



Theater Metaphor in Organizations and Application into in-Service Training *

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ABSTRACT

In organizations members play different roles. Sometimes roles may not be clear and some conflicts may occur. In order to get rid of these conflicts, members of the organizations need to be trained. Nowadays, in-service trainings with classical methods may be boring and not effective. Members (employees) want to attend to in-service trainings which have full of applications and fun. They expect not only theoretical knowledge but also practical applications for their profession. Creative-oriented trainings like forum theater, obsessed theater etc. may be very useful to make roles clear and understandable. Since whole world is a theater place according to Plato, organizations as a living organism should have some different roles acting in different situations.

Purpose of the study is to introduce the similarities between theater play structure and organizational structure and try to show the importance and effectiveness of creative-oriented trainings in in-service trainings. Education experts should take place in those trainings in the organizations and periodically trainings should be applied to members. Scientific researches need to be done more so that business world may be aware of those techniques and apply them on their members. In order to have more creative and initiative taking members, creative-oriented trainings should be applied. It may increase motivation and productivity also. Especially, in the service sector those trainings may trigger satisfaction of both members and guests.

Keywords: In-service training, theater, metaphor, organization.

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Örgütlerde Tiyatro Metaforu ve Hizmet İçi Eğitimde Uygulanışı *

ÖZ

Örgütlerde çalışanlar farklı roller üstlenirler. Bazen bu roller net olmayabilir ve çatışmalar ortaya çıkabilir. Bu çatışmalardan kaçınmak için çalışanlar zaman zaman eğitime tabi tutulmalıdır. Günümüzde klasik metodlarla gerçekleştirilen hizmet içi eğitimleri sıkıcı ve etkisiz olabilmektedir. Oysa ki, çalışanlar hizmet içi eğitimlerde bir yandan gerekli bilgileri edinirken, diğer yandan bu sürecin eğlenceli de geçmesini beklemektedirler. Ayrıca bu eğitimlerde sadece teorik bilgi değil mesleklerinde yararlı olacak uygulamaları da edinmek istemektedirler. Forum tiyatro, yaratıcı drama, ezilenlerin tiyatrosu vb. yaratıcı-odaklı bu tarz eğitimler rollerin net ve anlaşılır olması açısından etkili olabilmektedir. Plato'nun düşüncesine göre eğer dünya bir tiyatro sahnesi ise, canlı bir organizma olarak örgütlerdeki roller de farklı durumlara göre değişkenlik gösterecektir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, tiyatro oyunu yapısı ile örgüt yapısı arasındaki benzeşmeleri ortaya çıkarmak ve yaratıcı-odaklı hizmet içi eğitimlerin önemi ve etkililiğini ortaya koymaktır. Eğitim uzmanları bu tür eğitimlerde yer almalıdırlar. Bilimsel araştırmaların bu yönde daha fazla gerçekleştirilmesi ile birlikte iş dünyası bu tarz teknik ve metodlara karşı farkındalık kazanabilecek ve bu teknik ve metodların çalışanlar üzerinde uygulanma şansı artabilecektir. Daha fazla yaratıcı ve inisiyatif alabilen çalışanlara sahip olabilmek için, yaratıcı-odaklı bu tarz eğitimleri zaman zaman gerçekleştirilmesi faydalı olabilir. Böylece motivasyon ve üretkenlik artabilir. Özellikle hizmet sektöründe bu eğitimler hem çalışanların hem de müşterilerin memnuniyetini tetikleyebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Hizmet içi eğitim, tiyatro, metafor, örgüt.

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INTRODUCTION

Human being has many roles in daily life. A woman can play some roles as mom, working woman, wife, cook, girlfriend, manager etc. A man also can play some roles as father, soccer player, husband, hair stylist etc. If we consider the life as a theatre stage it will be normal to observe different kinds of roles at different times. Every role has its own characteristic behaviour. Those behaviours can be clearly seen in the organisations. Roles taken in the organisations can differ according to job itself and the hierarchical status.

It is necessary for organisations to renew themselves to reach success. Following the technology, understanding the changing needs and expectations of both clients and internal customers (employers in the organization) let all organisations adjust to the new business world. In this adjustment process, education has a very big and important role. It is very possible to get the success for organisations who follow or keep scientific methods and reaching new knowledge. Educational organisations cannot be out of league. They are even more important because they educate people for future human resources.

In this article, the power of theater in in-service trainings will be discussed and will try to be shown that organisations who apply in-service training with theater or creative-oriented methods can get more benefits and fun. Also importance of theatre and using of it in educational organisations will also be discussed. Finally, clear relationship between organisational roles and theatre metaphor will be drawn.

Organization Concept

Organization (corporation) is an association of individuals treated by law as having powers and liabilities independent of those of its members (Cavanagh and McGovern, 1988, 2). The reason of those structures are the desire to meet human needs. No any person could meet all of his/her needs by him/herself and surely expect some help from others. People choose to live together because of those needs. Need of love, need of security, need of specialization let human being live together in organized structures. According to Balcı, organizations are living beings and should contact with their environment (Balcı, 2003). Without contact, organizations which are close systems will be like a person who loses ability to see in darkness after staying there for long time and will surely lose the chance to survive.

The Relationship of Organization Concept with Theater Metaphor

Metaphor is a reflection of social reality and there is simile (Balcı, 2003). As the similarities between two concepts analyzed, the concept which is known better will help other concepts to be understandable (Tamimi, 2005:30). Also metaphors can explain things from a different angle (Bryant, 1993:553). Therefore, what is to be explained will be imaginary for us with the help of metaphor (Morgan, 1980:611).

Theater as metaphor is having more humanistic point of view than the other metaphors and some concepts as drama and ritual has been more visible. However, this should not be accepted as this metaphor is fully contributed to organization theory (Cornelissen, 2004:713). Although there had been no any extra ideal

contribution to organization theory, this metaphor had been very accepted in relations determined within the organization (Cornelissen, 2004:705), appearance of roles and the opportunity to be searched in the academia (Mangham and Overington, 1987:3).

Theater metaphor is very considerable because of the importance of its beneficial interaction of ritual and also determining the “personal” and “conditional” movements. Thus, the ritual behaviours come out through theater metaphor (Inns and Jones, 1996; akt.Cornelissen, 2004:717).

The most important contribution of theater metaphor may be giving people the chance to be creative and also analyzing routine and improvisation interactions in the organizations (Karreman, 2001; akt.Cornelissen, 2004:721). Also theater metaphor brings another meaning to the conditions of life (Bryant, 1993:553). There are two different approaches to theater metaphor; “Organizations as Theater” and “Theater in the organization”.

“Organizations as Theater” approach looks into the organizations as a theater stage. It transfers the organization life into drama. This approach assumes that human behaviours are all dramatic and there are no any differences between theater and organizations. Burke indicates that organizations do not look like theater, they are already theater. Work place is a theater and every job is a stage. Organizational life has been determined very detailed and what we need to do is just to play what we have given. Scenario represents the organization (Boje, Luhman and Cunliffe, 2003). It is possible to see the world as a theater, and the management style as performance style and art (Mangham, 1990).

In the “Theater in the organization” approach, metaphor is explanatory tool. It focuses to the language use and speaking activity. In this approach organizations are not completely theatrical. However, it can be dramatic during business meetings, educational activities or conferences. Using theater in this way can make it become a socialization or management tool. Theater can be a technologic tool and does its mission (Boje et al., 2003:2).

For most people organizations can not be questioned and examined. It is a structure for people who make their daily works without any problem. That’s why interactions in the organizations are in ritual way repeated every day and have lack of improvisations. Errors arising from this routine leads to conscious reflection and cause polarization between person and motion awareness. This distinction between reality and performance forms the theater (Bryant, 1993:553). This distinction should be very strong for theater to come true. If the play is almost the same with reality, then what is the purpose of theater? Theater should not be the reflection of life as Plato tells us and according to him, life is already a reflection and theater is the reflection of the reflection. Therefore, that kind of theater has no value for the audience. It just hypnotises them and drag them away from thinking. In this reflection we act unnatural and move away from reality. In work places, we play another role according to our status and tasks. Therefore, in the organizations’ theater stage, same reactions for same conditions are shown by members just like on a theater play. Organizations have become “theater consciousness”. In this consciousness, actions are not natural (as if they look like natural) and players (workers in the organizations) perform between the “should be” (reality-being

themselves) and “applied” (performance-the role). Most of the time they are close to the “applied” side. Every day, they do the same tasks, act in same ways, eat at the same time, sit on the same seats at the service bus. It is exactly the same as theater play.

“Organizations as Theater” Approach

Burke explains that everything in the organizations is the part of the drama. People behaviours can be detected. Therefore, motion and frame of mind should be analyzed to detect those behaviours. This analysis asks five questions (Burke, 1969a; akt. Schreyögg and Höpfl, 2004:1; <http://rhetorica.net/burke.htm>).

1. Role (Job): What happened? What is the action? What is going on? What action; What thoughts?
2. Scene (Job Place): Where is the act happening? What is the background situation?
3. Agent (Workers): Who is involved in the action? What are their roles?
4. Agency (Organization): How do the agents act? By what means do they act?
5. Purpose (Vision and aims): Why do the agents act? What do they want?

Tasks given to the organization members and status let them behave according to their roles. Every role has its own limitations and act of play. A cleaning person can not give orders to the managers and access to organization’s secret files. A manager also can not clean the floor using the broom. The culture and the roles that organization gives to their members let them behave and act according to that.

Managers are like script writers. They determine their actions and authority. They edit their powers and determine the roles of workers just like a writer and playwright (Mangham, 1990:108). Managers follow their tasks in a authority frame but sometimes they need to use initiative to make spontaneous decisions (Cornelissen, 2004:714). It is almost same with theater stage. A script should be followed. Every player has his/her own role and time schedule. It is obvious for a player when to enter and leave the stage. Players can not take initiative in a fully ruled plays. Otherwise, there will be chaos and no order. However, sometimes rules need to be broken. Players might act spontanously in some occasions. This spontaneity should not be recognized by others as an action out of script. It is the result of the trainings. If a player is trained well to act spontaneously, then improvisation on stage will be seen as a part of the play. It is exactly the same in organizations. Initiative actions should be percieved by others as a normal action. It is both same in managing level and in the relations with customers.

Especially in the service sector, organization has two main parts. One is the operational part which is happened in front of customers (guests) and the other part is administrational. In the operational part, guests are welcomed, served and departed with full satisfaction. The other part is unseen and affects to the service quality. In this part, members’ motivation, determining guests’ expectations, hygiene, management, support unit, food and bevarage (kitchen and cook), accounting unit, will affect guests’ satisfaction level. If we look at the theater as a whole, it is almost same. Thaeter play does not consist of players itself. Players are

the performers only seen in front of audience. In the backstage there are many units sharing this success or failure with the players which are director, cleaning unit, dramaturg, sponsors, costume unit, scenario writer, etc.

In the flexible organizations, members do not only know their tasks but know other units in minimum level. Thus, another member can be replaced in any position in the absence of a member. Cross training is the purpose of this replacement in any time (Baskin, 2000:45). It is the same with theater play. Every role is shared by players but every player should know other roles in minimum level.

It can be said that every role in the organization should be clearly set in order for operation goes on, as expected. It is very important for things to be excellent. Otherwise, chaos will occur. In a stage, the walking line even is determined before the play performed and it should be the same in the organization for every single member. This should not be understood like we want to create robotic members. No, it is not like that. Here the stress is on the importance of rules and initiative. Rules are important for things to be in an order and the initiative is important to be taken when needed. We just want to stress the importance of initiative taking in the conscious manner which is possible with the creative-oriented trainings like theater, invisible theater, forum theater, creative drama, etc.

In a dynamic organization structure, members should know about their roles clearly. Here, in-service trainings with creative-oriented applications may help members play their roles and understand with some case studies brought from reality. Especially, in educational organizations roles are very clear. There are three different roles in these organizations; teacher role, manager role and student role. Those three behavior styles should be very clear with boundaries to avoid chaos. Therefore, before school started some meetings should be held and some documents should be given to the students in order them to know about their roles clear. With these meetings, students will act in a proper way and aware about hierarchical relations. In same way, teacher and manager roles should be clear with the help of those meetings. Those meetings may be applied in theatrical ways and some techniques may be used from real case studies.

There are regulations of organizations and they are like the scenario of the structure. By these regulations, roles are clearly defined. They are formal roles. On the other hand, there are also informal roles. Informal roles are not written by the regulations. They are shaped by culture and differ from organizations. Some school managers may build close relations with teachers, even visit teacher rooms frequently and share some activities with them, on the other hand some managers may prefer to have formal relations and stay away sharing things. Here is a spontaneity showing the characteristic behaviour of the member within the script. There may be two type of roles; one may be; following the script (regulations) and the other may be; spontaneous roles (informal behaviours). In this respect, creative oriented trainings may play a very important role to give some information about what is going on and what kind of relation should a member build. Relationship type can be built with the help of that kind of trainings. Roles can be clearly understood as formal and informal. These trainings may teach members to use spontaneous behavior in a controlled manner.

“Theater in the Organizations” Approach

This approach is having more interest by the organizations lately. Theater is used as a tool and can be used for social conditions. The king's coronation, bringing down the ship into the water and the opening ceremony of the statue are all theatrical (Boal, 2008a:9). It is almost same in the organizations. A new product presenting with the help of theater form (in the fair or unit stores), using role playing techniques in the management skills workshops, band shows presentations by members during special occasions, organizational amateur drama performances, activities occurred in the yearly meetings are all theatrical approach in the organizations. All those theatrical forms are serious. Actually, this approach comes from ancient times. In ancient times, presenting the plans, solving different opinions has made theater as a tool. In our time, theater is being used by many organizations and countries as a communication tool. Theater groups detect a problem in the organization related with work and bring it on the stage. Most of the time, those plays are original and unique cases happened in the organizational life (Schreyögg ve Höpfl, 2004:696).

With a different perspective of theater, Boal (2008a, 9) uses it as a tool solving social problems and define it as mechanical repeated actions of daily life. The oldest meaning of theater is the capacity of people who observe themselves in the action. In the book named “obsessed theater” Boal (2008b, 111) indicates that all people are both player and the audience. He mentions that theater is the tool expressed by people themselves. Audience take the role of hero, change dramatic action, try for some solutions, discuss some plans related to change. As a summary, audience train themselves for real action. They become free and act as a whole person. The important thing is action should be the action, not fiction.

Members taking place in the action are the people who recognize the problems and solve in the organizations. With the help of some different approaches, they can repeat the cases in a play and solve these problems. Some organizations apply theater techniques that are developed by Boal like; invisible theater, obsessed theater, forum theater and image theater on members. Those different theater techniques analyze social problems. They are all for solving those problems and aim to gain some awareness on mass. Members observe different behavior styles from inside and outside of the action through those theater techniques. They can learn to look into the incidents in a critical and empathic view.

Theater plays in organizations are plays producing some problematic subjects. Lower level and moderate level management relationships, innovation difficulties, problems occur during the management meetings, resistance for strategic change, sexual harassment, workaholism, and many other problems are revealed. A problem is detected and then written by the members in the organization and finally played. Using one of these theater techniques, the main idea here is to get some attention to the detected problem in order to have some awareness by the audience (members in the organizations). Thus, opportunity to face with some painful realities, secret competitions, behaviours would be possible and they would watch and analyze their behaviours performed by others on stage from different angles. It is very important to define the perception of audience for the sake of theater to be affected. Main change should be in the audience's frame of mind. In other words, play should be configured

by the members (audience) point of view. During the play, audience watch the daily work routine, communications between members and endless arguments. In this way the reality divides into two; actual reality and theatrical reality (Schreyögg ve Höpfl, 2004:697-698).

Theater Using in In-Service Trainings into Organizations

Theater has positive effect on personal development. Especially during the school years theater helps students' development in many ways. Dramatization technique let students' fantasy world improve. Kavcar (1985), indicates that dramatization can be applied in the lessons especially in Turkish (language lessons) and literature. He stresses the benefits of dramatization technique in his article.

During pre school education; story telling, group conversation, dramatic plays take place. Dramatic plays are the most effective way in the process of mother tongue learning. Those plays provide communication and interaction between children. They try to learn their future roles by acting "as if". By the mean time they learn how to control feelings and have opportunity to show problems and anxiety. That kind of plays improve children's human relations in a positive way and also gain some problem solving skills. Thus, a healthy socialization emerges (Kavcar, 1985:32).

In the general education, interaction is needed for children and adults in every aspect of life and the quality of this interaction is very important. Fine Art education which are very effective on gaining and accelerating cultural, linguistic, social, mental etc. development for children and adults provide inter-disciplinary interaction. It provides perceptive, cognitive and informative education to individuals (Adıgüzel, 1994).

Without any creative-oriented lessons during the general education, people may be affected in negative way in their future business life. If organization asks them to be act spontaneous, they will have hard time since they are educated with memorization methods. They will want to stick to the rules and resist to be flexible. They will be only decision implementers (Bil, 2012:1). However, successful organizations would want to work with members who are able to have decision making skills.

Most of the organizations set some boundaries for its members. Rules let people act between those boundaries and especially in business life those boundaries block creativeness of members. Orders giving in business life let members stay away from creative-oriented decisions or actions. That kind of organizations with no vision perceive creative-oriented people as a threat. Managers have fear of losing their positions. Therefore, they would want to work with members who has no decision making skills and the one who can easily be controllable. That's why managers try to block creativeness of members.

Creative oriented trainings in Turkey has newly gained importance. Especially in the hotel sector, routine work circle and the effects of it on members can be easily observed. We can not expect creative actions from a housekeeper who cleans rooms every day. It is not possible to expect creative actions from a waiter/waitress also. Doing the same thing everyday let them loose their creativeness. Therefore,

periodically job rotation and creative oriented trainings should be applied to those members in order them to gain some flexibility in business life.

Trainings like creative drama, forum theater, invisible theater, obsessed theater and image theater would improve creativeness, help members to know each other more and harmony between them increase. It can be said that by applying that kind of trainings in organizations would increase the rate of members who can give decisions with different conditions. Bil (2012) has done a research with the members working on service sector and found out that communication and body language trainings with creative drama techniques are effective by means of “friendship, harmony, team spirit and trust” more than classical way of training. He also found out that members with creative drama training tend to perceive in-service trainings significantly more positive. In another words, members tend to enjoy more from those trainings and have more benefit. In-service trainings are perceived as boring time periods and they become more participative and fun by these creative-oriented techniques.

Using theater as a tool in the in-service trainings may let members analyze themselves from outside view, look into events from different point of view, meet in common thinking, strengthen communication and emphatic skills. Moreover, in the process of introducing a new product and during special occasions, theater may develop team spirit and organizational unity and solidarity. Organizational culture may be affected in good way. Those trainings should be encouraged in educational organizations too. Many organizational problems like members’ problems, communication quality development, manager-teacher problems/communication, manager-student problems/communication, teacher-student problems/communication etc. may be analyzed and solved by them. For sometime there is a protocol accepted between Çağdaş Drama Derneği (Modern Drama Association) and Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (National Education Ministry) aiming to apply creative drama in-service trainings for teachers and managers in schools. Members gathering in a fun ambiance for same targets will be more motivated. Motivated members will increase productivity.

In the theater as organizations approach, theater may define; organizational roles, job description, strategies and also may make organizational understandability better. Accepting and building organizations as a theater stage may make and develop behaviour styles clear, set authority and command limitations proper, and create a culture. Theater plays should be created in detailed according to education level of members, culture, geographic characteristics. Otherwise, the perception of play would be difficult and misunderstandings may emerge. This would lead audience get bored, unwilling, tend to judge this method in negative way. Beside, those methods should not be applied very often. Curiosity and hunger for those methods by members should be aroused in order not to loose attention for them after sometime.

CONCLUSION

Theater is not just an art for stage. It can be done in different ways and different ambiances. Today it is very wide-ranged used. It can be used for children's personal and educational development in classrooms as a method and also used as an art for their socializations. It can be used in organizations to train members and to analyze the organization itself for better understanding. Theater is a tool for members to observe themselves from outside angle. No doubt that Brecht had developed his theater approach without illusion and let audience can see behind and beyond the story. He pointed out the social problems and aimed to have some awareness on audience. With his technique called alienation he broked the illusion and let audience think and critic about what is going on the stage. He inspired proletarians and some organizations. Theater in this respect can be used to change behaviours, attitudes and even world. Theater can take the role "rebuilding".

It is a very important issue that only experts related with this area should take place in those educational matters. Unfortunately, many people who take little education declare themselves as expert in Turkey. They harm to this sector very badly because their inadequate skills direct others mind wrong and therefore the impression of this area is affected badly. Managers think that it is useless and boring method. Belief for those methods would decrease.

Business world should be informed through scientific meetings. Scientific outputs should be shared with business world and the managers/businessmen should be convinced about the benefits. To convince businessmen, researches related with this subjects should be done and introduced to business world via some events. As ampirical researches increase interaction with business world will be increase also. It means ear to ear marketing strategy may be useful and the opportunity to apply that kind of trainings will be more possible.

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