CHAPTER 8

A Linguistic Ethnography of Theatre Production

Kelli Zezulka, University of Leeds

Introduction

The study of light and lighting design in live performance is a growing area of academic study and theoretical inquiry; recent work by Palmer (2013), Abulafia (2015), Moran (2017) and Graham (2018) attests to this fact. However, ethnographic studies of theatre[1] production have remained relatively scarce, with the bulk of current research – particularly in lighting and scenography more widely – forming part of what lighting designer Rick Fisher calls '"post-design rationalisation" – a reflection that comes about after the work has been staged when the role of the lighting can be analysed from a more objective standpoint' (Palmer 2013: 255). In this chapter, however, drawing on material from my doctoral research (Zezulka 2019), I will be exploring the *process* of creative collaboration in theatre lighting design through linguistic ethnography.

The materiality of light is difficult to qualify and often eludes direct description. Edensor (2015: 139) maintains that light 'transcends the cognitive and moves into the nonrepresentational, the realm of the affective and sensual', highlighting the visceral and often inexpressible impact of light in performance.

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The focus here on the technical rehearsal – that is, the moment of creation for a lighting design(er) – is both indicative and symptomatic of this elusiveness. Paradoxically, light is an immaterial material; its materiality is obtained by proxy, by coming into contact with an object in space. Light's materiality is inherently bound to the spatial and temporal conditions in which it is employed. Lighting designer Neil Austin maintains that

> [t]he whole problem with lighting is that it's indescribable to other people beforehand, and … even the best of imaginations can't always foresee exactly what it's going to look like until you are in the space.
>
> (Moran 2017: 63)

Here, Austin is drawing explicit links between light as creative material and its connection to time and space. This interdependence underlies the inherent difficulties faced by lighting designers and their collaborators in describing light's material and affective qualities – and therefore its scenographic potential – prior to the creative team's arrival in the performance space. The linguistic strategies employed by creative and production teams therefore serve a dual purpose in collaboration: first, to describe light's materiality as it relates to its dramaturgical and affective potential and second, to help lighting designers use these descriptions to assert both their position in the creative team hierarchy and the position of light as an integral scenographic element.

I will begin with some brief information about the research environment before moving on to a discussion of the methods and methodology employed in this research. I will then show how I have applied these through an example from the fieldwork that demonstrates the effect of language on the often fluid and flexible hierarchical structures that occur in this very specific workplace environment. I will conclude by speculating on the impact of my research on related industries and the possibilities for future research, showing how this study contributes to the potential of and diversity in applied linguistics.

Research environment

Theatre and other live performance industries fundamentally rely on a highly interconnected network of skills and experience from often geographically disparate collaborators over a relatively short period of time. The freelance, peripatetic nature of the profession leads to a diversity of workplace settings and interactions, with lighting designers and other members of the creative team constantly negotiating the creative, interpersonal and linguistic boundaries of their collaborations and the hierarchies in which these occur.

The period of collaboration under examination here is known as the technical rehearsal, which starts with the first full-company rehearsals in the performance space and ends with the first dress rehearsal. This is often the first

and only time the entire company (cast, director, designers, stage management, technical staff etc.) is in the theatre together. As the name implies, the focus is on coordinating the technical and design elements with the actors, who by this point have spent several weeks rehearsing the piece in a rehearsal room, perhaps with mock-ups of the stage space; these can range from a two-dimensional version of the set marked out on the floor in coloured tape through to fully realised rehearsal sets, complete with functional features such as doors and windows. Actors may also have the opportunity to rehearse in their costumes, to engage with sound and video effects and to familiarise themselves with their props. It is rarely practicable, however, to integrate the performance lighting into the rehearsal process, for several reasons. Logistically, the infrastructure of many rehearsal rooms does not allow for the physical rigging and electrical set-ups required to replicate that in a performance venue. Even if this were possible, light is spatially and temporally dependent, its materiality inherently bound to not only other scenographic elements but also the architecture of the theatre space itself. As intimated above, and demonstrated by the quote from Austin, it is this interdependency between space, time, material, environment and architecture that makes light's potential difficult to articulate outside the actual performance space.

For lighting designers, the creative process of the technical rehearsal 'almost always requires compromises and responses to material constraints and it is not unusual for the most compelling aspect of a production to arise almost by accident' (McAuley 2008: 284–285). This process of trial and error makes use of two types of creativity, identified by Kotler as 'aesthetic creativity' and 'problem-solving creativity' (1967: 246–259). The former is attributed to those whose 'creative products are extensions of their own personalities and embodiments of their personal responses to the nature of the world' (Zackariasson, Walfisz & Wilson 2006: 89–90). The latter, on the other hand, 'is exemplified by scientists and businessmen [whose] creative products are solutions to problems' (Zackariasson, Walfisz & Wilson 2006: 90). The work of lighting designers spans both ends of this seemingly oppositional binary; during technical rehearsals they are constantly acting on and reacting to the theatre space, practising 'knowing-in-action' (Schön 1983: 49) and 'reflection-in-action' (Schön 1983: 54) simultaneously. These processes are engaged in tacitly, though practitioners are often aware that they exist but are unable to explicitly articulate them.

Methodology

In order to begin to articulate the effect of language on the creative process, I employed a linguistic ethnographic approach, conducting 11 periods of fieldwork, only one of which will feature here. During these periods of research I observed lighting designers, directors/choreographers and lighting programmers at work in theatres across the UK. This team works closely together during

the technical rehearsal, located at a central production desk in the auditorium. While it is the choreographer–lighting designer relationship under examination in this chapter, the lighting programmer also plays a key role and features heavily in the rest of the fieldwork (see Zezulka, forthcoming). They are primarily responsible for translating the lighting designer's instructions into syntax that is understandable by the lighting console, a bespoke piece of hardware and software that controls each individual lighting fixture. However, their job entails more than mere data input; the programmer often fulfils an associate creative function as well, both contributing to design decisions and using their expertise to manipulate the functionality of the console.

Linguistic ethnography is an emerging interdisciplinary field that, as the name suggests, gives a linguistic focus to ethnography. Rampton notes that linguistic ethnographers tend to move into the field as 'an attempt to find a way of adequately rendering quite extensive personal experience' (2007: 590); as a practising lighting designer and researcher, this research is an attempt to reconcile my 'quite extensive personal experience' of the theatre industry with what I feel to be an appreciable gap in current knowledge. As lighting designers, we 'speak through our art form' but it is difficult to convey 'how the [lighting designer] responds to the action and the emotion expressed on stage' (Jonathan 2008: 4). I am particularly interested in how this occurs during technical rehearsals, a high-pressure environment with constantly shifting power dynamics and hierarchies. In previous research (Zezulka 2011), I found that lighting designers often struggle to articulate their creative process (as opposed to their procedure) and the mechanisms through which they create a shared aesthetic vocabulary with other members of the creative and production teams. The divisions in nomenclature between cast, creative team and production team are sometimes contested (see, for example, Brennan 2011; McAuley 2012). For my purposes here, I include designers and the director/choreographer in the 'creative team' and technical staff and stage management in the 'production team'. The use of either term is not intended to imply or impose 'a hierarchy of creativity' (McAuley 2012: 45).

The distinction I have made here between 'process' and 'procedure' is important to note. The artistic *process* a lighting designer goes through is the 'why': why certain creative decisions were made and the choices that influenced these decisions. *Procedure*, on the other hand, refers to the 'how', or the tasks that facilitate the lighting design; these include researching technical specifications, creating paperwork, attending rehearsals, meeting with the director, designer and wider production team, compiling reference material (e.g., photographs, drawings or other images) etc. Focusing on procedure rather than process runs the risk of making collaboration seem much more linear and sequential than it actually is; as Slater notes, creative processes may 'appear stable and neat from a distanced perspective … but on closer inspection a story of messiness, uncertainty and flux is revealed' (2015: 72), making them difficult to articulate. The fact that many lighting design textbooks traditionally prioritise procedure over

process is indicative of the difficulty many practitioners have in articulating both their creative process and the impact that light can make to a production, dramaturgically as well as affectively. Recent published texts, however, have begun to redress this balance – in particular, Crisafulli (2013), Palmer (2013), Abulafia (2015), Moran (2017) and Graham (2018) – though none explicitly tackles the language of collaboration, its contribution to the process or its potential to affect the process. It is here that applied linguistics can be deployed, further diversifying and demonstrating the field's relevance and providing an alternative means of analysing the processes of lighting design, and collaboration more widely. As demonstrated below, this can also help to reveal the 'hidden' aspects of these complex interactions, with potentially far-reaching implications.

Linguistic ethnography is unusual in scenography and theatre production research, much of which relies primarily on reflective semi-structured interviews (Pilbrow 2010; Moran 2017, for example). Research into scenographic processes, as opposed to reflective or autoethnographic analyses of the end product (that is, the performance itself), has been taken up by only a handful of researchers, most prominently in lighting, Hunt's work focuses primarily on the lighting programmer (2013a and 2013b; Hunt & Melrose 2005) and the physical environment of the technical rehearsal (Hunt 2015). Similarly, applied linguistics research in theatre environments is relatively uncommon; Hazel (2018: 257) posits that this is because of the theatre's focus on repetition of an imagined dialogue rather than on everyday talk. However, there are several ethnographies of the rehearsal room and its associated process (Hazel 2018; Hazel forthcoming; McAuley 2012) as well as company-wide ethnographies (Atkinson 2006; McKechnie 2014; the latter also includes a detailed section on the intricate backstage processes during a performance). The present study, however, is so far the only ethnography to specifically focus on the language-in-use of theatre lighting designers at work during technical rehearsals, thus both diversifying and interlinking the fields of applied linguistics and scenography. Crucially, the data generation occurs during the creation of the design itself rather than as a reflection on that process.

Data were collected via two sets of audio recordings. One recorded the conversation 'on cans', the headset system worn by members of the creative and production team; the other recorded the conversations around the production desk. The example that follows comes from one of the latter recordings. I also took extensive field notes, which included both my overall impressions of the interactions and details of specific events. I was located near the production desk, just behind the lighting designer and programmer, out of their line of vision. Access to rehearsals was negotiated through my personal relationship with the lighting designer, who then obtained consent from the choreographer and programmer on my behalf. Given my existing relationship with the lighting designer, this importantly meant that they could vouch for my experience and expertise as an informed insider; this made forming relationships with

those I was observing easier as there was already an implicit level of trust on which to build. Transcripts of selected moments in the recordings were made, and these were coded using MaxQDA. Speakers are identified throughout by their production role rather than by name or initials. The generic 'they' is used for all speakers for the purposes of maintaining anonymity.

Through this process, I have been able to explore how lighting professionals use language not only to describe their creative process but also to navigate and potentially exploit the constantly changing social processes of the technical rehearsal. The language strategies used in these sometimes challenging environments are employed subconsciously, tacitly practised rather than explicitly understood. I am specifically interested in technical rehearsals as they are 'a period of often intense activity' (Moran 2017: 27) and 'intense creativity but also of anxiety and strain' (Hunt 2015: 1). For the lighting designer, the technical rehearsals are often very 'expos[ing] – "like standing naked on a table and asking 'what do you think?'", as lighting designer Mark Jonathan puts it' (Moran 2017: 27). As my primary interest is in the language used during the process of creative collaboration, specifically at the point of creation, I have therefore focused my attention on the technical rehearsal, what Moran calls a 'cauldron of potential' (2017: 50). These conditions contribute to a further potential obstacle for the lighting designer: technical rehearsals tend to include substantial negotiation and adjustment as creative teams learn the artistic 'language' of a production, while also refining the spoken language they use to articulate it.

Fieldwork example

The observation I draw on here took place at the end of September and beginning of October 2017. This was a new dance piece that was fairly unconventional in form, and I arrived in the middle of the second week of what was essentially an extended plotting session. These first two weeks of plotting and rehearsal took place in a theatre space that was not the final performance venue. It was much smaller in terms of stage height and width as well as audience capacity. The move to the larger performance venue (in particular, the production desk being moved from the stalls to the balcony level) had a huge impact on the visual aesthetic of the production and accounts for many of the discussions in the final week. The choreographer, lighting designer and programmer had previously worked together on many productions; in fact, the lighting designer and choreographer's professional relationship spans more than two decades. The programmer's professional position at the top of the industry, as well as their long-standing relationship with the lighting designer, afforded them a large amount of creative and problem-solving input. Despite the enduring creative relationships among this team, there was also a considerable amount of disagreement, misalignment and negotiation throughout the technical rehearsals.

In the following example, I explore the diversity of the linguistic tactics used by the creative team in 'develop[ing] the cultural artefact of the performance piece' (Hazel 2018: 257).

Much of the problem-solving that takes place during technical rehearsals relies on 'informed intuition' (Rink 2002: 39). In contrast to the period of 'post-design rationalisation' advocated by lighting designer Rick Fisher (quoted in Palmer 2013: 255), lighting designers and programmers work 'in the moment', improvising and creating in response to numerous constantly changing stimuli, what Schön describes as 'a reflective conversation with the situation' (1991: 76). In the transcript below, the lighting designer and choreographer are discussing the potential of the light and its movement in the scene; changes to the lighting are being made on stage during this section of dialogue.

Transcription key

CH	choreographer
LD	lighting designer
:::	elongated speech
=	latched speech
[	overlapping speech
[…]	section of talk missing
(.)	small pause
(0.2)	length of pause in seconds
[*gesture*]	italics in square brackets denotes a gesture or other clarifying information
<u>this</u>	emphasis
CAPITALS	louder speech

Excerpt 1

1	CH:	what about taking the side lights out? (2.1)
2	LD:	[*to the programmer*] try::: taking out the miros.[2] (9.5)
3	CH:	that's not really right [is it?
4	LD:	[no:::
		there <u>is</u> a <u>thought</u> (.) there <u>will be</u> an idea just (1.2)
5	CH:	yeah i think it needs a little bit=
		=it needs [like a virus feel
6	LD:	[it's definitely yeah
		it definitely needed the (0.3)
7	CH:	it needs light (.) it needs air or something (1.7)
8	LD:	what about the virus? (1.1)

9	CH:	it's too fiddly up top=
10	LD:	=yeah=
11	CH:	=it has to be something that's just like BOOF (1.1) that kind of like (1.6) quite full force BOOF::: […]
12	CH:	you know if if they all went like that [*gestures with hands*] in different ways=
13	LD:	=yeah we haven't done the jerking=
14	CH:	=the jerking in different colours= =see what that [does
15	LD:	[you know angel wings, [programmer]? oh that was wobbly (3.0) we just want the bars to (1.6) each individually go forwards and backwards (4.7) so we've got the downstage points and we've got the upstage points (1.1) we've also got that effect we did where they were streaming but maybe (.) they were moving like this [*demonstrates*] individually maybe we just need to make them snaps[3]?

While there are myriad things to unpack in this short interaction, I would like to focus here on how this transcript demonstrates lighting design in creative collaboration as both a process and a product, or, in Hannah and Harsløf's words, both a 'doing and a thing done' (2008: 13), and how this is exemplified through the use of incomplete utterances, dispreference in other-repair, and positive and negative scoping. While this is just one example from the fieldwork, these features occur across multiple instances of talk in creative collaborative discourse.

In the above exchange, it is clear in the first few turns that the current lighting state (that is, what the choreographer and lighting designer are looking at on stage) is unsatisfactory, but the desired state proves elusive. The choreographer suggests a solution in turn 1 ('What about taking the side lights out?') and, after a long pause, both the choreographer and the lighting designer concede that the lighting state is still 'not really right' (turn 3); the lighting designer's agreement is prompted by the choreographer's tag question 'is it?' in turn 3. This is followed by a series of suggestions, rebuttals and responses from both speakers while they attempt to create the 'right' lighting state together. These are filled with metaphors (turn 7), similes (turns 5 and 11) and onomatopoeia (turn 11), linguistic tactics often used to describe this difficult-to-qualify artistic medium. The lighting designer's assertion in turn 4 that 'there will be an idea' is presented in a positive sense, 'setting the tone' for the rest of this exchange as being positive in nature. The emphasis employed in turn 4 by the lighting designer confirms this; they are both reassuring the choreographer that a suitable solution will be found and indicating that they are open to working together to mutually create and co-construct said solution.

Incomplete utterances

Incomplete utterances appear frequently, inviting simultaneous co-creation. There are two incomplete utterances in the first half of this transcript: 'there is a thought (.) there will be an idea just' (turn 4) and 'it's definitely yeah it definitely needed the' (turn 6), both by the lighting designer. The incomplete utterances here – particularly as the lighting designer stops abruptly without completing their thought – could suggest that the lighting designer is uncertain about how to proceed, or perhaps it is an attempt to buy some thinking time. The choreographer does not complete these utterances but instead offers suggestions, which is perhaps the lighting designer's intention. In pedagogical practice, teachers often use 'designedly incomplete utterances' (Koshik 2002) in order to elicit responses from students, starting the utterance in such a way that invites a prompted response. While this exchange clearly does not have a pedagogic purpose, the choreographer's responses to the lighting designer's utterances (particularly in turns 5 and 7) have the effect of 'forward[ing] the projected turn or its action' (Lerner 1996: 239). The choreographer has not co-opted the lighting designer's turn; rather, they are helping to coproduce it. That is, the lighting designer and choreographer are simultaneously co-constructing the desired lighting state through their dialogue. This is similar to Lerner's examples of jointly produced 'sentences-in-progress' (1991: 441), except that here the choreographer does not so much finish the lighting designer's sentences as move them in a tangential direction. For instance, in turn 6, the lighting designer uses the past tense 'needed', implying that a past solution or attempt at a solution was beneficial in some way; there was some quality belonging to a previous version of this lighting state that was desirable (perhaps the inclusion of the side lights referenced in turn 1). The choreographer uses the same verb in turn 7 but in the present tense, indicating a move towards an untried solution and redirecting the lighting designer's attention away from previous attempts. This is clearly evidenced in the lighting designer's change of focus in turn 8 away from the state as a whole and towards an individual element ('the virus') within it.

Other-repair

Creative collaborative discourse also seems to lend itself to dispreference, seen here in the use of other-repair. The preference for self-repair in everyday conversation is well documented (e.g., Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977). In other-repair the speaker corrects a turn that is not theirs, and this is seen as a less likely choice than self-repair (and particularly in *other-initiated* other-repair) because a speaker should be in full control over the formulation of their turn. However, it appears that the opposite is more often true in situations of creative collaborative problem-solving. There is an example of other-initiated

other-repair in this transcript in which the recipient (in this case, the choreographer) both indicates a problem in the talk ('yeah i think it needs a little bit=', turn 5) and resolves the problem ('it needs like a virus feel', turn 5). Other-repair occurs throughout the full set of transcripts, to a greater or lesser extent, in cases where problem-solving is taking place. According to Pomerantz (1984), and later substantiated in a study by Svennevig (2007), there is a preference in other-initiated repair for trying the least complicated solution first. Svennevig, following Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977), divides repair into three types, in order of preference: problems of hearing, problems of understanding and problems of acceptability. Through the results of his study, he finds that problems of acceptability, which include the acceptability of the 'linguistic utterance' as well as its 'social action' (Svennevig 2007: 337), are often initially addressed as problems of hearing or understanding. This is the most likely course of action, as 'correcting someone else is displaying a deficiency in their contribution and thus constitutes a face-threatening act' (Svennevig 2007: 345). However, as demonstrated here, creative collaborative discourse favours the opposite. While there are instances of problems of hearing and problems of understanding throughout the full set of transcripts from this observation, problems of acceptability occur frequently as the preferred response. This may be due to a number of factors: time is limited at this stage of the process and identifying the problem straight away may be the most efficient use of time; in a long-standing creative partnership such as this one, there is less threat to the speaker's face as disagreements are understood to be creative rather than personal in nature; and a genuine desire on the part of both speakers to co-create and co-facilitate a joint understanding of the design space. These face-saving strategies are also demonstrated in the use of positive and negative scoping below. It is clear here that the desire to maintain the collaborative nature of the interaction overrides the linguistic 'preferences' in both self- and other-repair that are found in everyday talk.

Positive and negative scoping

Taylor (2018) considers what she calls 'negative scoping', following architectural theorist Alexander's assertion that articulating or justifying design preferences is often easier to do through establishing what is wrong as opposed to what is right (1973: 22–23). Using negative scoping, collaborators can edit out the information or qualities that are irrelevant or undesired, narrowing down the potential possibilities. In a cyclical fashion, this rejected information feeds into the next solution that is offered, and in theory the offer is further refined with each cycle of negative scoping. To this I will add 'positive scoping', the process of offering alternative, potentially desired options, rather than negating undesired ones. This works in a similarly cyclical fashion and likewise allows collaborators to clarify and hone their understanding of the 'design space' (Eckert

and Stacey 2000: 525). Both positive and negative scoping happen throughout this exchange, with the choreographer both offering suggestions and attempting to edit out undesirable characteristics.

There is an adjacency pair in turns 8 and 9, starting with the lighting designer's question 'what about the virus?', referring to a moving effect that is part of this lighting state. The lighting designer uses this common reference point of a virus – part of the shared aesthetic vocabulary that has developed over the course of this production, much like the reference to 'angel wings' in turn 15 – to help to establish the design space (i.e., what parameters the lighting is bound by). The choreographer is not keen on the existing virus effect, as evidenced clearly in turn 9. However, their response in turn 9 is not a direct rejection but rather an articulation of what is wrong with the 'virus', an example of Taylor's 'negative scoping.' Taylor also identifies the use of the word 'too' as a way to soften the effect of the rejection. However, in contrast to where it occurs here, Taylor notes that 'too' is often used as part of a question, allowing the recipient of the offer to easily reject it or offer an alternative solution without threatening the offeror's face. Here, though, it serves a similar purpose in allowing the choreographer to focus on a specific quality of the effect – its movement, which is 'too fiddly' (turn 9). Rather than dismiss the effect outright, they are able to identify a specific quality about it, allowing the lighting designer to correct or alter this later in turn 15.

There is only one outright rejection of an idea or action in this transcript: the choreographer's 'that's not really right' in turn 3. However, the tag question 'is it?' plus the intensifier 'really' serve to soften this rejection in a face-saving act on the part of the choreographer. Further, the quality 'not really right' is so vague as to be not very helpful, so it is interesting that the choreographer and the lighting designer both agree on this without any further parameters being articulated. It may, however, simply be the presence of the tag question that invites the lighting designer's agreement here.

As noted previously about the lighting designer's turn 4, the creative misalignment in turns 5 through 7 and 11 through 15 is likewise presented primarily in the positive. For instance, the choreographer says that the lighting state 'needs air or something' (turn 7) rather than 'this lighting state doesn't feel very airy' or a comparable utterance. A similar thing occurs in turn 11: by stating what the lighting state needs, the choreographer is offering a suggestion, however obscure, rather than stating what the lighting state currently lacks. This serves in both instances to preserve the interpersonal relationship of these collaborators, as consistent outright rejections from either party could be harmful.

The effect of this alternating positive and negative scoping is seen in the lighting designer's moment of inspiration in turn 13, spurred on by the choreographer's suggestion in turn 12 and followed by their assent in turn 14. The lighting designer then has the confidence to instruct the programmer in the execution of their idea (turn 15), something they had not done since turn 2. This clearly demonstrates the shifting nature of the hierarchies present during the

production period. Whereas the choreographer has been the primary offeror up to turn 12, the lighting designer then takes over from line 13 onwards. The combination of the choreographer's suggestions through positive and negative scoping and the lighting designer's knowledge of the existing design space allow the lighting designer to resume control of the creation of the lighting state from turn 13.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated the value of applying a linguistic ethnographic approach to the study of the theatre lighting design process. As shown here through linguistic analysis, lighting design (and scenography more widely) is both a 'doing and a thing done' (Hannah and Harsløf 2008: 13), an active process as well as the 'final' product presented to the audience on press night. In distinguishing between the two, Palmer usefully differentiates light from lighting, the first being a material of performance and the latter the tools and equipment used to produce an end result (2013: xiii–xiv). We have seen here how light's lack of materiality, or its dependent materiality, makes it difficult to describe. In talking about light and its material or affective qualities, creative teams regularly make use of linguistic tropes to convey often abstract ideas or concepts. But a more detailed linguistic analysis reveals the underlying structures at work in collaborative environments. Creative collaborative discourse lends itself in particular to the use of incomplete utterances, dispreference and negative scoping. These strategies serve a dual purpose within the setting of the technical rehearsal: first, to demonstrate the often 'hidden' ways in which collaborators co-construct their practice *in the moment* and, second, to assert the fundamentality of light and the lighting designer to live performance.

Using this methodology and the linguistic analysis demonstrated here can provide both applied linguists and theatre practitioners with a detailed process of exploring how collaborative mechanisms work and how these impact on both professional and interpersonal relationships. While this research specifically focuses on a very particular, esoteric workplace environment, the methodology I have employed here could be used to explore the processes employed in similar industries, particularly those that are situated at the intersection of art and technology, such as music, gaming and architecture, further diversifying the reach of applied linguistics research. This research opens up avenues for further inquiry into collaborative arts practices; further research could explore the application of applied linguistics methods in the wider field of scenography or in other scenographic processes, such as design meetings or research and development periods, or in ensemble theatre companies working with devised texts. There is additionally scope for exploring concepts such as leadership and identity in these hierarchical environments and how these are manifest in language practices.

Endnotes

[1] I use the word 'theatre' throughout to encompass several genres of live performance: plays, dance, opera and musicals.

[2] This refers to Miro Cubes, manufactured by Rosco. These are compact LED fixtures, which lined the edges of the stage in this production to provide side light.

[3] This is shorthand for a 'snap blackout', a 'fade' to black that happens instantly.

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