

Getting ready to move as a couple. Accomplishing mobile formations in a dance class

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Getting ready to move as a couple. Accomplishing mobile formations in a dance class

Mathias Broth¹ & Leelo Keevallik²

Abstract

The paper focuses on how students in a Lindy Hop dance class move into a complex mobile formation as a sequentially relevant response to a directive embedded in the teachers' verbal and embodied instructions of the next task for practice. This sequence of actions accomplishes a transition from a stationary constellation of observing students to a mobile circle of practicing dance couples. The paper describes in detail how instruction is turned into practice in an emergent way, in and through the simultaneous accountable production and reception of *qualitative instruction*, *practice proposals*, *structuring instructions* and *count-ins*. The analysis shows how student behaviour is oriented to the couple as a relevant mobile formation, and how couples gradually become more synchronised with each other to form a mobile circle for practicing a sequence of dance steps.

Keywords

Mobile formations, dance instruction, Lindy Hop classes, activity transitions, embodied response, multimodal interaction analysis, Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis.

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1. Introduction

This paper is about how a particular kind of mobile formation comes into being, namely dancing couples in a Lindy Hop class. Typically, dance classes are organised in two kinds of recurrent segments: instruction and practice. During instruction, teachers comment on student performance and give guidelines for the practice to come. Following the instruction students practice the dance moves in couples. This paper is devoted to the detailed description of how participants in a dance class move from instruction to practice in an emergent way, reflexively and accountably (Garfinkel 1967). The transition from instruction to practice is sequentially organised as a directive utterance by the teachers to which the students comply in beginning to practice the dance. In focussing on a pair of actions that is accomplished by two collective parties (the teacher couple and the students), and where the relevant student response is an embodied action, the paper extends previous research on paired actions (Schegloff 2007). The analysis demonstrates how beginning to move as a couple constitutes a recognisable response to the directive turn, and what it takes to constitute a collective moving student party.

Many types of group instruction are organised in such a way that students form a single interactional party that is expected to act simultaneously. Examples range from gymnastics and choral singing to traditional study of Koran. The interactional advantage of a collective party is that it can be collectively addressed, and the pedagogical advantage is, of course, that a large group of people can simultaneously profit from the practice. In addition, students can use each other as points of reference for evaluating their own performance. A diverging behaviour will be salient also for the teachers, allowing correction to be addressed to a single participant or collectively to the entire student party.

In group dance classes the body of students often moves in a synchronised way. Acting as part of a collective party in the class furthermore involves starting to dance at the same time as everybody else. It is a complex practical task for the participants to coordinate the beginning of a joint rhythmic activity, but also essential for achieving collective mobility in the class. A further complication in classes of partner dance, among them Lindy Hop, is that the students have to arrange themselves into couples in order to accomplish mobility in a relevant manner. Thus, the global moving body of students in partner dance classes consists of smaller constellations, which also have to be arranged in response to some initiating action by the teachers, who are responsible for the general agenda and organisation of the class.

In a dance class students are often arranged on a circle during the instruction as well as the practice. During the instructive segment the circle enables all the students a free view of the teachers at the centre, and during the practice segment the arrangement on a circle functions as a device of avoiding collisions, as everybody moves in the same direction. It also functions as a structuring device for partner change. At the same time, the circle affords easy spotting of divergent behaviour, and it is thus also a pedagogical instrument. In the figures of this paper we will see one section of the circle.

In this study we are interested in the interactional accomplishment of the embodied transition between the relatively immobile relaxed posture of the students during instruction and their joint synchronised initiation of the dance. Figures 1 and 2, taken from our focus case, show the bodies of the students while the teachers are demonstrating a dance move, and 17 seconds later when the step practice is about to start. Throughout the paper, each student will be identified by a letter, and couples by two neighbouring letters in the alphabetical order.

Figure 1: Attending to teachers' demonstration.

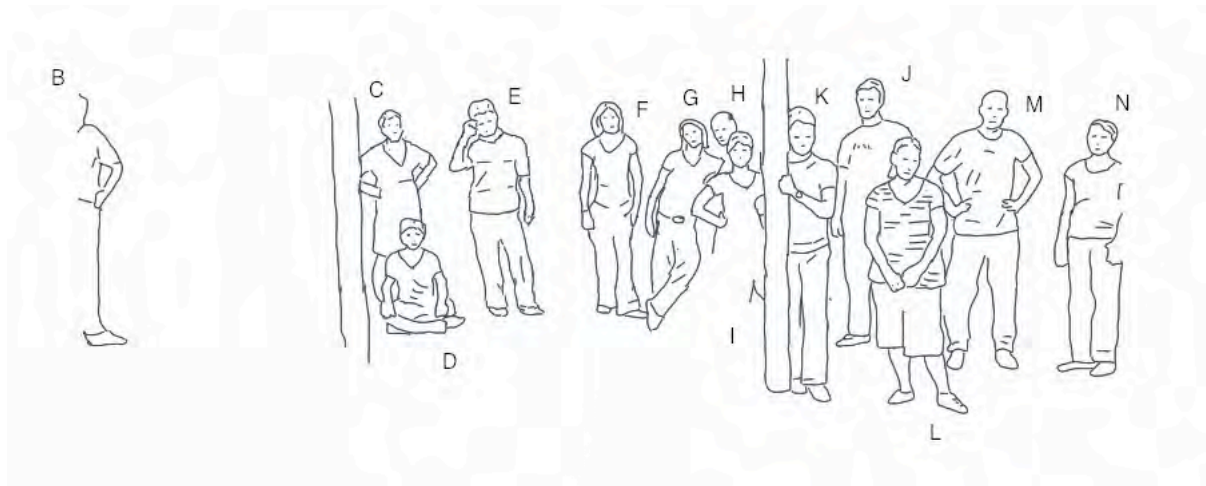
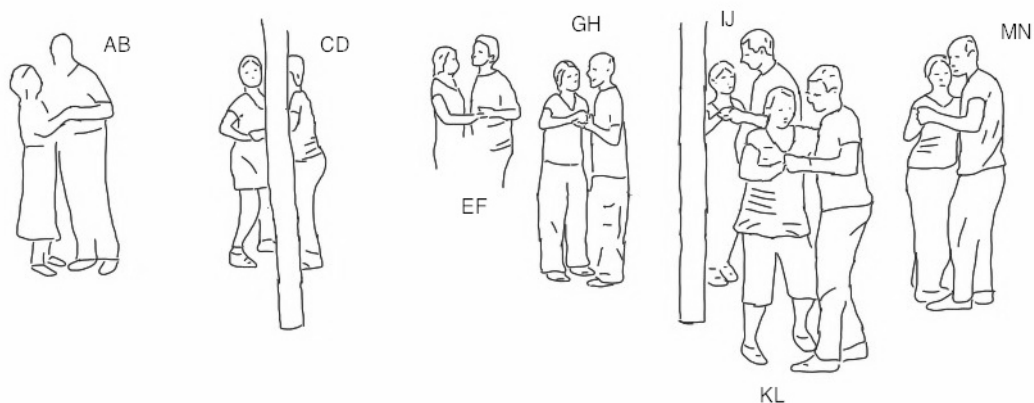


Figure 2: Beginning to dance, the teacher utters *sju* ('seven') in the count-in (Excerpt (4), l. 21).



As these images suggest, we are facing two rather different situations, one clearly stationary whereas the other is on the verge of becoming a mobile formation. Nevertheless, at both moments, all participants seem to comport themselves in a highly similar way. In the following, we will identify the cues that lead the students to increasingly engage themselves as dancing couples, analyse the practical problems they face in the task, and reveal the methodic practices through which these are dealt with.

2. Sequences, directives, and embodiment in mobile formations

One of the defining characteristics of Conversation Analysis as a discipline is its theoretical and analytical interest in the sequential organisation of actions-in-interaction (Sacks 1992:I: 3-11). Some actions were early on identified as forming “adjacency pairs”, actions that are normatively tied together in a particularly strong way through a “conditional relevance” (Schegloff 1968: 1083). The claim is that, from a participant’s perspective, “[...] given the first, the second is expectable” (*ibid.*), and if not produced, it is missing. Many types of adjacency pairs have been described, e.g. greeting – greeting, question – answer, and request – granting/refusal (Schegloff 2007). These straightforward pairs may be expanded in different and more or less complex ways. For instance, a pair may precede a subsequent pair, and this has been described in terms of “pre-sequences”; a pair may also be inserted after the first but

before the second part of another pair (the “base pair”) which is then termed an “insertion sequence” (see further Schegloff 2007).

More recently, there has been an increased interest in the embodied and visually available aspects of adjacently paired actions, especially regarding aspects of response. For instance, in many cases an embodied response is the only relevant alternative, as when you are asked to pass the salt at a dinner table, turn right as the driver of a car (Haddington 2010) or make a shot of a particular participant in the studio as a camera operator during TV-production (Broth 2011). Clearly, there are limits to what can be done with words only.

So far, most studies have focussed on the *sequential* relations between an initiating action and its response. But of course participants do not vanish from the scene when not involved in the direct production of either of the two parts of an adjacency pair. Rather, they embody themselves as recipients of the other’s action in accountable ways. As Goodwin (1979) was one of the first to show empirically, there is a very fine-grained *reflexive* and simultaneous relation between the activity of speakers and recipients, leading to the understanding that actions and activities are co-constructed at a minute level of detail. The ethnomethodological and conversation analytic research tradition that is now well established as “multi-modal interaction analysis” (see e.g. Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron 2012) has continued this work and describes how participants use not only talk but also visual resources of all kinds (gesture, gaze, body posture, manipulation of artefacts, etc.) to build sequences. Participants can e.g. project themselves as next speakers through pointing (Mondada 2007), embody stances to assessments through facial expressions (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori 2006) and initiate a sequentially expected embodied response through camera panning (Broth 2011) well before the completion of a first current verbal action.

The relevance of participants’ mobility for the sequential organisation of action has recently also become a focus of interest (McIlvenny, Broth & Haddington 2009; Haddington, Mondada & Neville 2012). The mobility of participants often, but not always, implies a change or modification of the mutual spatial positioning between the participants. Kendon (1990), studying relatively stationary settings, first showed how people ordinarily position themselves in different “F-formations” (or “facing-formations”, *ibid.* 249) in focused interaction (e.g. face-to-face, in a circle or side-by-side). Mondada (2005) described how the “interactional space” thus created is flexibly related to the on-going activity and the local environment. This work now continues in a renewed interest in what has early on been described as “vehicular units” (Goffman 1971: 8), mobile “withs” (*ibid.* 19) or accountable “togethernesses” (Ryave & Schenkein 1974: 270). With the added focus of the dynamic, emergent and achieved character of groups of people on the move, mobile groups are studied as “mobile formations”. As examples of this line of research, Mondada (2009) describes how mobile participants become stationary as a new interactional space is set up for asking the way in the street; Broth & Mondada (submitted) analyse how stationary participants become mobile as a way of closing the current activity; and Broth & Lundström (2012) analyse both these aspects in a detailed analysis of walking between different places during a guided walk at a boat club.

On a relatively global level, the actions involved in the concerted accomplishment of the relevant mobile dance formations considered here are 1. a directive (telling someone what to do), and 2. its compliance (cf. Craven & Potter 2010). This is analysable as an adjacency pair where the first pair part is built using verbal and other embodied resources and the second pair part produced through a particular kind of embodied response: starting to dance. Although the literature on directives in conversation is extensive (see M.H. Goodwin 2006 for an overview), few studies focus directly on embodied responses to directives. For notable exceptions, see M.H. Goodwin (2006) on sequential trajectories of directives in families, Cekaite (2010) on shepherding children in families and Mondada (2011) on directives in

jointly playing video games. This paper builds further on this work by studying how entering a mobile formation can be a relevant response to a directive in a dance class. Original aspects here include the fact that the directive is produced by a collective party (two dance teachers) and that the embodied response is also produced by a collective party (the students), who furthermore respond by getting ready to dance in, and as part of, a complex mobile formation.

3. Data and methodology

The data was video recorded in classes of Lindy Hop in 2006-2010. The overall length of the corpus is about 25 hours and the thirteen teachers speak English, Swedish or Estonian. The example here will be in Swedish but the described pattern applies to all the data. Lindy Hop is a partner dance and typically taught by a “lead” and a “follow” teacher. The recordings include beginner through advanced levels of non-professional dancing. The phenomenon of transition from instruction to practice occurs about 12 times per hour, thus being a frequent concern for the participants.

The data are analysed from a multimodal and interactional perspective, to unveil the detailed ways in which the participants deal with the practical problems of the moment in a methodic, emplaced, embodied and accountable way (McIlvenny, Broth & Haddington, 2009; Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron, 2011). Regarding the systematicity of the participants’ practices, our data present a rather unusual characteristic, and that is that it features, in a single clip, a large number of participants facing not only an identical, but actually the same, practical problem: how relevantly to respond to a specific emerging qualitative instruction and a following directive to start the practice. This means that we are able to observe a great number of student responses to the teachers’ activity in a single clip. As the single clip thus documents several responses by different participants, it is possible to talk about it as already providing a collection of cases. We propose that such a “single clip collection” is particularly strong as empirical evidence of oriented to phenomena, as it documents not only an orientation by many participants towards a particular *type* of action, but in fact towards *the same* initiating action. In our case, the initiating action is performed by dance teachers and the response takes the form of an emergent mobile formation by students.

4. Analysis

Transitions from demonstration and instruction of how to dance by the teachers to moments where students dance in couples turn out to involve a certain number of highly regular phases. At the end of the qualitative instruction about what will have to be practiced, teachers announce that it is now time to start the practice, and also provide students with support for structuring and coordinating their beginning to dance. This support is done via a *structuring instruction* and a *count-in*. The analysis will follow this step-by-step procedure whereby the participants in the class are brought, and bring themselves, into movement as a large number of synchronised dancing couples.

4.1 Closure of instruction as foreshadowing student activity

The very fact that an instructive stretch of talk is about to be brought to closure, is oriented to by some students as foreshadowing the upcoming dance practice. This is observable in Extract (1), where some participants rearrange their body posture at what could be heard as

the closure of the instruction. The immobility of other students is an evidence of the optional character of beginning to move this early.

Excerpt (1) VL10-2I. Participants: TeaL Lead teacher, TeaF Follow teacher, StuA – StuF Student A – Student F.

```

01 TeaL:      +[BOM]
02 TeaF:      +[BOM]
   TeaF/L     +>>--dance-->

03           (0.5)
04 TeaF:      s:å går vi ner i swing out för,
               then we go down in a swing out 'cause
05 TeaF:      (0.8) infö:r en swing out, vill man gärna ha're där.
               before a swing out you really want to have this
06           (0.6)
07 TeaL:      s:+träckt.Δ (0.2)+ βv           (.) sλiträcktä läΔvφαget.λ=
               stretched                      stretched position

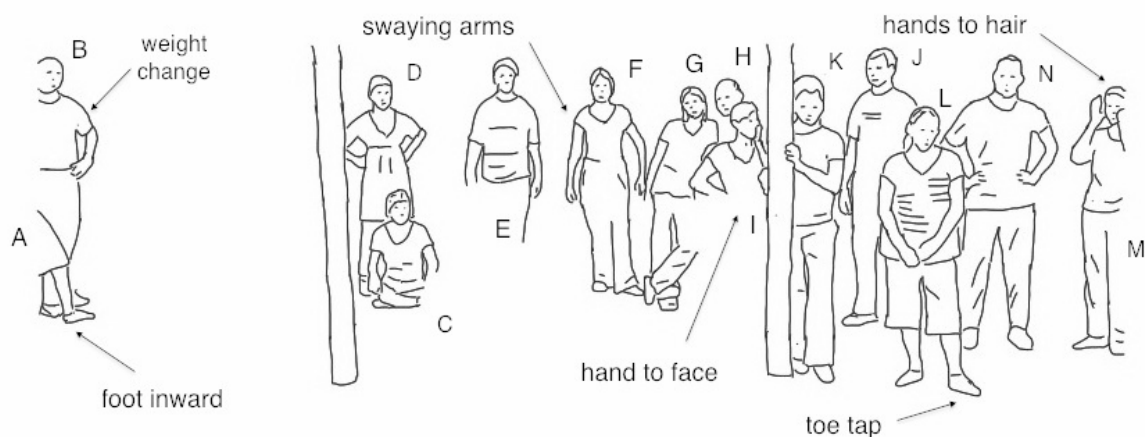
   StuC:      ((sniff))φ
   TeaF/L     ->dance+ disengage+
   TeaL       Δhands up demonstrating a "stretch" Δ ((apex underl.))
   StuB       βweight shift
   StuN       vmoves hand slightly           vhand to hair-->>
   StuF       φmoves hand on leg φsways arms-->>
   StuL       λfoot up and down λ
   StuI       ιhead turn, hand to face-->>
   StuA       αmoves foot-->>

08 TeaF:      =sträckt un:dergreppι
               stretched undergrip
09           (0.5)
10 TeaL:      just de.=
               that's right
11 TeaF:      =jaå.
               yeah
12           (0.3)

```

At the beginning of the excerpt, the two teachers dance in front of the class that is standing around them on a circle, watching in what we here call an *observer's position*. By this we mean that the students are bodily oriented towards the centre of the dance hall, relatively immobile and gazing at the teachers in the middle. The two teachers collaboratively produce a last instructive turn that explains a detail pertaining to a preferable way of holding hands before a particular dance move (*swingout*). The turn that is produced by the follow teacher (4-6) is recompleted by the lead teacher in the form of an increment (Ford, Fox & Thompson, 2002) (7). The qualitative instruction is performed and treated as a composite display (constituted by both dance movement, talk and gesture), which is visible in the fact that both demonstrative dance and talk is completed before any of the students begin to move. Two students (B and N) move slightly after a pause following a first possible completion point, i.e. where the talk can be heard as complete (beginning of 7). And as soon as the lead teacher reaches a second possible completion point of the collaborative turn, which furthermore coincides with the ending of the iconic gesture “gestalt” that he produces (end of 7), several students reposition their bodies slightly, in what is understandable as getting ready to move themselves: F starts swaying her arms, L taps with her toes, I turns her head and touches her face, N begins to re-arrange her hair and A retracts her foot (for exact timings, see multimodal transcription in line 7).

Figure 3. Summary of first signs of slight movement by the end of instruction, on *sträckt* (‘stretched’) in line 8.



These moves, visually summarized in Figure 3, can be taken as public displays of recognition of what the end of the teachers' instruction implies, i.e. that it will soon be up to the students to practice. In this way subdued movement, while reflecting recipient analysis of the verbal-bodily structures in teacher instruction, can adumbrate a future major mobile action that is relevant and accountable in the activity context. However, in order to actually start dancing, the students need further instruction and coordination by the teachers. This will be unpacked below.

4.2 Initiation of the directive utterance: practice projectors

The first teacher action that explicitly makes relevant a response in the form of actual dance by the students is the production of what we call a *practice projector*. The practice projector constitutes, together with the subsequent specifications (see 4.3 below), the first pair part of an adjacency pair, a directive action. A practice projector can be found in line 13 in Extract (2), which is the direct continuation of (1):

Excerpt (2) VL10-2I

- 12 (0.3)
 13 TeaL: VI TESTAR.
 Let's have a go ((lit. "we test"))
 14 ps: γ(0.3)
 StuG γturns head towards partner (StuH), uncrosses feet-->>
 15 TeaL: ηβFRÅ:N,
 from
 StuH ηturns head towards partner (StuG)-->>
 StuB βtakes step forward-->>

After closing the instruction (shown in Extract 1), the lead teacher turns towards the students and utters the phrase *vi testar*. ('let's have a go', line 13). This is the beginning of the first part of a two-part action sequence: 1. A directive to start the practice by teachers, and 2. Dance practice by the students. There are some immediate student responses (as shown in line 14 and 15) that embody a projection of the fact that the next relevant action is expectable from them and indicates that the distance between the initiation of the directive and the first step of dance practice may be oriented to as preferably minimised by the students. However, the

majority of the students do not yet move. Instead, they seem to wait for more before a response can be accomplished.

In contrast to the previous excerpt, when the upcoming practice was only distantly projectable and not yet required by the students, here some students immediately begin to move into dance positions, as can be seen in their movements toward their prospective partners. The category of a partner emerges as imminently relevant as soon as the practice segment is understood to be approaching, and the practice projector defines the time-space until the practice as relatively short. In their movement we see evidence that these students treat beginning to form dance positions as the proper thing to do after hearing the practice projector. This authorises an analysis of this sequence as an adjacency pair, where the first action, the directive, makes the second conditionally relevant and missing if not produced (Schegloff 1968: 1083).

In the global organization of the class, the practice projector is a salient marker of transition from an instruction segment to a practice segment and from observers' position to dancing in student behaviour. Practice projectors can take many different forms. Our collection of practice projectors excerpted from our Swedish and English corpus include:

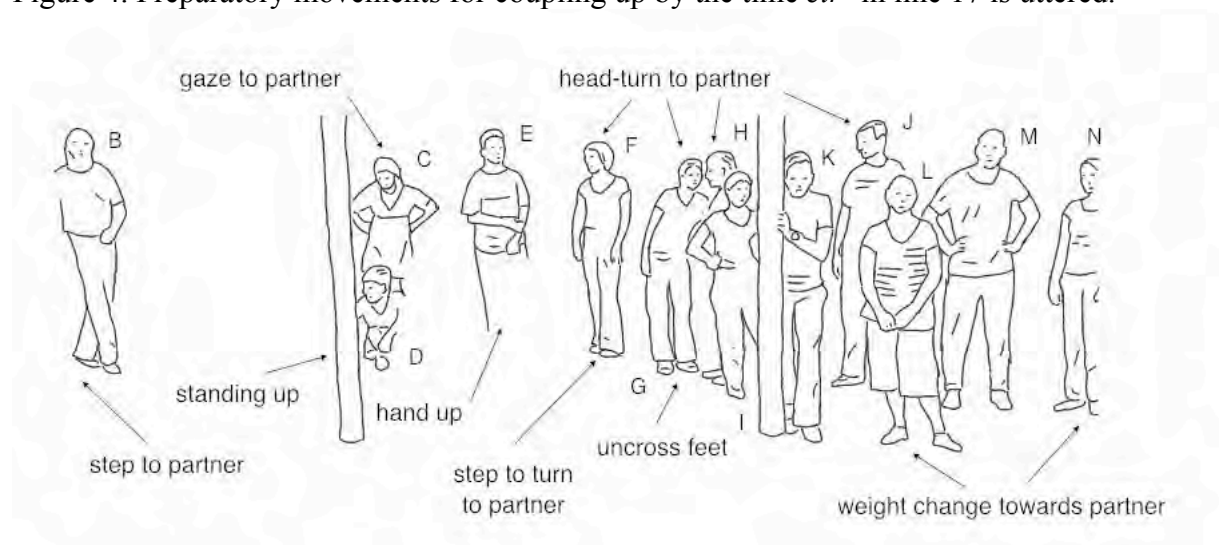
- | | |
|---|--|
| - <i>Vi testar</i> . ('Let's try') | - Let's just try that. |
| - <i>Vi prova tillammans</i> . ('Let's try together') | - Let's do it together. |
| - <i>(Vi tar det) en gång till/igen</i> . ('(Let's do it) one more time') | - Let's try again. |
| - <i>Sista gången</i> . ('Last time') | - Could I just see that? |
| - <i>Nu gör vi en [step name]</i> . ('Now we'll do a [step name]') | - All together. |
| - Can we try that? | - Here we go. |
| - Could we all try that? | - I'll put on a song and let you do it on your own |

Practice projectors constitute a clear example of the context-renewing/context shaped character of turns at talk (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974: 699). They project that it is now the students' turn to dance, but what exactly should be practiced is only recoverable by referring back to the previous qualitative instruction. In this paper, however, we are not looking at the content of the dance practice or its success. Our focus is on the mechanism of embodied transition from the instruction to the practice segment.

Some of the practice projectors listed above, such as 'one more time' presuppose that the relevant step has been practiced just previously, others do not pose such a restriction. Some explicitly define the step to be practiced. These objects organise future action in the class by making relevant an activity-specific compliance, starting to dance. However, there are further actions to be taken before the dance can actually start. The couples have to be assembled and a common rhythm established for the dance. The subsequent analysis will focus on how the students go about producing the second pair part, in an orderly manner.

The teachers' cueings, from the practice projector and onwards, importantly accomplish an increased streamlining of the students' activities, compared to what would most likely be the case if the students were to organise their dance start by themselves as individual couples. The students' movements become gradually more dance-related, and less generic and self-grooming. After the practice projector we can observe movements that are preparatory to coupling up, such as gazes and weight changes toward partners. Note however, that there are yet almost no actual adjustments of bodies in space (with the exception of B). The exact timing of these movements is shown in Excerpts (2) above and (3) below with the resulting position changes visualised in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Preparatory movements for coupling up by the time *cir-* in line 17 is uttered.



In reflexively responding to a practice projector as a transition marker in the teachers' unfolding talk, the students thus gradually begin to move from being formed as stationary individuals in observer's position to couples ready for practice.

4.3 Continuation of the directive utterance: Structuring instruction

While some of the students begin to form couples in response to the directive, the teachers continue their instructive talk. Building on the earlier qualitative instruction, the teachers now verbally identify from where in the sequence of dance steps the students are supposed to start practicing. This amounts to a distinct instruction that crucially structures the following practice segment. As can be seen in Extract (3), which is the continuation of Extract (2), already the very first item of the structuring instruction 'from' can be seen to result in more students beginning to form couples:

Excerpt (3). VL10-2I

- 15 TeaL: γηβFRÅ:N,
 from
StuG γ>>--turns head towards partner (StuH), uncrosses feet-->>
StuH ηturns head towards partner (StuG)-->>
StuB βtakes step forward-->>
- 16 TeaF: δχ(.) [UND-] ((English pronunciation))
17 TeaL: [CIηR]KEL].
 Circle
StuD δrises from floor-->>
StuC χlooks down at rising partner (StuD)-->>
StuI χturns left towards partner (StuJ)-->>
StuJ χturns right towards partner (StuI)-->>
StuE ηturns right towards partner (StuF)-->>
StuF ηturns left towards partner (StuE)-->>
- 18 (0.2)
19 TeaF: ohkej.
 Okey
20 TeaL: λ(.) cirkel unkder the arλch swingout fem,

circle under the arch swingout five

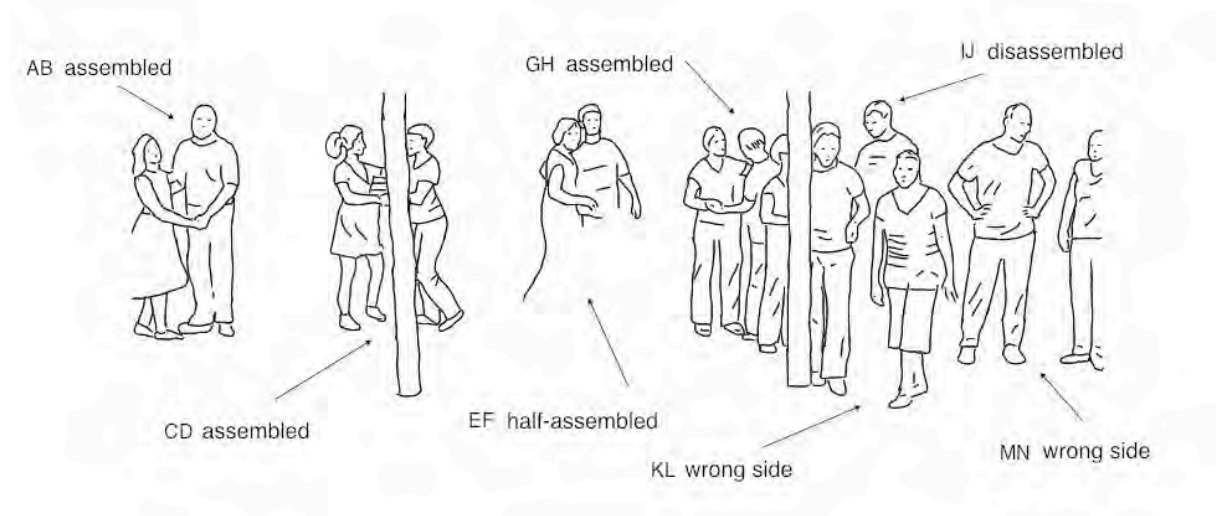
StuL λ lets go of linked hands λ steps fw left foot-->>

StuK kremoves hand from post, turns tw part (StuL)-->>

The lead teacher incrementally continues his turn, previously begun with the practice projector *vi testar* 'let's try' (line 13 above), with a preposition (*från* 'from', 15) that projects a step specification. This projection is clearly visible in the follow teacher's attempt at a collaborative completion (Lerner 1996), where she begins such a specification by *und-* (16, understandable as the beginning of the phrase *under-the-arch*). However, this is overlapped by a conflicting specification uttered by the lead teacher (*cirkel* 'circle', 17) and the follow teacher soon publicly accepts the lead teacher's version (19).

From the very beginning of the structuring instruction, the remaining immobile students (in fact the majority) begin to form couples. Although individual students move at quite different times, by the end of the structuring instruction, all of the students are clearly orienting towards a partner, as shown in Figure (5). What is notable also, is the fact that students who are part of a particular couple begin to move at the same time. Thus, whereas students A and B move right after the practice proposal (15), D and E, and F and G once the preposition has been produced (17), H and I after the first specifying syllable (17), J and K begin to move quite a bit later, as they wait until the first part of the specification has been overtly agreed on by the teachers (20). These findings further demonstrate the relevance of the prospective couple in this activity, in that students not only respond to the teachers' instruction in beginning to move, but are clearly also highly sensitive to the activity of the anticipated partner.

Figure 5. Position on -out in line 20, immediately before the count-in starts.



This part of the sequence thus shows how the teachers provide structuring resources. In so doing, they also provide students with the time necessary for actually forming couples, coming from their prior participation as observing individuals positioned side-by-side on a big circle. Whereas some students begin to move into couples very early, at the moment when the instruction that precedes the directive can be heard to be approaching closure, others may still wait considerably, even beyond the structuring instruction. However, by the time of the first item of the count-in, all the couples are on their way to being formed, while they also reveal awareness that they still have the entire time of the count-in – that establishes the necessary rhythm for the dance practice – to finalise the formations. We can thus see that the students' beginning to move is accomplished, although still not perfectly together, through the coordinated activities of students and teachers alike.

4.4 The count-in

The last phase of the transition from instruction to dance practice is the count-in, which immediately precedes the first dance step on *wam* in line 22:

Excerpt (4) VL 10-2I

```

20 TeaL:      (.) cirkel under the arch swingout fem,
               circle under the arch swingout five
21 TeaL:      (0.7) sex (0.5) å fem sex ↑sjū::.=
               six      an' five six seven
22 TeaF:      [↓å:: Σwam]
               an::d wam
               Stus      Σdance-->>
23 TeaL:      =[↓å:: cir]kel,=
               an::d circle
24 TeaF:      =pam pom (.) wam

```

Having specified from where the students are supposed to start dancing, the lead teacher immediately launches the count-in (end of 20). Upon its completion, all students begin to dance at the same time (22). The count-in does a multiple duty in this activity: it a) establishes a public rhythm for the upcoming practice; b) enables joint establishment of rhythm within every couple; c) projects a distinct spate of time for the students to get ready for beat ‘one’ of the dance; d) and thus achieves a highly synchronised onset of dancing within and between couples as part of a multi-layered mobile formation.

Lindy hop is danced to four-beat music usually organized into eight-beat step patterns that stretch across two bars. This means that the practice is generally structured in eight-counts. The conventional format of counting in the joint practice is to utter the following:

Counts:	‘five’	(pause)	‘six’	(pause)	‘five’	‘six’	‘seven’	‘eight’	‘one ...’
Beats in bars:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1

All the initial syllables of numbers fall on the beats and pauses are held for one beat. In the second half of the pattern the increasing imminency of the start is iconically marked by the more elaborate counting.³ The counting format is heavily conventionalised, as the first ‘five’ actually falls on beat one and the ‘six’ on three in the first bar of the two-bar structure. In addition, as can also be seen in line 22 in Excerpt (4), the ‘eight’ can be replaced with ‘and’, which sets it apart and formulates its distinct meaning for the practical purposes in the class. Another feature emphasising the importance of the ‘and’ is its joint production by the two teachers, even though just one of them counted thus far. Parts of the count-in may be emphasised by embodied behaviour, such as claps, snaps and stomps. In the current case, both teachers clap their hands, as shown in Figure (6).

In terms of the social coordination of the students, it is crucial that the time limit for the start of the practice is ultimately defined from the moment when ‘five’ and ‘six’ have been uttered. The interval between the two words projects the total length of time it takes to arrive at the next ‘one’ in the eight-count sequence, when the first dance step has to be taken. That

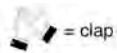
³ This is a phenomenon that is strikingly similar to countdowns in TV-production, where counts also get more frequent the closer to the relevant moment for action one gets (cf. [Broth, submitted](#)). However, a clear difference between count-ins and countdowns is that, whereas in the first case the rhythm of the count prospectively establishes a key resource for the activity to follow, in the second case the rhythm of the count is only used for projecting to crucial moment, after which it ceases to be relevant.

leaves the students with a clearly projectable end of preparation and enables a synchronised beginning of the practice. A parallel for the joint start can be found in “choral productions” in spoken discourse (Lerner 2002), as both necessitate a clear projection in the on-going activity.

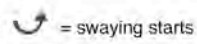
In order to take the first step on the ‘one’ the students will have to go down in the knees on the beat before it as well as lift the stepping foot from the floor. And in order to jointly go down in the knees, accomplishing an embodied upbeat, they have to take the dance position on beat three-and-a-half at the latest and anticipate the going down with a slight raise in the body and especially a marked raise in the joined hands. Thus, minimally the coupling up has to be terminated by beat three-and-a-half of bar two, from which moment everything has to be set for the step practice to start on the first beat of the subsequent bar. The couples who are not ready by then will unavoidably be late. The importance of count seven as the *de facto* start signal of joint movement in the class, is underlined by the prosodic emphasis on *sjū* ‘seven’ in this particular case. Ideally, the couple will also have established a common rhythm by count seven by jointly swaying during the count-in.

Nevertheless, there is still considerable variation in what the couples actually do during the temporally and rigidly projecting count-in, as shown in Figure (6). The starting positions of the couples before beat one of the count-in (i.e. the first ‘five’) were shown above in Figure (5): AB, CD, GH are already in dance position, EF is connected on the shoulder-to-shoulder side, while IJ, KL and MN are disassembled. However, by count seven everybody is in perfect synchrony.

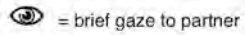
Figure 6: Schematic presentation of the teachers’ and couples’ activities during the count-in.



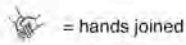
= clap



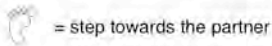
= swaying starts



= brief gaze to partner



= hands joined



= step towards the partner



= shoulder-to-shoulder connected



= adjusting position on circle



= joined hands up and down



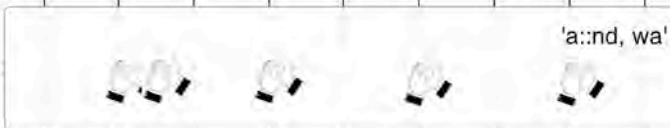
= down in knees



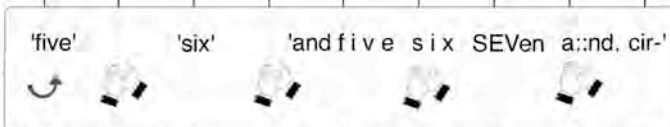
= first dance step

beats 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1

TeaF:



TeaL:



AB:



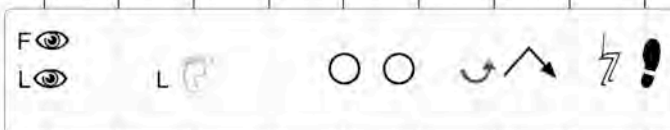
CD:



EF:



GH:



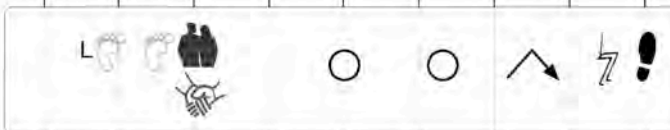
IJ:



KL:



MN:



1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1

As can be seen in Figure (6), a variety of movements take place during the count-in: adjusting the mutual placement of the partners, connecting both sides of the couple (simultaneously or one at a time), adjusting the placement of the couple on the global formation of a circle, and establishing a joint rhythm by swaying. In the chart we can see the variation in the timing and possible ordering of these actions by the seven couples. For example, the swaying is generally started after the complete assembly of the couple, but hands can also be joined later (EF). The swaying can go on for a longer or shorter period, or even be skipped (MN), but is a clear indication of readiness to start the dance. By swaying the couple furthermore claims their current dance space in relation to other couples in the circle.

In short, we can observe the following tendencies in the students' emergent responses to the teachers' count-in: a) coupleship may be established by gazing, turning bodies, stepping closer, or raising hands; b) distance to a prospective partner is adjusted before the partners take hold of each other; c) shoulder-to-shoulder side is connected before the hands; d) global formation of a circle is adjusted after couple assembly; e) swaying is initiated when at least shoulder-to-shoulder side is connected and the global position on a circle is established. In addition, with the help of Figure (5) above we can see evidence of the 'neighbour'-effect, as couples next to each other display a tendency to be in approximately the same phase of preparation: the couples on the left are generally assembled while the ones on the right are not. This shows mutual social control and adjustment on a more generic scale within the circle, suggesting that couples do not only react independently to teachers' talk but also to the behaviour of other nearby couples.

The count-in ends in the students' synchronic dance preparation on counts seven and eight. A preparation in Lindy Hop consists of a raise and then a going down in knees. The moment when the couples jointly raise their hands on the upbeat (beat eight) is captured in Figure (2) at the beginning of the paper. The step sequence that starts on 'one' (as illustrated in the right-most column of Figure (6)) constitutes the target of the practice, and thereby functions as a response to the teachers' directive action. While the step sequence practiced here can actually be fitted in a variety of places in the dance, a preparation is universally necessary to get into the dance. Accordingly, the dance can be said to start with the preparation phase, involving the upbeat, while the practice starts on beat one. The count-in is an action-specific temporal coordination device designed for prefacing dance movement in the global formation of students as a single party in a dance class.

5. Conclusion

Building on recent studies on how mobility figures in interaction, this study looked at how a complex mobile formation is reflexively accomplished in a specific setting of dance classes. By scrutinizing a single case, it showed how the students foreshadow a transition from instruction to dance practice already when the termination of the teachers' instruction is projectable and before the actual directive to practice is produced. In response to several activity-specific devices, such as practice projectors and count-ins, students move in increasing synchrony and in growingly dance-related manner to bring about the beginning of the dance practice. Their activity results in a circular global mobile formation consisting of highly coordinated moving couples. The analysis showed the step-by-step achievement of both the temporal and spatial aspects of the emerging mobile formation that was collectively, yet individually built by fourteen different students. It targeted mobility as a responsive accomplishment, displaying its reflexive relationship to talk.

Human action is often organised in sequences. Although sequences of turns-at-talk have attracted the most attention in interaction studies (Schegloff 2007), this doesn't mean that sequences cannot be built using other resources. In this paper, we focused on a specific instructive setting and studied a particular kind of embodied response to a verbal directive. The relevant response to the teachers' directive proved to be highly specific (but nevertheless oriented to in very similar ways by the fourteen dance students), involving not only starting to dance but also doing this with a particular partner and as part of a moving circle of couples. These two kinds of mobile formations, the couples and the circle, are layered upon each other and reflect the pedagogical character of the activity, insofar as they make individual student performance inspectable, and thus assessable by the teachers that are placed at the centre of the circle. We also argued that a responsive action, at least its embodied form, can be adumbrated in advance of its actual sequential time-slot, displaying understanding of the general activity structure.

The sequentiality of interaction implies that participants are constantly concerned with what is a relevant next action. By using a practice projector, the teachers accomplish a situation where students can understand that dance practice is a relevant next and begin to get ready for it, minimising the time-space between the directive and its response. At the same time, the teachers can continue the directive utterance by structuring instructions, providing a final specification for the students' responsive action. All the while, the imminence of practice is reflected in the action of the students, who move in finely orchestrated ways to accomplish a functioning mobile formation in a timely manner.

Transcription conventions

Talk has been transcribed according to conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (see e.g. Schegloff 2007 for a full description).

An indicative translation is provided line per line, in italics.

Multimodal details have been transcribed according to the following conventions:

- Δ Δ delimit descriptions of the lead teacher's actions.
- + + delimit descriptions of collective teacher actions.
- α α delimit Student A's actions.
- β β delimit Student B's actions; Etc.
- Σ Σ delimit descriptions of collective student action.
- α---> action described continues across subsequent lines.
- α--->> action described continues until and after excerpt's end.
- >α action described continues until the same symbol is reached.
- >>-- action described begins before the excerpt's beginning.
- StuA** participant doing the action is identified in grey and bold characters.

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