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THEATRE AS A MEANS OF STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The article deals with the problem of students' emotional development. The authors analyze the experience of staging the performances at the students' theatre at the Pedagogical Institute. The article proves the idea of opportunities such kind of the theatre has to develop students' emotional sphere.

Keywords: theatre, students' emotional development, the history of students' theatre "Globe".

Conference participants

Clayton Hamilton once said: «The most effective moments in the theatre are those that appeal to basic and commonplace emotion – love of woman, love of home, love of country, love of right, anger, jealousy, revenge, ambition, lust, and treachery» [1].

Surely theatre is exactly one of the oldest ways of expressing what we are. It is the opportunity of showing to the audience the real nature of a man without any danger or harm but with great effectiveness that could be explained in a very simple way. The audience "plays" together with the actors and author and actually it is a way of changing. That's why the main aim of the theatre is not only to entertain the audience but to cause feelings and thoughts that can provoke reflections, empathy and emotions. Surely it can be called a development effect. Mostly this effect works when theatre deals with the youth, students or children.

We decided to prove that theatre has great importance as the means of students' emotional development. In 1998 the students' English theatre was organized in Lesosibirsk Pedagogical Institute, Krasnoyarsk region.

The first idea was not that as it was presented above. It was very simple. The practice of traditional exam on phonetics was boring and the teacher suggested the students to perform "My Fair Lady". This performance became the alternative form of exam. The experience was rather interesting because there were 5 Elizes, 3 Higginses and so on. There was only one student who didn't want to take part in the performance and he passed exam in a traditional form. Still it was a success and our next performance was dedicated to the 100th Pushkin's anniversary. We performed "The Stone Guest". The text

of the tragedy is complicated because it is the translation from Russian, full of metaphors and written in verses. We realized that immortal Pushkin's text has special charm in English and belongs to the whole mankind. Why not Don Guan speak English? The students were full of enthusiasm so it was a success again. But we didn't realize that our performances could be more than simple performances in English.

The idea of development of our theatre came to us in 2005 when theatre was called "The Globe". Why "Globe"? Without any pretending on historical parallel we suggested that "globe" is an image and metaphor that unites people. That's why very often we "cross" different cultures and play national characters. It helps us to understand people of different cultures better. The Russian scientist V. Bibler once called this phenomena "just to be a little bit German, a little bit French".

In 2007 we decided to underline the theme of love in Shakespeare's plays. The performance was named "Shakespeare in Love". The plot was as follows. Two modern students meet, one of them adores Shakespeare, the other one hates him. During the performance the second girl changes her opinion due to immortal Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet", "Hamlet", "Taming of the Shrew" and of course sonnets. A lot of music and good acting made the performance bright and emotional.

Sometimes we mix and extend the plot adding something special. For example, in the performance "The Gift of Magi" after O'Henry we put the action into the streets of New-York. While seeking the present for Jim Della got a lot of exiting impressions: she saw a nice film, met the actors at Broadway

theatre and so on.

In 2009 we performed the fairytale "The Nutcracker" by Gofman. It occurred to be a light irony full of music, dancing and good English.

Sometimes we use the device that we called "Runglish on the stage". The fact is that our spectators are mostly not good at English, some of them can't speak English at all. So we put the Russian text into English one just to make the context clear and to draw spectators' attention to the action. This is the example of such kind of mixture from "The Nutcracker".

Maman. Come now, darling and see what the blessed Christ Child has brought for you!

Fritz, Mary. How lovely! How lovely!

Mary. Oh, what a lovely, lovely darling little dress!

Fritz (opens the box with the toys) Oh, what is this? Whose present is this?

Maman. It's grandpa Drosselmeier's present.

Fritz. This castle is so nice!

Drosselmeier. My dear children! I'm glad you like it. Но вы даже представить себе не можете, что они еще умеют делать!

Here comes toy's dance – an original mixture of Tchaikovsky's melody and modern dance.

2010 was proclaimed as the Teacher's Year in Russia. So we performed "The Miracle Worker" by W. Gibson. This is a story about deaf, blind and mute girl who couldn't communicate with anybody and her teacher Ann Sallivan trying to explain the simplest things to her. Gibson shows real tragedy of girl's parents who love their daughter but couldn't even say it to her, of poor girl who couldn't keep her aggression to the surrounding world, because it doesn't understand her. But the most penetrative tragedy is the sit-

uation of the teacher who wants to save the little life. This play was deliberately chosen for Pedagogical Institute, because it shows teacher's profession from different points of view. After the performance the spectators were asked to describe their impressions and answer the question: "What do you think if the director and actors were successful in performing the main idea of the play that a teacher was a "miracle worker"?" It should be said that their essays surprised and pleased us. There was little criticism connected with actors' pronunciation but we were ready for that because many students in the performance were just freshmen. In spite of this fact almost everybody mentioned that all scenes were clear.

Here are some students' impressions.

"I hadn't got any problems with understanding the play. Everything was clear for me."

"Even those who didn't know English could understand the main idea of the play with the help of good acting".

Good acting was also the point distinguished by most of the spectators. And what is more almost everyone noted emotionality of it. Of course, the chosen plot obliged the play to touch people's feelings, but actors could really understand the tragedy of the situation and get filled with it.

"It was very emotional!!! Sometimes I couldn't understand if it was just a play or the real life!"

"Actors were so emotional, they got into their roles so well that I completely forgot that they were people I study with."

"Sometimes you started to believe that the girl was really blind."

"All actors were very emotional and that made the play absolutely spectacular."

We are sure that any play that is chosen for performance in amateur theatre of foreign language should be emotional because the main function of emotions is to help people understand each other. So we could recognize people's feelings and even thoughts without speaking. It is proved that people of different nationalities and different cultures are able to define such feelings as fear, joy, anger, disgust and astonishment exactly. So our emotions are a kind of inner language that is clear for everyone.

Another important part of emotionality

in performance is addressing to audience feelings. From the ancient time philosophers considered a theatre as a teacher of moral, possible spiritual healer. But spectators should hold action close to their hearts, so it will be able to influence on them, make them think of important things. So making people feel was one of the main aims for actors. It is obvious from students' essays that we were successful.

"The acting of main heroines made me cry."

"The play managed to touch everybody's mind and heart, it didn't leave anyone indifferent."

"I couldn't keep tears at the end of the play."

The last but not the least purpose of the play was to help future teachers to reconsider some views on their profession, to observe the difficulties that may be there. It also found its reflection in students' analyses.

"I think this play helped me to understand teacher's work."

"It was very useful for young students to see the problems and dangers and which would await them on the path of teacher's profession."

Thus we could consider that the story of Ann Sullivan and Helen Keller performed by future teachers was true to life due to emotional acting. This was the story about the "Miracle Worker" who helped the poor disabled girl to become a well-educated woman whom Bernhard Show called one of the most prominent persons of the XIX century.

It was very interesting to watch the changes that happened to the students while getting ready the performance. For example, the student who acted the part of Helen first couldn't imagine what the disabled girl felt. But up to the first performance she understood the feelings of the girl and was quite natural.

Here is what actors think about the performance and their acting.

Poletshuk Evgeni (Autor Keller, Helen's father).

"The performance "Miracle Worker" by Gibson showed me the will and courage of disabled people. Many normal people would make a suicide if in such situation... More than that I realized the significant importance of a teacher in our life. That is the teacher who helps us to overcome all the difficulties and hardships we meet with."

Zulkarnaeva Victoria (Hellen's mother).

"The Globe" gives me a lot. I have a chance to think about different situations and to control my emotions. While working on the part of Helen's mother I understood what to do when you meet difficulties in your life. More than that theatre learns me to understand other people's emotions. The performance "The Miracle Worker" became the new step in my emotional development. My part was very serious. Kate Keller is a woman who is tired of life because of disabled daughter. Still she didn't leave the hope to help Helen. It's not easy to perform the feelings you never had. But I was trying to do my best. I am glad to be in the cast of "The Globe" because every time I learn something new, improve my English and do what I always wanted to do."

Tihonova Ulyana (Hellen Keller).

"I never thought that I could perform on the stage. But I always was interested in theatre and would like to understand other peoples' feelings. So I came to "The Globe". It is more interesting when you play the part of a person from different culture and speak English on the stage. But Helen in "The Miracle Worker" doesn't speak at all. She is deaf, blind and mute. At first it seemed to me that it was impossible to express all the feelings the girl felt. It was so unusual to play without words but I managed doing that. Our theatre is a kind of a family with friendly atmosphere. I like to be there and to communicate with my friends and teachers. "The Globe" helps me to realize what I am, what I can do and what my friends can do as well."

To sum it up theatre has always been a kind of art that helped people to become better. As for Student's Theatre it has some specific features. First it gives the young people the opportunity of getting the unique experience of understanding other people's emotions and secondly it develops their own emotional sphere. We think that it is very important in our pragmatic century.

References:

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