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Linguistics in drama processes

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Abstract

Doing drama is a complex interactive process. Drama processes, such as rehearsals, rely heavily on the spoken communication between the participants (such as actors, directors, performance artists), no matter how much gesture and movement is involved. Drama is often thought of only in terms of a final product, such as a performance or a script, rather than as a creative communication and working process that can be spread out over a longer period of time before reaching its final stage. In spite of all the research and analysis dedicated to drama, discursive research has rarely been carried out on theatre practice and its authentic discourse, which constitute part of the everyday working process for theatre practitioners the world over. This paper explores from a discursive perspective what is going on in drama processes and introduces the method I have developed for researching drama processes. [1]

Introduction

Drama processes are a form of creative and artistic everyday working process, part of the fabric of people's lives all over the world. They take place in cultural, educational, corporate and community contexts, and may have artistic, social, and political functions, among others. But what is going on in drama processes? How do people work on a particular scene for a play within a rehearsal? My research explores from a discursive perspective what is going on when people are doing drama. My observations during my ethnographic fieldwork have shown that in a rehearsal—a face-to-face aestheticising working process—working means communicating, and much of this is spoken. In this interactive situation, communication partners (e.g. actors, directors, performance artists) reveal activities such as giving instructions, carrying out acting-versions [2], and giving feedback. The communication in rehearsals is observable, but until recently drama processes have been a sort of a black box (Milde 2007 a,b,c).

In this paper I demonstrate reformulation as one of the linguistic features of doing drama, based on empirical examples, and offer guidance on how to investigate drama and other performance arts processes. The examples are taken from two of the many different rehearsal projects I have documented over the years. Reformulation, along with turn-taking, is one of the key organising structures in the collaborative spoken text-production process. Reformulation occurs in many different ways, depending on each group's or director's particular practice, experience, time and budget-constraints, and so on. I give an overview of my method for investigating and analysing drama processes, which draws on the research areas of spoken discourse analysis, text-production, and *critique génétique* (French manuscript research, cf. Gresillon 1999), and which in turn contributes to these areas as well as to drama and creativity research.

[1] This version of my article is from 2014. I would like to thank Professor Ben Rampton (in particular), Professor Constant Leung, the late Professor Brian Street, and also Professor Gerlinde Mautner (WU, Vienna) for discussing my research with me before, during and after my talks at the research seminars (RWLL), Micro Discourse Analysis data session, and many other occasions during my time as Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Language Discourse & Communication, King's College London.

[2] 'Acting-version' means one of potentially several ways of realising a scripted or improvised text that an actor presents in a rehearsal, based or not based on instructions.

Although this article focuses on spoken interaction, my approach enables a systematic investigation of the interaction in drama processes in different modes, bearing in mind Deborah Cameron's proposition that 'discourse analysis is not exclusively concerned with spoken discourse: in principle it can deal with socially-situated language-use in any channel or medium' (Cameron 2001:7).

Drama is understood here as an interactive, collaborative (in the practical and more neutral sense of 'working together'), communicative and artistic process.[3] The focus of my research is the production process leading up to the performance and, more specifically, the directing-conversations between director and performers in rehearsals, rather than the performance process. Communication is at the heart of the collaborative production process in drama and performance arts. Even in artistic fields where there may be a short rehearsal period, such as radio-play and film productions, the collaborative working process is still based on conversation.

Many different modes of communication can be found within drama working processes, but conversation is always an essential element of the process. Whether a performance group is creating a new piece from scratch or a director is working with an actor on a Shakespeare monologue, they will talk to each other about what they do, what they would like to do, or what they want each other or another person to do, no matter how much gesture and movement is involved. What modes of communication are used and when they are used depends on various factors (e.g. the constellation of people, the rehearsal space, approaches to drama practice), and can range from a director sitting in an almost entirely dark auditorium instructing actors on a brightly lit stage to a director who is in the rehearsal space with the actors demonstrating and discussing her or his ideas; but there will always be talk, no matter if it takes place via a microphone or face-to-face.

In some performance arts (dance, circus, or drama, for example), there may be parts of a rehearsal that contain no spoken language, but they will be part of an overall working process involving a lot of talk. If we want to understand as fully as possible what is going on in any part of a production, we need to be able to see it in the context of the overall working process (cf. Gresillon 1999); and if conversation is an essential element of this process, then we need to be able to investigate the spoken communication.

Spoken discourse and collaborative spoken text-production

Drama processes are complex. They can involve various parallel activities, such as more than one person giving instructions at the same time (for example, when a movement director and an artistic director work with different artists in the same space) and different people engaging in sequential turn-taking (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1978), and these processes can appear messy or chaotic. For example, improvising a scene or rehearsing a particular sequence may appear chaotic, but there is usually an underlying structure and purpose.

If we think in terms of Levinson's notion of activity types (Levinson 1992), we can identify a directing-conversation as the main activity type within the event of a rehearsal, and can divide the activity of carrying out a directing-conversation into sub-activities such as keying, scripting, making suggestions for acting-versions, and providing feedback (see additional materials for table of drama-specific sub-activities). Depending on each group's or director's particular practice, the use of improvisation might also play a role. Levinson's notion of activity types 'refers to any culturally recognized activity, whether or not that activity is co-extensive with a period of speech or indeed whether any talk takes place in it at all'. In line with this notion, I regard directing-conversations as a culturally recognized activity, independently from how much talk takes place in them. Based on my

[3] I understand 'collaboration' as a working process involving two or more participants (for a comparison of 'collaborative creation' and 'devising', see Heddon and Milling 2006, pp. 2-3).

observations, talk is a major part of any working period that takes place during the creation and negotiation period, such as rehearsals in drama processes.

For example, a creative team and cast have the task of collaboratively creating a theatre play based on a ready-made script, which means they have to transform the manuscript into the performance of a play—a visible and audible text. The director wants the performers/actors to do something, therefore it is necessary to verbalize for them which activities she wants them to do. In line with Lehnen's and Gülich's research in conversational writing-interactions (*Konversationelle Schreibinteraktionen*), I consider the verbalization of text-production activities as necessary when two or more people collaboratively produce a text during the production process for a performance. The activities need to be indicated or accompanied by verbal comments, which make the production process visible (Lehnen and Gülich 1997: 113). Lehnen's and Gülich's focus on authentic face-to-face negotiations while producing a text has been particularly useful and relevant to the development of my approach.

Following Keseling, Wrobel, and Rau (text-production research), I assume that revisions (what are here called 'reformulations', as we are dealing with spoken language) are essential activities of text-production, which generally involves several modifications (e.g. deleting, rephrasing, or correcting) before the text is considered finished (Rau 1992: 301; Wrobel 1992: 361; Keseling 1993).

The process of creating a play (as shown in example 2) or working on a scene (as shown in example 1) is a collaboration and requires communication that can be understood by all its participants. This may appear to be self-evident, but it can in practice be hard to fulfill, as theatre directors often have very individual ways of working and a specific set of terms and concepts that they use. Sometimes directors have, over the years, developed a sort of a spoken 'shorthand', which they might not always be aware of, and expect the cast to understand it. The actors or performers usually try to adapt to each director's way of working and communicating as best they can in order to succeed and avoid losing face, or causing the director to lose face (Goffman 1967). Either outcome could have negative consequences for performers, who are in a vulnerable and exposed position during the working process and may be concerned, for example, about being rehired for another production. Institutional pressures caused by factors such as budget constraints and availability of the cast or rehearsal space can have strong effects on all production-phases.

Although drama processes are highly interactive and involve complex communication, drama training institutions do not so far seem to have recognized the importance of communication for working in drama, and communication in drama processes is not a standard subject in their curricula. Drama processes are not limited to theatres and drama schools, of course, but can be found in various fields such as in therapy, migrant integration projects, community projects, language learning and teaching, and medical and corporate role-play. Although drama activities have proved to be stimulating and useful in these fields, empirically based studies of such working processes and their spoken everyday working discourse that take into account the specific features of drama are hard to find.

The inclusion of elements of performance within everyday conversations has been observed by Crow (1988), Goffman (1974), and Günthner (2002) (see also Hopper 1993 and Stucky 1993). When investigating everyday language, Goffman (1974: 86) observed participants performing different sequences of conversations as 'little shows', in which the participants in the interaction alter their way of speaking in order to indicate other people's speech. Crow (1988: 23), who turned conversational material from his doctoral dissertation into a play, observed different types of 'performance acts' in everyday conversations. Günthner (2002: 18), also investigating everyday language, observed that when participants report the speech of people who are not present, recipients not only hear the voices of the imitated person, but also the implicit judgement of the performing participant about the absent person. A different approach is required for investigating drama processes,

however, as we are dealing with task-oriented collaborative communication in which participants negotiate the spoken text, which may itself be based on a script. Furthermore, the process is aestheticising since the activity is performed with an artistic goal.

Text-producing activities in literary writing, which is the object of *critique génétique*, have been investigated extensively by linguists such as Grésillon (e.g. 1997, 1999) and Hay (e.g. 1971) (cf. Deppman et al. 2004). These linguists have developed a framework for investigating writing processes and hypotheses about writing processes by looking at manuscripts by canonical literary authors such as Heinrich Heine (e.g. Hay 1971) and Gustave Flaubert (e.g. Debray Genette 2004), and take into account the whole writing process with all its changes and annotations in order to make the creative process visible as a gradual text-development with its features and hand-written traces. They focus on the process of text-production with its various versions, rather than on a single version of a final product. *Critique génétique* has been particularly useful in developing my approach to spoken drama discourse as it takes into account artistic text-production features and looks at the creative process in the context of its gradual text-development with its various stages.

Following Gülich and Kotschi (1996: 39), I believe that reformulations can appear as rephrasing, corrections, paraphrases, and so on, and often occur in connection with problems in the communication process (see also Schegloff et al. 1977 on 'repair'). And problems—also in the sense of puzzles—do occur in the creative working process of producing a play.

Apart from the linguistic approach in text-production research to canonical literature (*critique génétique*), whose aim is to understand the creative process by reconstructing the language-use in literary writing activities, and which I adapted to spoken language for my research purposes, I mainly draw on discourse analysis (e.g. Schiffrin 1994; Gülich and Kotschi 1996; Jaworski and Coupland 1999; Cameron 2001), which is suitable for analysing socially situated language use. I use the term 'discourse' here, drawing on Cameron (2001: 7), as an 'umbrella term, allowing for considerable variation in subject matter and approach'. This article is concerned with spoken discourse in drama processes, which is both an everyday working discourse and an artistic discourse. Cameron (2001: 8) states that 'anyone who has been educated in a highly literate society will have developed, not only the ability to read and write, but also some ability to think analytically about written texts', but in contrast they 'rarely possess a paralinguistic apparatus for discussing the structures of spoken language' (Cameron 2001: 8). A similar contrast can be found in drama contexts. Up to now drama has mostly been thought of as performance—which I regard as a form of final product and the final stage of a text-development process—or as literary text and has been analysed in those terms. Rehearsals have been studied by drama and performance scholars in various ways (e.g. McAuley 1998, 2012; Bayley 2012). Yet, an empirically based discursive investigation of the features and complexities of spoken language in drama rehearsals has been neglected so far.

Data and method

Data

The data[4] used in this article come from two data sets, based on two different drama events in London, led by the same London theatre company and artistic director. The first example comes from a seven-day (35 hours of audio and visual materials) workshop for actors and directors with twenty participants. It shows part of a workshop exercise in which the director works with one actor at a time on a Shakespeare monologue the actors had been asked to prepare a few weeks before the workshop.

[4] More data and materials were collected during my fieldwork, but are not further discussed in this article.

The monologue is from Shakespeare's play *Othello*. The material was recorded in 2011 in the rehearsal studio of another theatre in London, hired for this occasion.

The second example comes from a three-week rehearsal period (75 hours of audio and visual materials) for a joint production between circus-arts second-year undergraduate students and the theatre company. Rehearsals generally involved eighteen student performers, two professional actors, and five observers (who were present for different reasons). Not all participants were present all the time as not all performers and actors were always needed for all scenes, and in some parts of the working process other participants such as the writer of the piece and technical staff were involved. The second example was chosen as it focuses on the interaction and text-development process between the director and the performers. The recorded material used for the second example was recorded in 2011 in a big space in an educational circus-arts institution in London

The system for transcribing that is used here draws on the HIAT transcription system, which is based on the musical notation system (*Partiturschreibweise*) first introduced by Konrad Ehlich and Jochen Rehbein in the German-speaking spoken discourse analysis world in the 1970s (Ehlich and Rehbein 1976), and which is a widely used form of transcribing in the German-speaking world of spoken discourse analysis. HIAT stands for German ***H****alb****I****nterpretative* ***A****rbeits****T****ranskriptionen*, meaning 'semi-interpretative working transcriptions'. 'Semi-interpretative' because decisions about how things are understood are already being made in the transcribing process, and 'working transcriptions' because the transcriptions are generally still open and not in a final state, so that more details can always be added.

The aim of the transcriptions in this article is to present in an easily readable way the spoken interaction of the participants and their joint spoken text-development process. In line with this, I see the transcribing of spoken discourse as a potentially never-ending process to which more details can always be added (for more details of the transcription conventions used here, see end of article), depending on the particular research focus.

My first step in identifying relevant sequences that showed features of the text-production process within a short but entire part of the rehearsal (e.g. a particular exercise) was during my fieldwork when I indicated in my field notes any observations of particular features I wanted to return to. I listened to those sequences of authentic communication in the context of the whole working process and transcribed them. I then examined the entire transcriptions for the features of the participants' spoken discourse, their collaborative text-creation, and the ten groups of sub-activities in drama processes and carried out a line-by-line analysis. The feature of 'reformulating' (making changes) emerged as the key element in drama processes as it organizes the activities of the participants' interaction and their creation of the performance-text. Drama activities at the National Theatre, for instance, might in many ways be different from drama activities at a high school in London, but both drama activities—as long as they are in a preparational stage—can be investigated in relation to the participants' spoken interaction and their creative and task-oriented spoken text-production using the method described in this article. The two examples below will show different drama activities and their spoken interaction, both located in East London.

Many themes and topics can be observed in drama processes, depending on various factors such as the director's working style and the content of the piece. In this paper, I focus on one of the three drama-specific features that are essential for the linguistic approach which I developed to investigate drama processes carried out by two or more participants. The drama-specific features are generally: (a) authentic spoken aesthetizing discourse that is shaped by an overall reformulation structure, (b) task-oriented collaborative spoken artistic text-development, (c) and the ten basic communicative categories for breaking down drama processes into their activities (see additional materials). In the following section I will discuss the method I developed and use for investigating drama processes by focusing on (a).

Method

In this section I would like to discuss the two main characteristics of investigating discourse in drama. They are (i) investigating discourse in drama processes on a general level; (ii) investigating discourse in drama processes on a more detailed level.

i) Investigating discourse in drama processes on a general level

Discourse in drama, just like every other area in discourse, has its own unique features. Drama processes such as drama rehearsals involve communication, argumentation, and explanation, all aimed at exploring, creating, and developing a performance or broadcast, and this sets them apart from everyday non-artistic processes.

A rehearsal with a director and actors is a (more-or-less) collaborative period of exploring and developing a scene. As mentioned above, producing text collaboratively means here producing text jointly. Extracts of conversations (e.g. between director and actors) need to be seen in the context of the entire working process.

Investigating drama here mainly means investigating rehearsals (or the creative working process before a rehearsal, or, in the case of education, drama classes or workshops) as these are the key period of the creative process for drama participants (such as actors and directors). It is in this period that the way they work and the features of their drama practice are revealed.

In order to investigate drama productions and their discourse, I regard it as essential to make recordings (audio or video, but the audio must be understandable), take field-notes, and then make transcriptions of the relevant sections. As with *critique génétique*, in drama it is important to record and work with an entire recorded section of the working process with its different phases and development.

This means that in order to investigate the general development of a whole play, with all its discourse, phases, changes, and so on, and to be able to trace back the participants' working process, one needs to investigate the whole process from the first day of the face-to-face production (e.g. with director and actors) up to the final phase, such as performance or broadcast (Milde 2007b). Without being able to trace back the various stages and actual development that have taken place, the investigation would lead to distorted results, as it would not be based on data that provide insight into the development process.

In any drama production there are various aspects that can be investigated within the three main phases of production (see Figure 1): the institutional-organizational phase (e.g. how it is commissioned), the artistic face-to-face working process during preparational phases (e.g. in rehearsals), and the performance.[5] These phases may overlap and affect one another. In this paper I focus on the face-to-face artistic practice of directors and actors in rehearsals.[6]

[5] I focus on the collaborative creation process and its various activities (e.g. negotiations and the revising of suggested acting-versions, either face-to-face or via microphone). I do not focus on the performance as I regard it as the final phase and product of the working and negotiation process. Drama performances have their own dynamics, but—apart from improvisational performances—are usually aimed at delivering a piece as it was decided on and rehearsed before the performance. In improvisational theatre performances (cf. Sawyer 2000, 2003), the text-production process is not negotiated and revised in an observable way. Improvisational performances also have some sort of preparational phase, even if this is not in the form of rehearsals.

[6] I have documented how artistic decisions are made outside the rehearsal room (e.g. director and set-designer over a coffee), but in this article I focus on the discourse in the rehearsal room.

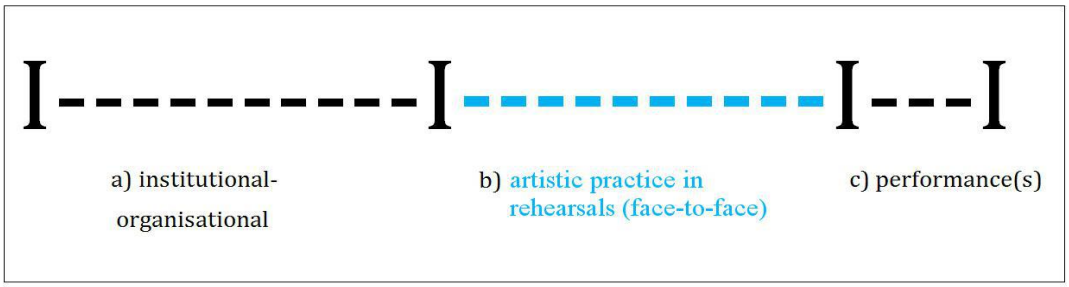

Figure 1: The three production-phases in drama processes (phases may overlap and length of each production-phase varies according to each production).

ii) Investigating discourse in drama rehearsals on a more detailed level.

Under point (i) I pointed out that for my method of investigating drama practice it is important to get an idea of the text-development the drama practitioners carry out in collaboration with one or more other participants. This means—depending on the particular research aim—either looking at the whole rehearsal period or at an entire section of the process, so that one can see how the working process of drama practitioners takes place.

Apart from looking at the text-development in the drama process, and in order to be able to understand and identify the different phases of the text-development in the working process, specific communicative activities must be taken into account. Below (Figure 2) I provide a list of sub-activities of doing drama (e.g. directing, devising). This is not exhaustive, but represents the main groups of sub-activities that I have identified as relevant in the artistic text-development process.

Authentic face-to-face discourse in drama

In the following two sections (examples 1 and 2) I will present two examples, both with the same director, but each one with a different constellation of participants. I will show how the director and performers (in other examples other participants might also be involved) collaboratively create a scene. Creating a scene means here communicating instructions and ideas for the realization of a particular part of the script. I will discuss the face-to-face communication between the participants, looking at how the director responds to the actors' responses and acting versions, how the director suggests something, and how the actors respond to the director's suggestions and comments. In drama processes one comes across many different ways of communicating, as well as longer discussions between director and actors in which both actors and director can have long turns. For this part I selected the following examples in order to show a short but complete unit of artistic spoken discourse intertwined with a text-development process (example 1), and to demonstrate some of the drama-specific categories in context (examples 1 and 2).

This will show how the process of artistic reformulation is a part of the directing-process and the text-development process. The analysis will also demonstrate how the working process is based on a turn-taking structure consisting of responses from the actor and the suggestions carried out by the director. In order to make it easier to read I have simplified the transcriptions of both examples (1 and 2) as other and more detailed features are not regarded as relevant in this particular instance, but can be added if necessary.

Category	Sub-activities	Essential Questions	Examples
1	Using a script	In what way is a script being used? Is it ready-made or is it being developed?	A Shakespeare text is used for an exercise. An improvisation is used to create the script for a scene.
	Scripting text	In what way is text scripted within the process? Is a scripted text provided during the working process (that wasn't provided beforehand)?	Performers write down the details of a dialogue after having developed it from scratch.
2	Providing feedback	In what way is feedback provided? What sort of feedback? By whom? For whom? Does it include a suggestion (see category 10)?	'ok . right . great . that is (?) really .. it's very excellent' 'if you let the text guide you instead of you controlling the text you're slightly closed'
3	Providing explanations	In what way are explanations provided?	'the reason why I want the language people largely to do it is because I ultimately we are saying you're coming from foreign lands to London'
	Providing (background) information	In what way is information provided?	'you've been on this ship you've got off'
4	Using improvisations	In what way are improvisations being used? Are there instructions for them (see category 5)? Are the improvisations keyed or totally open?	'we're going to do tiny little improvisation and move into it'
5	Providing instructions and using keys as a way of providing instructions	In what way are instructions being used? In what way are keys being used? Are the keys for *how* to do something, or for *what* to do? Is a sub-text provided? Has a suggestion been made through a kind of description (e.g. through a scenario or a kind of demonstration)? Are cues being given? Are text parts being conducted (as a kind of 'live instructing')?	'you're just going to be that guy doing a bit of your beat box thing' 'you think it's great'
6	Framing one's own activity	In what way do drama practitioners (e.g. directors) frame their directing-activities? What does it indicate?	'what you're going to do' 'what I want you to do'
7	Sharing ideas, thoughts, stories, anecdotes, etc.	In what way is the sharing of ideas, thoughts, stories, etc. being used? Is the sharing of ideas etc. aimed at providing feedback (see category 2), information (see category 3), or suggestions (see category 10)?	'My sister used to do this too'
8	Acting out/ performing a version	In what way is the acting out/the performing of a text version being used? By whom? For whom?	((Shakespeare text)) *it is the cause! . it is the cause my soul*
9	Providing/asking questions	In what way are questions being used? Are they rhetorical questions? Are they aimed at giving feedback (see category 2) or suggestions (see category 10)?	'am I doing it from here?'
10	Providing/making suggestions	In what way are suggestions being used? Are they aimed at providing feedback (see category 2) or sharing an idea (see category 7)?	'I could do it more quickly'

Figure 2: Sub-activities within devising- or directing-conversations in drama/performance processes.

Example 1

The following example shows five extracts from the face-to-face drama practice of a director during a workshop exercise. The actor has prepared a monologue from Shakespeare's play *Othello* prior to the workshop and the director is now working with him on developing his improvisation skills in order to

improve his acting skills. The actual exercise lasts eight minutes (not including the following final improvisation by the actors) in one flow without any breaks, and each extract from example 1 demonstrates a particular phase in the working process.[7]

The first thing the director does is to prepare the working process by arranging the set-up of the scene in which Desdemona is still in bed, asleep, when Othello enters, aiming to kill her (Act 5, Scene 2). The director gets a sports mat, and asks another workshop participant (actress T) to lie down on the mat, so the actor playing Othello (A) will have a real person to interact with. The director starts working on the piece with the actor by giving him some brief instructions, but then quickly engages in a more casual and personal conversation.

Participants are: D = director; A = actor in his early 20s; T = actress in her early 20s. For transcription conventions see appendix.

Figure 3: Directing-conversation during a drama-workshop.

Extract 1

01 D:	ok now what I want you to do is . right .. I want you . to come in
02 A:	((agreeing)) mm+
02 D:	and in your . wh/ what is your accent? you're a London accent it
03 A:	London
04 D:	it's London? . ok so u:hm .. ok so . can you just talk to me a
05 A:	yeah

[7] The different phases in the working process discussed in examples 1 and 2 are set in the second production-phase (see Figure 1).

06 D: bit in your London accent? yeah so: . you yeah how did you get here
07 A: yeah

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08 D: this morning? yeah
09 A: (??) I took the bus . the one four two (?Central line)

In the extract above, the director (D) briefly frames her activity as a directing-activity (e.g. 'what I want you to do') and announces for the actor (A) and other participants that the workshop exercise has started. Her activities are framed as directing-activities, which means that her activities are accompanied by verbal comments, which makes the production process visible (cf. Gülich and Lehnen 1997).

Once she has established the general frame for the following acting activities, she moves on to more specific aspects such as the actor's way of speaking. She asks the actor to say something using his everyday way of speaking ('can you just talk to me a bit in your London accent?'), which has the effect of making the actor feel confident and relaxed with the language use in the exercise. After the actor briefly indicates ('yeah') to the director that he is OK with *how* he speaks in the exercise, the director moves on to *what* he speaks about ('how did you get here this morning?').

By setting the keys (similar to musical keys) for the actor's manner of speaking (*how*) and the content of his speech (*what*), the director provides support for the actor in the first phase of the exercise.[8] She makes him feel comfortable and supported by the other observing participants who find his story amusing and entertaining. This task appears to be easy for the actor, indicated by the actor immediately starting the exercise without any hesitation and by the flow of his speech ('?? I took the bus [...]').

Once D has made sure that the actor has comfortably settled into the first phase of the exercise and that his communication is flowing, she provides the actor with a way of boosting his confidence and a fresh approach to this famous scene. She engages him in a conversation about something she has seen him excited about earlier that day: his new smartphone.

Extract 2

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01 D: and now you're coming back with the new phone you bought . which

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02 D: you just love . it's got all the apps/
03 A: it's got everything (??)

The actor has been telling the director, and other participants, in his own accent, how he got to the drama workshop that morning, when the director introduces a new topic ('and now you're coming back with the new phone you bought'). The director brings in a new topic at a moment when the actor's speech is still flowing and before he has exhausted the preceding topic (transport). In this phase of the exercise the director is still helping the actor to prepare for the actual improvisation and to gradually gain more confidence. We can also see that D goes a step further, beyond establishing the fluidity of the actor's speech and making the actor feel safe within the exercise. She now encourages the actor to talk about something she knows he is interested in and has some knowledge about, which is her way of involving him more in the process of play.

Once the actor has become more confident and personally involved in the process of play, the director moves on to the next phase.

[8] Keys in drama are similar to keys in music as they provide information about *what* is supposed to be performed in a certain way and *how* it is supposed to be performed (for the keying of performance see Baumann 1975; for keys and instructions in radio-plays see Milde 2010).

Extract 3

01 D: so what is it exactly you do?
02 A: how I sample music? well first . first I listen to a

03 D: yeah yeah yeah
04 A: song a:nd I pick up certain beats I like and I keep that in mind

05 D: [...] like do you have to do it yourself? yeah go on . so like . yeah if
06 A: yeah ((hesitating)) u:h+

07 D: you . if you hear something and
08 A: (??) ((beat box)) <*Pa·ʈa ʈa pa ʈa ʈa Pa·ʈa ʈa pa ʈa ʈa*>

09 D: and then that and
10 A: yeah <*Ts·ts ts **ts-** ts ts Ts·ts ts **ts-** ts ts ts Pa· tsts*>

11 D: and then do you record that? you're doing it? oh cool
12 A: yeah yeah

In the third phase of setting up an improvisation for this particular actor, D asks him not only to talk about something he feels comfortable with ('what is it exactly you do?'), but she also asks him to demonstrate beat boxing ('yeah go on . so like'), which is an activity that she has seen him enjoying earlier. We can see that the director helps the actor to get involved by encouraging him to bring in his interests (e.g. 'do you have to do it yourself?') and, very importantly, by helping him find and develop skills that he can use later in the working process.

The fourth extract demonstrates the final phase of setting up the improvisation. D now provides the keys for the improvisation, by drawing on what both actor and director have just developed in the preceding phases of the working process.

Extract 4

01 D: right ok . so . what you're going to do . you're going to look at her .

02 D: and that's fine or not and you're just going to be that guy doing a bit of

03 D: your beat boxing . ok? a:nd .. (?don't forget) . when I clap you're gonna go

04 D: to text . ok? but it's . going to be that guy who does that beat box thing
05 A: ((agreeing)) <m-m>

06 D: […] a London guy done/ ((correcting herself)) doing+ Shakespeare ok?

In Extract 4 we can see how the director moves to the next phase and frames her activity as instructions to the actor (e.g. 'what you're going to do') just as she did it in the beginning of the first phase ('what I want you to do'). The instructions she gives, in particular the first element of the instructions ("what you're going to do"), mark the end of the more open exploratory period and announce that the next phase, the improvisation (also an exploration, but here with a particular task), is about to come up.

In this phase D provides the keys for the actor's following acting-version ('you're just going to be that guy doing a bit of your beat box thing'), which involves all elements the director and the actor have been building up: the actor's manner of speaking (*how:* the actor's everyday London accent), the content of his speech (*what:* drawing on content of the Shakespeare monologue), and

using the communicative tools he just developed (beat box). The director arranges a cue with the actor ('when I clap you're gonna go to text ok?'), so he will know when to move from doing an improvisation to doing an acting version of the Shakespeare text. She finishes the instructions by encouraging him to keep his way of interacting (e.g. 'but it's going to be that guy who does that beat box thing').

After having seen a couple of brief improvisations, the director gives some information and final instructions (phase 5) before the actor begins his improvisation and acting version, supported by actress T, responding to the actor's interactions. Each actor sits at one end of the bench.

Extract 5

01 D: so: . u:hm . so you've had that conversation you said you've slept with

02 D: my best friend . she's plunged into silence and you start your bloody

03 D: beat boxing . and you come back at the end
04 A: ((beat boxing)) <*Pa·ʈa ʈa pa ʈa ʈa*

05 A: *Pa·ʈa ʈa pa ʈa Pa·ʈa ʈa pa ʈa Pa·ʈa ʈa pa ʈa ((sounds quieten down))d d d*
06 T: really!? is that the answer to everything? ..

07 A: *d d d+ Pa·ʈa ʈa pa Pa·ʈa ʈa pa ʈa>*
08 T: why do you do this every time anything

09 A: ((Shakespeare text)) *it is the cause! . it is the cause my soul*
10 T: comes up? ok we need to talk

In Extract 5, the director gives some final instructions to the actor by briefly providing him with a summarized version of the scenario. In lines 1 to 2 ('so you've had that conversation you said you've slept with my best friend . she's plunged into silence') the director provides the actor with background information about the situation he is supposed to find himself in. Then in lines 2 to 3 ('and you start your bloody beat boxing . and you come back at the end') the director moves from the past (the scenario's backstory, formulated in the present perfect tense) to the present situation (formulated in the present tense) and gives the actor some instructions concerning which point in the scenario she wants him to begin at. The scenario the director gives is simple, involves a concrete real-life situation, and the instructions are straightforward in their meaning.

The actor begins the improvisation with a full and melodic sounding beat box—compared to the beat box he has done in the previous phases—and then, in response to the intentionally challenging comments by the actress ('why do you do this every time anything comes up?'), moves into the acting version ('it is the cause') of the Shakespeare monologue, he uses a script for this activity now, which remains interwoven with the beat boxing.

After that several other groups present their work, and the director works with the other actors in a similar manner. In this workshop exercise, we have identified five phases of discourse and text-development in the director's and actors' working process. In their discourse, both participants have gradually built up the keys and tools for the actor and have worked towards an improvisation which will then lead to an acting version involving the Shakespeare monologue. More specifically, in the fourth phase, D provides the keys for the actor's following acting-version ('you're just going to be that guy doing a bit of your beat box thing'), which involves all elements the director and the actor have been building up: the actor's manner of speaking (*how:* the actor's everyday London accent), the content of his speech (*what:* drawing on content of Shakespeare text), and using the communicative tools he just developed (beat box). Reformulating activities (cf. Gülich and Kotschi 1996: 39; also Rau

1992: 301-323) appear here in connection with a puzzle (or task) in this communication process (phase 4 and 5), as the director asks the actor to redo his beat-boxing by adding a particular attitude (phase 4) and timing (phase 5) to the former draft of the working text.

Figure 4: Directing-conversation during a rehearsal (drama and circus-arts).

Example 2

The following extract shows an example of a face-to-face interaction during a rehearsal for a play (drama and circus-arts co-production) in a large pillarless space (25 x 17 x 17.5 metres), specifically equipped for circus-arts. The interaction takes place on the first day of this rehearsal period between one director and eighteen circus-arts students and actors who will be described as performers. The extract shows how the performers and the director work on preparing an improvisation which will form the basis for the performers' text. The interaction lasts 57 seconds.

Participants are: D = director; P = different performers (circus-arts students) in their 20s, P1-P7 (performer 1-7); ? = participant could not be identified. (The names used here are not the participants' real names).

---

18 D: [...] does anybody else have another language .

---

19 D: in this group? sorry? no not Irish . you mean actual
20 P1: Irish Irish
21 P2: Irish Celia (??) Irish

---

22 D: Gaelic? ((to performer 1)) . and do YOU? DO you
23 P1: yeah a little bit a tiny little bit yeah
24 P3: yeah

---

25 D: a tiny little bit ok
26 P1: yeah Celia
27 P2: Celia Celia does as well
28 P4: Celia speaks fluent(?)

---

29 D: she Celia Celia . Celia speaks fluent Gaelic .
30 P1: (????)
31 P2: (???)
32 P3: Anya speaks Dutch

---

33 D: Anya speaks Dutch . ((to performer 6)) I know
34 P5: she is Dutch she is Dutch
35 P6: and I speak Italian . I am Italian
---
36 D: but you're not in this scene ((loud)) very very
37 P6: yeah oh THAT scene (??)
38 ?: ((some performers find it amusing and laugh)) <ha ha ha ha>
---
39 D: useful your Italian+ but you're not in this yeah . so
40 P?: (??) speak (?Italian)
---
41 D: we need you out . we need you out (??) ok so you're .
42 P6: yeyeyeyeah I understood
43 P?: ((in a joking way)) (?go away)
---
44 D: so . but you do speak Italian you (?might as well?) use it .
45 ?: (?this is?)
---
46 D: ((speaks to Anya)) so you speak Dutch .
---
47 D: so we need your Dutch . ok? . so . u:hm .. ((to performer 1)) you speak
---
48 D: Gaelic . a little bit of Gaelic and so does she (??) that's not a bad idea ok .
49 ?: ((coughs)) <hhmhm>
---
50 D: so . uhm . could you swap with Bill then . right? . right? ((speaks to Bill))
---
51 D: so . Bill . you're . you're with Tina right?
52 P7: so I'm the father . ok

In this example D encourages the performers to bring in other languages they speak ('does anybody else have another language in this group?'), which we can observe as turn-taking between the performers and the director, who either repeats their suggestions or refers to them. One of the discursive features that is evident in example 2 is *repetition*. This may in part be because of the rehearsal space with its difficult acoustics and the size of the group of performers. It should also be noted that this is a group of (student) physical performers, who during rehearsals are often involved in physical activities such as stretching, massaging, or physical play while engaged in conversation; more than (student) drama performers are, for example.

The feature of repetition appears here in four different ways. Firstly, when a performer's discourse element gets repeated by the director (e.g. line 25: 'a tiny little bit'). Secondly, when a performer repeats or adds to the content of what someone else has said (e.g. lines 27 and 28). Thirdly, when a performer repeats their own discourse element (e.g. line 35: 'she is Dutch'), and fourthly, when the director repeats her own discourse element (e.g. line 41: 'we need you out').

The different types of repetition and the way they are combined seem to be significant for the reformulation process, as the repetitions appear throughout the whole example and result in language suggestions that are picked up on by the director. For example, the suggestion for Irish/Gaelic takes several repetitions (lines 19 to 29) before a performer makes another suggestion (line 32), which again leads to several repetitions. The director, who is both an artist and an educator, plays a central role, and it is therefore not surprising that the first type of repetition appears to have the strongest impact on the reformulation structure.

Repetition can have different functions in the reformulation process. We can see this in the example, where the director uses repetition to confirm for the group what information she has heard (line 33), as a form of thinking aloud and gaining time for planning (line 33), and to check she has understood correctly and whether the performers are happy to use their respective languages (lines

46–48). In general, D repeats only the new information that is presented to her, and acknowledges the information that is already known to her ('I speak Italian . I am Italian') by referring to it instead (e.g. 'very very useful your Italian').

Reformulation activities appear here in connection with the director's invitation to bring in other languages. The performers' input (e.g. line 32) directly influences the director's decisions about the performers' positions (line 50), which in some cases leads to a change in the performers' roles and keys (line 52), which will in turn have an impact on the improvisation, and therefore on the development of the script.

Conclusion

The first example shows how the production of different acting-versions is intertwined with a turn-taking structure and the reformulation of acting-versions (or elements of them). In both examples the director and performers create drafts that gradually lead to the performance text. These drafts go through an ongoing modification (reformulation) process. We can see a process of layering, in which some layers work as a tool for the performers or a kind of scaffolding (e.g. when the director asks the performer to talk about how he got to the rehearsal that morning), which later in the process will be taken off again when no longer needed (e.g. in the improvisation using the Shakespeare text). This also shows the exploration process that drama has in common with the other arts (cf. Collingwood 1938; Dewey 1934), with the difference that the working process in drama rehearsals is observable, made explicit, and created through communication and language.

Drama processes are complex interactive activities and yet theatre practice and its authentic discourse have largely been neglected by linguistic-communicative research. Many people all over the world are involved in drama for economic, social, political, educational, therapeutic, and recreational purposes. It is therefore surprising how little interest relevant disciplines have shown in empirically investigating drama processes. I regard people's arts practice and their everyday communication as just as important and relevant to society as communication in other areas of life.

In drama research, researchers often sit in on the rehearsals to observe, take notes, make video-recordings, and so on. But in spite of this, it is not common to carry out empirically-based arts-oriented research on drama processes that looks in detail at the communicative artistic features of drama. In my linguistic fieldwork and in discussions with drama practitioners the question has often come up about where to begin and what to look out for when investigating drama processes. By presenting reformulation as one of the key features of linguistics in drama, I intend to provide some guidance for investigating drama activities for both linguists and those without a linguistic background. I hope to provide a starting point for investigating drama processes, and show how applied linguistics can play a key role in the arts and creativity research.

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Appendix

Transcription conventions

Standard orthography is generally used here for the transcriptions with the following exemptions:

- punctuation marks are not used apart from apostrophes, question marks, and exclamation marks;
- special features in articulation are demonstrated through untypical orthography.

((to performer))	-	double parentheses in smaller font represent comments for the following text.
+	-	plus sign indicates that comment in double parentheses stops working.
a:nd	-	colon stretches previous sound.
THAT	-	capital letters in utterance elements indicate emphasis.
[...]	-	ellipses in brackets indicate places where the transcription has been abridged.
(??)	-	parentheses with one or more question marks indicate unintelligible words.
<haha>	-	greater-than and less-than signs indicate non-verbal phenomena.
ok . so	-	each dot represents a pause with approximate length of one second.
wh/	-	forward slash after an element means that speaker has a cut off.

Irish	-	utterance elements written underneath in the system are spoken at
Celia		the same time.