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Chapter 8: Writing: A versatile resource in the treatment of the clients' proposals

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Abstract

This chapter investigates how writing serves as a resource in decision-making at the Clubhouse and how writing activities relate to professionals' responses to clients. The ideology of the Clubhouse is one of interaction, and in accordance with this perspective, support workers and clients should be treated equally in decision-making processes related to the activity of the Clubhouse. However, as demonstrated in previous research, encouraging clients in mental health rehabilitation to participate actively in interaction and decision-making can be difficult. Therefore, support workers carry a substantial responsibility for promoting clients' participation in interactions; this responsibility is supported by how they respond to clients. The focus in this chapter is on a certain type of participation-encouraging response—that is, a response that promotes the documentation of vaguely expressed ideas in written documents and encourages a dialogue between support workers and Clubhouse clients around the formulations in a text-in-production.

Keywords: writing, text, proposals, decision-making

Writing in Face-to-Face Social Interaction

Research of writing has a long history. However, this research has typically focused on the dichotomy between spoken and written language, stressing the differences between situated processes of speaking and of written texts. Thus, spoken language has been studied from a process perspective, while research into written language has focused on the final product.

The study of writing as a dynamic activity has been non-linear, emerging as unrelated approaches in fields like literature, socio-ethnography, and psycholinguistics. In these research domains, texts have not been studied as fixed objects but rather as possible versions among many, as embedded in the wider complex of human contextualized activities, and as cognitive processes of writing documented by technological tools. In the emerging conversation-analytic research field of writing-in-interaction (Komter, 2006; Mondada & Svinhufvud, 2016), the research on writing as a process has been developed further by involving interactional and embodied aspects in the analysis. In this development, writing has been studied not only as a cognitive process but also as a social practice.

Previous research on institutional interaction has mostly focused on differences between discussions in spoken language and the written texts resulting from these discussions. In an early study of police interrogations, Jönsson and Linell (1991) demonstrated several differences between the narrative structure of the spoken interviews and the written documents. For example, the transformation from interview to document involves a higher degree of precision, increased coherence, and modification of emotionality into objectively identified findings. Similar results were demonstrated in Van Charldorp's (2014) more recent study on police interrogations. Komter (2006) further showed the interactive process that transforms a police interrogation into a written document, explaining how the coordination of participants' speaking with typing generates a monologue-like written document presenting the suspect's statement.

As summarized by Mondada and Svinhufvud (2016), previous research has outlined a few sequential environments where writing occupies a specific sequential slot. Writing has especially been studied as a closing third action following an adjacency pair. For example, the above-mentioned study on police interrogations by Komter (2006), as well as Pälli and Lehtinen's (2014) account of appraisal interviews, deal with writing as a third action in this context.

Another context investigated by many researchers is writing as a third action after a proposal and an acceptance. For example, writing as part of proposal sequences has been studied by Asmuss and Oshima (2012), Pälli and Lehtinen (2014), Nissi (2015), and Mondada and Svinhufvud (2016). In their study of appraisal interviews, Pälli and Lehtinen (2014) showed that moving into writing usually demonstrates unproblematic acceptance of a proposal, whereas a delay indicates that the decision is somewhat problematic and is a matter of negotiation.

Writing also relates to the processes of decision-making in institutional interaction. In analyzing instances of note-taking in decision-making, Stevanovic (2013) illuminated how writing may be a manner of individually registering a final decision. Nissi (2015) demonstrated how shared text production in multiparty meetings involves two forms of decision-making. First, the group must make decisions about local text production that involve what to write in the text. Second, a more general decision is involved, because the written document will commit the group members to carrying out certain public service in the future. Thus, by agreeing with the local formulations of the document, the meeting participants also agree to provide future services.

Once formulated, texts become independent entities in organizational life, and new organization members no longer have access to the processes preceding the formulation of the

documents (Nissi, 2015; cf. Pälli, Vaara, & Sorsa, 2009 on strategy documents). As demonstrated by Moore, Whalen, Gathman, and Hankinson (2010), documents can coordinate organizational activity and play a constitutional role in entire activity systems of organizations. Drawing on the relationship between texts and organizational constitution, Cooren (2004; 2009) introduced the notion of textual agency, stating that texts themselves, not just the people producing and using the texts, make a difference in organizations by performing various actions. Cooren (2004; 2009) adapted the notion of the speech act (Austin, 1975; Searle, 1989) to written text, postulating the ability of texts to perform certain speech acts. Originally, Austin (1975) introduced two types of speech acts: constatives are statements that can be either true or false (e.g., “The sun is shining today”), and performatives are statements that produce actions (e.g., “I sentence you to prison”). Although speech acts were originally considered to be instances of face-to-face spoken communication, legal documents have been studied as written indications of speech acts (Fiorito, 2006; Visconti, 2009).

Written documents of the type analyzed in the present study are not performative in the sense of legal language, which creates “deontic states that are made obligatory by law” (Fiorito, 2006, p. 103). However, these documents can still be considered as performatives from the whole organization’s perspective. As demonstrated (e.g., Nissi, 2015), written documentation turns ideas into guidelines that play a fundamental role in the organization. In this chapter, writing is analyzed as a resource for decision-making in the mental rehabilitation context of the Clubhouse organization (described in more detail in chapters 2, 6, 9, and 12). The following conversational extract provides a first glimpse into how strongly writing is associated with decision-making in the everyday activities of the Clubhouse. Here, Clubhouse member Ada acts as secretary, writing with a keyboard, while the text-in-production was projected on the wall.

Extract 1

- 01 SW1: mutta me ei ehkä voida sitä tähän ainakaan vielä
but maybe we can't put it here at least not yet
- 02 laittaa koska me ei olla tehty sitä päätöstä se
because we haven't made that decision it
- 03 on vasta huomenna nyt sitte se meidän
is not until tomorrow now then the wrapping up
- 04 kehittämispäivän purku
of our development day
- 05 (1.0)
- 06 SW1: ni onks se vähän (0.2) sit me ei ehkä voida
so is it a bit (0.2) then we can't perhaps
- 07 sitä tohon vielä laittaa (.) sit me ollaan ikään
put it there yet (.) then we have kind of
- 08 kuin se jo päätetty että se täytyy ottaa tähän
already decided it that we need to include it
- 09 osaksi,
here

10 Ada: mmh

11 SW1: vaik se päätetään vasta huomenna.
even if we make the decision tomorrow

12 Ada: nii.
yes

13 (2.0)

14 SW1: joo (.) me voidaan se sit lisätä nää voi
yes (.) we can then add it these can

15 kuitenkin kun nää tallennetaan tänne nii tota
still when we save these here then erm

16 ne voidaan sitte muokkailla
we can then edit them

17 sitä mukaan kun (0.2) mutta millä me saadaan toi
at the same time as (0.2) but how do we get that

18 jos me tulostetaan toi eka dia?
one if we print the first slide

In Extract 1, the support worker SW1 repeatedly expresses the connection between writing something down and making a decision. As seen in line 1, she begins by pointing out that the group cannot write down a point about making individual rehabilitation/career plans for the Clubhouse members. As an explanation, she mentions (lines 2–4) that the decision has not been made yet but will be made the following day. After a pause, she repeats (lines 6–8) that they cannot write something down yet: “Then we can’t perhaps put it there yet.” She continues to mention that writing something down signals making a decision (“Then we have already kind of decided it,” lines 7–8).

Clubhouse member Ada acknowledges SW1’s statement by producing minimal response tokens (lines 10, 12), after which SW1 states that the information can be added and the texts edited later. In this, SW1 implies that the text can be completed once the decision has been made. At this point, SW1 initiates talk about practical issues related to ongoing tasks – how pieces of cardboard should be placed on the wall (line 17 onwards). Once she has indicated that new information can be added to the text later, she moves on to discussing other matters.

Extract 1 illustrates how closely connected collective writing was to decision-making in group meetings at the Clubhouse, as made explicit by the support worker. This connection makes writing a fruitful domain for study in the field of joint decision-making. Therefore, this article focuses on three different uses of writing in various stages of decision-making:

1. Initial stage: How are ideas transformed into proposals during the initial stages of decision-making?
2. Mid-stage: How does editing texts contribute to decision-making?
3. Final stage: What is the status of written texts? Are they considered to be tentative proposals or finalized decisions?

Data and Method

The data analyzed for this chapter were collected as part of a larger project on mental health rehabilitation (see Chapter 2 for a description of the project). Recorded over an 11-month period at a Finnish Clubhouse, the 29 hours of video data featured authentic interactions from group meetings involving 2–10 clients and 1–3 support workers. The data collection was based on participants' informed consent, and research permission was obtained from the Clubhouse organization board in the relevant area.

The group investigated in this study was a work coaching group open to Clubhouse members. The group discussed a range of topics, from future employment plans to generic skills needed in the labor market. The generic skills practiced during the sessions involved active participation at the meetings.

Examining the data with the overall aim of studying the decision-making processes revealed that the Clubhouse meetings were characterized by the support workers' attempts to promote clients' participation. Furthermore, texts and joint writing played an important role in the interaction. At the beginning of every meeting, a client was chosen to be a secretary in charge of taking minutes. Besides the minutes, other texts like guidelines for Clubhouse activities were also written and edited during the meetings. These texts were often written on a computer and reflected onto a screen.

In this study, the focus was on how the writing processes related to decision-making, and it identified the role of writing in various stages of decision-making. This role is the focus of analysis in this chapter. In Section 3, the results of the analysis are presented. Because the authors did not have access to all texts written during the meetings, this analysis concentrates on writing as a process rather than the written products.

Conversation analysis was the method used (cf. Chapter 1 for an introduction of conversation analysis and the study of joint decision-making). This chapter draws on the conversation analytic literature introduced above.

Analysis: Three Uses of Writing During Joint Decision-Making Processes

In this section, we discuss how writing relates to decision-making in the data. In their account of writing in interaction, Mondada and Svinhufvud (2016) distinguished between moving into writing and actual writing; they then analyzed both phenomena as embodied conduct. The present study does not distinguish between different phases in the writing process. Instead, this presentation of cases follows the phases of the decision-making process, proceeding from the initial phase to the final phase of decision-making via the mid-stage.

Transforming Tentative Ideas into Proposals

During the initial stage of a decision-making process, writing allows even tentative ideas expressed by Clubhouse members to be transformed into proposals with potential future consequences. This is the case for Extract 2. Here, the group is discussing upcoming meetings.

Extract 2

- 01 Ari: kyllä sitä oppii t- tekemällä (-)
you do learn by doing
- 02 SW1: mm
- 03 SW2: mm
- 04 SW1: kun tässä tulee nyt kuitenkin ihan (.) siis hyviä
when we now have really (.) good
- 05 ideota [mitä me voitas tehdä tässä et pitäskö
ideas what we could do so should we
- 06 SW2: mm
- 07 SW1: niitä laittaa ylös paperille et muuten me ei
write them down on paper because otherwise we
- 08 [muisteta näitä.] haluaaks joku. (0.5)
won't remember them does anybody want to (0.5)
- 09 SW2: [laitetaan]
let's put them down
- 10 haluaksä Kai pistää
do you Kai want to put
- 11 SW1: sä oot hyvä (.) kirjuri (-)((naurua))
you're a good (.) secretary (-) ((laughter))
- 12 Kai: no no ku mää (.) lähen jo (.) joudun lähtee
well well when I (.) already go (.) have to go
- 13 kymmenen minuutin sisällä kun mul on se, (1.0)
in 10 minutes when I have that, (1.0)
- 14 (muuten voisin kirjoittaa) (--)
(otherwise I could write) (--)
- 15 SW1: voiksää Asko laittaa paperille
can you Asko write down
- 16 (.)
- 17 SW1: et
you can't
- 18 SW1: (kuka on täs)
(who is here)
- 19 Mia: (--)
- 20 SW1: Ari voi ottaa
Ari can take
- 21 (.)

22 Ari: (-) minä otan tämän sihteerin homman
 (-) I take this secretary work

23 SW1: no ni,
 okay,

24 (.)

25 SW1: niin mä aattelin et tässähan tuli yks, (0.8)
 so I thought that we had one, (0.8)

26 [y^hks i^hdea
 one idea

27 SW2: [mm joo
 mm yes

28 SW1: Kailla (.) (--) laittaa vähän ranskiksia sinne
 from Kai (.) (--) write down some bullet points

29 (-) ylös voidaan sit miettiä,
 (-) we can discuss them then

30 Ari: mikä se [oli.
 what was it

31 SW1: [elikkä, (1.2) sulla oli vähän ninku
 so (1.2) you had a bit like

32 sitä (.) <oman toiminnan arviointia>
 that (.) assessment of one's own activity

In Extract 2, one member has presented the idea of going to the employment office to learn something new, and this has sparked a discussion. In line 4, the support worker SW1 (a) defines a member's prior, rather unspecified, turns as suggestions for further activities ("really good ideas what we could do", lines 4–5), (b) suggests writing these ideas down ("should we write them down on paper", lines 5–7), and (c) addresses one of the members as the potential secretary ("do you Kai want to put", line 10). Her turn is followed by a negotiation about who should act as secretary (lines 8–19). After the negotiation, SW1 returns to the matter of writing things down. She refers to an idea introduced by another member ("one idea from Kai", lines 25, 28) and the importance of writing this idea down ("write down some bullet points", lines 28–29). After the member acting as secretary asks for help formulating the ideas, SW1 reformulates Kai's idea (lines 31–32).

As seen in this extract, SW1 referred to the ideas presented by various Clubhouse members and proposed the importance of writing these ideas down. She even explicitly pointed to the opportunity to discuss the proposals later (line 29). Thus, vague ideas achieved the status of proposals through the process of writing them down. Simultaneously, the process of writing down ideas did not necessarily entail commitment to accepting the proposal. Instead, the written-down text embodied the possibility that the proposal might be returned to and accepted later. This allowed the participants to display their "in principle" serious engagement with the proposal, even if they moved on to a new topic.

Extract 3 provides another example of how unspecific ideas are transformed into proposals by formulating these ideas in text.

Extract 3

- 01 Ira: ja vähän harjotella sitä et miten se lähtee.
and practice a bit how it goes
- 02 SW2: mm,
- 03 SW1: ↑voidaanhan käydä esimerkiks joku kerta
we can for example at some point have a (.)
- 04 sellanen (.) keskustelu että että tota (.)
discussion that erm (.)
- 05 vaikka sillon jos tulee näitäkin (.) jäseniä
for example if there are members coming
- 06 jotka on, (0.3) sieltä Helsingistä [jotka] on,
who are, (0.3) from Helsinki who have
- 07 (0.3) on tota noin niin käyny [sen,]
(0.3) have erm well erm gone through that
- 08 SW2: [mm-m,] mm-m,
- 09 SW1: tehny siirtymätyöjaksoja (.) ja sitten meillä
done transition work periods (.) and then we
- 10 on henkilökuntajäseninä, (0.4) kokemusta siitä
have as staff members (0.4) experience of how
- 11 että miten se prosessi niinku menee kun se työ
the process goes when one starts the work
- 12 alotetaan et jos mennään sitte jo siihen
so if we already go to that
- 13 pisteeseen, (0.3) ja mietitään
point (0.3) and think about
- 14 sitä niin voidaan käydä ihan hyvin (.)
that then nothing prevents us from having (.)
- 15 semmon[enki] keskustelu, (0.4) [jollaki kertaa]
that kind of conversation (0.4) at some point
- 16 SW2: [mm,] [se ois hyvä]
mm that would be good
- 17 SW1: et mitä siinä että mitä siinä ↑tapahtuu ihan
that what happens there
- 18 konkreettisesti että, (0.4) miten se työ yhdessä
concretely that (0.4) what the work we
- 19 harjotellaan ja, (0.4) palkkaussysteemit ja
practice together and (0.4) salary systems and so
- 20 muut. ↑Pitäskö seki laittaa sinne ylös.
forth. Should we also write that down
(lines omitted)

- 21 Aki: mikä se työalotusprosessi (.) mitä sinne piti
what the process of starting work (.) what should
- 22 kirjottaa
I write
- 23 SW2: oisko se työnaloitusprosessi ja
should we write the process of starting work and
- 24 työvalmentajan tuki. ehkä me siitä
the support from the work coach. maybe we'll
- 25 muistetaan mitä se
remember what it

Extract (3) features a lengthy discussion about a potential future activity—arranging an event at which the process of transition work will be discussed. In line 3, SW1 expresses herself vaguely by saying that they can arrange a discussion “at some point.” However, she then describes the future event in detail by outlining several aspects worth discussing at the event (lines 17–20). In line 20, she suggests that this idea be written down. The member acting as secretary asks about how he should formulate the idea when writing it down (line 21). In this case, the member identifies the “process of starting work” as the core of the support worker’s proposal and then asks the support workers for clarification about the linguistic formulation of the proposal. SW2 responds by providing a formulation and then referring to the fact that they may need to remember the idea later: (“maybe we’ll remember”, line 24). The process of collective writing becomes visible in how the parties negotiate the precise formulations in lines 22–23.

Hence, the proposal was discussed and dealt with in the interaction, but more detailed planning was postponed. The suggestion was considered; it was written down, and the need to remember it in the future was referenced. However, no decision was made. Writing the suggestion down paused the discussion. Both Extracts 2 and 3 exemplify how tentative ideas were taken seriously and treated as proposals that must be considered.

Text Editing as a Path to Proposal Content

Writing may also constitute the “core” of the participants’ negotiations about the content of the decisions to be made. In this case, texts written on other occasions are used as a starting point for decision-making, which is realized by the participants’ joint text editing. In other words, editing texts prompts several decisions concerning both the content and linguistic formulations of the text.

In their prompts to launch editing activities, the support workers frequently followed a dual agenda, on one hand, asking about the clients’ grasp of the meaning of the text and, on the other hand, about the acceptability of a given linguistic formulation. This agenda allowed members to contribute freely to the unfolding interaction while also allowing the support workers to monitor the Clubhouse members’ epistemic access to the proposal content, intervening when needed. These processes are exemplified in Extracts 4 and 5.

In Extract 4, a text produced in another context is made visible on the screen, and the support worker is typing on the computer while simultaneously using the text as a basis for discussion. In line 1, she points at the screen and asks the group about their opinion of the text. Her question has an open format (“what do you think”), which does not restrict the requested responses in any way. In line 5, however, she produces a more specific two-part question, in which she asks

for the group's opinion about both the form ("is this ok") and the content ("what does this mean") of the featured text. The response from the group is minimal; only one member responds minimally (line 7), and a lengthy pause (line 8) follows. Then, SW1 poses a new question to the group (line 9).

Extract 4

- 01 SW1: no tää seuraava, (.) mitä ootte mieltä.
so this next one (.) what do you think

(points at a point visible on the screen)
- 02 (5.0) ((the group looks at the screen))
- 03 SW1: mä vaihdan tän näin.
I'll change this one like this.
- 04 (10.0)
- 05 SW1: onks tää ookoo ja mitä tää tarkoittaa.
is this ok and what does this mean
- 06 (1.0)
- 07 Ira: on.
yes
- 08 (4.0)
- 09 SW1: voidaaks me kirjata tätä tähän koska siis
can we write this down here because
- 10 tää on nyt, (.) otettu mallia toisista
this is now (.) we took the model from other
- 11 klubitaloista sielähä on tämmönen, (.) ura
clubhouses they use this kind of (.) career
- 12 kautta kuntoutussuunnitelma. (.) ja meillä on,
slash rehabilitation plan (.) and we have
- 13 (0.8) ollu toisella nimellä. (0.8)
(0.8) used another name (0.8)
- 14 tavotesuunnitelma. (0.4) (mitä näitä)
target plan (0.4) (what there)
- 15 (.)
- 16 Ira: must toi on i[ha
I think that's quite
- 17 SW1: [et se on pitäny [olla siinä
that it needed to be there
- 18 Ira: [sellane lyhyt ja
a short and

- 19 ytimekäs toi ehdotus.
succinct that suggestion
- 20 (0.8)
- 21 SW1: mutta meil ei välttämättä
but at our place we don't necessarily
- 22 tarvii, (.) tehdä sitä. (1.4) suunnitelmaa.
need to (.) do that (1.4) plan
- 23 (2.0)
- 24 Ira: no pitäskö sinne laittaa että haluttaessa.
well should we write down that when desired

The support worker's turn (line 9) contains an initial question, ("can we write this down here"), followed by a causal clause initiated with the subordinating conjunction *koska* ("because"). The causal clause provides the to the question; SW1 points out that they have used a text produced at another Clubhouse as a model for the text on which they are currently working. Furthermore, she outlines the differences between the terms various Clubhouses use to refer to certain documents utilized in their everyday activities. One of the Clubhouse members, Ira, agrees with SW1's suggestion (line 16). However, Ira interrupts her turn, because SW1 overlaps by referring to a certain point that must be expressed if the group wants to follow the other Clubhouse's model verbatim (line 17). Ira then completes her turn (lines 18–19), expressing acceptance of SW1's initial suggestion. In line 21, however, SW1 adds a contrasting remark, *mutta* ("but"), stating that they do not necessarily need to follow this model. Thus, she expresses the group's freedom to take an independent position toward the text they use as a basis for their negotiations. Ira suggests (line 24) a reformulation of the already-written text, indicating how they can change the text to be more flexible and not overly dependent on the other Clubhouse's model.

In Extract 4, the negotiations were related to editing a previously written text to meet the needs of the current group. The support worker asked questions both about the form and content of the text in creation, thus treating the Clubhouse members as peers who had a say in how the text was formulated. In this instance, text editing was a collective process.

Extract 5 features an example of a negotiation which involves two support workers and a Clubhouse member as participants.

Extract 5

- 01 SW3: must tääl on aika kivasti tää et
I think this is quite nicely put this that
- 02 siirtymätyö on jäsenoikeus ei
transition work is the right of a member not an
- 03 velvote(.) vähän liittyy tähän et ei jos
obligation (.) this has a little to do with this
- 04 ei niiku, (.) ei kenenkään oo pakko lähtee.
that if you don't (.) nobody has to go
(reads from a paper)

05 Tia: nii toiki on ihan hyvä pointti.
yes that's a good point too

06 SW1: no laitetaan seki tohon.
ok let's put it there then

The sequence begins with SW3 evaluating a formulation in an already-written text. First, she frames the formulation in a positive way. Second, she reads aloud from the text, "Transition work is the right of a club member, not an obligation." Finally, she reformulates the cited text in her own words, defining the message of the text as follows: nobody has to attend transition work against their will. Tia gives positive feedback (line 5), and her turn is followed by SW1's turn, in which SW1 immediately agrees to write down the formulation. Thus, they choose to accept the formulation as such, without any changes or further negotiations. Unlike Extract 4, no lengthy negotiation about using the already-written text as material for the text-in-production can be found in this extract.

Extracts 4 and 5 illustrated how text editing forms the basis for negotiations between clients and support workers, providing the clients with an opportunity to contribute to both the content and linguistic formulations of the texts they are editing.

Ambiguous Status of the Already-Written Texts

During the final stages of the decision-making process, the text the group has been working on can be a resource when trying to reach a decision after lengthy negotiations. However, the status of already-written texts as tentative proposals versus confirmed decisions is ambiguous and negotiable. Therefore, this section demonstrates these negotiations' delicate balance between the ideals of consensus-based decision-making and more pragmatic considerations about the group's needs. Extract 6 (analyzed at length in Chapter 12) features the end of a long discussion about the coaching group's name. Here, writing is done with a pen, not on the computer.

Extract 6

01 Leo: miksi me päätimme tämän.
what have we decided

02 Anu: laita se työvalmennus.
write down the work coaching

03 SW1: käyks se (.) käyks se kaikille.
is it (.) is it okay for everybody

04 Esa: eiks melkein kaikki sitä äänestäny.
didn't almost everyone vote for that option

05 SW1: no Maj ehdotti kyl toista ja mä: mulle kävi
well Maj suggested something else and I'm okay

06 kaikki, (.) kaikki k(h)äy,
with everything

07 (2.0)

08 Anu: niin no se on nyt sittee se.
so well that's now what it is

09 (1.0)

10 Anu: päätös tapahtu (--) demokratia (-) vai
the decision was made (--) democracy (-) or

11 (3.0)

12 Ida: sillä nyt melkeen
because now almost

13 Anu: ja kun se on vielä kuulakärkikynä niin sitä
and when it's a ball pen then it

14 ei enää voi pyyhkiä.
can't be erased anymore

15 (0.5)

16 Maj: voi sen sotkee ja kirjottaa uuden.
well one can mess it up and write again

In line 1, Leo again asks what name they should choose. Anu (line 2) encourage him to write down this choice, and Esa (line 4) supports the decision by stating that almost everybody voted for this proposal. Anu continues, saying that it was a democratic decision, and then she says that the name was written with a ballpoint pen (lines 13–14) and thus cannot be erased. This utterance stresses the idea on which the present study is based; at the Clubhouse, writing and decision-making are intimately connected. Because the name suggestion has been written down, it cannot be erased; thus, the decision has been made through writing down the name. Although nobody has declared that a decision has been made (cf. Austin, 1975), Anu retrospectively treats the act of writing down a name as a decision that could not be altered.

However, Maj, who makes another suggestion, declares her divergent opinion (line 16); she points out that the text can be messed up and rewritten. This conversation can be interpreted as a discussion about textual agency (Cooren, 2004; 2009) in which Anu treats the written text as having independent agency, whereas Maj ascribes the capacity to make decisions to the present human actors. According to Maj, they have the right to change the text if they want to.

Therefore, this analysis indicates specific practical advantages of writing for managing participation and joint decision-making in mental health rehabilitation. Writing can be used to reach a decision after lengthy negotiations, enabling the conversation to move forward to other topics.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we investigated writing-in-interaction at the Clubhouse. Writing has been studied as a joint and collaborative practice rather than an individual and cognitive phenomenon. The focus has been on writing as a process, and written texts as products have

been omitted from the current analysis. The present study is particularly connected to previous literature about writing on decision-making that has examined writing as typically following the actions of proposal and acceptance (Asmuss & Oshima, 2012, Pälli & Lehtinen, 2014, Nissi, 2015, Mondada & Svinhufvud, 2016). However, as the present investigation has indicated, proposals can present as emergent processes, and identifying acceptance of proposals can be subject to negotiation. Thus, this study sheds new light on the role of writing in sequences involving proposals.

This study reported on the role of texts in various phases of the decision-making process and demonstrated how the texts achieve their own intersubjective understanding based on their connection to the various stages of decision-making. The participants oriented to the texts in different ways depending on the decision-making phase. In the initial stages, the participants oriented to the texts to transform tentative ideas into proposals; they simultaneously postponed the decision. While editing texts, various immediate decisions must be made regarding both the content and form of the texts. During this process, the texts were used by the support workers to engage the Clubhouse members in the shared activity and allow them to provide input. Finally, texts could also conclude a lengthy negotiation, causing a decision to be made.

The present analysis has revealed that texts at the Clubhouse were developed in a manner promoting the intertextuality and intersubjectivity of the texts. Intertextuality refers to texts achieving their meaning from interconnection with other texts. In the present data, the connection between the texts-in-production and related texts became visible, especially in the processes of editing and revising texts based on those produced at other Clubhouses. The revision work launched negotiations about both the content and form of the model texts; in other words, does the group accept this content in this form as the guidelines for their activities? The interconnectedness between the texts at the various Clubhouses revealed the structure of the Clubhouse organization, with its underlying common ideology open to renegotiation to fit the demands of the individual Clubhouse.

This analysis has demonstrated that the process of writing balanced the ideals and practice of decision-making at the Clubhouse. On one hand, decision-making at the Clubhouse promoted a consensus-based process (cf. Chapter 12) in which everybody could be involved in the decision-making. On the other hand, pragmatic decisions concerning what the group needed had to be made. As in all institutional interactions, the meetings had an agenda and an allotted time slot; these factors constituted the outer circumstances of the interaction. Another issue related to consensus-based decision-making was the need to promote participation, which could be done by responding to Clubhouse members and involving them in collective writing.

The extracts analyzed have demonstrated how collective writing balances ideals and practice. The first section showed how the support workers encouraged writing down unspecified ideas presented by the Clubhouse members. The transformation of these ideas into text supported the delicate balance between involving Clubhouse members in the interaction and sticking to the agenda. Writing the ideas down and mentioning returning to these matters in the future gave the impression that the ideas were treated seriously and were not simply dismissed. Simultaneously, writing the ideas down enabled the conversation to move on to other matters, and the agenda was followed without requiring any decisions to be made on the proposed matters. Therefore, writing down ideas helped the support workers meet the local institutional goal of following the agenda set for the meeting while simultaneously following the overall Clubhouse ideology of involving the members in decision-making.

The Clubhouse members were involved in the collective editing of texts based on previous texts. The text editing questions the extent to which guidelines formulated in another context are applicable in the current context and whether formulations from prior texts should be accepted as such or edited and reformulated to fit the current context. The shared editing of texts enabled a discussion between support workers and Clubhouse members in which the

support workers treated the members as peers and texts were formulated as a collective endeavor. During the editing process, the members were provided with the opportunity to express their opinion on both the content and linguistic formulations of the text, and this opportunity allowed the Clubhouse members to contribute to the interaction. However, the support workers acted as the party who had the final say about the text-in-production; the Clubhouse members confirmed the correct formulations to use in the text with the support workers. In this way, the support workers could both involve the Clubhouse members in interaction and monitor their access to the proposal content, ensuring that the agenda was followed.

Writing can also be a resource for concluding a lengthy decision-making process. However, the status of the written formulations as tentative proposals versus confirmed decisions is sometimes ambiguous; this status can become a topic for negotiation itself. Additionally, these negotiations were connected with balancing the Clubhouse ideal of democratic decision-making with practical considerations related to the framework of institutional talk. Sometimes, a member might stick with the agenda and move the decision-making process forward while the support worker ensured that the decision-making was consensus-based. In this instance, the support worker carried the responsibility of involving everybody in decision-making and reaching a balance between honoring the ideals of democratic decision-making and orienting to the overall conversational agenda.

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