

The Role of Dramaturgy Criticism in The Development of Drama

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Abstract: This study investigates the role of dramaturgy criticism in the development of Karakalpak drama during the post-independence period. Using qualitative textual and comparative analysis, the research examines critical works by prominent literary scholars and theater critics, including S. Allayarov, Q. Kamalov, B. Tursinov, O. Satbaev, K. Kurambaev, and J. Esenov. The study analyzes their evaluations of dramatic texts and theatrical productions, focusing on artistic structure, historical interpretation, psychological characterization, and stage performance. The findings indicate that dramaturgy criticism has significantly contributed to improving dramatic writing, preserving national theatrical traditions, and promoting artistic dialogue between playwrights, directors, and audiences.

Keywords: Dramaturgy criticism, Karakalpak drama, literary criticism, theater studies, dramatic literature, stage performance, dramatic analysis.

Introduction:

Dramaturgy occupies a special place within the system of literary arts because it exists at the intersection of literature, theater, and performance. Unlike other literary genres, a dramatic text is not complete in written form alone; it fully realizes its artistic meaning only through stage interpretation. This dual nature makes dramaturgy both a literary and a performative phenomenon, requiring a specific type of critical approach that combines textual analysis with theatrical evaluation.

In the context of Karakalpak literature, drama has historically developed unevenly compared to poetry and prose. While epic poetry and narrative fiction have received sustained scholarly attention, dramaturgy often remained on the margins of literary studies. One of the key reasons for this imbalance is the relative scarcity of systematic dramaturgical criticism, especially in earlier periods. Literary scholar Q. Kamalov rightly pointed out that the underdevelopment of literary criticism directly affects

the slow progress of drama itself, since without critical evaluation artistic forms cannot mature effectively [3].

After the period of independence, however, a noticeable shift occurred in the cultural and literary landscape. The emergence of new intellectual freedom allowed critics, writers, and theater practitioners to revisit classical works and evaluate contemporary dramatic productions with greater openness. This period saw the publication of numerous reviews, analytical essays, and interpretive articles addressing both the textual and performative aspects of drama. Critics such as S. Allayarov, Q. Kamalov, B. Tursinov, O. Satbaev, K. Kurambaev, and others actively engaged in assessing new plays and theatrical performances, contributing to the gradual formation of a more structured dramaturgical discourse.

Despite this positive development, dramaturgy criticism still faced significant challenges. Many reviews tended to remain descriptive, focusing on plot summaries rather than deep structural or aesthetic analysis. In some cases, critical writings lacked

methodological consistency or theoretical grounding, which limited their analytical effectiveness. Moreover, there was often a gap between theatrical practice and academic criticism, meaning that stage innovations were not always adequately reflected in scholarly discourse.

At the same time, the role of criticism extended beyond evaluation. It became a mediating force between playwrights, directors, actors, and audiences. Through reviews and analytical articles, criticism helped identify artistic strengths and weaknesses, encouraged reinterpretation of classical themes, and supported the adaptation of dramatic works for modern audiences. In this sense, dramaturgy criticism functioned not only as an analytical tool but also as a formative element in the evolution of national theater culture.

Therefore, studying the role of dramaturgy criticism is essential for understanding the broader development of Karakalpak drama. It allows us to trace how critical thought influenced artistic production, how theoretical limitations affected interpretation, and how dialogue between critics and practitioners shaped the trajectory of theatrical art in the post-independence period.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach aimed at examining the role of dramaturgy criticism in the development of Karakalpak drama. The main focus is not on statistical measurement, but on interpreting critical texts and identifying recurring evaluative patterns, conceptual approaches, and aesthetic judgments within literary criticism.

The primary research material consists of published critical articles, theatrical reviews, and analytical essays written by Karakalpak literary scholars and critics. These include works by S. Allayarov, Q. Kamalov, B. Tursinov, Q. Sultanov, O. Satbaev, K. Kurambaev, J. Esenov, and other contributors to dramaturgical discourse. Special attention is given to their analyses of plays such as “Koklen Batir,” “Bes kúnlik dúnya” and several other stage productions that were actively discussed in the post-independence period.

The research employs textual analysis as the main method. Each critical source is examined in terms of its structure, argumentative logic, and evaluative criteria. This includes identifying how critics interpret plot

development, character construction, ideological content, and stage performance. Particular emphasis is placed on the relationship between dramatic text and theatrical realization, since many reviews address both literary and performance dimensions simultaneously.

A comparative method is also used to analyze differences in critical perspectives. For instance, the interpretations of the same play by different critics are compared in order to reveal variations in methodological approach, theoretical depth, and aesthetic judgment. This allows for a clearer understanding of how dramaturgical criticism functions as a multi-voiced discourse rather than a unified system.

In addition, contextual analysis is applied to situate critical writings within their historical and cultural environment. This helps to explain how ideological frameworks, particularly earlier influences of socialist realism, shaped both dramatic production and its critical reception. It also allows for tracing the gradual transition toward more psychological and socially oriented interpretations in later periods.

Finally, interpretive synthesis is used to integrate findings from different sources. By combining individual critical perspectives, the study identifies broader tendencies in dramaturgy criticism, including its strengths, limitations, and evolving role in shaping national dramatic art.

RESULTS

The analysis of dramaturgy criticism in Karakalpak literary discourse reveals several important tendencies that demonstrate both its contribution to the development of national drama and the challenges that continue to limit its effectiveness.

First, the study indicates that dramaturgy criticism became considerably more active during the post-independence period. Literary scholars and critics, including S. Allayarov, Q. Kamalov, B. Tursinov, O. Satbaev, Q. Sultanov, K. Kurambaev, and J. Esenov, published numerous reviews, analytical essays, and literary portraits devoted to contemporary dramatic works and theatrical performances. Compared with earlier decades, these publications reflected a growing interest in evaluating not only dramatic texts but also their theatrical realization.

One of the most significant examples is S. Allayarov's

detailed analysis of "Koklen Batir." His study goes beyond ordinary literary review by comparing the dramatic text with historical documents and oral traditions. The critic demonstrates that playwright M. Daribaev creatively transformed historical events while preserving the central heroic image. At the same time, Allayarov reveals that certain changes in the play, particularly the ending, resulted from ideological intervention rather than historical authenticity. For instance, historical records indicate that Koklen Batir was captured and executed, whereas the revised theatrical version presents his death as a heroic sacrifice on the battlefield in accordance with the aesthetic principles of socialist realism. This example illustrates how literary criticism can expose the interaction between historical reality, political ideology, and artistic creativity.

Another important contribution of Allayarov concerns his stylistic analysis of the play. He notes that "Koklen Batir" successfully combines prose and poetic dialogue, creating a distinctive dramatic language. According to the critic, the lyrical songs are organically integrated into the dramatic action rather than functioning as decorative elements. Folk songs, humorous verses, and lyrical dialogues strengthen emotional expression and preserve national cultural traditions within the dramatic structure. Such observations demonstrate that criticism was increasingly concerned with artistic form as well as ideological content [2].

The results also demonstrate an increasing interest in psychological drama. O. Satbaev's review of Q. Khalmuratov's "Kewil kólenkesi" focuses primarily on the emotional and moral transformation of the protagonist Majit. The critic describes the father's reunion with his son not simply as a family episode but as a profound psychological conflict involving guilt, loneliness, forgiveness, and spiritual reconciliation. Satbaev argues that the emotional climax of the play lies not in external action but in the inner transformation of its characters. Such criticism reflects the gradual movement of Karakalpak dramaturgy toward psychological realism [7].

A similar tendency appears in Satbaev's discussion of "Bes kúnlik dúnya." While appreciating the playwright's intention, the critic questions the credibility of the dramatic conflict and suggests alternative approaches to character relationships that could strengthen the

dramatic logic. Rather than rejecting the play entirely, he offers constructive recommendations concerning character motivation, conflict development, and dramatic composition. This demonstrates that criticism increasingly functioned as professional guidance for playwrights instead of merely praising or condemning literary works [8].

An outstanding example of socio-satirical criticism is found in the reviews of M. Nizanov's comedy "Eki dúnyaníń áweresi." Both K. Kurambaev and J. Esenov argue that the comedy successfully exposes corruption, greed, hypocrisy, and moral degeneration within society. They emphasize that the playwright combines realistic situations with fantasy, dreams, hallucinations, and grotesque exaggeration. According to Esenov, this artistic synthesis resembles the satirical traditions established by Gogol in *The Inspector General* and by Erkin Vahidov in *Altin diywal*. The critics maintain that such exaggeration strengthens rather than weakens realism because it reveals the hidden moral defects of society through comic symbolism [4;6].

The reviewers further illustrate their arguments by analyzing individual dialogues. For example, the protagonist Artiq continues to worry about wealth and material possessions even after death, while his wife openly confesses her previous romantic relationship beside his coffin. Critics interpret these scenes not as unrealistic fantasy but as artistic devices exposing greed, hypocrisy, and spiritual emptiness. Such analyses demonstrate the critics' ability to connect dramatic dialogue with broader ethical and social problems [6].

The study also identifies valuable contributions in theatrical criticism. B. Tursinov's works on J. Aymurzayev's "Aygul-Abat" emphasize both the literary significance of the drama and its theatrical realization. He argues that the play occupies a unique place in Karakalpak dramaturgy because it creatively develops themes comparable to Shakespearean tragedies while preserving national artistic traditions. Tursinov also highlights director T. Allanazarov's innovative staging methods and the actors' growing professional mastery. His studies illustrate how literary criticism can simultaneously evaluate dramatic literature, directing techniques, and theatrical performance [9].

Similarly, Tursinov's analyses of S. Khojaniyazov's

dramatic works examine not only dramatic composition but also the creative process behind repeated revisions of the plays. His criticism emphasizes that successful dramaturgy emerges through continuous artistic refinement rather than initial perfection.

However, the analysis also reveals several persistent weaknesses. Many published reviews remain descriptive rather than analytical. Some articles devote excessive attention to plot summary while neglecting characterization, symbolism, dramatic structure, or theatrical language. For example, reviews of productions such as "Qiyamet Erkek" and "Temir Qatin" contain extensive factual descriptions but provide limited literary or aesthetic interpretation. In these cases, criticism functions more as newspaper reporting than as scholarly analysis [5;10].

The research further shows that methodological inconsistency remains a significant problem. Certain critics evaluate plays primarily through ideological criteria, whereas others emphasize historical accuracy, theatrical effectiveness, or psychological realism. The absence of a unified critical methodology produces uneven standards of evaluation across different publications.

Despite these shortcomings, the overall findings demonstrate that dramaturgy criticism has played a decisive role in the evolution of Karakalpak dramatic literature. It has preserved the historical memory of theatrical productions, stimulated artistic discussion, encouraged playwrights to revise and improve their works, and promoted deeper understanding of dramatic aesthetics among readers, audiences, and theater professionals. The accumulated body of critical literature therefore constitutes an indispensable component of the development of modern Karakalpak dramaturgy.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that dramaturgy criticism has played a much broader role than simply evaluating dramatic texts. Throughout the post-independence period, literary criticism became an important mechanism for shaping the artistic direction of Karakalpak drama by influencing playwrights, directors, actors, and audiences. Although the quantity of critical publications remained relatively limited

compared with poetry and prose criticism, their qualitative contribution to the development of dramatic literature is evident.

One of the most significant findings is that the most successful examples of dramaturgy criticism combine literary analysis with theatrical interpretation. Critics such as S. Allayarov and Q. Kamalov did not restrict their evaluations to plot summaries or general impressions. Instead, they examined historical authenticity, dramatic composition, language, characterization, stage performance, music, and stenography as interconnected elements of dramatic art. Such multidimensional analysis corresponds with modern theories of theater criticism, which consider drama a synthesis of literature and performance rather than an exclusively literary genre.

The analysis of "Koklen Batir" clearly illustrates this tendency. Allayarov's comparison of historical documents with the dramatic text demonstrates that criticism can reveal the creative mechanisms through which historical reality is transformed into artistic representation. His observations concerning ideological revisions introduced during the Soviet period also confirm that dramatic literature cannot be interpreted independently of its political and cultural environment. Similar conclusions have been reached in contemporary literary studies, which argue that dramatic texts often reflect negotiations between artistic freedom and dominant ideological discourse.

Another important observation concerns the increasing attention paid to psychological realism in modern criticism. Reviews of "Kewil sayasi" and "Bes kúnlik dúnya" indicate a gradual transition from evaluating external dramatic structure toward interpreting characters' internal emotional experiences. This shift reflects broader developments in contemporary dramatic literature, where psychological conflict increasingly replaces external action as the primary source of dramatic tension. O. Satbaev's analyses particularly demonstrate that criticism has become more sensitive to issues of family relationships, moral responsibility, loneliness, forgiveness, and social alienation.

The study also shows that humor and satire occupy a central position within modern Karakalpak dramaturgy. The critical reception of M. Nizanov's "Eki dúnyanıń

áweresi" illustrates how satire functions not merely as entertainment but as an instrument of social criticism. By comparing the comedy with Gogol's *The Inspector General* and Erkin Vahidov's *Altın diywal*, critics place Karakalpak drama within a broader literary tradition of grotesque realism. Such comparative criticism expands the intellectual context of national literature and strengthens its connection with world dramatic heritage.

At the same time, the research identifies several weaknesses that continue to hinder the development of dramaturgy criticism. A considerable number of reviews remain descriptive and journalistic rather than analytical. Instead of investigating dramatic composition, symbolism, characterization, or theatrical language, some publications merely retell the plot or express general opinions about performances. As a result, these reviews contribute little to the theoretical understanding of dramatic art or to the professional development of playwrights and theater practitioners.

Another limitation concerns methodological inconsistency. Different critics apply different evaluative principles without clearly defining their analytical frameworks. Some prioritize ideological interpretation, others historical authenticity, while still others focus mainly on stage performance. Although such diversity reflects intellectual plurality, it also complicates the establishment of consistent scholarly standards for dramaturgy criticism. Future research would therefore benefit from greater integration of contemporary literary theory, theater studies, narratology, performance studies, and cultural criticism into the analysis of dramatic works.

The findings further suggest that the shortage of professional theater critics has significantly influenced the quality of dramatic criticism. As noted in the analyzed materials, only a limited number of specialists consistently engaged with dramaturgy, while many reviews were written by poets, journalists, or literary scholars whose primary expertise lay outside theater studies. Consequently, analyses of directing techniques, acting methods, stage movement, visual aesthetics, and audience reception often remained incomplete. Strengthening professional education in theater criticism could therefore substantially improve the quality of future critical discourse.

Despite these limitations, the overall contribution of dramaturgy criticism remains highly significant. Critical publications preserved valuable documentation of theatrical productions, encouraged revisions of dramatic texts, stimulated creative dialogue between playwrights and directors, and introduced audiences to aesthetic and ethical dimensions of dramatic literature. Constructive criticism, particularly that offered by S. Allayarov, Q. Kamalov, B. Tursinov, O. Satbaev, K. Kurambaev, and J. Esenov, demonstrates that literary criticism can function not merely as an instrument of evaluation but also as a creative force that actively shapes the evolution of national dramaturgy.

Overall, this study confirms that the development of Karakalpak drama is closely connected with the development of dramaturgy criticism. As dramatic literature continues to evolve, the role of theoretically grounded, objective, and professionally informed criticism will become increasingly important for promoting artistic innovation, preserving cultural identity, and ensuring the sustainable growth of national theater.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of dramaturgy criticism in the development of Karakalpak drama during the post-independence period by analyzing the critical works of leading literary scholars and theater critics. The findings demonstrate that although dramaturgy criticism has developed more slowly than the criticism of poetry and prose, it has nevertheless made a significant contribution to the artistic and theoretical advancement of national dramatic literature.

The analysis shows that dramaturgy criticism performs several essential functions. It evaluates the artistic quality of dramatic texts, examines the relationship between historical reality and literary imagination, assesses theatrical productions, and encourages playwrights to refine their creative work. The studies of critics such as S. Allayarov, Q. Kamalov, B. Tursinov, O. Satbaev, K. Kurambaev, and J. Esenov illustrate that constructive criticism can influence not only the interpretation of dramatic works but also their subsequent development and stage realization.

The research further reveals that the most valuable critical studies combine textual analysis with theatrical evaluation. Reviews of Koklen Batir, Kewil sayasi, Bes

kúnlik dúnya and Eki dúnyanıń áweresi demonstrate that effective dramaturgy criticism considers dramatic structure, characterization, historical context, directing, acting, music, and scenography as interconnected components of theatrical art. Such comprehensive analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of both literary and performance aesthetics.

At the same time, the study identifies several persistent challenges. Many published reviews remain descriptive rather than analytical, often emphasizing plot summaries instead of theoretical interpretation. The limited number of professional theater critics and the absence of unified methodological approaches have also restricted the development of dramaturgical criticism. These shortcomings indicate the need for stronger integration of contemporary literary theory, performance studies, and comparative dramatic criticism into future research.

Overall, the findings confirm that dramaturgy criticism serves not merely as an evaluative practice but as an active force in the evolution of Karakalpak dramatic literature. By fostering dialogue between playwrights, directors, critics, and audiences, criticism contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage, the improvement of artistic standards, and the formation of a dynamic national theatrical tradition. Future studies should expand the comparative analysis of Karakalpak dramaturgy with other Turkic and international dramatic traditions while employing interdisciplinary methodologies to strengthen the theoretical foundations of dramaturgical criticism.

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