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## METHOD OF CONTACT IMPROVISATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF PERSONALITY

### Annotation

*The article deals with the phenomenon of contact improvisation, which has recently received considerable attention in the world of choreographic art. Characteristic features of this dance technique are considered by the author; the idea of the influence of contact improvisation on the communicative skills of personality is justified from a scientific and theoretical point of view.*

**Key words:** *modern choreography, contact improvisation, communication skills, dance, psychology, pedagogy of choreography.*

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## ТҰЛҒАНЫҢ КОММУНИКАТИВТІК ДАҒДЫЛАРЫН ІСКЕ АСЫРУДАҒЫ СУЫРЫП САЛМА ӘДІСІ

### Аннотация

*Мақалада әлемдік хореографиялық өнерде соңғы кезде кең қызығушылыққа ие болған импровизация феномені қарастырылған. Автор берілген юи технологиясының сипаттамаларын қарастырды және ғылыми-теориялық тұрғыдан импровизациялық тұлғаның коммуникативтік дағдыларына байланысты импровизацияның әсері туралы идея негізделген.*

**Түйінді сөздер:** *Заманауи хореография, қарым-қатынас импровизация, коммуникативтік дағдылар, би, психология, хореография педагогикасы.*

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## МЕТОД КОНТАКТНОЙ ИМПРОВИЗАЦИИ В РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ КОММУНИКАТИВНЫХ НАВЫКОВ ЛИЧНОСТИ

### Аннотация

*В статье рассмотрен феномен контактной импровизации, получившей в последнее время широкий резонанс в мировом хореографическом искусстве. Автором рассмотрены характерные особенности данной танцевальной техники, с научно-теоретической позиции обоснована идея о влиянии контактной импровизации на коммуникативные навыки личности.*

**Ключевые слова:** *современная хореография, контактная импровизация, коммуникативные навыки, танец, психология, педагогика хореографии.*

«Dance is the only art are the stuff of which it is made of which we serve ourselves» [1].  
American dancer and choreographer, Ted Shawn

The modern world is characterized by a rapid process of popularization of free dance. Such concept as free dance arose at the beginning of the twentieth century and identified avoiding the conventionality of classical forms of dance.

As a result of these changes, through improvisation and creative searches in free dance, many techniques that, as a rule, include their own philosophy, principles, and methodology of performing, have emerged in one century.

The technique of “contact improvisation” before us comes into contact with the solution of the problem of communication skills. This technique confirms its relevance, according to the fact that one of the most important requirements in social implementation is the presence of communication skills.

The general scientific method was chosen by us as the main research method: analysis of the literature on the research problem, generalization, comparison of empirical and theoretical data. We relied on the works of researchers in the field of modern choreography, such as V.Yu. Nikitin, S. Zdor, M.A. Martynova, A. Rakhmanova.

At the present time, where society has the opportunity to easily get the necessary information via the Internet, such skill as “ability to communicate” is becoming increasingly valuable and rare. However, this is only one of the problems of communication. Criteria below could be attributed to the characteristics of social communication between people:

Types of character of the personality. If a person is an introvert, it is difficult for him to form social connections and it is uncomfortable in an unfamiliar society.

Psychological and physical clamps. The roots of such clamps usually extend back to childhood. This is a mistrust in society, lack of confidence, as well as non-acceptance of personality, etc.

The section of psychology naturally does not stand still in the XXI century, which is considered the century of discoveries in all areas. On the problem of communication skills, various training courses are being conducted, works are written and studied, and many techniques are practiced. And one of the most effective techniques in the implementation of communications is the method of contact improvisation.

The history of the formation of contact improvisation dates back to the 1970s, however, at the early stage of formation, the goal and idea of

creating this technique were in the search for new choreographic forms. At the same time, its influence and connection on the sphere of psychology were not considered yet.

The birth and the further development of this technique is associated with the name of the American choreographer Steve Paxton (1939). We will dwell in more detail on the history of the formation of contact improvisation. The beginning of the use and occurrence of contact improvisation can rightly be considered the performance of “Magnesium”, where Steve Paxton in tandem with the dancers contacted each other throughout the action using various contact methods (throwing, lying, lifting, etc.). Compared to the first performance, where only men took part, the choreographer included dancers of both sexes to the next one. Then the group learnt the principles of the previous performance during two weeks, experimented in pairs and simultaneously practiced and introduced the technique of contact improvisation to the public through five-hour performances at the John Weber Gallery in New York. Steve Paxton described this period of his life as follows: “When in 1972 a group of dancers began to work in contact improvisation, it was a research of possible ways of interacting through touching. Worked out movement was irrational, intuitive, and led to contingencies and unforeseen situations” [2].

The further step was that S. Paxton, together with the dance group, got on the tour, first in the territory of the United States and then in Europe, where they did not only perform, but provided master classes. Due to the fact that the direction was newly appeared, the whole performance was in an informal setting: the lack of musical accompaniment, the absence of stage costumes, the seating of the audience around the stage, the changing and unusual structure of the performance itself. Thereafter, Paxton, together with his students, organized the first group practicing contact improvisation called “Re-Union”, whose members met once a year to hold tour with performances and master classes.

It should be emphasized that the techniques used in setting the first performances, Steve Paxton borrowed from martial arts such as aikido, tai chi, as well as from the dance and therapeutic technique Body Mind Centering, developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. Though, in developing the technique of contact improvisation, the choreographer focused more on the physical and psychological interactions of the dancers, and the above techniques were used by him at the initial phases of his teaching activities.

In modern times, the popularity of contact improvisation techniques is so great that it splited off long ago from classical systems and is used as a separate form of dance. Contact improvisation has such a well development due to its functionality in using (sports, acting, in the social sphere, team building, trainings, etc.). The majority of opinions come down to the fact that the technique we deal with has an impact of therapeutic purposes, aimed

at the development of personality, on the other hand there are supporters whose opinions say only about the physical contact of two bodies.

The main idea of the last supporters involves the study of physical capabilities and the search for variability of contact methods: “This point of view came from the creator of CI Steve Paxton, who associated CI with biomechanics, gravity, and proposed to separate the “physics” of the body from its “chemistry” (emotions, sexuality, cognitive processes) at the ideological level and to use only the first in contact dance” [3].

The opposite opinion is related to the perception of contact improvisation as a means for developing personality traits, a pervasive work with the conscious and subconscious: “Cynthia Novak, author of one of the most famous books on contact improvisation, says that the atmosphere of the early 70s was “an era of openness and meeting groups” and the popularity of meeting groups contributed to the acceptance of contact improvisation” [3].

The basic principles of contact improvisation were developed in the manual “The mastery of the choreographer in modern dance” of Vadim Yurievich Nikitin, the Russian choreographer in modern choreography. We had studied and analyzed it, and established the connection of techniques with the communicative skills of the individual:

1. The first principle treats the following: “The movement follows the displacement of the point of contact between the bodies of partners” [4, p.135]. This principle implies partnership between the participants, because their main task is to keep a point of contact where it is very important to understand each other by continuum transfer of touching.

2. “To feel through the skin. Almost permanent physical contact between partners aims to use all body surfaces to support own weight and partner’s weight” [4, p.135]. The second principle covers topics such as trust and responsibility. In the process, a person completely trusts his body weight to a partner, that is, he acquires the skill of trusting others through working with body weight, but at the same time he must be ready to accept the body weight of his partner, thereby demonstrating responsibility.

3. The next principle specifies such concept as “Overflow. The attention is given to body segmentation and movement simultaneously in several directions. The consistent inclusion of body parts in combination with their message in several different directions” [4, p.135]. The constant change of the position and direction of movements in the body teaches us to stay focused on the present moment. Focusing on what is running at the moment is used in many therapies.

4. “The feeling of movement from the inside. Orientation and attention on body’s interior space” [4, p.135]. The process of studying the requirements and features of the physical and spiritual body occurs through this principle.

5. “Use of spherical space (360 degrees). Three-dimensional trajectories in space, spiral and curved rounded lines of body movement” [4, p.135]. In other words, the fifth principle is aimed at working with bodily clamps, at revealing own boundaries and creative potential.

6. “Following inertia, weight and flow of movement” [4, p.136]. The essence of this principle is freeing hypercontrol of the situation, others and yourself particularly.

7. “The implied presence of audience” [4, p.136].

8. “A dancer is an ordinary person. The acceptance of a behavioural or natural state of affairs, dancers generally avoid movements clearly identified with traditional dance techniques and do not differentiate between daily and dance movements” [4, p.136]. Similarity to daily life distinguishes contact improvisation from other forms of dance, which also allows you to practice dancing without age, gender and social restrictions.

9. “To let the dance happen” [4, p.136]. The mentioned principle is explained by the rejection of evaluative actions in the dance, in relation to you and to the partner. This approach is often applied in psychology, in allowing the acceptance of what is happening, the environment without evaluation.

In an article on the topic “The therapeutic potential of Contact Improvisation” a psychotherapist, a member of the Association of Dance Movement Therapy, Alfiya Rakhmanova summarized the responses of the participants in contact improvisation groups and compiled a range of reasons why people practice this technique:

1. The acceptance of the image of the “physical I”.
2. The need for free and spontaneous self-expression.
3. Awareness of the hidden sides of your personality.
4. The need for communication, for new forms of communication.
5. Discovery of resource states.
6. Acceptance by other people.
7. Belonging to the group.
8. Closeness, intimacy.
9. Building the boundaries of the personal space.
10. Self-acceptance, gaining self-esteem.
11. Work with fears. [3].

According to the responses of practitioners, we can observe the theory about the positive impact of contact improvisation not only on the communicative skills of the personality, but also on the positive impact on the personality as a whole. Conversely, we determined the developmental functions and possibilities of contact improvisation:

1. Regular choreography practices effect on improving physical condition.
2. The individual reveals his own creative potential through dance im-

provisation, through the influence of music and bodywork.

3. The topic of psychological aspect is addressed in the form of gaining self-esteem, confidence and self-perception.

4. Contact improvisation is successfully used in the issue of the relationships with the world around.

Certainly, observing the great potential of choreography regarding the development of a person's identity, experts in the field of practical psychology began to apply it as a therapy for people with various problems. Dance movement therapy appeared as a result. Meanwhile, the society was able to have new opportunities applicable in the rehabilitation system. So, in the process of therapy, clients can dance different kinds of dances at a spontaneous, intuitive level. In this context, practitioners began frequently to apply a similar, but more systematic technique - contact improvisation. Moreover, in the process of working by using innovative methods of dance technique, psychologists revealed its salutary effect.

Contact improvisation is a multifaceted system in the world of modern choreography. The analysed examples can also be applied in improvisation with a partner. This specificity can be considered as the solution of a number of tasks related to the formation of communication skills of the personality.

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