodanza
6	Psychological Aspects of Biodanza
7	Identity and Integration
8	Trance and Regression
9	Mythical and Philosophical Predecessors of Biodanza
10	Contact and Caress
11	Human Movement
12	Vitality
13	Sexuality
14	Creativity
15	Affectivity
16	Transcendence
17	Action Mechanisms of Biodanza
18	Applications and Extensions of Biodanza
19	Biodanza <i>Ars Magna</i>
20	Biodanza and Social Action
21	Music in Biodanza
22	Methodology I (Musical Semantics)
23	Methodology II (The Biodanza Session – first part)
24	Methodology III (The Biodanza Session – second part)
25	Methodology IV (The Weekly Biodanza Course and the Biodanza Workshop)
26	Methodology V (The Biodanza Group)
27	Methodology VI (Evaluation Criterion of the Developmental Process in Biodanza)
28	Methodology VII (Official List of the Biodanza Exercises)

In addition to the above modules, students can also participate in special seminars such as the Minotaur Project, Tree of Desires, Angel's Premonition, Biodanza and the 4 Elements and many more. Practicing Biodanza is not limited to gyms and dance halls, it is also possible to experience Biodanza in nature, Biodanza and clay or for example Aquatic Biodanza. These workshops are extensions of Biodanza and if a facilitator wants to be authorized to conduct these extensions, he or she must complete an extension study for the specialty in addition to the basic study at the Biodanza school. The study of extensions is also done in a modular way, the number of modules can vary. An example of a Biodanza extension that focuses on the use of the voice can be studied under the title Biodanza, Voice, Music and Percussion in two modules. The first module is more vivential, the second is more focused on the theory and methodology of working with the voice. The topics discussed in both modules are as follows:

- Nature as music's teacher
- Universal rhythms and biological rhythms
- Melodies and sounds of nature
- Anthropological aspects of music
- Biomusic – The body as the origin of music
- The human voice
- Emotional words and emotional language
- Visceral voice, internal dance and music
- Rhythmic movement
- Melodic movement
- Organic music and harmony
- Music and singing with an adrenergic effect
- Music and singing with a cholinergic effect
- Biological and physiological effects of singing
- Rhythmic singing – Creative singing
- Affective singing – Singing as a caress
- Shamanic singing – Singing and trance
- Voice, music and percussion together

(Cruz, 2000)

In addition to extensions, there are applications or uses of Biodanza for specific groups, such as Biodanza for children, clinical Biodanza or Biodanza for pregnant women. For some of these applications specific preparation is required, for others there is no specific preparation. Preparation is particularly necessary in the area of clinical Biodanza, which may include many specific groups such as people suffering from psychosomatic disorders, the mentally disabled, the physically disabled, drug addicts, people affected by cancer, Parkinson's disease or HIV carriers, among others. The visually or hearing impaired are also very specific groups.

Góis notes the following in relation to the profession of facilitator:

"Biodanza works with all kinds of people, with different beliefs, customs, values, knowledge, ideologies, cultures, as well as with people with mental or physical disabilities, or with physical illnesses, psychosomatic illnesses and psychological disorders in general. It