

ACTOR'S SPEECH AND MEANS OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN TABLET PUPPET THEATER

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Abstract. This article examines the specific features of stage speech in puppet theatre through the example of tabletop puppetry. Using the diploma performance "Turna Pati" (The Crane's Feather) as a case study, the relationship between stage speech, puppet manipulation, and character creation is analyzed.

Keywords: puppet theatre, stage speech, tabletop puppet, acting skills, character creation, Turna Pati, intonation, plasticity.

The art of puppet theater is one of the most complex synthetic arts created by mankind. In this art form, acting, puppet control, stage speech, plastic, music, fine arts, puppet construction and directorial thinking are combined into a single artistic system. Therefore, the process of training a puppet theater actor is much more complex and multifaceted than in a traditional acting school. "In a word, the art of modern puppet theater is a unique art in shaping the worldview of the young generation, the future of Independent Uzbekistan, in educating young people to be loyal to the Motherland, spiritually mature and comprehensively mature people" [1, 10].

A puppet theater actor does not just create an image on stage. He gives life to an inanimate object, conveys its character, mental state, attitude and inner experiences to the viewer. Such a task requires the actor to manage several creative processes at the same time. He controls the technical control of the puppet, maintains the logic of the image, organizes the purposeful movement of the puppet on stage, and at the same time ensures the naturalness and expressiveness of speech expression. These requirements are especially complicated in the case of tablet puppets. Because the actor is present in the same stage space with the puppet and must be able to direct the audience's attention to the puppet image. "The work of a puppet theater actor is manual labor associated with the creation and control of the actor's hand movements. At the same time, it is considered a high art that can only be achieved with highly qualified and skillful mastery of the puppet control technique" [2, 4].

Today, ensuring the harmony of theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the training of puppet theater actors remains one of the urgent tasks. However, this process is not limited to providing professional knowledge alone. It is also important to instill a love for puppetry in the student, to understand its aesthetic and philosophical possibilities. Because many students, at the initial stages of their studies, imagine themselves more as dramatic stage actors. And puppet theater appears to them as a complex technical system. In fact, puppet theater acting is one of the most complex and universal manifestations of stage art.

In this regard, stage speech in puppet theater is one of the main means of creating an image. While in dramatic theater the actor's face, facial expressions and body plasticity play an important role in revealing the inner world of the character, in puppet theater a large part of this task is mobilized to find the speech potential of the character and express it. The emotional state, character, attitude and inner experiences of the puppet are often expressed through speech. "Therefore, the actor must have highly developed creative fantasy, imagination, and hearing (self-hearing)" [3, 6].



Stage speech in puppet theater is not limited to simple text pronunciation. It is a creative process that expresses the inner purpose, emotional energy and spiritual movement of the character. The actor evokes the puppet's thought process through words, reveals its inner experiences through pauses, and expresses its attitude to events with the help of intonation. Therefore, when creating a character, the issue of stage speech should be approached not separately from plasticity, rhythm and the logic of movement, but inextricably linked with them.

Now, the expression of the character's speech ability in creating an image also differs depending on the type of puppet. In particular, the tablet puppet is one of the most complex and creative forms of modern puppet theater. In this system, the puppet moves on the same stage with the actor. As a result, the viewer sees both the puppet and the actor controlling it at the same time. Such a situation requires a high level of stage discipline and artistic control from the actor.

In tablet puppetry, the main task of the actor is to bring the puppet, not himself, to the center. The viewer should see the potential of the puppet image, not the actor. Therefore, every movement, breath and speech of the actor serves the existence of the puppet. If the harmony between voice, plasticity and puppet movement is disturbed, the credibility of the image weakens.

Another important aspect of this type of puppetry is related to team management. In many scenes, one puppet can be controlled by two or three actors. In such a situation, the performers are required to act as a single organism. Especially high skill is required from the two performers controlling the puppet on stage. That is, the stage partner performer, in addition to controlling the puppet's head movements, hand gestures, and changes in body plasticity, requires a subtle feeling and complementarity of the actor who voices the character and simultaneously controls the puppet's head and body. It is this harmony that ensures the life of the puppet character on stage. "The puppeteer must adapt his stage speech not only from the point of view of artistic expressiveness, but also to the movements, gestures and plasticity of the puppet. In this case, the strength, pitch and rhythm of the voice are adapted to the puppet's actions in a dramatic situation" [4, 34]

Based on the above-mentioned points, the selection of repertoire is also of particular pedagogical importance in the training of future puppet theater actors. If in the initial pre-diploma performances the works selected for the course students are based on examples of national dramaturgy and folk oral art, then by the stage of the diploma performance there is a need to work with more complex dramaturgical materials. This process serves to develop the student's professional outlook, aesthetic thinking and performance culture.

From this point of view, it is not by chance that I. Sodikov's play "The Crane's Feather" based on a Japanese folk tale was chosen for graduates of the "Puppet Theater Acting" program of the Uzbek State Institute of Arts and Culture in the 2025/2026 academic year. This work, with its symbolic nature, philosophical content and poetic expression, requires a deep analytical approach from students. The work reflects the complex relationship between love and benefit, loyalty and betrayal, selflessness and ego. Therefore, the associate professor of the "Puppet Theater Art" department, Honored Artist of Uzbekistan Fatkhulla Khodjayev, paid special attention to the issue of stage speech in the staging of this work from the point of view of revealing the inner world of the characters.

In the play "The Crane's Foot," the development of events relies more on internal drama. The impact of the work is manifested in emotional experiences, silences, and meaningful pauses rather than external action. As a result, for the actors, stage speech becomes not just a means of delivering dialogues, but an artistic mechanism that reveals the inner life of the character. Turnaoy's monologue at the end of the play is a vivid example of this.

The fact that this play is staged in the form of a tablet puppet puts even greater responsibility on the performers. Each actor, along with controlling the movements of the puppet, must also express the

mental state of the character through speech. The delicate harmony between speech and plasticity becomes one of the main factors determining the artistic value of the play.

During the creative process on the play, the students mastered not only the technique of puppet control, but also the complex layers of stage speech. They sought to reveal the spiritual world of the image by working with intonation, pause, internal monologue, verbal movement and rhythm. As a result, stage speech merged with puppet movement, forming a single artistic organism.

In the process of working on the diploma play “Turna pati”, the issue of the speech potential of the image was formed based on the inner nature of each. Due to the poetic and philosophical orientation of the play, when working on the image, the students analyzed the spiritual world of each character, their role on the stage and their place in the general ideological structure of the work, and the speech characteristics were created on this basis.

In the process of working on the image of Turnaoy, the main attention was paid to expressing the spiritual purity, sincerity and dedication of the character through speech. Therefore, maintaining poetic melodiousness, emotional tenderness and inner calm in the voice interpretation of the image was set as an important task. In the research on the image of the old man, the goal was to reveal life experience, wisdom and humanistic qualities through natural and convincing speech. In the image of the Old Woman, the expression of maternal love, care and spiritual experiences was chosen as a priority, and the emotional world of the hero was illuminated through the timbre of the voice and intonation diversity.

The process of working on the image of the Merchant, who represents the opposing force in the play, required a special approach. This image was interpreted not only as a negative character, but also as a symbol of greed, self-interest and lust, and attention was paid to reflecting demandingness, internal conflict and emotional tension in his speech. The image of the Storyteller was interpreted as a means of conveying the ideological and philosophical content of the play to the audience, and served as a kind of school in forming the imagery, logical clarity and artistic expressiveness of speech. When working on the images of children, preserving naturalness, innocence and sincerity was accepted as the main criterion, and special importance was attached to abandoning artificial stagecraft in their speech expression.

The analysis of the creative process of the performance showed that creating an image in the tablet puppet theater is not an individual performance, but a product of collective creativity. In particular, in the performance “Turna pati”, the stage life of each image was formed through the harmonious activity of two performers. For example, on the image of Turna, Farmonova Dilafruz worked on the control of the head and body and voicing, while Umarova Fozila ensured the plastic integrity of the image by controlling the hand movements. In the image of the old woman, Salimova Mukhlisa’s research into creating voice, character and inner state of mind was combined with the hand plasticity performed by Valijonov Khosilbek. Similarly, in the image of the Old Man, the speech and psychological interpretation of Esonaliyev Muzaffar was enriched by Abdijabbarova Norposhsha’s hand movements, in the image of the Merchant, the voice and body plasticity of Koziboyev Zoyirbek aimed at creating a sharp character was enriched by Toychiyeva Mubina’s hand control, in the image of the Boy, the voice and control skills of Valijonov Khosilbek were enriched by Holdarov Khusanboy’s hand movements, and in the image of the Girl, the voice and character creation skills of Abdijabbarova Norposhsha were enriched by Toychiyeva Mubina’s plastic solutions. This creative experience showed that stage speech in the tablet puppet theater does not depend only on the skill of the voice performer, but on the contrary, speech, plasticity and puppet control are a single artistic system closely interconnected. As a result, each image was formed as a whole stage organism as a result of the creative cooperation of two performers, creating a lively and convincing artistic impression on the viewer.



In conclusion, stage speech in puppet theater is one of the main artistic means of creating an image, and its importance is especially increased in the tablet puppet type. In this type of puppet, the actor appears not only as a performer expressing the text, but also as a creator shaping the inner spiritual life of the puppet. The conducted analyses have shown that stage speech makes a convincing artistic impression on the viewer only when it is combined with puppet movement, plasticity, rhythm and image logic. In this regard, in the process of training a puppet theater actor, teaching stage speech not as a separate discipline, but inextricably linked with acting skills, puppet management and stage plasticity is of great scientific and practical importance.

The creative research conducted on the diploma play “Turna pati” once again confirmed that creating an image in tablet puppet theater is a product of collective creativity. The stage life of each character was created in the harmony of the speech skills of the voice actor and the movements of the co-performer, who provided the plastic capabilities of the puppet. As a result, stage speech was manifested not only as a pronunciation of words, but also as an artistic phenomenon that provided the puppet with thinking, feeling and living. The results achieved during the research indicate the need to work on the basis of complex dramaturgical materials in modern puppet theater education, to form collective performance thinking in students along with speech culture, and to study the artistic capabilities of the tablet puppet in more depth.

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