Intervention of Spoken Word in Making Contemporary Dance Choreography

Muhammad Fairul Azreen bin Mohd Zahid[1]*, Mohd Kipli Abdul Rahman[2],
Ahmad Kamal Basyah Sallehuddin[3] and Syahrul Fithri Musa[4]

[1]*LASALLE College of the Arts, School of Dance and Theatre, Singapore*
[2,3&4]*College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia*

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*Corresponding Author
Muhammad Fairul Azreen Mohd Zahid
E-mail: fairul.zahid@lasalle.edu.sg

Co-Author(s):
Author 2: Mohd Kipli Abdul Rahman
E-mail: mohdkipli@uitm.edu.my

Author 3: Ahmad Kamal Basyah Sallehuddin
E-mail: akamalbasyah@uitm.edu.my

Author 4: Syahrul Fithri Musa
E-mail: sfitri315@uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The integration of spoken word into contemporary dance choreography has gained increasing attention as a means of addressing complex societal and political themes. However, scholarly understanding of its function as a choreographic tool remains limited. **Methods:** This study adopts an auto-ethnomethodological approach, combining principles of embodied cognition and performative analysis, to investigate the choreographic process behind the work 1st APPEAL. The analysis draws on the choreographer's reflective practice and experiential insights. **Results:** The findings reveal that the selective use of spoken word can enhance the thematic resonance and conceptual clarity of a choreographic piece. Furthermore, dancers' comprehension of the spoken content was found to significantly influence the embodied realization of choreographic intent, suggesting a reciprocal relationship between verbal articulation and physical expression. **Discussion:** These results underscore the importance of integrating spoken language intentionally within dance to preserve the expressive balance between movement and text. The spoken word emerges as a dynamic choreographic tool that deepens interpretive engagement and narrative coherence in performance. **Conclusion:** This study contributes to the evolving discourse on choreographic methodologies by highlighting the potential of spoken word to bridge meaning and motion. It offers valuable insights for choreographers seeking to expand their performative vocabulary through the thoughtful integration of language and movement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Spoken word is a dynamic and interactive art form that involves the oral performance of poetry or literary works, distinguishing it from traditional poetry, which is typically read silently (Banes, 2019). With roots in ancient oral traditions, spoken word gained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s through poetry slams and open mic events (Wengrower et al., 2019). According to Schneider and Scales (2015), spoken word performances are often dynamic and interactive experiences. While spoken word is frequently associated with social and political commentary, the genre encompasses a broad range of themes and styles. Some artists incorporate spoken word into choreography to explore personal emotional experiences, whereas others utilize spoken word to address issues like racism, gender inequality, and social

justice. The integration of spoken word in contemporary dance choreography enables choreographers to convey complex narratives that may be difficult to express through movement alone, particularly when addressing heavy issues (O'Sullivan, 2007). As Allies (2015) noted in "Dance and Spoken Word: Making Polos," spoken word intervention highlights the limitations of movement in conveying meaning. Fiske (1990) supported this idea, suggesting that the human body can be challenging to "read" due to its inherent ambiguity.

This paper argues that the incorporation of spoken word into choreography facilitates a dynamic equilibrium between movement and language, ensuring that neither medium dominates the other. This integration serves as an alternative choreographic tool, particularly effective in conveying complex narratives. The strategic use of spoken word can augment the emotional resonance of a performance, introducing layers of depth and nuance that may be difficult to achieve through movement alone (Fortuna, 2016). By combining spoken word with choreography, dancers and choreographers can explore innovative storytelling methods and convey social messages or commentary (Zarrilli, 2017), including emotions that may be difficult to express through bodily movement. The incorporation of spoken word can add variety to a performance, engaging audiences through both verbal and nonverbal elements. Ultimately, the decision to include spoken word in a dance piece depends on the choreographer's artistic direction and goals. By examining the relationship with spoken language as well as considering how it influences broader cultural contexts, this research can gain valuable insights into lived experiences and their sociocultural significance. Goodridge and Goulish (2006) note that the incorporation of spoken word into contemporary choreography has been driven by various factors, including an increasing interest in interdisciplinary art forms as well as a desire to discover new modes of expression.

Choreographers have also been encouraged to incorporate spoken word into their works as a response to social and political concerns. For instance, Bill T. Jones' "Still/Here" (1995) explores themes of mortality and illness through dance, music, and spoken word. Crystal Pite (2016) also uses spoken words in her contemporary choreography. Pite's work "Betroffenheit" utilizes spoken word to explore the impact of trauma, providing viewers with an intensely personal and robust experience. By integrating spoken word and movement, choreographers can delve deeper into complex themes and emotions (Pite, 2016). This approach is exemplified by Liz Lerman (2006), who uses spoken words to provide context for her dances. Similarly, the Urban Bush Women dance company frequently incorporates spoken words to share stories about the experiences of black women. Other notable choreographers, such as Okwui Okpokwasili (2014) and Mette Edvardsen (2011, 2014), have also successfully combined dance and spoken word to explore themes like sexuality, power dynamics, and personal history. In my own choreographic work, 1st APPEAL, I employ Auto Ethnomethodology to address the intervention of spoken word in exploring heavy societal and political issues in Malaysia.

To effectively convey complex narratives in contemporary dance, the integration of spoken word serves as a powerful tool for enhancing communicative clarity and emotional resonance. This study investigates the role of spoken word within choreographic practice, using the author's original work, 1st APPEAL, as a case study. A central challenge in this process lies in selecting the most appropriate linguistic elements to convey the intended message. To address this, a systematic method was developed, focusing on the identification of key "nouns" and "verbs" to structure spoken interventions (see Figure 1). For example, in the phrase *"They are going to Italy,"* the segments *"They are going"* (verb phrase) and *"to Italy"* (noun phrase) were chosen for repetition, emphasizing both action and destination. This approach acknowledges the limitations of bodily expression, particularly in conveying abstract or specific concepts such as geographic locations—an issue that aligns with Allies' concern regarding the potential for meaning to be "lost in translation" in purely physical performance. Within this context, spoken word functions not only as a narrative aid for the audience but also as a cognitive anchor for performers, ensuring that the choreographed movement retains its intended semantic depth. Assigning spoken elements to dancers also revealed an intriguing interplay: movements were often interpreted as either "nouns" or "verbs," depending on the associated verbal cue.

Although the integration of spoken word into contemporary dance has gained increased scholarly and artistic interest, there remains a paucity of research exploring its application within specific cultural frameworks, particularly in Southeast Asia and Malaysia. While several choreographers have employed spoken word to enhance narrative expression, the nuanced challenges associated with word selection, audience interpretation, and cultural resonance warrant further investigation. The preliminary method of utilizing grammatical categories—namely nouns and verbs—as structuring devices shows potential, yet it requires additional theoretical refinement and empirical validation. Furthermore, the influence of spoken word on audience engagement, comprehension,
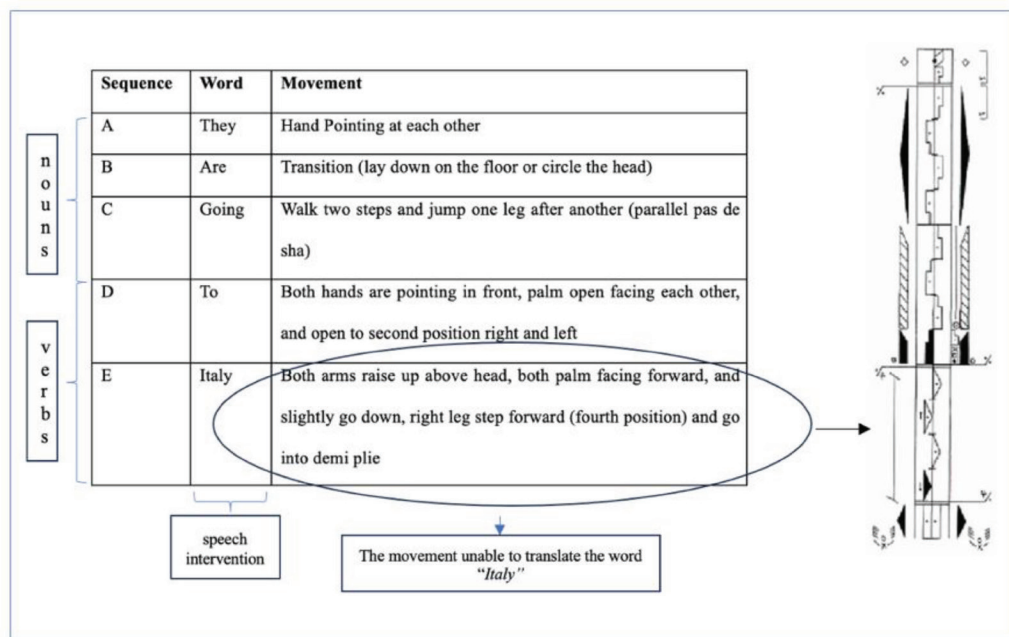
Figure 1: Words separation and movements sample

and emotional response remains underexplored. Although anecdotal and artistic evidence suggests that spoken word may intensify emotional connection and clarify complex themes, systematic analysis of its impact is still lacking.

To address these research gaps, this study proposes the following guiding questions:

1. How can spoken word be effectively integrated into contemporary dance choreography to communicate complex narratives and emotions within specific cultural contexts?
2. What are the benefits and challenges of incorporating spoken word into dance performances, and what strategies can choreographers employ to navigate these challenges?
3. In what ways does spoken word influence audience engagement and understanding, and what are the implications for choreographic practice and performer interpretation?

Through this inquiry, the research seeks to expand the growing discourse on multimodal storytelling in dance and to offer practical insights for choreographers and performers working at the intersection of movement and language.

2. Methodological Approach

This study employs an **auto-ethnomethodological research approach**, offering a reflexive and detailed examination of the researcher's own creative process as a choreographer, specifically in relation to the development and performance of *1*st *APPEAL*. Auto-ethnomethodology enables a nuanced exploration of practice-based inquiry, foregrounding the researcher's subjective experiences, biases, and assumptions as integral components of the research process. This methodological choice is particularly appropriate given the study's emphasis on introspective analysis and artistic decision-making within the choreographic context.

The methodological section outlines the overall research design, including participant selection, data collection strategies, and analytical procedures. Special attention is paid to the role of the researcher in qualitative inquiry, emphasizing the importance of **reflexivity** and positionality. Strategies such as **member checking**, **peer debriefing**, and the use of **thick description** were employed to enhance the **trustworthiness**, **validity**, and **credibility** of the findings.

To further support the rigor of the study, expert feedback was solicited from a seasoned practitioner in the field of dance and choreography. This expert provided critical evaluation of the choreographic tools and methods used in *1*st *APPEAL*, thereby contributing to the evaluative depth of the research.

The methodological framework integrates **qualitative**, **exploratory**, **cognitive**, **post-textual**, **contextual**, and **empirical approaches**, each informing different aspects of the investigation. The auto-ethnomethodological approach is conceptually divided into two main components: (1) a **cognitive approach**, which focuses on the creative process during the making of *1*st *APPEAL* and functions as the exploratory design for

primary data collection; and (2) a **post-textual analysis**, which interprets the embodied knowledge derived from choreographic practice and translates it into textual form.

The cognitive dimension of the study is grounded in Flower and Hayes's (1981) **Cognitive Process Model of Composition**, which identifies three core components of writing: the writer's long-term memory (knowledge of topic, audience, and context), the task environment (including rhetorical problems and the developing text), and the writing process (planning, translating, and revising). This model offers a **non-linear, hierarchical** framework for understanding the dynamic and recursive nature of creative composition, which is equally applicable to choreographic creation.

By employing this integrated framework, the study aims to systematically address the central research problem and achieve its primary objective. The **exploratory process** is embedded within the auto-ethnographic framework, facilitating real-time analysis of artistic practice. The **post-textual component** enriches the auto-ethnomethodological inquiry by offering interpretive insights and methodological robustness. These two approaches collectively support the study's four core outcomes: identifying the research problem, conducting background, empirical, and contextual investigations, and, ultimately, refining the research focus through iterative reflection grounded in practice.

3. Identifying the Words Using "Nouns" and "Verbs"

To start the process in making choreography 1st APPEAL. Identifying the words "nouns" and "verbs" is very important because it is parts of the important material to be put inside the choreography. The words separation, using "nouns" and "verbs" will act as a tool to be used by the choreographer and dancers which later, it will be decided by the choreographer to be used as spoken, or movements. In the early process, the "nouns" and "verbs" also will be named as *key indicators, and* those choices of words can be played around like a puzzle to ensure the dancers itself able to embody those words together with movements.

Most of us have been taught that a "noun" is a word that refers to a person, place, or thing. While this is true, it is helpful to think of things as a broad category; a *thing* does not have to be something that you can hold in your hand (a mountain, a place, and a feeling can all be *things*), for examples:

– *They going to know*. (*They* is a noun and refers to a person or a thing)
– *I want to go to Italy*. (*Italy* is a noun and a place)

– *They not going to know*. (*Know* is a noun and a thing represents feelings)

Nouns can also refer to an animal a quality, an idea, or an action as in "She is not going to know". Nouns can name someone or something generally (*dog, seashore, friend*) or specifically (they refer as they, we, who, whom and so forth). Although most "nouns" consist of a single word, some do not: *school bus, Italian dressing* are all nouns. Nouns can be singular "*kepercayaan kepada Tuhan*"[1] with the word "*Tuhan*" (God) referring to one (depending on religion and beliefs) or plural ('two *gods*'), although some nouns take the same form regardless ('one *god*,' 'two *gods*'). Nouns can also refer to concepts (*information*) that cannot be counted and singular entities "*kedaulatan undang-undang*" (rules of law) that cannot be pluralized. Sentences can have one noun "*They* going to know." or more than one "*They* going to know and *God* forgive *you*." but some sentences don't have any for example "*objection*!" which can be considered as a transition or taken over by movement.

Verbs are easier to identify because they are words that indicate action or a state of being, words like: write, run, tell, have, be, look, feel. Verbs are the only part of speech that gets conjugated, that is, that changes tense in order to indicate a particular time frame. For example "they not *going to* know" going to can refer to a doer which is the possibility to do something or have a tendency to make something. The subject of a sentence acts (s) indicated by the main verb; that is, the subject is the doer of the action: "*kesopanan* dan *kesusilaan*" (courtesy and morality) which means both "*kesopanan, kesusilaan*" is an action that must do or must have where the word "*and*" can be a link or transition which later can referred to movements or even can be used to be spoken. Both "nouns' and "verbs" as tools to choose the word to be spoken or not to be spoken will be the main implementation throughout the process. The choreographer used these tools to identify the word before starting the choreographic making. This process can happen before the process or even during the process, however, discourse needs to be conducted to ensure the dancers are able to understand before they portray it in the choreography.

This study adopts a cognitive approach to choreography, particularly in the creation of *1st APPEAL*, by employing a linguistic framework that distinguishes between "nouns" and "verbs." This categorization facilitates the identification and selection of keywords to be either spoken or embodied through movement.

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[1]*Kepercayaan* kepada *Tuhan* is referring to believe in god, which is taken from the Malaysia National Pillars (Rukun Negara)

Nouns—representing people, places, objects, ideas, or concepts—and verbs—denoting actions or states of being—serve as fundamental elements in constructing a coherent and expressive narrative. Through this analytical process, choreographers are able to make deliberate choices about which words to emphasize verbally and which to convey kinesthetically, thereby enhancing the clarity and communicative power of the performance.

The effectiveness of this method lies in its ability to deepen the dancers' interpretive understanding of the choreographic intent. By isolating and categorizing key terms, dancers gain insight into the narrative structure and thematic emphasis, enabling them to embody these words with both physical precision and emotional resonance. Critical to this process is the ongoing dialogue between choreographer and performers, ensuring that the intended meanings are comprehensively understood and accurately conveyed. During the choreographic development of *1*st *APPEAL*, the choreographer systematically analyzed sentence structures to extract salient nouns and verbs for spoken delivery or movement expression. This entailed careful consideration of contextual relevance to optimize the impact and intelligibility of the performance. Ultimately, this approach supports the creation of a compelling and cohesive choreographic narrative that communicates effectively with the audience.

4. Choreographic Approach in Choosing Important Words to be Spoken

The Intervention of spoken work will make the spoken words and movements balance and possibility to prove that the function of movements is not "gone," as Lepecki mentioned, but rather helps to transmit heavy issues, concepts, and ideas inside the choreography. According to Cambridge Dictionary: Translations & Thesaurus (2023), A specific person or authority does not necessarily indicate the importance of "nouns" and "verbs" in spoken words. Rather, it is a generally accepted principle among linguists, writers, and educators that strong and precise "nouns" and "verbs" are essential for effective communication either in spoken or body language. This principle is based on the idea that 'nouns' and "verbs" carry the most important information in a sentence. This first exploration will answer the problem of comprehension towards the intervention of spoken words, where the function of the intervention is to help the dancers when movements cannot transmit a situation (O'Sullivan, 2007, p.12). The challenge in using "nouns" and "verbs" as a tool in making contemporary choreography is that language can obscure movement. In other words, if the spoken word is too prominent, it will interfere with the dance itself and make it difficult for the

dancers to deliver the entire performance. It is, therefore, important that choreographers make important choices through "nouns" and "verbs" deliberately, taking into account the specific needs of the dancers involved in the work.

The process of choosing what word is important has to be done together with the choreographer and dancers. In this process, the choreographer must understand, that there is no "I", it will always be "We". The goal is to see whether the dancers can embody the cognition through the spoken words, and movements and how the choreographer can identify the dancer's own words that they speak, and blend well with the movement given. From 1, each word is important and this is because each word will always connect each other with "nouns" and "verbs". Now the question is how to identify the choice of the word is important and how this word can make the dancers easily understand and able to portray the work well.

When the spoken word is used with movement in modern choreography, it creates opportunities and challenges. So that these differences stay in the way, choreographers need to find a middle ground between the two art forms that let them complement each other and say the same thing, (De Keersmaeker, 2019). The importance of "nouns" and "verbs" in this process provides the ideology of 'not all words will be spoken' and 'not all movements will be abandoned'. Besides, the process of choosing the right word using" nouns" and "verbs" in a way helps the dancers to embody the 1st APPEAL work cohesively.

The current study has applied an exploratory research concept and the process has been divided into three different phases based on the Auto auto-ethnomethodological approach. This phase is based on the studio exploration while making 1st APPEAL choreography. **Phase one** is to create movements in reflection of the spoken word. Each movement represents one word as a direct translation; each word and movement will be interrelated as a direct translation at this stage. The choreographer has given the movement earlier to the dancers by sequences and this sequence represents the words given. Based on Figure 1, the choreographer has investigated and divided the word into "nouns" and "verbs". The choreographer needs to know each word has a connection with the movement. This is what the choreographer refers to as "preparation". The word will be pronounced repetitively to create an image inside the dancer's brain, this is because the choreographer needs to know that the dancers can embody the psychology before they can simulate the word through the body. The repetitive work to be spoken will be carried to phase two.

Throughout the process, even though the movements are already set for the dancers, it is difficult for the dancers to understand and question, whether the movements themselves can portray the word *Italy*. This means it is going to be hard for the dancers to be able to deliver through the body. This is when the intervention of spoken word appears to ensure the dancers can signify the act in those particular sections. Those words much needed to be spoken after several explorations and considering the pros and cons of the spoken word intervention needed. As in Figure 1, the sequences A, B, and C remain as "nouns" and for phase one, the choreographer has used movement as a "noun". Through this first process, it is more flexible, the choice depends on how far the dancers can portray and make the choreographer believe that the dancers have embodied those "nouns" as a movement. However, the output and effectiveness need to be re-evaluated at phase two. Every single word will be separated in alphabetical order which is A, B, C, D, E, and so forth. This is to make sure easier for the choreographer to foresee clearly while playing with the word.

Every decision-making about whether the choice of the word is valid depends on the long-term process. Repeating the same material over and over again helps to make the dancers able to embody that particular section. Through this first phase process, what the choreographer can see is, that the word "*are*" is quite difficult to portray through movements because the word are cannot stand alone. It has to have support to complete the entire word that the dancers need to deliver. For instance, if the dancers only use *Italy* to speak, it might give an idea maybe it is about something happening in *Italy* or what is happening in *Italy*. So the choreographer has tried to include the words "*are*" for dancers to speak, however, they must come together with the movements. the choreographer tries to play around with the word to be spoken and try to balance it so that it will not abandon the function of the movements or what (O'Sullivan, 2007) mentioned it will make the entire section lost in translation. For the piece to be delivered well, the dancers must have a strong understanding of what, how, and why they say those words or what the intention of the movements appears.

Aforesaid mentioned, the process has shown the flexibility of placing and using the word at the right place and at the right time. However, both dancers and choreographers need to understand the function of "nouns" and "verbs". Those tools, basically have been created to make sure the choreographer has the idea of "epiphany" (Gonzales, 2011), in which they have the tool to play around rather than have nothing. The arrangement of what needs to be spoken based on the word depends on how the choreographer plays with the word or "Word Play". This idea of "Word Play" is not only effective in ensuring the effectiveness of the word to be spoken. In 1st APPEAL, the choreographer has split it into three sections, where each section portrays a different 'story'. When the choreographer mentions about different 'story' does not mean the piece itself has a storyline. As mentioned earlier, 1st APPEAL was created based on the eclectic story of political and societal issues in Malaysia. The heaviness of the work itself needed this intervention to ensure the dancers were able to carry the work and deliver it successfully based on the choreographer's needs.

5. Development Process: Co-Ordination Word, and Movement

In phase one, another exploration that the choreographer applied is, combining both "nouns" and "verbs" to be spoken. The actual word is *They are going to Italy* but the choreographer assigns the dancers not to mention the word *Italy*. They need to say the entire word but change the word *Italy* to something synonym or closer to *Italy*. At this stage, the choreographer did not say it was wrong or right yet. This is because the choreographer trying to figure out whether the dancers are able to trigger the embodied psychology. The movement will remain surround the word and what the choreographer said (on standby). As can be seen in Figure 1, the word *know* has been highlighted and the choreographer and dancers explore what can do with the word *know*. and what if change it to *knowing*, what is the difference between *know* and *knowing*? Based on the exploration and discourse between dancers and choreographers the word know can refer to "I know someone" which indicates personal familiarity or acquaintance with the individual in question, suggesting a direct relationship or interaction. On the other hand, *"I know of someone"* implies awareness of the person's existence or reputation, but not necessarily a personal connection or direct interaction. It suggests a more distant or superficial knowledge of the individual. the idea behind this only the words *know* and *knowing* can be played around as a reference to, "*I know someone from Italy*".

The intention behind it probably has changed however, if we look deeper into the meaning it will somehow have a connection. The fragmented of this word which is *know* and *knowing*, has been played around but, the main intention and word is *They are going to Italy*. As the choreographer mentioned to the dancers, yes the word can play around however, it needs to go back to the actual sentence. This is because the sentence carries the actual story on a particular section in 1st APPEAL. The idea
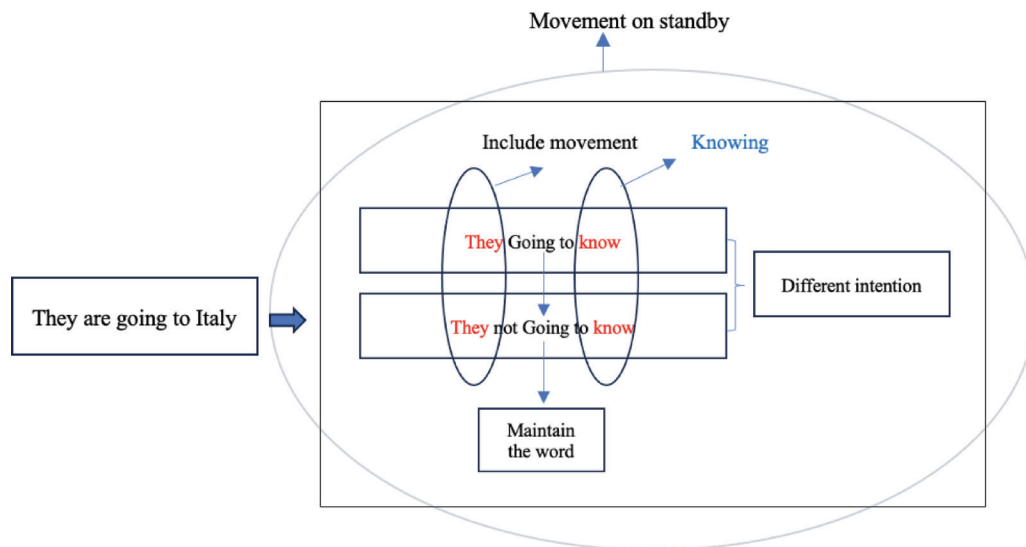
Figure 2: Emphasizing Noun and Verb.

of playing with the word or "Word Play" had a similarity with Edvardsen in Black and No Title where the actual word that she wants to portray or speak is *this is my table*, but she has decided to only mention *table* (repetitively). The entire section when combined, has become different which is it is not what the choreographer wants it. Because of the word *"they are going to Italy"*, *"they going to know"* and *"they not going to know"* differently. However, after several explorations, it's related because it has a story to portray.

In this current process, only one word which is *"they"* has no meaning. It cannot be put in "nouns" or "verbs", however, emphasizing the word *they* many times will trigger the beginning of the next word or what is going to happen next. With that, the embodied simulation will appear because the brain has created the flow of what is going to happen which makes the movement can interframe at any time. The reason why the only word *"they"* is accompanied by movements, is that the word *"they"* is important to emphasize. It is almost like a command and telling to do something, together with feeling and emotion, and the word *"going"* will maintain what it is. The word "going" is not being abandoned, but it can be used to speak when it is needed if the choreographer sees the dancers unable to portray the intentionality of the intervention. In this section, the choreographer has decided to make all the words as important to speak. The dancers have embodied the understanding of what is "nouns" and what is "verbs". It is much easier for them to transmit it and play around throughout the process.

In Phase Two, the choreographer chose the important word to be spoken based on either "nouns" or verbs" in word sentences which means the dancers need to speak one word repetitively. In this phase, the word will only be used partially throughout the process. Only specific words will represent a starter or introduction to the situation. The chosen word will repeatedly be used many times to create the visual for the dancer's brain and body. This process ensures that what dancers say will leave the image and by memorizing those words will transmit clear natural movements to which the dancer will apply the embodied psychology for example:

The word knowing is a choice after selection through the "verbs," which means the "verbs" emphasize the action of knowing something. There is a question from the dancers, which is why knowing can become a "verb"? This is because the word knowing has another sentence kept in the dancer's brain. They know what the next word after the word knowing, it is just they don't pronounce it verbally. The choice of the word itself needs to have a negotiation or mutual agreement as to what will happen and what is the intention behind the word to be used between the choreographer and dancers. As mentioned by Garner, (1994), it is the manner in which the choreographer, and the performers, enter into negotiations/economies/tactical interactivity/ transactions that gives 'identity' to the dance event. The continuous sentence from word somehow has created a signify itself in the dancer's brain. This is from the perspective of embodied psychology which the word already exists in the brain. Once a fringe movement or what they think will remain as one of the signify, and later the embodied psychology now enjoys a fair amount of prominence (Chemero, 2009, pp. 181-195). Aforesaid mentioned, the words "they" and "knowing" can be repeated as often as possible to create an image that the dancers will believe they know something, and they are

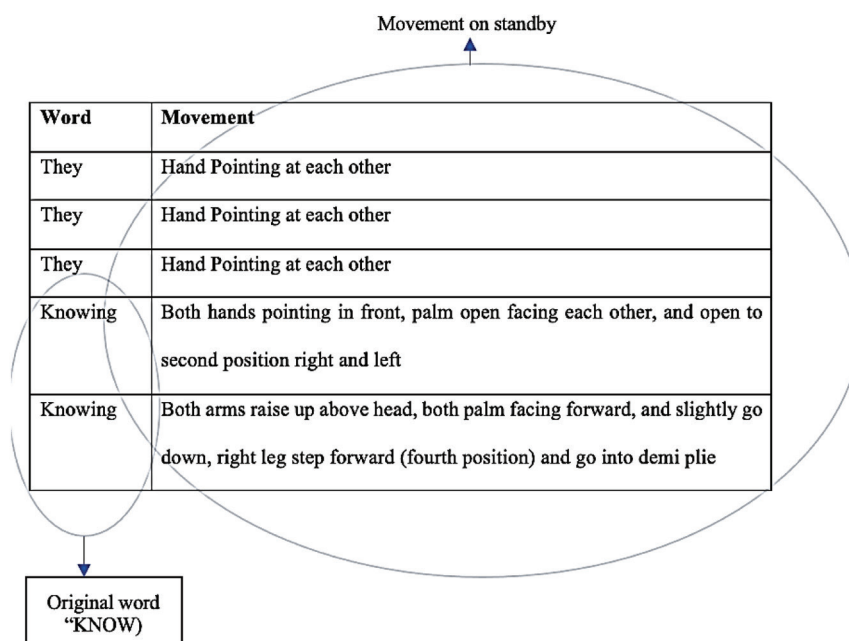| Word	Movement
They	Hand Pointing at each other
They	Hand Pointing at each other
They	Hand Pointing at each other
Knowing	Both hands pointing in front, palm open facing each other, and open to second position right and left
Knowing	Both arms raise up above head, both palm facing forward, and slightly go down, right leg step forward (fourth position) and go into demi plie

Figure 3: Words and movement relation.

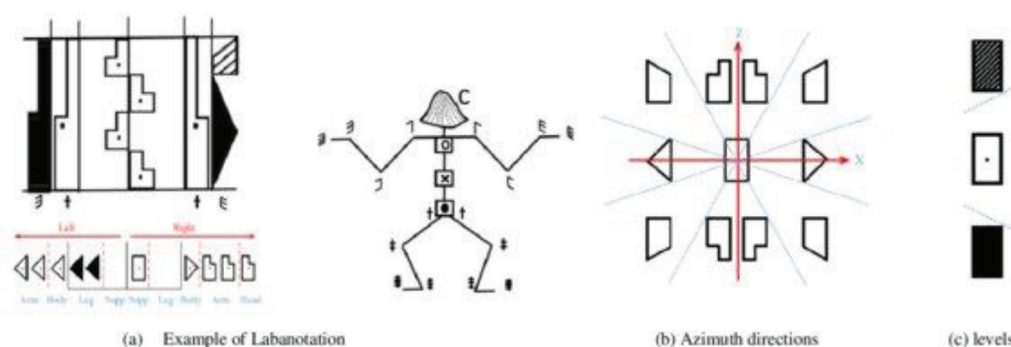(a) Example of Labanotation   (b) Azimuth directions   (c) levels

Figure 4: Labanotation movement sample.

starting to embody the word that they have. The missing word will be done by the movements such as "are", and going and referred to as a "transition" which they are:

- lay down on the floor or circle the head
- Walk two steps and jump one leg after another (parallel pas de sha)

It is also very important for the dancers to know the missing words. In this context, the words "are" sound simple, however, in 1st APPEAL, the words "are" have been used as a transition to the next words. The choreographer believes without this transition, the phrase itself will become incomplete. This will cause the dancer unable to complete or embody the whole section, particularly the sentence given in Figure 3. However, it is a matter of try and error whether the existence of those 'unimportant' words will affect the dancer's embodiment of the entire section. Nevertheless, the word "are" referring to figure

5, the process has been done through movements instead of speech. With that, the word "are" has become a "verb". Through this process, choice-making is very important whether or not to use the word as movements or speech. This must be put as a discourse with the dancers to ensure the dancers build a connection with the word choice because only the person who doing it will understand the feeling of it. It is easy when the dancers speak the word "are" and based on Figure 5, to portray the word "are" is so many, again it is a choice of how the dancers portray the word "are" in their perspective. It can be a long movement phrase, yet it can be a short phrase, for example, stand still and both arms hold the chest. It again, depends on how and what the choreographer wants and the dancer's comfort. In 1st APPEAL, the words refer to what Figure 4 explained. Even though the word "are" disappears (not to speak), but yet throughout the process the dancers repeat the words many times and it triggers
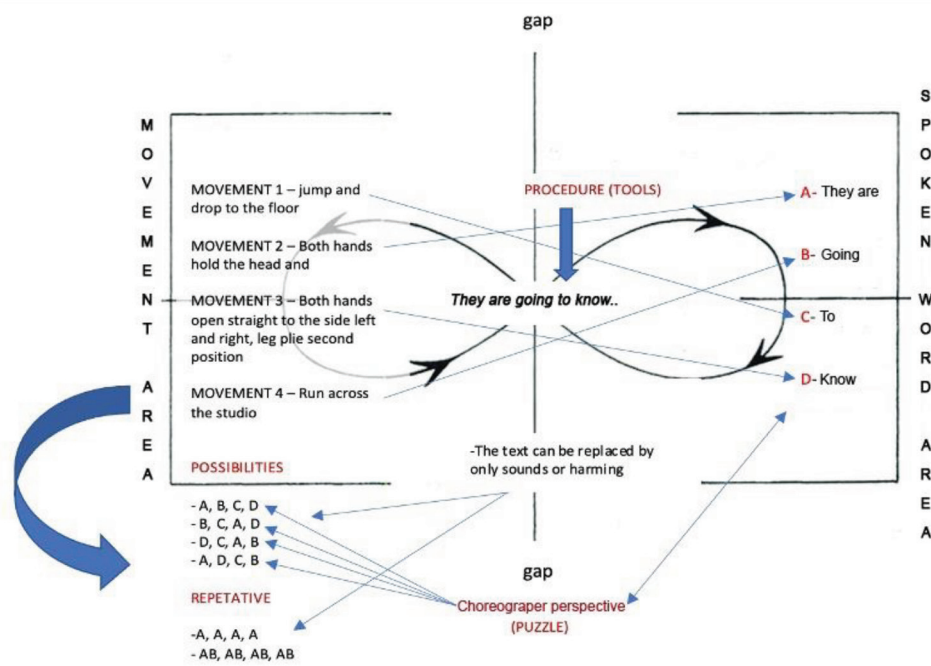
Figure 5: Playing with word and movement
(adopted from the rehearsal process by Richard Schechners)

psychological cognition which remembering and blending well in the brain. The relationship to suggest that the body serves the mind (cognition), such that the external world leads our body to respond in a way that will inform and guide the mental representations that constitute thought For example, Clark's (1998; 1999; 2008) view is more moderate in terms of considering the role of internal representations in cognition and yet still suggests that the interaction of the body and the external world can explain much of what has typically been considered the work of the brain.

This is what Edvardsen has used also in No Title (2011), which will make the disappearance of the word look like it exists because it has created a rhythm in the brain through the sound from the spoken word. However, once the dancer already embodied the cognition, the choreographer can decide whether the movement can become a "verb" or "noun" or the spoken words can become a "noun" or "verb". This experimental process will measure how much the dancers are able to embody that information in the body till they can manipulate the spoken word, and movement based on "noun" and 'Verb" ideology. As referred to in Figure 3, The movement is always on standby which as mentioned it has been created earlier. As mentioned, the choreographer moves to priority because dance itself is about movement (Gonzales, 2009). It has become more flexible and always ready to intervene.

The process of choosing the right words to be spoken using "nouns" and "verbs" is complex in the first place in creating 1st APPEAL. Every word must have its meaning and the purpose to use those particular words. However, in this section, the movement itself doesn't need to be meaningful, but rather more towards the connection between the mind and body. This is because as mentioned earlier, the movement is always there, but it is a matter of what word will trigger the brain to remember the word till it becomes part of their muscle memory. This muscle memory is important because it is related towards connection on embodiment cognition in general. In order to make sure the words itself strong enough to make the brain remember, the choreographer has separated the words using alphabet A, B, C, D, and so forth. This alphabet will make the brain itself remember what alphabet represents the words or sentences. In this process, it will make more easier for the dancers to remember the words to be spoken. In reference to Figure 5, the choreographer has assigned the movement to the words "they are" which the word itself is not necessary to be spoken, but it is more like a reference, or a symbol to ensure the dancers know the movement that referring to the words.

However, the choreographer can or needs to have a discourse with the dancers to ensure that the words to be spoken or the movements to be used, are balanced and not overpowering each other. This is important in order to

Figure 6: Text separation and movements function.

identify the function of the spoken word not to "exhaust" the movement, as mentioned by Lepeski, (2011). It has to come with mutual agreement because, at the end of the day the choreographer needs to understand, that only the dancer's mind and body are able to carry the choreographer's intention. The choices of the word to be spoken and movement can be seen in Figure 5 which in 1st APPEAL, the choreographer decided to do all the movements and speak all the words.

6. Development Process: Using the Ideology of "Playing with the Word" (Word Play)

In 1st APPEAL, the choreographer is not only focused on the word itself. It is about why the word needs to be spoken and involved in the first place. This is because the work in 1st APPEAL is very heavy with political and societal issues. The eclectic political situation that happened in Malaysia has caused the choreographer to come out and refer to the text in Rukun Negara. This is because the text itself has abundant material that is connected to the current situation, for example, the ideology of MADANI[2], Unity Government, and so forth which conclude the

entire situation that happened in Malaysia. This whole process and choice-making need to be transmitted to the dancers clearly. The transmission is also very important because each story or choice will affect the effectiveness of the dancer's ability to embody the whole piece or even section. After all, at the end of the day, the function of the choreographer will disappear or what Barthes, (1977) mentioned, "Death of the Author" once the piece is presented. The word "kedaulatan undang-undang" in 1st APPEAL holds a very significant ideology behind it. The purpose of choreographer uses this word which refers to the "Rukun Negara" because it is related to the situation and conceptual idea behind the work. Each phrase or line in "Rukun Negara" holds its storyline. It is very easy to speak the entire phrase and it is much easier for the dancers to understand. However, this research focuses on the intervention of the spoken word itself which helps the dancers to understand and embody the word instead of verbally speaking the word. It is imperative to identify the chosen text and the word to be implemented in the piece and to be spoken; for example, based on the process conducted, the choice of text needs to be aligned with the understanding of the deconstruction of the "nouns" and "verbs" ideology because, based on Deridda, "the choice of the text/word is essential for choreographers to identify the intention before delivering it either using spoken or movement " see Figure 6 below:

[2]Malaysia Madani (English: Civilised Malaysia) a policy framework and government slogan introduced by the administration of the 10th Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim. The concept focuses on good governance, sustainable development and racial harmony.Malaysia Madani serves as the replacement for Keluarga Malaysia, of the administration of the 9th Prime Minister, Ismail Sabri Yaakob.
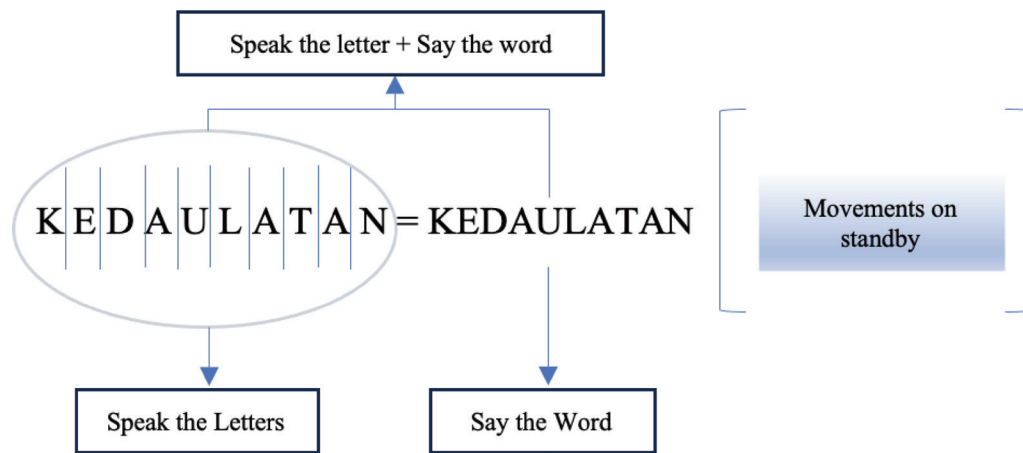
Figure 7: Consonant separation from the text**.**

The whole situation depends on the relevance of the current situation that can be related to the choice of text before it can be spoken by the dancers. This is important especially for the dancers to get a taste of its culture, which refers to the current and political ideas and concepts that the choreographer trying to use. For example, the choice of text from *kedaulatan undang-undang dan…*, they will say these words clearly as a group and add the words "*19th July 2007*" as solo even though the choice of the date is not as a primary but interplay between these words remain as a space for the dancers to continue the next word using their body language to finish the story from the sentences. This situation required the intervention of both "nouns" and "verbs" to be spoken and also to do the movement. both spoken word and movement will pass to each other and take turns to act. After that, another text appears "*itu adalah permulaan…*" In this method, the choreographer deconstructs the text from the original text by using "nouns" and "verbs" based on Phase Two. However, To achieve the exploration, the dancers themselves need to understand where and what is the story or intention of this phrase. After the dancers embody the story and the concept which again refers to the culture that the choreographer uses, it will intervene more clearly for the dancers to use.

In the process of making 1st APPEAL as mentioned in the introduction the chosen word to be spoken needs to be constructed based on the puzzle. They need to be related to each other as a phrase even when it comes to the movements. the continuity from each word needs to have a flow to see the validation of the situation or what is happening. Indeed, the spoken word did not overcome the movements entirely, however, because the text itself is very issue, sometimes the word needs to be spoken entirely together with movements. At this stage, the "noun" and "verbs" methods have been applied. The word "*kedaulatan undang-undang*" in 1st APPEAL does not necessarily need to be pronounced or spoken in a full

word, it can be delivered only the first-word "*kedaulatan*" and the remaining can be spelled (speak) or the action through movements. for example:

Besides the methods described above, the repetitive text also is one of the methods to be implemented in this work. In The Pledge 2.0, the movement is articulated through the composition of the text. This is done, for example, by the manner in which "*kedaulatan*" in "*kedaulatankedaulatan, kedaulatan, kedaulatan, kedaulatan,*" raises slightly upwards and how the dancer's pronunciation of "*objection, objection, objection, objection…*" while the dancers will repetitively drop the body on the floor many times and smile. The word objection appears because of the intention of the word "*kedaulatan*" where some people believe in the "*kedaulatan undang-undang*" (rules of law) and some people do not. Same as in this piece where not all dancers say the word objection because it depends on whether the dancers believe in the "*undang-undang*" or not. In this second phase, the choreographer hasn't interfered 100% yet. The word "*objection*" itself came through the process of improvisation and it came from one of the dancers when they felt they disagreed with the "*undang-undang*" in Malaysia.

Through this phase, the dancer's choice of words must base on the word given as in Figure 3 however, if the dancers feel the word does not relate to the current situation of emotional feeling towards what has happened in their life, it means the dancers unsuccessful to embody the word itself even though the word came from the dancers. In every single process when the dancers speak the word, the choreographer will ask why and what is the relation with the existing word. However, every word that comes out from the dancers, has to align with the ideology of what is "nouns" and "verbs" in that phrase. They have a choice to choose what and which word they want to pronounce. In the observation, the choreographer has asked the dancers several times, 'You must have a
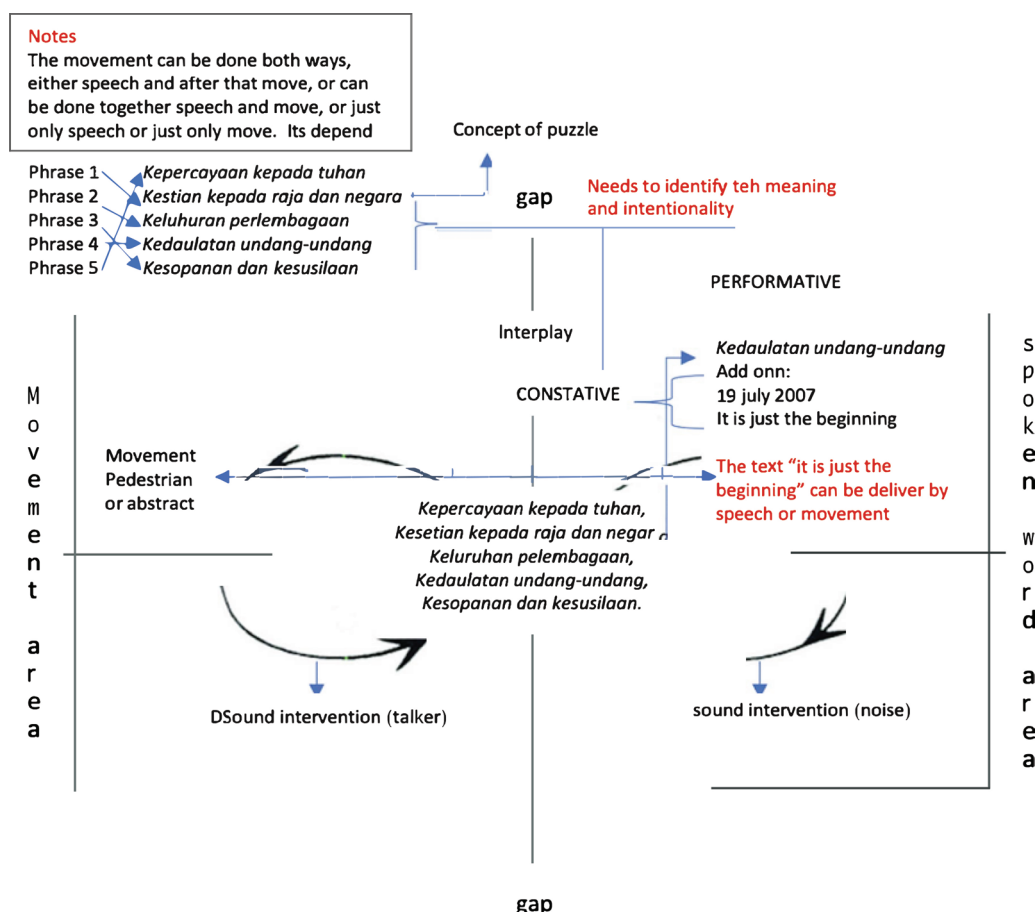
Figure 8: Rehearsal process and combining words and movements

(adopted from the rehearsal process by Richard Schechners)

text or phrase that you refer to' because, without the full sentences, the word itself becomes invalid because of unable to see where is the "nouns" and "verbs".

As previously discussed, dancers must be able to embody and internalize the contextual meanings conveyed through the words provided by the choreographer. This embodiment enables dancers to move and articulate those words through physical experience. While choreographers may select words rooted in nouns and verbs, this lexical categorization alone does not guarantee that dancers will fully comprehend or physically express their intended meanings. Consequently, the dancer's body may struggle to carry the narrative or fulfill the intended purpose of the choreographic intervention.

In real life, physical experience often relies more on observable and measurable elements than on internal sensation. For instance, heavier objects are typically perceived as more significant than lighter ones (e.g., full bottles of milk versus empty ones), and such embodied associations influence cognitive processes related to value and meaning (Barsalou, 2008b). The choreographer provides the linguistic tools—namely, the selected nouns

and verbs—but the dancer's interpretation may diverge from that of the choreographer. This potential dissonance underscores the importance of shared experience; dancers must strive to experience the words as the choreographer envisions them.

The repetition of key phrases serves to emphasize their role as signifiers within the situation, reinforcing the dancer's communicative intention. While the choreographer may grant dancers a degree of interpretive freedom, this freedom must be underpinned by mutual understanding. A central question emerges: why should the choreographer allow such freedom, especially when, according to Besio (2009), external interpretations can be disregarded in the process of auto-ethnomethodology? In this context, however, the choreographer intentionally opens space for collaborative interpretation, as dancers' insights are deemed valuable for data generation and creative exploration.

Moreover, repeated variations of phrases function as linguistic counterparts to repeated movement sequences within the body. The rhythmic structure of these phrases elicits a kinetic response, facilitating embodiment of the utterance. According to Howard

Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1991), methods evolve through maturity and accumulated experience. Accordingly, each group must investigate activities that connect meaningfully with the given text, ensuring that the interpretation remains grounded in the studied phenomena. All spoken phrases must align precisely with the contextual conditions necessary for meaningful speech acts. Again, repetition plays a critical role in this phase, as each element is inherently interconnected and should not be viewed as an isolated unit or linear process.

7. The Combination of Spoken Word, and Movement

In the **final phase** of this exploration, the choreographer integrated all previous phases to demonstrate the effectiveness of spoken word intervention as a choreographic tool. This culmination showcased the diverse applications of spoken word on a larger scale, within a twenty-minute choreographic piece. Through this integration, the choreographer quantified the frequency of spoken words and movements, revealing the spoken word's role as a "helper" to movement. Simultaneously, the spoken word facilitated dancers' embodiment of cognition, rendering the entire piece more cohesive. The strategic use of "nouns" and "verbs" justified the intentionality and meaning of spoken words and movement, leveraging J.L. Austin's speech act concept. Here, "nouns" corresponded to performative acts, while "verbs" represented constative acts. This framework ensured that chosen words were judiciously selected to facilitate dancers' embodiment of cognition.

The success of these innovative tools in contemporary choreography hinges on the dancers' embodiment of cognition, while the choreographer employs an embodied cognition perspective to evaluate the balance of interventions. The integration of spoken word with movement in 1st APPEAL necessitates a multifaceted understanding of the spoken words' and sounds' significance. The rehearsal process Figure 1 serves as a platform to merge these elements, requiring a comprehensive grasp of each word's meaning, intentionality, and significance. For instance, phrases like *"kedaulatanundang-undang"* and *"kesopanan dan kesusilaan"* possess distinct meanings that dancers must comprehend and convey.

To facilitate a profound performance, dancers must first embody each word, contextualize its origin, and connect with its personal significance. As a choreographer, it is essential to provide dancers with a rich understanding of the story behind each chosen word, transcending mere movement and spoken words

(Gonzales, 2019, p. 117-118). A choreographer's role is to ensure that all elements are meticulously arranged and connected to convey a clear narrative and message. In this process, the choreographer must remain open-minded, acknowledging that the outcome may differ from initial expectations, unless the choreographer themselves dictates every movement and step. Each task assigned to the dancers requires careful interpretation, allowing for both the dancers' and choreographers' perspectives to emerge. By equipping dancers with essential knowledge, they can embody each task effectively, fostering a cohesive and impactful performance.

1st APPEAL also has a similarity In Becoming King (Gonzales, 2018), the use of the text itself is not a new creation, it is more like a deconstructive text from "Mak Yong" for example, "mako iyo la Kau raja Antara ke sore, mako sinitempat Aku naktunjukkekuasaan Aku puloknyo"(I am the sole king, and I wish to demonstrate my power to everyone at this moment)this phrase usually has beenusing as "UcapTetap"or compulsory speech for Pak Yong[3] to show their ability, power, andcommands to certain events or situation. It is referred to a leader who campaigns to ensure heor she can win the people's hearts. Gonzales uses this particular phrase to deliver the speech toensure it matches the concept of "election".

What distinguishes 1st APPEAL is the unpredictable use of spoken words, which can occur before, during, or after movement, with the primary goal of delivering performative or constative acts. Conveying text through body language poses a significant challenge, as it invites the audience to engage critically and complete the narrative puzzle. Dancers are encouraged to interpret the text in their own way, without being bound by a single "correct" meaning. This approach empowers dancers to transmit information confidently, as they have the autonomy to shape their own understanding of the text. As J.L. Austin (1962) noted in "Performative Action," performative sentences can be distinguished from assertions, highlighting the complex relationship between language and action (p. 6). In 1st APPEAL, the choreographer provides a permanent movement sequence, serving as a reference point for improvement. The strategic use of spoken words enhances the narrative, describing situations and circumstances that unfold. This approach is grounded in Austin's (1962) "speech act" theory, which categorizes linguistic acts into constative and performative divisions. According to Derrida (2015), constative acts convey meaning, explaining or showing

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[3]Pak Yong is the principal role (lead male character) in Malay Theatre Traditional, from one of the states in Malaysia, (Kelantan). However, the Mak Yong form also have been played in several countries in southeast Asia such as Thailand, Siam, Indonesia, and so on.

something, while acknowledging the potential for misinterpretation. The success of this approach depends on the choreographer's intention, underscoring the importance of clear artistic vision.

The meaning behind the lines in the choice of word may differ according to needs and individuals. Roland Barthes' approach in writing entitled "Death of the Author" explains that every word written or created has various meanings depending on the needs, situation, individuals as well as communities. According to what Barthes said, the essential meaning of a work depends on the impressions of the reader, rather than the "passions" or "taste" of a writer, (Barthes, 1967). In the 1st APPEAL, each line has a different essence from the choreographer's original ideology in current issues or any situation that happened surrounding, including, the issue of corruption, freedom of speech, equal rights, and so on. It is also can be as simple as the word "let's start", a simple word can be described with a thousand meanings. For example, the group studied the word "*perlembagaanharusdipatuhi kerana…*", they will mention these words clearly as a group and add the words for example "*19th July 2007", that was when the incident happened*". The main reason the choreographeruses this phrase is because of the existing fact that that moment has become an unprecedented tragedy that involved former prime minister of Malaysia Najib Razak and his wife Rosmah Mansor toward corruption issues, however, it can be interpreted differently by the audience depending on their breadth of knowledge towards the current issues. Through this exploration referring to Figure 8, the spoken word "*19th July 2007*" appeared. This is because the word it has been considered as extrinsic. This means, that the spoken words help the dancers to memorise the connection of the "*perlembagaanharusdipatuhi kerana…*". The dancers can juggle between these two words until the brain can decide which spoken word is better for the body. Once the mind is used to these two particular spoken words, the embodied psychology will take over and later it will transmit to the embodied simulation.

The narrative arc of this work is intentionally varied, with sections that shift focus exclusively to movement. At these junctures, the intervention of spoken word becomes secondary or even disappears, allowing movement to take precedence. The "noun" and "verb" elements, previously prominent, now assume a subordinate role as movement dictates the trajectory. However, when spoken word is reintroduced, the choreographer must exercise careful consideration. Dancers are not permitted to recite entire phrases; instead, they must select specific words from the "nouns" and "verbs" that resonate with the constative and performative sentences. The tone and intonation of these spoken words should evoke a distinct emotional response

from each dancer. This approach facilitates a nuanced creative process, where each word is thoughtfully paired with a specific movement. Nevertheless, it also presents challenges, as the chosen words play a subtle yet pivotal role in conveying the intended narrative and emotional resonance.

The incorporation of the text from *"Rukun Negara"* (National Pillar of Malaysia) in 1st APPEAL serves as a guiding framework for the choreographer, ensuring that the performance remains true to its initial concept. The text provides a foundation for the choreographer's ideas, sparking the creation of additional words and themes. In 1st APPEAL, the choreographer draws inspiration from the five parts of the *"Rukun Negara"* text, using each part to convey a distinct perspective on the meaning behind the words. This approach aligns with the constative concept, which involves explaining or describing things (Austin). As Austin notes, "Every word that exists needs to have a meaning to ensure that the message conveyed is effective" (Austin). This effectiveness is achieved through action, which is rooted in the interplay between constative and performative understanding. As Derrida (2010) observes, "We cannot put limits between performative and constative because everything can be blended." In 1st APPEAL, the choreographer interprets each line of the *"Rukun Negara"* text as an (untold story) related to current issues in Malaysia. This interpretation is facilitated by the intersection of constative and performative elements, enabling the choreographer and dancers to embody the spoken words and sounds with conviction. Notably, the choreographer does not use the *"Rukun Negara"* text as a rigid framework, but rather as a reference point that gives rise to additional words and themes. External elements, such as dates and places, are incorporated to support the dancers' understanding and to help them cohesively relate the story, much like assembling a puzzle.

Each of these stories is taken from events that are considered incompatible with the arguments made by the leaders. In Malaysia and even around the world, there are differences among certain class groups of people whereas in Malaysia we are divided into T20 (upper class), M40 (middle class), and B40 (lower class) groups. Usually, the B40 group tends to be unheard of when expressing their opinions which may give the leadership a boost. 1st APPEAL tells a story of political instability and injustice in dealing with the murder of a Mongolian citizen, *AltantuyaShaaribu* who was killed in October 2007, (Azam, S. M. F., & Razzaq, A. 2014) and the case of the death of *Muhammad Adib Mohd Kassim* who did not have a proper defence after his death in December 2017, and the injustice of judiciary system (Wong, C. H., & Hassan, H.2020). If we look closely, there are so many
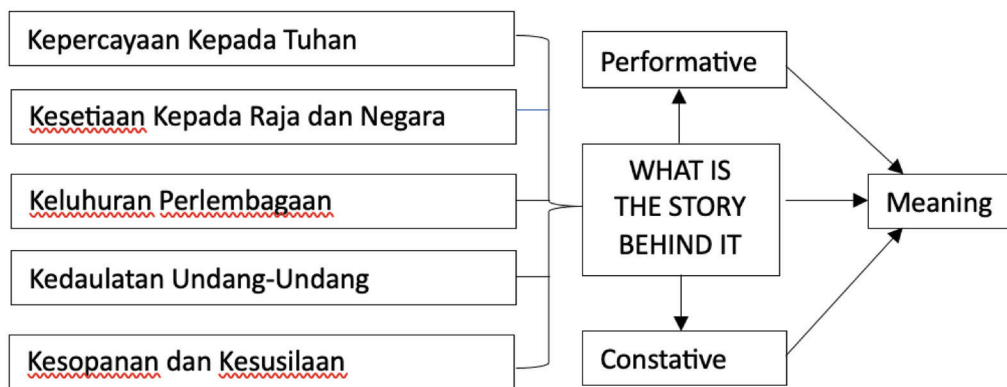
Figure 9. Words and Meaning Relation.

cases that can become a subject focus in creating this piece. However, the choreographer has selected these three entities as the main reference material.

Furthermore, these three cases are classified as high-profile cases in court but haven't been resolved till today. The reference of the words in *"Rukun Negara"* again as a guideline to narrow down till the meaning of word choices came out from the choreographic tools mentioned earlier. Figure 9 above shows that the Performative words and Constative will appear as the main approach to digging for the actual meaning in every word choice came from the choreographer. Each line of the verse carries the implied meaning of each of the dancer's actions and behaviours of reflecting on it.

Each line of the verse carries an implied meaning that informs the dancers' actions and behaviors. For instance, the phrase *"Kepercayaan kepada Tuhan"* (Faith in God) prompts the dancers to perform movements that reflect on the contradiction between this principle and the act of killing, which is a grave offense in many religions. This reference alludes to the murder of *AltantuyaShaaribu*, whose perpetrator was believed to be a Muslim, making the act a profound sin. Through this text, the creator incorporates additional information, such as the date and place of the murder. The inclusion of *"19 July 2007"* is not merely a transitional device, but rather a deliberate reference to the date of the incident. In this context, the choreographer employs the word as a performative utterance, while the receiver (dancer) initially interprets it as a constative statement. However, as the dancers grasp the meaning of each word, they can transition from merely receiving the words to owning them, thereby becoming performative agents. During the performance, the dancers explicitly utter the phrase *"kepercayaan kepada tuhan,"* transforming the sentence into a "noun" and rendering it the central focus. As explained in Chapter Three, this approach relegates the movements to secondary importance, akin to "verbs." Nevertheless, the dancers' understanding of the meaning and intention behind the words remains paramount.

The dancers' belief in God transforms the word into a performative utterance, solidifying its meaning. This embodiment becomes "felicitous" (valid) as the meaning connects with the dancers' thoughts, enabling them to effortlessly manipulate subsequent words. This process is evident in the dancers' spontaneous use of phrases like *"your god," "My god,"* and *"our God."* These external words evolve into performative "nouns," conveying a shared intention. Although the words differ, their intention remains similar, with slightly distinct meanings. The dancers' authorization of these words validates their use. However, to ensure consistency, the dancers and choreographer must discuss and agree on the words and their meanings. This agreement is crucial, as it aligns the choreographer's and dancers' thoughts, facilitating a unified portrayal of the intended meaning. This process relates to the rules and procedures of speech acts, which comprise both performative and constative elements. Constative speech acts involve words that can be true or false, whereas performative speech acts reference actions. In essence, constative speech acts state "if," while performative speech acts state "*does*." The interplay between these two elements is essential for the choreographer and dancers to convey a unified intention. By adopting a cognitive approach, dancers move beyond passively receiving verbal instructions to actively internalizing and embodying them, thus becoming performative agents in the creative process. The classification of words into "nouns" and "verbs" facilitates a deeper understanding of linguistic intention and semantic content, which is essential for meaningful embodiment. As dancers comprehend the narrative structure, they gain the capacity to manipulate subsequent language and movement in ways that render the performance both "felicitous" (i.e., contextually appropriate and effective) and impactful.

Central to this process is the dynamic interplay between constative and performative speech acts. Constative utterances provide an interpretive framework and cognitive grounding, while performative utterances

prompt action and allow dancers to enact the narrative through physical and vocal expression. When choreographers and dancers engage in collaborative dialogue to define and agree upon the meaning of specific words and phrases, a shared semantic framework emerges, ensuring interpretive consistency and cohesion.

This approach enables choreographers to access and activate the dancers' embodied cognition, facilitating the translation of narrative into kinesthetic and verbal expression. As dancers integrate spoken language and sonic elements with intentionality and conviction, they coalesce narrative meaning and movement, thereby enhancing the communicative power of the performance. Ultimately, this cognitive-linguistic strategy enriches the choreographic process, allowing for the construction of nuanced, coherent, and resonant performances that seamlessly unite speech and embodiment.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

8. Limitations to the Study

The integration of spoken word in contemporary dance choreography has been shown to enhance the emotional impact and depth of a performance (Fortuna, 2016). However, despite the numerous benefits of this approach, there are several limitations that must be considered. One of the primary limitations of this research is its narrow focus on contemporary dance choreography. While the integration of spoken word may be beneficial in this context, it may not be applicable to other dance styles or genres. Further research is needed to explore the potential benefits and limitations of spoken word in other dance forms.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of empirical data. While theoretical analysis and conceptual frameworks provide a solid foundation for understanding the integration of spoken word in dance, empirical data collected through experiments, surveys, or interviews would provide valuable insights into the practical applications and effects of this approach. This research primarily examines the transmission of choreographers' ideas or thoughts to dancers' bodies, grounded in embodied cognition theory. However, alternative perspectives, particularly from audience members, may offer valuable insights. Investigating audience perception and interpretation of spoken word in dance would provide a more comprehensive understanding of this approach. Moreover, this research focuses on the benefits of spoken word for choreographers, overlooking the potential impact on audience perception and interpretation.

Examining how audiences respond to and interpret spoken word in dance performances would or might provide a different understanding of this approach. Choreographers may need to initially prioritize the dancer's perspective when applying this method, potentially setting aside audience considerations until the desired outcome has been achieved with the dancers body. This could be a necessary step in the creative process, with audience perspective becoming a focus in subsequent stages. Furthermore, this study's focus on contemporary dance may limit its applicability to other genres. While choreographers from other genres may experiment with spoken word, the outcomes may vary, and the effectiveness of this technique may depend on the specific genre or style. Future research should explore the potential applications and limitations of spoken word in diverse dance genres.

This research highlights the strategic use of nouns and verbs in spoken word, which may have limited applicability to choreographers working in languages with distinct grammatical structures or linguistic features. Linguistic researchers may offer alternative perspectives on the use of nouns and verbs; however, this study primarily aims to provide choreographers with a practical tool for selecting essential words that facilitate embodied cognition in dancers. Further research is necessary to explore the potential applications and limitations of spoken word in diverse linguistic contexts. A cross-disciplinary collaboration between dance and linguistics could provide valuable insights, fostering a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between language, movement, and cognition.

9. CONCLUSION

The intersection of dance and spoken word has given rise to a unique and powerful form of expression. By incorporating spoken word into choreography, young emerging choreographers can reap numerous benefits, enhancing their artistic voices and contributing to the evolution of contemporary dance. The primary advantages of integrating spoken word into choreography is its ability to add depth and nuance to a performance. Spoken word can convey complex emotions, narratives, and themes, providing audiences with a richer understanding of the choreographer's intent. For young emerging

choreographers, this can be particularly beneficial, as it allows them to communicate their ideas and perspectives more effectively. By combining movement with spoken word, choreographers can create a more immersive experience, engaging audiences on multiple levels.

This research has demonstrated the effectiveness of integrating spoken word into contemporary dance choreography, particularly through the strategic use of nouns and verbs. By employing this approach, choreographers can create a new paradigm for conveying complex narratives and themes, while ensuring that the deliberation between choreographer and dancer remains clear. The incorporation of spoken word is not intended to supplant the importance of movement, but rather to complement and enhance it. This research offers a new reference point for choreographers, encouraging them to explore alternative approaches to storytelling and communication. By embracing the potential of spoken word in choreography, artists can expand the expressive capabilities of dance, fostering a more nuanced and multifaceted language of movement. This research pioneers a novel approach to contemporary dance choreography by integrating spoken word through the strategic use of nouns and verbs.

This innovative methodology offers a new paradigm for conveying complex narratives and themes, while ensuring that the deliberation between choreographer and dancer remains clear. The incorporation of spoken word is not intended to supplant the importance of movement, but rather to complement and enhance it. This groundbreaking research contributes to the evolution of dance language, expanding its expressive capabilities and offering a fresh perspective on the intersection of movement and spoken word. By introducing this new approach, this study provides a valuable reference point for choreographers, encouraging them to explore alternative approaches to storytelling and communication.

The integration of spoken word into choreography offers numerous benefits for young emerging choreographers. By adding depth, nuance, and complexity to their work, choreographers can create immersive, thought-provoking performances that engage audiences and spark meaningful conversations. To further develop this field, future research could investigate the impact of spoken word on audience engagement and understanding, explore its applications in other dance forms, or develop new methodologies for integrating spoken word into choreography. Additionally, examining the role of spoken word in facilitating collaboration and communication between choreographers and dancers, or analyzing its use in conveying complex social and cultural issues, could provide valuable insights for the dance community. By pursuing these research directions, scholars and practitioners can continue to push the boundaries of contemporary dance, exploring new possibilities for artistic expression and deepening our understanding of the intersection of movement and spoken word.

Work reference:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-yH7UFLIDc&t=143s

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Biographical Statement of Author(s)

Fairul Zahid is a multidisciplinary dance artist, educator, and scholar, currently serving as a Lecturer in Dance at the School of Dance and Theatre, LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. He holds a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Dance (Choreography and Performance) from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and a BA (Hons) in Performance (Ballet and Contemporary) as well as a Diploma in Dance from the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA), Malaysia.

With a professional career spanning over two decades, Fairul has performed and choreographed for acclaimed companies such as ASK Dance Company, Christina Noel & The Creature (New York), LaneCoArts (NYC), and participated in productions including *The Nutcracker* by New York City Ballet. He has also served as Artistic Director of the Asia Duo Dance Company.

As an educator, Fairul has taught at several leading institutions in Malaysia, including the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA) and Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). Internationally, he has been invited as a guest lecturer and choreographer at institutions such as Minzu University and Capital Normal University (Beijing), the University of the Philippines, and Temple University (Philadelphia, USA).

Fairul's choreographic and performance work spans contemporary, ballet, traditional Malay, and Chinese dance forms, earning him recognition both locally and internationally. His contributions to dance scholarship include several publications exploring the nexus between practice and research, with a particular focus on practice-based inquiry in choreography and performance. He is currently pursuing a PhD at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia, where his research centers on practice-based methodologies in dance.

Fairul is the current President of the World Dance Alliance (Singapore chapter), actively advancing the discourse and practice of dance across regional and global platforms.

Mr. Muhammad Fairul Azreen
LASALLE College of the Arts
School of Dance and Theatre
Singapore
Email: fairul.zahid@lasalle.edu.sg

Mohd Kipli Bin Abdul Rahman is a Professor of Theatre at the Department of Performing Arts, College of Creative Arts Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. He is both a dedicated academic and an active theatre practitioner, contributing as a director, choreographer, actor, dancer, body performer, facilitator, and professional theatre jury member.

Prof. Rahman serves as the principal investigator of the *Malay Archipelago Glokal Wisdom (MAGIS)* Research Initiative Group at UiTM, where his scholarly focus lies in interdisciplinary performing arts. His work integrates research, writing, and editorial contributions to advance knowledge in the fields of theatre and performance studies.

In addition to his academic pursuits, he leads community-based cultural programs, particularly with children, with the aim of fostering awareness of cultural heritage and identity. These initiatives also extend to

adults and individuals with disabilities, particularly in rural communities, to promote and preserve local wisdom and traditional practices.

His reflective writings explore societal perspectives on the cultural arts and contribute to the fields of social ethnography and ethno-performance studies. His current research focuses on traditional performing arts in the Malay Archipelago, approached through an interdisciplinary lens.

Professor Dr. Mohd Kipli Abdul Rahman
College of Creative Arts
University Technology MARA (UiTM)
Malaysia
Email: mohdkipli@uitm.edu.my

Ahmad Kamal Basyah Sallehuddin is a distinguished scholar and academic leader in the field of creative arts. He currently serves as the Head of School for Liberal Arts Studies at the College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia.

His academic and professional pursuits are deeply rooted in a commitment to advancing research and education in Malaysian popular culture, theatre history, contemporary American literature, and performance theory. Dr. Sallehuddin earned his PhD in Drama Theory, which has provided a strong foundation for his contributions as a researcher, educator, and advocate for the creative arts.

Dr. Ahmad Kamal Basyah Sallehuddin
Head of Liberal Arts Studies
College of Creative Arts
University Technology MARA (UiTM)
Shah Alam, Malaysia
Email: akamalbasyah@uitm.edu.my

Syahrul Fithri Musa is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Performing Arts, College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia. His research focuses on alternative theatre, modern and Malaysian theatre, acting methodologies, and directing practices. In addition to his academic work, he is an accomplished theatre practitioner, actively engaged as a director, actor, and playwright.

His critical essays and creative writings have been featured in leading cultural and literary platforms, including *Dewan Sastera*, *Seni Malaya*, *Eksentrika*, and *Malaysiakini*. In 2005, he represented Malaysia at the Future-Oriented Cooperation Project in Seoul, underscoring his contribution to the regional performing arts landscape.

Dr. Syahrul Fithri Musa
Head
Creative Media and College of Creative Arts
University Technology MARA (UiTM)
Shah Alam *Technology Hub* (CMTHub)
Malaysia
Email: sfitri315@uitm.edu.my