

ABSTRACT

to the text of Tsoy Anna Vadimovna's doctoral dissertation

«The performativity of malleable body language in Kazakhstan contemporary drama performances», submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty 8D02111 – Directing of choreography

Relevance of the research topic

In the vast field of cultural practices and research, the attempt to move from a result to a process, from mediated movement to direct contact, from the discourse of the word to the body context, from absence to presence has led to the emergence of new theories that cannot be interpreted by hermeneutics and traditional aesthetic theories. Manipulations with the performer's body, laboratory work with space and the relationship between the audience and the art work, the artist are the basic principles of contemporary stage performance. The interdisciplinary context of performativity, as a new configuration of contemporary art that includes visual art with dramatic content, offers collaboration to the viewer, a kind of co-authorship in which both the vividness of the viewer's imagination and associative thinking, as well as her emotional responsiveness, are in demand in the first place.

The contemporary sphere of Kazakhstan culture represents a wide range of cultural institutions, extending from professional theater to postmodern trends in various fields, among which a significant place is given to performative practices. Performance art in Kazakhstan has been a relatively new art form since the 1990s and continues to this day. A wave of performative performances, in which the body and malleable body language are one of the fundamental aspects shaping the Kazakh drama canvas, has overwhelmed the audience, eager for new forms of theater. However, scientific understanding has not kept pace with the practical experiments of the theatrical events of the 21st century. The blurring of the boundaries between the social and the theatrical with the help of malleable body language has led to the blurring of many facets in the study of theater. Such a flickering of the theater on the periphery of the arts actualizes the issues of migration of choreographic into dramatic art and vice versa. And, although there is a scientific paradigm that has recently emerged as a body-based approach, there is no established tradition of the artistic practice studying of performance in Kazakhstan.

The object of research is contemporary drama performances, which most fully reveal the close nature of creative cooperation between Kazakhstan directors and directors of movement.

The subject of the study analyzes the performative aspect of malleable body language as a fundamental means of expression in the creation of a contemporary drama performance in Kazakhstan.

The purpose of the study of malleable body language from the perspective of performativity to determine its role in the Kazakhstan contemporary drama theater, the presence of which determines the artistic integrity of stage performance.

Research objectives:

– to consider the concept of malleable body language, its formation and development in the history of theatrical art through the prism of performativity;

- to analyze the formation of the form of performance through malleable body language through the contamination of dramatic and choreographic arts;
- using the concept of meta discourse, to explore the origins of performative art in Kazakhstan (late 19th– early 20th century) through the prism of bodily incarnations
- based on the results of experimental laboratories of artistic practices with performers of the Kazakh drama theater, to identify trends in the education of contemporary actors in line with the development of Kazakhstan contemporary drama art;
- to analyze dance mise-en-scene, malleable body solutions in the dramatic performances of contemporary Kazakhstan directors in the body discourse, interaction with time and space, and communication with the audience, using the method of visual drama (Knut Ove Arntzen) and the phenomenological approach (Maxine Sheets-Johnstone);
- to comprehend the place and importance of the director of movement, choreographer in the Kazakhstan contemporary drama theater;
- to analyze the contemporary performative practices of Kazakhstan artists through malleable body language, to characterize them according to global trends in performative research;
- to study the problems of using malleable body language in Kazakhstan theatrical art at the present stage and propose ways to solve them.

The degree of study of the research topic

The analysis of the malleable body solution of a drama performance was influenced by the works of N. A. Pitsukha (2004), where special attention is paid to the transformation of the malleable body image; research by T. A. Grigoryants (2006, 2014), aimed at understanding the cultural and historical analysis of malleable body arts and the semiotics of malleable body culture; the essence and methods of presentation through physicality in contemporary art. They are investigated in the work of E. A. Berezhnaya (2017).

A significant contribution to the study of choreography art in the theater was made by: A. V. Arustamyan (1999), A. A. Leshchinsky (2011), analyzing dance in the system of professional development of an actor of the drama theater in Russia, E. E. Kuzina (2012), N. F. Babich (2012). There are also works by T. V. Gordeeva (2020), who studied issues of artistic communication in Russian dance performance at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, and A. Kozonina (2021), who examines the development of dance performance in Russia. Recently, the problem of the development of performative culture has been given attention: Y. V. Krivtsova (2006), E. V. Averyanova (2006), A. A. Toporova (2017). The works of Yushkova E. V. (2004), M. M. Yachmeneva (2012), A.V. Konstantinova (2013) and others are devoted to the development of body movement drama.

Fundamental works on performativity and performance culture in the drama theater belong to: J. Butler (1998), S. Simon, W. Mick (2004), A. Badiou (2007), R. Goldberg (2018), R. Schechner (2020), E. Fischer-Lichte (2021). The systems and methods of the educational function of actors of the contemporary drama theater, which use body and movement, are studied in the work of A. Hodge (2015)

In the above-mentioned works, the concept of malleable body language in the drama performance space remains a little-studied topic, therefore, research cannot be applied to solve the tasks set in this work. In addition, they do not take into account the experience of the development of Kazakh performative art in the theater of the XX–XXI centuries turn. The topic of this research, aimed at analyzing the performative aspect of malleable body language in contemporary drama performances within the framework of the development of Kazakhstan performative art, is being considered for the first time. At the moment, there are no literary sources on the issue under study.

The methodological research foundation is based on the experience of Western European and Russian studies of contemporary theater, many of which in one way or another affect the field of the physical in performance.

R. Goldberg (1979) explores performative art through the historical context, analyzing the actual art of futurists and contemporary artists. Drama, performativity, and performance by W. Worthen (1998) are considered from the interdisciplinary research perspective, pointing to their interrelationship and various migrations of theater to performance, and vice versa. J. Butler (1998) examines the nature of performative acts, focusing on the performers' bodies gender. The authors of S. Shepard and M. Wallis (2004) examines attitudes to drama, theater, and performance at various historical stages, offering a comprehensive guide to the dynamically developing field of contemporary art, talking about its goals, nature, and place in the scientific field of research, as well as basic approaches to the body. How performance thinks from the perspective of a wide range of intersections of contexts, including bodily practices and the new field of «philosophy of performance» are considered by H. J. Minors (2012). The idea of practice, how research is analyzed by theorists and practitioners of performative art and these results are collected in the work «How performance thinks», which makes it possible to effectively apply performative events in domestic practice. E. Fischer-Lichte (2014) studies the phenomenon of performance, formulating its basic concepts for the interpretation of various performative practices. Thanks to the theory of performance by R. Schechner (2019), an area is opening up for researchers of social, psychological, and semiotic fields.

Thus, due to the aesthetics of performativity and the theory of performance, interdisciplinary research, the relationship between theater and performance, the gender basis of performativity, the philosophy of performance, as well as an understanding of its thinking, goals and nature, this study contributes to the effective study of the Kazakh performative practices experience within the drama theater in its variability and openness.

Research methods:

- cultural and historical to study the emergence of the concepts of "plastic" and "performativity" in the context of the development of culture and art;
- historical and biographical to indicate the chronology of the appearance and development of dramatic performances with the use of dance and plastic arts as a key stage solution;
- description and analysis of a dramatic performance to identify the plastic structure from the perspective of performativity;

- a meta-discourse aimed at identifying the organizational structure of the stage text, among which plastic is the most significant for research. The individual plastic scenes in the performances will be considered not individually, but collectively, forming a single network of performance signs;

- comparative analysis to determine the place and role of plastics in dramatic performances of the XX-XXI centuries and modernity;

- interviewing method for collecting information about the activities of plastic directors in modern dramatic theater performances in Kazakhstan;

- semiotic decoding of plastic texts and evaluation of interpretative functions from the perspective of their performativity;

- an art criticism method in the study of the philosophical, cultural and philosophical influence of plastic and dramatic theatrical performances on the development of art in Kazakhstan as a whole;

- the phenomenological approach (Maxine Sheets-Johnstone) considers movement, which is the basis of plastic language in terms of the primacy of movement, talking about how the mechanization of consciousness is parallel to the mechanization of bodies. Using this method, the semantics of plastic language will be studied through awareness, body somatics, which is typical for the performative study of modern choreography;

- visual dramaturgy (Knut Ove Arntzen), whose mission is to establish a connection between the viewer and what he sees. In the post-dramatic era of the Kazakh theater, the text and its scenic embodiment are equally equivalent, which makes it possible to consider the plastic language while preserving its characteristics in the field of the whole representation. This concept is a research tool that allows us to talk about the relationship between textual and performative;

- an experimental laboratory of artistic practices with actors of the Kazakh theater, the results of which will help determine the ways of development of the actor of our time in line with the development of dramatic art in Kazakhstan;

The scientific novelty of the dissertation research

- is in the study of the concept of malleable body language, its formation and development in the history of the world theatrical art advance in the context of performativity;

- in the study of malleable body language in drama and choreography arts as a way of forming performance;

- in the analysis of drama performances within the framework of interdisciplinary practices to identify concepts included in the structure of malleable body language: physicality, the body, bodily incarnations;

- in substantiating the trend of merging contemporary art and theater, through bodily incarnations using concepts such as: repetition of performance (reincarnation); strengthening the role of artistic communication with the audience (participation, interaction); improvisational skill, which exists within the framework of the performance and as an open process in time (performance);

- in the study of the emergence of performative practices through the malleable body embodiment of the late 19th– early 20th century in Kazakhstan;

- in the theoretical substantiation of the tools of the performativity of the malleable body as a method and method in creating a contemporary stage performance in Kazakhstan;
- in the analysis of dance mise en scene, malleable body language solutions in Kazakh drama performances by contemporary directors through aspects of performativity;
- in the theoretical substantiation of the place and importance of the director of movement in the Kazakh contemporary drama theater;
- in identifying the problems of contemporary malleable body language-drama thinking in the Kazakh theatrical art and ways to solve them;
- in categorizing performative practices in Kazakhstan in the discourse of the scale of contemporary performative research;
- in the results of experimental laboratories, which contribute to the effective expansion of the concept of the performativity of malleable body language both in scientific understanding and in the practical application of Kazakh contemporary theatrical practices.

The main points put forward for defense:

- the appeal to the body and its malleable body language was a determining factor in the formation of performance within the framework of the contamination of drama and choreography arts;
- the consistent development of performance art, the historical continuity of Western European experience, contributed to the emergence and development of performance art in the domestic practice of Kazakhstan artists focused on the body;
- the dynamics of artistic processes characteristic of contemporary drama theater in Kazakhstan reveals a tendency to actualize malleable body language through aspects of performativity that contribute to the development of performative theater;
- interdisciplinary research of malleable body language in Kazakhstan drama performances based on the concepts of meta discourse, phenomenology and visual drama contributes to the formation of not only the culture of the Kazakh performer, but also artistic communication with the new age audience, offering effective ways of reading stage performance;
- more than 60 Kazakhstani dramatic performances and performances through bodily practices were analyzed, the results of which determined algorithms and tools for creating future malleable body embodiments characteristic of performative research: the body of a contemporary, physical frankness, gender, narrative, discourse, improvisation, bodily marking of time, installation, sound, color, silence, visual media, ritual, mimetic empathy, malleable body symbol, etc.
- malleable body language representation in the performative process of drama action acts at the present stage of its historical development as an open structure, as a form-process in which the growing role of the director of movement in creating a visually expressive stage symbol is defined.

Theoretical and practical significance of the research

The principles of creating the performer's malleable body language through the context of performativity, formed and proposed in the framework of this study, can be used in the development of methodological manual, scientific and methodological

recommendations for theater institutes, art faculties of universities involved in the practice of performance and can be used in directing, pedagogy.

Approbation of the study:

The main concepts of the dissertation are presented in 4 scientific publications, including an international scientific publication with a non-zero impact factor, Q1, percentile – 93, included in the Scopus database, in three articles published in journals recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The doctoral thesis was discussed and recommended for defense at an expanded meeting of the Department of Choreography of the Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts on 09/29/2025.

The structure of the thesis consists of an introduction, three sections, a conclusion, a list of sources, and appendices.