

## THE SEMIOSPHERE OF THE ART OF THE ARTISTIC WORD IN UKRAINIAN STAGE CULTURE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH – BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURIES

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**Abstract:** The article deals with the semiosphere of artistic expression in the Ukrainian culture in the second half of the 20th – beginning of the 21st centuries. The author presents a semantic-semiotic analysis of its genre varieties and forms, traditional for this period's performance. Considering the two directions of the stage embodiment of non-dramaturgical material – that of a reader and an actor – the theatrical sign systems related to the artistic word are separated and systematized, their role and correlation with the text in the stage embodiment are determined. Theater and literature related to the latest technology in the arts have led to the search for innovative formats of the text's stage embodiment. It contributes to creating a radically new semiosphere of the art of artistic word, which has been increasingly asserting itself since the beginning of the 21st century.

**Keywords:** Actor-reader, Artistic word, Non-dramaturgical material, Theatrical sign, Tradition, Ukrainian stage culture.

### 1 Introduction

There is symmetry between the iconic systems of the artistic word's art (mainly on the literary stage) and the theater. Since the word is the main one for the specifics of performing (reading, reading-acting) non-dramatic text, the most important part of the creative process, including the stage embodiment, is carried out in the area of semiospheres of literary criticism and linguistics. At the same time, other iconic theatrical systems (gesture, stage movement (plastic), make-up, hairstyle, costume, props, scenography, light, music) are assigned the role of "sketchiness" [19].

The purpose of the research is to analyze the basic semiotic sign models of the art of the artistic word, which characterize the stage performance in the twentieth century's Ukrainian culture.

The review of scientific works gives grounds to assert that the problem of stage embodiment of non-dramatic text, its interpretation by the actor-reader should be analyzed and systematized through the prism of scientific works devoted to the issues of a theatrical sign.

### 2 Literature Review

Important for the study are the works of the literary critic, culturologist, and semiotician J. Lotman. He considered the problem of the significance of the text, which reveals it in the process of moving to the audience (viewer), "The relationship between text and audience is characterized by mutual activity: the text seeks to liken the audience to itself, impose its code system, the audience responds the same. The text seems to include the image of "his" ideal audience, the audience – "his" text" [11, p. 87].

German scholar K. Balme analyzes the dramatic text and its stage embodiment, pointing out that three textual levels should be distinguished: theatrical text (text original), the text of the play, the text of the play. Each text level creates a specific volume of values" [2, p. 120].

Thus, starting from the origins of the creative process and taking as a basis the text, the performer as an interpreter of the stage version of the literary basis goes through certain stages while changing its system of signs. It can be systematized in stages:

- 1) Internal visualization with a triple intention (actor-reader, actor-author, actor-performer) in traditional artistic performance without the use of extralingual and stage means of expression;
- 2) External (in combination with internal) – when used.

P. Pavi considers theatrical semiology as a method of text analysis or performance in the field of formal organization, dynamics and creation of meaning in the process of interaction between theatrical artists and the public [13, p. 451]. He believes that it is enough to understand "syncretism" as the use of various manifestations of its language with other semiologies (space, text, gesture, music) [13, p. 452].

The nature of the theatrical sign was studied by the Russian art critic I. Gubanova. She analyzed the works of leading French, Italian, English semiologists, thus updating the issues and expanding the methodological basis of domestic theater studies [4].

Polish historian of theater and literature T. Kovzan classifies the main sign systems used on stage and considered in the context of the study: word, intonation, facial expressions, gesture, stage movement (plastic), makeup, hairstyle, costume, props, scenography, light, music, the sound effect [9, p. 126].

Readers' performance remained popular until the 1980s and the second half of the twentieth century, which is confirmed by the multi-stage system of readers' competitions, which gradually collapsed at the same time as the Union's collapse.

Suppose we distinguish the sign systems inherent only in the reader's performance (voice, intonation, facial expressions, gestures, plastics). In that case, there are some studies by theorists and practitioners of the art of the artistic word, based on European and Russian scholars' previous experience. Among the Ukrainian authors of the twentieth century are D. Revutsky [15], M. Bazhenov [3], R. Cherkashin [5].

Polish historian and theorist of drama and theater, S. Swiontek, believes, "The theatrical sign is a consequence of mutual functionalization of heterogeneous semantic categories, and the most important role in the theater in its formation is played by the addressee, who is given an executive function. It consists in giving specific meaning to the signs transmitted through the theatrical message. Outside of this function, the theater as a cultural phenomenon does not exist" [17].

Among the latest theoretical studies in the field of semiotics, "Architectonics of theatricality" theater director, actor, theater theorist, semiotician I. Alexandrov believes that theater is a privileged semiotic object, even compared with language, it has absorbed many more components than any other art form [1, p. 4].

Researcher of Ukrainian drama, author of works on comparative literature L. Zaleska-Onyshkevych writes about the second life of literary texts on stage. Theoretically, the analysis of the literary text and its intertextuality deserves attention. The author also analyzes the interpretation of poetry and prose through the actor's embodiment [20].

Semantic-semiotic analysis of the tradition of the main paths of the genre of the art of the artistic word is partially analyzed in the dissertation of N. Kukuruza [10]. There is still no work devoted to the holistic study of the history of the formation and development of the art of the artistic word, in particular, its semiotic space both on the concert stage and on the scene.

### 3 Materials and Methods

The artistic word's performance in Ukrainian culture is traditionally divided into two types of stage embodiment: reading and acting, the beginning of the twentieth century were represented by artists of these different directions Alexander Zakushnyak and Vladimir Yakhontov. The experience of their performance was reconsidered and continued by Russian and Ukrainian actors-readers over the following decades. In addition to performing specific prose and poetic works, various genres

and art forms of the artistic word began: "evening of stories", "evenings of monologues", "evenings of actors", "theater of historical portrait", "literary evenings", "poetic theater", etc.

#### 4 Results

The semiosphere of the reader's performance, first of all, includes the creation of a stage version of the text. The word and its implementation (mainly static communication with the viewer) has expressive means: facial expressions, gestures, costume, plastic, mise-en-scène, sometimes special hairstyle and makeup.

The author of the stage version of the word must be often the performer himself, and therefore he is assigned the role of interpreter of the text, the changer of the author's sign system. Zakushnyak notes, "I was the first to make literature on the stage a profession. I managed to find a completely complete form, constant, able to solve the style of a particular author through a combination of intonations and composition of the text, a form that has a special technique, which includes a long list of special techniques" [5, p. 37]. As for the text, T. Kovzan details such a process, noting that the word "varies depending on the dramatic genre, literary or theatrical fashion, the style of the play" [17, p. 132], which have a direct impact on the art of performance. In contrast to the dramatic, we should add that the art of the artistic word has signs of mobility. This is also its significance: the ability to respond quickly to various socio-political or cultural-artistic events.

V. Yakhontov had a slightly different approach to the embodiment of a literary text on the stage, different from the reader's performance. He synthesized the artistic word with other types and genres of art: primarily with theater and music. V. Yakhontov called for "thinking in the theater", sought to cultivate a sense of theater in the narrative form of a literary text. He substantiated and widely used the principle of contrasting construction of the program: alternation of poems and prose, poems and documents.

In the stage interpretation of the text, the performer puts a semantic sign as an expression of a certain thought.

#### 5 Discussion

Here are some examples of working with the textbase of famous Ukrainian actors-readers.

Art critic, author, and performer of literary compositions Bohdan Kozak notes, "I have never read 'The Cherry Orchard Around the House' or 'I was thirteen'. But during the creation of the composition, I missed this topic. And it turned out that this is perhaps one of the best moments of poetic and musical composition. In the school textbook, which my peers and I studied, the poem 'My thirteenth past' ends with the lines:

*"And we, jokingly, took other people's lambs to the water."*

We take the academic publication, and there:

*"Nasty!... But still, as I recall,  
That heart cries and aches,  
Why the Lord did not let him live  
Young age in that paradise.  
He would die plowing in the field,  
I would know nothing in the world.  
I wouldn't be a fool in the world,  
He did not curse people and God!"*

These lines have never been in a textbook. This is how I always find things that need to be understood" [6].

The iconic Ukrainian reader Anatoliy Palamarenko is also in a constant search for Kobzar's texts' meanings. Only recently, according to the great actor-reader, he found the right, logical emphasis in the "Testament", "Earlier, without delving, he intuitively emphasized the word 'blood'. And now I think, why

"blood" and not "enemy"? I always try to find the main word, and only then add emotional nuances" [8].

Thus, the final stage interpretation of the word is formed at different levels of the system of signs (the field of linguistics and literary studies), starting from material choice to its embodiment.

Following the systematization of T. Kovzan, we turn to the intonation – melody, rhythm, tempo, emphasis, which are born in the subtexts of the performer, creating a variety of signs.

Thus, O. Vyshny's "Fair", a cult work in A. Palamarenko's repertoire, is full of various vocal modulations, tempo changes, and texts reduced to patter. The length of vowels acts as a sign of the breadth of the soul of the Ukrainian people.

The system of signs includes dialect. In particular, the actor Yuriy Brylynsky performs works by V. Stefanyk, written using Pokut dialectal features (performance-dedication "Ancient Melody").

Actress-reader Oleksandra Lesnikova gave weight to tempo-rhythm speech.

Here is an example of how Lesnikova changed the structure of language in the composition of V. Kataev's novel "The Grass of Oblivion", which is about the funeral of V. Mayakovsky.

Prose lines from the original source, "The Guard changed silently near the agreement. I don't remember if there was any music. Apparently, it was. But she could not silence the silence. One by one, his readers climbed the steps from the courtyard. They walked in a chain one after another – weeping, dead – past narrow vases with long, pale greenhouse roses..." – performed by O. Lesnikova. This text sounded like a poem, evoking associations of grief and rhythms of mourning music:

*"Near the agreement, he changed Guard silently.  
I don't remember if there was any music.  
But she could not silence the silence.  
We climbed the stairs from the courtyard.  
One by one, his readers...  
They walked in a chain - crying, dead.  
Past narrow flowerpots with long,  
Pale greenhouse roses..." [16, p. 75–76].*

Such an original version in the stage version also has semiological significance. These options may acquire a purely aesthetic value or, as in the above examples, have a semiological significance.

Let us move on to other means of expression of the artistic word's art, which have an auxiliary function. O. Zakushnyak writes about the gesture on the literary stage separately, "The gesture of a pop narrator is sharply different from the gesture of an actor... The common thing between an actor and a pop singer is only the alphabet of expressive movement" [5, p. 34].

So the principle of gesture in the classical embodiment of the artistic word is primarily because the narrator works without accessories. Sometimes, there are many characters in his story, and there are few means to describe them. Therefore, O. Zakushnyak equated the gesture to a "silhouette image", emphasized its fleetingness, sketchiness, argued that the performer's gesture should be "strict and stingy". Also, the gesture on the stage should be most closely related to the style of the author whose work is performed, and the nature of this work: "Americanized" in the performance of Twain, "tailcoat salon" – in the work of France, wide, allowing the use of dance rhythms, – in Gogol's "Taras Bulba". He claims the same about facial expressions [5, p. 35].

The famous Ukrainian actor-reader R. Iytsky followed these rules in the composition "A Word about the Kobzar", "He very sparingly reproduces the poet's external features. Semi-gesture, but expressive, an element of movement, but characteristic, complete, inherent in this character" [16, p. 35].

Actress-reader Lyudmila Dzhigul professed the reader's performance, "Only an expressive voice, various facial expressions and sometimes stinky, barely noticeable, supporting the main idea gesture" (for example, Aisha and Mohammed) [16, p. 138].

An essential component of the art of the artistic word is also the *mise-en-scène*. Most often, its change means a change in the opinion of the author of the work. It is good when the author prompts, sometimes simplifying the task when the *mise-en-scène* specified in the content is concretized in mind [18, p. 156].

S. Klitin notes that in "Theater of One Actor", the performer is free from the need to reproduce some (predominantly domestic) external actions, but he has to perform them by force of imagination. In his imagination, he often has to do a chain of physical actions missed due to lack of stage site of the necessary objects and things. The actor's imagination carries an auxiliary load – imaginary moments of life alternate with real physical action moments on stage. Therefore, the *mise-en-scène* and signs of external character in the reader's theater can be used only very carefully, in a reasonable dose. The *mise-en-scène* and gesture become here the means of expression much brighter and more powerful than in the ordinary theater. In the reader's theater, every step, every turn of the head, every wave of the actor's hand acquires a special, more significant meaning [7, p. 60].

V. Yakhontov defines the static position as a *mise-en-scène*, "Of course, it is not easy to "live in a pause". For an actor, the static position is always difficult; inviolability as a *mise-en-scène* is a very subtle acting state that requires, I would say, virtuosity. In the inviolability, the viewer does not see the *mise-en-scène*. It isn't easy to convince him of this. This requires a great inner life of the actor, a precise task, a clear vision, i.e., perfect mastery of the technique of stage behavior" [18, p. 399].

Thus, the *mise-en-scène* in literary reading is the most stinky but also the most expressive and accurate sign. Its main components are word and movement, although it is considered in the context of "language of feelings".

Consider the costume sign in the art of the artistic word. Here, as a sketch in a gesture, you should also avoid busting. For example, a detail of an actor-reader's costume is a "bow, tie, vest, unbuttoned or buttoned jacket. All these details "work" on the image. Autumn – raised collar..." [7, p. 40].

Let us take into account the broader aspect of performance. Ukrainian authors' works, especially T. Shevchenko, I. Franko, L. Ukrainka, readers traditionally perform in costumes with elements of costume that contain authentic features of the Ukrainian people. Actress-reader Neonila Kryukova, whose almost repertoire consisted of works by Ukrainian authors, also always performed in Ukrainian costumes.

Actress Raisa Nedashkivska performs the reader's monologue "Forest Song" in Mavka's costumes created for her by famous artists Lyudmila Semikina and Lyudmila Nagorna.

Props in the art of the artistic word are used as little as possible. It can be a book, letters, a cane, a fan, a shawl, etc. Props in the composition do not acquire the meaning of everyday things, as in a dramatic performance. It carries a deep image, a certain meaning, generalization, symbol, sign. The props serve as a reinforcement and a kind of illustration to a particular moment of the story. In the monoplay, each emerging object acquires hypertrophied symbolism.

V. Yakhontov's use of various objects of props is indicative, "Create a number of additional representations. It was necessary to assure the spectator that I was not raising a stick, but a pistol of Dantes, who killed Pushkin, that the suitcase was a coffin in which the poet's body was taken to the village of Mikhailovskoye. And even my leather gloves fall on the suitcase with thud like lumps of earth in the grave. The audience was convinced by my faith in these transformations" [18, p. 164–165].

The idea of one of V. Yakhontov's performances included to pick up a real object, to extract an image from it, and not one, but a number. The umbrella could be a carriage wheel or a shield. The blanket is an old overcoat, a sled slide, a cloth from which the hero cuts a new overcoat, and so on. In this "game with a thing", he used a generally simple associative principle, which corresponded to the poetics of the play [18, p. 178–224].

Ukrainian actors-readers R. Ivitsky, B. Chernov, and S. Maksymchuk combined similar performance methods on the stage in literary compositions. As V. Rusanov notes, "*Literaturnaya Gazeta* wrote about the subtle and multifaceted play of one of them in the literary composition. A "Word about a Kobzar", "Sometimes Ivitsky's reincarnations seem like a miracle. We have just seen Shevchenko – old, tired, sick, but unbreakable, ready to fight. And here, the artist is reincarnated. No, he doesn't change his clothes; he doesn't even hide his face under a mask. He just slowly pulls on his gloves – the timbre of the voice and intonation change. And we can see in front of us a gendarmier officer, a soulless careerist, a "servant of the fatherland"" [16, p. 36].

In the early 70's of the twentieth century, actor-reader S. Maksymchuk, together with the director M. Merzlykin prepared a dramatic poem by Lesya Ukrainka "In the Field of Blood", which became a notable phenomenon on the Ukrainian literary and concert stage. "The text is read simply, without any theatrical aids. Only a perch stuck in the low trunk of a felled tree in the middle of the stage was associated with Judas's hoe to work his field. He threatened his former mentor, the Messiah, menacingly and angrily with a hoe. Remembering Him, he angrily attacks the old pilgrim. He dug the ground with a hoe, and he used it to work in his own field, "without stretching, without wiping sweat..." Leaning on the hoe, he is thinking sometimes" [16, p. 163].

A small sham thing, a detail, became a real creative discovery. It was also etched in the visual memory: a helpless pilgrim contrasted with the strong Judas' image with a stick in his hand.

Semiology in the field of music is also an auxiliary means of expression. A striking example of the word combined with music was the protest speech of 1981 when the actress-reader Neonila Kryukova and the bandura player Halyna Menkush performed a solo performance, "Marusya Churai", which was banned by the Soviet authorities.

Actress R. Nedashkivska performs Lesya Ukrainka's "Forest Song" (directed by M. Merzlykin) against the background of M. Skorulsky's ballet of the same name.

### 5.1 Ukraine's Contribution to the Art

Modern realities also dictate a change in the format of the readers' competitions themselves. Thus, in 2011 in Ivano-Frankivsk, the Institute of Arts of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University and the family of Honored Artist of Ukraine, Oksana Zatvarska launched and every two years held a "Competition of young actors of Oksana Zatvarska" (later - "named after Oksana Zatvarska").

In 2019, the All-Ukrainian competition of professional readers named after Ivan Franko (existed in this format in 2006-2019), the renewed team of NSTDU transformed the format of "readers" into a competition of "young actors". The idea for the changes arose to expand the performing horizons, which allows participants to present a micro-performance in the competition.

Among the most eloquent speeches in the context of the study should be noted the performance of V. Symonenko's short story "Kryvda" by the actor of the Kyiv theater "Actor" Peter Rusayenko (rollerblading), which modernized and "refreshed" the content of poetry, because the theme of Ivas – unfortunately, has not lost relevance [11]. Similarly, the artist of the conversational genre of the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Philharmonic named after Ira Malanyuk, Olga Kozhushok in "Hutsul Wedding" M. Vlad combined auditory (voice

modulations reproduced the voices of guests, hosts, young men, sang kolomyyki, also shameful) and visual (plastic, dance elements) Hutsulka", "Arkan", a stage costume stylized in Hutsul costume) components, thus giving the performance of the recognizable traditional Hutsul color. To modernize the ancient mountain traditions, the singer performed kolomyyki in the rhythms of rap and replaced the carbatinae with sneakers.

Changing the format of competitions from reading to acting, the predominance of acting incarnation of non-dramatic material proves that "the art of reading art is undergoing a stage of transformation: the technique of reading skills and language skills of the actor converge" [16].

Competitive auditions (All-Ukrainian competitions of professional readers named after R.O. Cherkashin, named after Ivan Franko, named after Lesya Ukrainka) convince: the predominance of "acting" approaches is confirmed in work on literary material. At the IV All-Ukrainian competition of readers named after R.O. Cherkashin (Kharkiv, 2010), actress of the Kharkiv State Academic Theater named after T. Shevchenko Oksana Cherkashina won the Grand Prix. Her speech was difficult to build. To visualize the word in an effort to reveal the fate of Mexican artist Frida Callo, she was helped by theatrical means: props, plastic, elements of dance. In essence, it was a small one-act play, completely completed in its form. It testifies to the palm of supremacy in the direction of theatricalization of the artistic word as a natural transformation of performance in the modern art space.

Combining the components of theatrical sign systems in the interpretation of poetic texts, actress Oksana Cherkashina actively uses specific plasticity of Latin American dance, which visibly determines the text's figurative structure, visually expressing its code. It is not about the usual text code as a key that unlocks the viewer's imagination, and the viewer "sees" the picture, not a linear formula for the manifestation of the word – indirect visualization: understanding it by different visible and invisible streams – sensory, fantasy – thanks to the light, music design, applied costume details (hat, jacket) and, most importantly, plastic drawing role. This play, having a concise stage life, nevertheless revealed the postmodern search for the embodiment of the genre and influenced its further development among the artists involved in it.

## 6 Conclusion

The art semiosphere of the artistic word in the Ukrainian culture in the second half of the 20th – beginning of the 21st centuries, which is considered on the example of professional actors-readers' work, was based on the theoretical work of Russian actors O. Zakushnyak and V. Yakhontov, and thus followed their methodology as a tradition.

In the genre of the art of the artistic word, two directions remain the academic style of performance used by the actor-reader and the theatrical performance of literary material, where the word is a carrier not of information but action.

The prospect of further study of the art semiosphere of the artistic word is seen in the following:

- 1) The art of the artistic word in the collective practices of the twentieth century;
- 2) The latest technologies in the field of arts and clip thinking, as a sign of a different worldview, contribute to the creation of a new semiosphere in the area of art of the artistic word, which also needs to be understood and systematized.

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