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# **Title: Walking with Gail: the local achievement of interactional rhythm and synchrony through footwork.**

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## **Abstract**

By analysing the movements through space of a famous conversation analyst delivering a well known lecture this paper reveals the creative construction of space within the social and physical constraints of the lecture hall, and in so doing contributes to the embodied analysis of humans in material environments. While situation in a multimodal or embodied conversation analysis, it uses terminology and insights from dance to help 'see' and analyse the movements as 'footwork' and 'figures'.

Keywords: Conversation Analysis; embodied interaction; walking; dance

## **Introduction**

Space and temporality are intimately related. Certain spaces are designed to effect particular activities and interactions as they temporally unfold. As Jucker et al. (2018, p. 86) point out, "there are many contexts and arrangements that are shaped in such a way as to facilitate interaction or to facilitate certain types of interaction." At the same time "People "do space" ... by appropriating spatial affordances in specific ways that may or may not have been intended and anticipated by their creators" (ibid). They do this through temporally inflected movement. In this way, "spaces are an interactive and performative achievement rather than a contextual given" (ibid).

The lecture hall is an institutional space in which this plays out. Premised upon a pre-defined activity region, social actors are simultaneously constrained - with the social conventions involved in presenting to, and engaging with, an audience as group - while creatively constructing the space as meaningful as they move through it.

By analysing, in detail, the movements through space of a famous conversation analyst, Gail Jefferson, delivering a well known lecture, entitled "The Poetics of Ordinary Conversation" this paper reveals the creative construction of space within the social and physical constraints of the lecture hall, and in so doing contributes to the embodied analysis of humans in material environments from a multimodal or embodied conversation analytic perspective. While Jefferson's

movements could be seen as idiosyncratic, the claim is that the regular patterning of movements is a common occurrence which underpins or produces a local rhythmic ordering in relation to a prescribed space.

The activity involves perhaps the most mundane of human movement, bipedal walking. The temporal and the spatial combine as each step, or 'pace' (noun), construes a fluid 'pace' (verb) or speed. This 'pacing' becomes a 'measure' in two ways: a means to define the space in physical terms; and a rhythmic and routinised temporal unit akin to a bar of music. The 'footwork' informs the rhythmicity of the talk-as-lecture and the analysis reveals the way that walking becomes a temporal and spatial metric for the performative presentation as institutional talk. The analysis reveals the 'local rhythmic ordering practices' that situate not only the talk and its production but also provide a foundation for the lecture as a spatial production, one designed to engender and complement the normative communicative expectations of the audience members. As such this paper contributes to recent interest in 'temporality in embodied interaction' (Deppermann & Streeck, 2018).

## **Background**

### **Talk in motion**

The broader sociological literature conceptualises walking as a fundamental form of mobility and motility. Edensor (2010), for example, is concerned with "the distinct rhythms of walking and the ways that it intersects with diverse temporalities and spaces" (p. 69). In cultural studies walking is closely tied to embodied rhythms and rhythm is positioned as a conceptual methodological tool (see Henriques et al. 2014 for a "genealogy of rhythm" (p. 6)). Pink et al. (2010), O'Neill & Hubbard (2010), and Iared & Oliveira (2018) position walking as a form of ethnographic practice that engenders intimate research relationships. Yet, what these approaches fail to attend to is the rhythm of walking in mundane practices of everyday life.

Mondada (2017) points out that "[w]alking is a fundamental form of mobility" (p. 221). Yet, it has only recently been the topic of Conversation Analysis (CA). A small number of studies have examined talking while walking (e.g. Haddington & Mondada, 2013). These are concerned with the manner in which walking acts as a precursor to group activity based on different organisational categories, such as the 'guided participant' (De Stephani & Mondada, 2013), producing certain kinds of group formation or 'collective participation framework[s]' (Mondada, 2017:220; Mondada, 2009; 2014). They include the negotiation of doors (Weilenmann et al., 2014) and navigation of museum exhibits (vom Lehn, et al., 2007). Alternatively, there has been a focus on 'walking away' as it construes a form of activity closing (Broth & Mondada, 2013:41). While these analyses and concepts help situate talk in motion, they only hint at the potential for walking to fundamentally structure activity spaces.

## Locally Produced Rhythmic Ordering

There is a body of analytic work that, like CA, rests on the close observation of embodied activities. In a landmark publication, Davis (1982) brings together a range of practitioners concerned with 'interaction rhythms' and the local production of rhythmic ordering. That is, the manner in which rhythmicity is a product of the activities of social actors. Practitioners come from a range of disciplines including psychology, anthropology and ethnomusicology and many of them trace their foundations to an extended and interdisciplinary piece of work known as the 'Natural History of an Interview' (NHI) (Bateson et al. 1971). In many ways, this work resembles Conversation Analysis in its close attention to the detail of mundane behaviours. It purports to show the 'interaction rhythms' of social life and celebrates dance as emblematic of its epistemology,

“Any dancer or musician could have told us that we must share a **common rhythm** to sing or play or dance together ... Are scientists always the last to know what artists and others have known all along?” (Schefflen, 1982, p. 14, emphasis added).

The 'common rhythm' need not emanate from some external source (such as music) but is instead 'accomplished' through individual and collective behaviours. In this sense, social order is founded upon 'local' movement practice. For Schefflen this means that human behaviour would be better formulated as “co-action” (p.15) rather than 'interaction'. Arguably, Schefflen had communication studies in mind when he made this assertion, however it is appropriate that we take it into account when developing analysis of embodied interaction in CA.

In 1987, Leeds-Hurwitz published a review of NHI and the subsequent research in a leading CA journal (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1987). In the intervening period, the work has not found its place in CA. However, recent work in embodied interaction has begun to rediscover this history (Streeck, 2018; Depperman & Streeck, 2018). A clue perhaps as to its (lack of) status is found in a footnote to an article on 'choral behaviours' by Gene Lerner in 2002 when he writes,

Over the years, a number of researchers have reported on the phenomenon of “interactional synchrony” (see Davis 1982 for an important collection of papers on this topic). Roughly, this concerns the cyclic, patterned co-actions of co-participants. Researchers in this tradition have found that the micro-momentary changes of bodies, gestures and vocal behavior can be quite precisely synchronized between speaker and recipient. I would like to distinguish the “**achieved synchrony**” described in this report from that type of seemingly unintended, unconscious and unrecognized synchronization. Participants can construct closely synchronized hand gestures as a feature of the

recognizable actions they are seeably engaged in producing, and not merely as a mainly unrecognizable orchestration for such actions" (Lerner, 2002: p 266, fn17, emphasis added).

Lerner contrasts achieved synchrony here with 'unconscious' or 'unintended' synchrony, with the implication that the interactional synchrony of Davis (1982) is to be placed in the second category. Lerner's point rests on a classical, yet problematic, distinction between 'behaviour' and 'action' (Wilson & Shpall, 2016). Achieved synchrony is analytically valuable for Lerner because it speaks to the manner in which interactional behaviours are brought together and become 'co-action'. Clearly, this argument has won out. The problem is that this unduly devalues routinised and repetitive behaviours as part of ongoing activities.

Instead, rhythmic and repetitive movements can be seen as a foundation upon which interactional behaviours are produced, one part of the 'achievement' of embodied interaction. Understood in this way, 'achieved synchrony' underpins Jefferson's presentational behaviours. While Lerner was concerned with the interactional production of what Schefflen would call 'co-action', the concept of 'interactional rhythms' starts with the relationships within the body of the individual, in the various embodied movements. This is what Deppermann and Streeck (2018) call 'interpersonal' synchrony and contrast with 'intrapersonal' synchrony at the interactional, multiparty level. The rhythmic production of 'pacing' and 'turning' forms a foundation for the production of 'movement figures' that perform the lecture within the spatial and social constraints of the lecture hall.

The analysis first sets out and details the rhythmic and repetitive production of a walking-turning 'five-step' figure. It then details a basic 'turn'. By detailing a further 'three-step' figure - initially as a 'deviant case' - it shows how both figures are designed to interlock and complement the spatial constraints. The second part of the paper shows two instances of adaptation and augmentation of these patterns. The first shows the 'incremental turn', when a turning motion is broken into two parts so as to make way for a static gesture production towards and gaze alignment with the audience; the second an adaptation in which the walking rhythm is utilised in combination with verbal 'fillers' to allow for precise starts of verbal utterances at the beginning of a patterned walking-turning figure. Both of these adaptations are oriented to the performance towards the audience and hence the spatial and social arrangements of the 'lecture' as institutional activity.

An issue in multimodal analysis is the question of if and how different 'modes' - or different activities in the same 'mode' - relate to one another. In this analysis we show how one activity is reliant upon another and how this reliance is in part sequential - in the sense that one activity necessarily precedes the other - but also simultaneous - in the sense that for one activity to occur it must be layered *upon* another. This is a diachronic and synchronic distinction, or a distinction between 'synchronicity' and 'sequentiality' (Deppermann & Streeck, 2018). While we are certainly

not suggesting we abandon notions of sequentiality and multimodality, it is important to recognise that embodied actions are composed of multiple elements that necessarily combine and coincide. The notions of 'interactional synchrony' from Davis (1982) and 'co-action' from Scheflen (1982) are then productively incorporated into a CA analysis as a useful reflection on current discussions of the use of the terms 'multimodal' and 'embodied' within CA analysis.

## Data And Method

The data for this paper comes from a recording of a lecture given by Gail Jefferson on In June 1977 at the Boston University Conference on Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis on the topics of 'The Poetics of Ordinary Conversation'. The lecture was published as a journal article in 1996 in *Text and Performance Quarterly* (Jefferson, 1996). This early lecture is novel in that it was filmed and transcribed.<sup>1</sup> In analysing Jefferson's lecture, we have no wish to devalue the content of the lecture and subsequent article (see Wooffitt et al., 2021 for an analysis) and instead approached its analysis with respect. We hope that our readers will see this respect in the analysis that follows.

The video was used as the basis of a set of data sessions that accompanied a visit by the second author to the host institution. The group initially chose the classic lecture by Jefferson because of the topic of her talk and a shared interest in 'poetics' (Wooffitt et al., 2021). However as we observed the video, we became interested in Jefferson's physical movements, in particular the rhythmic quality of those movements. The 'noticing' of this quality is what drew the authors to the topic of embodied analysis and the means by which such elements could be represented and analysed.<sup>2</sup> This paper is one outcome of these analytic discussions.

## Analysis

First, a number of general remarks need to be made. The analysis details body movements in an intricate way. To support and enable such descriptions the literature on dance technique and theory was consulted and a number of technical terms 'borrowed'<sup>3</sup> (see next section on 'walking, stepping'). This borrowing enabled a form of technical description but also effected a form of analytic gaze. While it is a happy coincidence that Jefferson was herself a trained dancer, we should recognise that this borrowing played into and affected (effected) the analytic outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Jefferson (1996) the original talk was transcribed by Robert Hopper. Later it was transcribed by Maurice Nevile (2015). This only includes the verbal production. The recording and later transcript can be found at <https://ca.talkbank.org/access/Jefferson/Poetics.html>

<sup>2</sup> This was also, in part, inspired by Jefferson's and the first author's background in dance.

<sup>3</sup> 'Seeing' the data was reflexively tied to the expertise of the analysts. The first author is a qualified ballroom dance teacher and hence the data analysis was informed by dance theory and technique.

Second, the video of Gail Jefferson rarely shows her feet, meaning that any transcription of a "footfall" relies on other indicators. There are audible 'cues' when a foot makes contact with the floor. But more generally, in watching the movement of a body observers can tell when a person is stepping; they 'see' these movements through a reading of the body, even when the feet are not visible. This includes the transfer of weight through the subtle movements of the trunk and shoulders and intimation of the occurrence of an upcoming footfall through the alignment of the hips and thighs. This is a form of 'kinesthetic empathy' (Reynolds & Reason, 2012) and taken-for-granted skill. In a group analysis session, the authors had no problems in deploying these skills to identify when strides and steps occurred.

### **Walking and stepping**

At its most basic, walking is a continuous movement comprised of a sequence of 'steps'. But simply talking about individual steps tends to obscure the preparatory, integral, and subsequent embodied movements. To 'step' requires the movement of the rest of the body in various ways (initial movement of the leg for example). In dance training, the 'step' is detailed in terms of its direction relative to the traveling body (e.g., 'forward, back, side') and the ambulant trajectory (e.g. 'line of dance'). The placing and movement of body weight through different parts of the foot (heel, ball, toes') allows for both horizontal (along the floor') and vertical (e.g., 'rise and fall') body movement description (Moore, 2002). Turning movements entail a step in one direction and then a step in the other. To accomplish this the legs, trunk and head are also turned. More subtly, the steps themselves are necessarily accomplished in a certain way that involves transferring the weight from the heel, through the 'ball' of the foot and then through to the toes as the alternate leg is moved into position (Moore, 2002 and Laird, 1998). A footfall is typically detected ('seen') as the heel makes contact with the floor and the weight is transferred to the ball of the foot.

This paper borrows from these understandings from dance in 2 ways:

1. To conceptualise the 'step' as more than just a footfall, as including leg movement before and after the footfall, as well as the associated trunk, head and arm movements
2. To inform the analytic interpretation of upper body movement to infer footfall where the feet are not visible.

For analytic simplicity, an initial distinction is made between steps ('footfalls') - the moment when the foot makes contact with the floor - and the leg movement that accompanies the step. This decision has analytic payoff when considering embodied 'turns' with a body rotating through the combination of a step (notated by either L for left foot, or R for right foot), a 'turn' on that foot (e.g.

L(turn)) and embodied movement that carries the body through the turn and extends into the preparation of the next step.

## **Section 1 - the basic movement and figures**

A consistent element of the embodied behaviour of Jefferson is the manner in which she paces up and down as she speaks to the audience. This is so consistently produced that it provides an underlying rhythmic quality to her movement and in turn the lecture presentation.

Walking up and down is a combination of steps and turns, such that a set number of steps leads sequentially to a turning action accomplished on alternate feet as sequences combine. In dance terms this would be called a 'figure' (Moore, 2002). The existence of this figure is established in the first section as comprised of five steps. An alternative figure comprised of 3 steps is observed and initially described as a deviant case. However, what becomes clear is that this alternative figure is not deviant but actually complements and sustains the spatial and temporal arrangements and movement trajectory.

The turning movements are then looked at in more detail. These are either produced as a continuation of the movement 'flow' or are disruptive of this flow. Instances are detailed that include inserted gestures. The gestures are designed to be directed toward and available to the attending audience members and hence show how the movement figure is adapted to meet the social normative requirements of the lecture (i.e., that it is a performance to an audience). This is then extended through analysis of the temporally disruptive instance - defined as an 'incremental turn' - when a *movement pause* is introduced. Again, what seems initially to be a deviant case, turns out to be supportive of the temporal and rhythmic ordering. Finally, the temporal 'pacing' of the movement is underlined through identification of talk-oriented delays, when tokens such as 'uhm' and the production of verbal pauses are used to fit talk to turning movements so as to project and produce talk at the onset of a movement figure.

### **Five-step figure**

The following video shows a repeated pattern (Figure 1). As Jefferson moves in front of the audience, she *routinely* takes five steps. These steps emerge as a consistently repeated pattern that completes one 'side' of the movement - either with her left or right shoulder facing the audience. The steps themselves form something like a 'locally produced movement metric' that provides a rhythmic beat or pulse. The broader argument, developed in the second section, is



that this rhythm situates and regulates the talk, gestures and other movements, which are combined with it, in line with a conceptual framing of 'movements' and 'figures'<sup>4</sup>.



<Figure 1.mp4 (video) here>

### **FIGURE 1: VIDEO SHOWING STEPS**

In the video there are twelve repetitions of the five-step movement depicted with accompanying subtitles for each 'stride' ('Left,' 'Right,' 'Left,' etc.). These form alternating 'leftwards' and 'rightwards' figures with a turn occurring on each fifth stride. [Note, the subtitles indicate the onset of the stride to its completion, i.e. the full length of each leg movement. Consequently when viewing them they appear to start just before the identifiable 'footfall' and continue after it<sup>5</sup>.]

The example segment is indicative of the full lecture. Throughout the video data Jefferson alternates between pacing up and down behind a desk (acting as lecturn) and standing still facing the audience. During one segment she writes on the chalk board behind her. At no point in the actual lecture does she move in front of the desk (only afterwards, as she answers questions). After each occasion of 'stillness' she re-establishes the pacing movements.

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<sup>4</sup> There are some important caveats. If we were to precisely time the footfalls and strides we would see that they do not conform to a 'strict tempo' (to use a dancing term). That is they are not produced at precisely the same rate. Instead there are small changes in stride length and therefore different timings between each footfall. When it comes to turns, dependent on accompanying gestures and slight pauses they too are of varying temporal duration. So in talking about a 'rhythm' we are imagining a fluid and flexible pulse that nevertheless provides a 'beat' for the embodied behaviours.

<sup>5</sup> The manner in which the reader can 'see' the steps as indicated by identifiable footfalls underlines the point made about the analytic gaze earlier.

The precise number of steps is not important, as we will see, and is likely related to the spatial elements of the environment, such as the length of the desk. What is important is that the number of steps is repeated and it is an *odd* number. The reason for the odd number of steps is so that the turning action is produced *towards* the audience (Figure 2). It is what would be called in theatre terminology an 'downstage turn' This allows for the production of embodied actions such

## Audience

as gestures and gaze alignments oriented to the onlooking participants (see later).

<Figure 2.gif (gif) here>

### FIGURE 2: FIVE-STEP FIGURE WITH TURN

#### **Basic turn ('spot turn' or 'turn in place'<sup>6</sup>)**

The turn is accomplished as part of the five-step movement, with the last step of the five, and the first step of the next five forming component elements of the 'turn in place' or 'spot turn' as it is called in dance. The basic turn has the person walking in one direction, and then back in the opposite direction. This is accomplished through a step on one foot, and a pivot through the 'balls' of the feet as the body turns. Once the whole body has turned through 180 degrees, the stepping foot becomes the 'back foot' and the next step is taken in the new direction on the other foot. Just as with the notion of steps and strides, a turn is more than the 'pivot' on a single step; before, during, and after the turn the person's head, shoulders and trunk are also moving.

The basic turn is developed through *layering* and *sequencing* of gesture and gaze (e.g., arm and head positioning). Layering sees the production of gesture and gaze movements *during* the turn; sequencing sees the pausing of the turning movement and the production of gesture and gaze

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<sup>6</sup> Terminology is borrowed from Ballroom Dance theory as it includes precise descriptions of weight transference and angles turned. Please see Laird (1998) and Moore (2002).

before the turning action is resumed. We call this second form an 'incremental turn' and will detail it as the analysis develops.

### Talk, Steps and Turns

In the following extract (Transcript 1) the foundational 'five-step figure' is preceded by the last step turn of the previous movement and including the last step in the turn (line 12). Each footfall is detailed. The turns are described from the participant's perspective (i.e. 'turns to *her* left') in the accompanying gloss on the right hand side. So a turn to the left is accomplished by stepping on the right foot (annotated as 'R (turn)'). The direction of travel is detailed with accompanying dotted arrows, with 'L1 -->' meaning steps on left foot, moving rightwards from the audience member's perspective.

<Transcript 1.pdf here>

#### **Transcript 1: Talk with footfalls and turns (Poetics 1:36-1:44)**

01 G: |gail (0.4) take a look at this  
02 Gb: |**R (turn)** ..... ((turns to left))  
03 G: |utterance  
04 Gb: |**L1**-->  
05 (---|-----|---)  
06 Gb: |**R2**-->  
07 G: it's|: (0.3)  
08 Gb: |**L3**-->  
09 G: breaking my |(folks)  
10 Gb: |**R4**-->  
11 G: my |in|sanity's breaking their  
12 Gb: |**L5 (turn)** ..... ((turns to right))  
13: G: |bank book bee kay bee  
14 Gb: |**R1**←



<Figure 3.mov here>

### **FIGURE 3: TALK WITH FOOTFALLS AND TURNS (POETICS 1:36-1:44)**

In line 01 there is the last step of a previous five-step movement on the right foot (traveling leftwards from the audience's perspective). This is accompanied by a turn to the left resulting in Jefferson facing rightwards. In line 05 we see the first step of a five-step movement produced on 'utterance'. The second step comes 0.3 seconds into a one-second pause, on line 07. The third step is produced at the tail end of the elongated 's' consonant in 'its: 'in line 08 and as part of the following 0.3 second pause. The fourth step occurs with '(folks)'. The fifth step occurs at the beginning of 'in 'of 'insanity '(line 12) and a turn to the right is produced with 'sanity'.

#### **Three-step movement**

To this point the movement has been detailed as a repeated five-step movement forming a five-step figure. However, there are also smaller figures, with fewer steps, such as this three-step figure. In the following video (Figure 4) the production of a three-step movement and turn is followed by another three-step movement and turn, bringing Jefferson back to the starting point. This repetition aligns with the spatial frame and allows for a return to the five-step pattern. Put another way, when producing a smaller movement (i.e., a three-step figure), a second movement is produced so as to return to the original position. The combined three-step figure can be seen in the following video and the accompanying transcript.



<Figure 4.mp4 here>

### **FIGURE 4: INSERTED THREE-STEP FIGURE**

<Transcript 2.pdf here>

### **Transcript 2: Inserted three-step figure (Poetics 6:33- 7:02)**

(G: talk, Gb body including steps)

01 G: another |feature is that a lot of |these words  
02 Gb: |R1← |L2←  
03 G: |Phrases (-----|-----)  
04 Gb: |R3← |L4←  
05 G: be|lo:ng to more than one |category n  
06 Gb: |R5 (turn) |L1→  
07 G: °that's a|nother feature° (---|--)  
08 Gb: |R2→ |L3→  
09 G: an:' |that's about as systematic as I'm |gonna get  
10 Gb: |R4→ |L5 (turn)  
11 G: (-----) those are two | features  
12 Gb: |R1←  
13 G: (-----) |now I'm gonna be looking |a:t talk  
14 Gb: |L2← |R3 (turn)  
15 G: (-----) |u::m (-----|-----)  
16 Gb: |L1→ |R2→  
17 G: |pretty much (-----)  
18 Gb: |L3 (turn)  
19 G: |it's figured that (--|-)  
20 Gb: |R1← |L2←  
21 G: all these |mar:vellous sound|s  
22 Gb: |R3← |L4←  
23 G: (-----) are the |providence of-  
24 Gb: |R5 (turn)  
25 G: Poet|s (-----)  
26 Gb: |L1→  
27 G: who make |it their business  
28 Gb: |R2→  
29 G: (-----|---) to |work out  
30 Gb: |L3→ |R4→  
31 G: to seek |out (-----)  
32 Gb: |R5 (turn)  
33 G: to really en|deavor to find |jus' the word  
34 Gb: |R1← |L2←

In lines 01 to 10 two five step figures are produced, culminating in a turn to the right during 'gonna get' (line 10). After a 0.5 second pause and during the utterance 'those are two features' a step on the right foot is produced on 'features' (line 12) and then in the summary phrase 'now I'm gonna be looking a:t talk' (line 13) two further steps are produced (left foot then right foot). With

the third step and during 'a:t talk' a turn is produced to the left. After a 0.8 second pause (line 15), there is a step on 'u::m' followed by a further pause of 1.5 second; 0.6 seconds into which a second step is produced on the right foot. A third step accompanied by a turn is produced on 'pretty much' (line 18). The first set of three steps is produced such that the statement 'now I'm gonna be looking at talk' is produced with the left shoulder to the audience. The second set of three steps is produced during vocal pauses and the minimal token 'u::m'. What this means is that the next substantive phrase 'pretty much it's figured that all these marvellous sounds...' can start with the onset of a new set of five step figures. In a sense, the two 3-step figures reset the starting position, in line with this new topic.

There are other sequences of five-step and three-step figures in the data, with for example a turn towards notes placed at the centre to of the desk, but on the whole the total shape of the walking movements is maintained until the end of the lecture, when Jefferson moves from behind the desk to answer questions.

### **Introducing the Incremental Turn**

Figure 5 shows a number of five-step movements with turns. The turns to the audience are at times more pronounced and seem to take longer than those previously presented. In general this is due to the speaker orienting to the audience with gaze 'within' the turning movement.



<Figure 5.mov (video) here>

**FIGURE 5: FIVE-STEP MOMENTS WITH INCREMENTAL TURNS**

In total there are seven turns in the segment (Figure 5) with four of them involving gaze towards the audience. There is also a turn with gaze towards the materials on the desk at turn five.

While the turning movement is integral to the pacing movement (and vice versa), turning is slower. It entails moving the body (head, shoulders, trunk, etc.) *towards and then away* from the audience. There is a moment when Jefferson is facing the audience. We will build on our analysis of this moment of facing the audience in the second section.

## Section 2

Facing the audience allows for the production of additional embodied elements. First these will be detailed in relation to a continuous turn, and then in relation to a movement pause.

### Turns with gaze and gestures

One development of the basic turn is when a gesture and/or gaze alignment is produced as part of the continuous turn. The example below (Transcript 3) shows gaze panning and alignment with the audience the continuous movement of the turn.

<Transcript 3.pdf here>

#### **Transcript 3: Continuous turn with gaze alignment to audience (Poetics 13:38 - 13:45)**

(G: talk, Gg gaze, Gb body including steps)

01	G:	now this  thing gets treated  as no:t just	
02	Gb:	L←	R←
03	Gg:	~~~~~	((Line of Movement <sup>7</sup> ))
04	G:	what ever those others  would get treated	
05	Gb:	L←	R(turn).....
06	Gg:	~~~~~ .....	((turns head and gaze))
07	G:	a:s if we ever  caught them	
08	Gb:	L→	
09	Gg:	~~~~~	((gaze at audience))
10		( ----- )	
11	Gg:	.....	((gaze pan to LoM))
12	Gb:	~~~~~	((quarter turn to L))
13	G:	tongue twisters what ever	
14	Gb:	R→	L→
15	Gg:	~~~~~	((LoM))

As Jefferson utters 'now this thing gets treated as no:t just whatever those others' she steps on 'thing', 'as' (line 02) and 'ever' (line 05). At the end of this utterance element as she steps on her right foot to begin a quarter turn to the left, she turns her head and gaze, aligning them with the audience on 'a:s' (line 09). She takes a further step on 'caught' while continuing to gaze at the audience.

<sup>7</sup> The dance term 'line of dance' is adapted here to 'line of movement' to express the direction of travel. Abbreviated to LoM in subsequent notation.

The second example below shows an instance of a turn + gesture format. Jefferson has her eyes closed as she produces this movement. The turn movement is produced at the beginning of the utterance ' Gail take a look at this '(lines 01-02)(Transcript 5).



<figure 6.gif (gif) here>

**FIGURE 6: TURN WITH GESTURES**

Jefferson steps turns through her right foot (line 02), transferring her weight into it and turning to the left. At the end of 'gail' and during the following pause she lifts her left hand (not transcribed) in a gesture preparation. As her body is oriented to the audience, she makes three pointing 'beat ' gestures with her left hand, coinciding with the talk, detailed below:

<Transcript 4.pdf here>

**Transcript 4: Continuous turn with beat Gesture (Poetics 1:36-1:39)**

```

01 G: |gail (0.4) t|ake| a |loo|k at |thi|s
02 Gb: |R(turn) ..... ((turns to left))
03 Gb: |~~ | |~~ | |~~ | ((pointing beat gestures))
04 G: |utterance
05 Gb: |L1→
```

This is a continuous turn movement with a gesture phrase produced as the body faces the audience. This is made possible by the odd number of steps and the production of an 'upstage' turn. An important point is that the steps of the turn occur *before and after* the gesture phrase, i.e. 'right step, beat gestures, left step'. The elements, while synchronous to the turning motion (and the steps constitutive of the turn), are sequentially produced. This becomes more relevant in the incremental turn.



### **Incremental turn with inserted gesture unit**

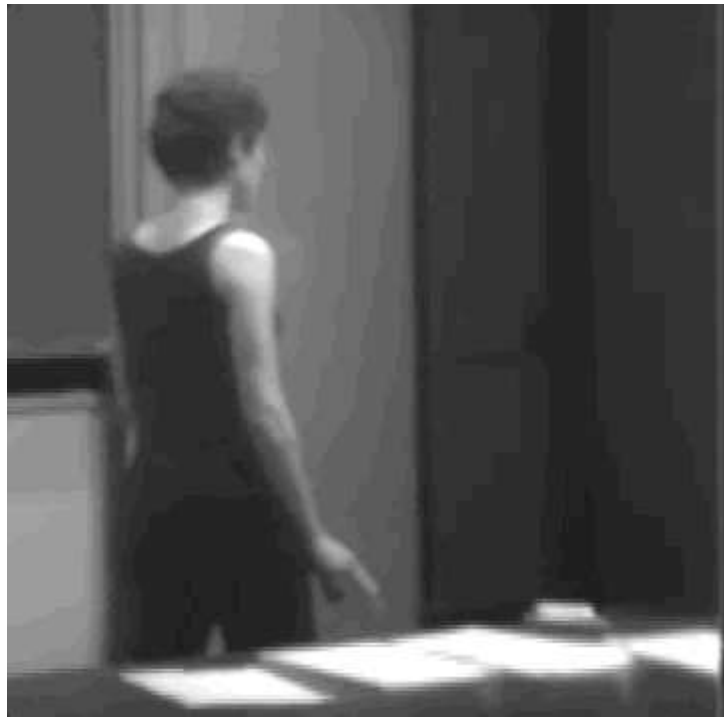
An alternative format has a movement pause in the turn, such that Jefferson undertakes enough of a turn for her to be facing the audience, produces an embodied action in the direction of the audience, and then continues the turn. The 180 degree turn is divided into two, with a small movement pause in the middle. This is an incremental turn.

As seen above (Figure 6), the continuous turn may include gestures. This is also the case with the incremental turn. Here, the pause in the turn movement is utilised to produce a set of embodied actions.



<Figure 7.gif (Gif here)>

**FIGURE 7: INCREMENTAL TURN WITH GESTURE UNIT**



<Figure 8.gif (gig) Here>

**FIGURE 8: INCREMENTAL TURN WITH GESTURE UNIT, HALF SPEED**

<Transcript 5.pdf here>

**Transcript 5: incremental turn with gesture unit (Poetics 7:07-17)**

01 G: this is gonna be  
 02 G: a translation |done by a committee  
 03 Gb: |L→  
 04 G: (--|-)of a poem |by Paul Valéry  
 05 Gb: |R→ |L→  
 04 G: (|-----|--) that's | (.) at the |  
 05 Gb: |~~~~~ | ((RH gesture preparation))  
 06 Gb: |~~~~~ | ((LH gesture preparation))  
 07 Gb: |~~~~ | ((RH back, flat palm))  
 08 G: | top |  
 09 Gb: |~~~ | ((RH semicircle; LH up))  
 10 G: (.) |Har|vey| has| a collect|ion of |  
 11 Gb: |~~ | ((RH up))  
 12 Gb: |~~ | ((RH down))  
 13 Gb: |~~ | ((RH up; LH up))  
 14 Gb: |~~ | ((RH down; LH down))  
 15 Gb: |~~~ | ((RH LH held))  
 16 Gb: |~~~~ | ((RH LH up))  
 17 (|--|)  
 18 Gb: |~~ | ((RH LH 'pat'))  
 19 G: | sound phe|nomena |  
 20 Gb: |~~~~~ | ((RH LH to side retraction))  
 21 Gb: |R←  
 22 G: and at the |top of |it (0.3)  
 23 Gb: |L←  
 24 Gb: |~~ | ((LH 'pat'))

25 G: is this |poem

26 Gb: |R←

Transcript 5 shows a single 'gesture unit' (Kendon, 2004:111-113), with a gesture 'preparation' in each hand at lines 05 and 06, and a gesture retraction or recovery phase of both hands at line 20. A 'gesture phrase' is the prominent element (typically seen as the gesture itself).

The anatomy of this incremental turn is made up of a turn increment to the right, of around ninety degrees to bring her to face the audience,<sup>8</sup> accompanied by gesture preparation - first with a gesture stroke in the right hand as it become visible to the audience and then a gesture stroke in the left hand as the left shoulder and arm become visible. The production of a series of gesture actions follows during a movement pause, in this case a series of gesture phrases that aligns with the utterance production. Finally, gesture recovery/retraction accompanies the second increment of the turn with a further quarter turn to the right. Gesture preparation and retraction are produced while turning and gesture phrases are produced as Jefferson faces the audience members.

In dance notation (Moore, 2002) the incremental turn as figure would be written as:

1. Beginning line of movement, ¼ turn + gesture preparation, ending facing audience
2. Gesture phases, towards audience
3. Beginning towards audience, ¼ turn + gesture recovery/retraction, ending line of movement.

The incremental turn introduces a pause in the rhythmic structuring of the steps. Unlike the turn with gesture and gaze seen in the earlier example (Figure 6), here the rhythm is disrupted and put on hold.

### **Maintaining the rhythm**

There are an alternative set of movements in which the pacing and turning rhythm is continuous and verbal utterances are adapted to this movement. This enables Jefferson to produce an utterance element after a turn, rather than during it. The most common verbal production is the 'uhm' utterances, surrounded by verbal pausing. These act to put on hold the flow of talk to bring it in line with the turning action.

---

<sup>8</sup> In dance terminology this is called a 'quarter turn'

Here is a simple example. It occurs near the beginning of the talk and involves Jefferson introducing her interest in the topic at hand. Immediately following an incremental turn, with an inserted set of head nods (line 08) during a 0.8 second pause, Jefferson says "what how this stuff jus' keeps turning up" (lines 09 and 11). She then provides a line that in retrospect can be seen as the title or main topic of the talk "the poetics of ordinary conversation" (lines 15 and 17). This important utterance is produced as she turns (line 16) and takes the first step of a new side (line 18).

Instead of continuing to her next utterance, she produces a one-second pause with an inserted step in line 19, then utters an extended 'u:::m' with a second step, and follows this with a two-point-five-second pause with two steps, the second being a pivot turn onset step. As she turns to face the audience on the second quarter of the turn (she is by this point visible) she starts a story about a 'biographical note' (which is simultaneously a literal note written to her as well as a biographical story about Harvey Sacks).

Jefferson completes nearly a full five-step movement before introducing this story. The 'um' and surrounding pauses function to allow for the production of the story beginning at the onset of a five-step movement.

<Transcript 6.pdf here>

**Transcript 6: Um plus turns (1:12 - 1:29)**

```

01 G: The |organisation is |casual this is |mainly
02 G: |L2<--- |R3<--- |L4<---
03 (---|-)
04 G: |R(turn) ((quarter turn left))
05 G: |to show you|
06 G: ..... | ((quarter turn left, gaze to audience))
07 (-|---|----)
08 G: |~~ |~~ ((two nods))
09 G: wha|t (-----)
10 G: |L1->~~~~~ ((quarter turn left))
11 G: |how this stuff jus' keeps |turning up
12 G: |R2-> |L3->
13 (----|--)
14 G: |R4->
15 G: the |poetics: (.)
16 G: |L(turn) ((half turn to right))
17 G: of ordinary conver|sation
18 G: |R1<---
19 (-----|-----)
20 G: |L2<---
21 G: u:::m (-----|-----|-----)
22 G: |R3<--- |L4<--- |R(turn) ((half turn to
left))
23 G: there's a f- a |little |biographical
24 G: .....|L1-> ((half turn to left))

```

25 G: |~~~ ((point/beat gesture))  
 25 G: note |that I found interest|ing  
 26 G: |R2→ |L3→

At times the production of an uhm + pause combination can be traced to a disruption of the five-step movement.

In this final example (Transcript 7), Jefferson is detailing how she started to read a particular author. As part of the story she stumbles over the name of the author, specifically in relation to his initials, and stops to read her notes. This occurs after producing only two steps of what is likely to be a five-step movement. After the pause to read the notes, she then produces a three-step movement while producing a one point one-second pause and then an elongated 'u::m' followed by a two-second pause. This enables her to produce the 'payoff' of the story at the beginning of the subsequent five-step movement with "stopped reading anything else and just started reading him" (lines 10-13). She utters this in combination with producing a two-handed emphasis gesture (see Figure 9).

<Transcript 7.pdf here>

**Transcript 7: um plus turn and gesture (4:04 - 4:16)**

01 G: I |developed an e|normous affection |for one gu:y  
 02 G: |R← |L← |R(turn)  
 03 G: (0.3) |name of double-u el (.) |double-u el↑  
 04 G: |L1→ |R2→  
 05 G: |(0.4) double-u el woods|  
 06 G: |~~~~~| ((stops, looks at notes))  
 07 G: em dee  
 08 (-----|-----) u:::|m (-----|-----)  
 09 G: |L→ |R→ |L(turn) ((quarter turn R))  
 10 G: |stopped reading anything else  
 11 G: |R← ..... ((quarter turn to R))  
 12 G: |~~~~~ ((two handed gesture))  
 13 G: and just |started reading him



<Figure 9.mov (Video) here>

### **FIGURE 9: UM PLUS TURN AND GESTURE**

#### **Discussion**

Scheflen's quote about scientists needing to accept what dancers already know inspired this paper. As a dancer from an early age and a dance teacher, the rhythmic qualities of dance performance and the expertise of understanding and directing the dancing body play into the first author's interest in embodied behaviours. The terminology of dance has proven here to be a useful means to describe multimodal activities, especially when they do not include - or are not primarily oriented to - talk. A number of contemporary CA analysts either take dance as their focus or are inspired by choreographic notation in their work (Keevallik, 2010; Broth & Keevallik, 2014; Albert, 2015; Abe, 2017).

The work of Scheflen, (1982); Davis, (1982) and Chapple, (1982) provide an attractive foundation for understanding and advocating for the fundamental rhythmicity of human activity. Yet, these works move too quickly to formulate a rhythmic foundation upon which *all* human activity is based - whether this be the heartbeat or other body rhythms. For those analysts rhythms precede the activity itself; once assumed are hard to question. This is Lerner's point. Rather, we should focus on the 'achievement' of rhythmic patterning and not simply assume they are a consistent foundation. The assumption of an inherent social rhythmicity obscures such achievements. It also obscures moments when a rhythm is established, adapted and abandoned. It is these moments that are important in this paper.

This paper argues that what the above analytic instances show are instances of *achieved* rhythmic order. The rhythm does not precede the activity, it is not the music to which a person dances. Instead, the rhythm is set up by the person acting, and experienced by those watching them. This is not to denigrate the importance in certain social situations of external rhythms. It is still a requirement of dancers to dance 'in time' to the music, for example. There are numerous examples when coordination is centred upon a sense of shared rhythm. Yet, people still dance 'out of time' and coordination is far from 'baked in'.

The lecture given by Gail Jefferson has a rhythmic quality. This rhythm is established and maintained through repeated patterning of walking and turning. This 'locally produced rhythmic ordering' provides foundation for the accompanying embodied display. It could be said that a lecture in which the speaker paces up and down does not properly engage the audience. Yet, what this body orientation and pacing provides is dynamic presentation that is continually on the move, animated by a sense of concentrated thought and selective engagement. Watching is punctuated by deliberate and directed moments of engagement by the speaker.

The five-step rhythm is oriented to and 'describes' a particular space (Jucker et al., 2018). It is not only contained by the physical parameters of the lecture hall, it also constructs that space as meaningful. The physical layout of a lecture hall becomes a place of a lecture performance as it is animated by movement, talk, and observation.

The five-step and the three-step movements are the foundation of the movement in front of the audience. Jefferson produces them such that her body is turned at 90 degrees to the audience, pacing 'up and down' from left to right. This allows for visible access to her body and face. It would be a strange lecture, or theatre performance, if the person 'in front' of the audience did not accede to this kind of visible access.

The five-step and three-step figures consistently produced and could be said to show an interactional rhythm and form of 'interpersonal' synchrony. As a minimum they provide a structure to which further movements are added. The primary addition is a turning action.

The turn is accomplished through an adaptation of the momentum, weight distribution, and body positioning of the steps. Arguably, without the production of the five-step and three-step figures the turn would not exist; indeed there is no reason for a turn to exist without the walking movement and a necessary orientation to the onlooking audience members.

Once added, the turn of the body and the manner in which this makes different 'aspects' available to the audience allows for the production of visible gestures at exactly the moments when they are most effectively seen.

The point should not be lost. Gestures do not simply accompany relevant talk and provide such aspects as emphasis (Streeck, 2009), but here are timed to be produced at those precise moments when they can be seen by the audience members.

The five or three-step sequence of steps is designed to allow for a turn *towards* the audience. This is a mundane feature and easy to overlook. But only through an odd number of steps can the walking person turn 'down stage' towards the audience. Only through turning down stage can any accompanying gestures and facial expressions be seen.

Presentation and lecture entail public performance of the body to others. It therefore implicates a 'master orientation' towards the audience and a pre-defined set of spatial arrangements (front and back of lecture hall, auditorium, stage, etc.). Yet, these are dynamically re-imagined and constructed. In turning her body to the side (and not, for example, retaining a 'front-facing' orientation) Jefferson challenges expectations. Perhaps she will make no contact with the audience and be mere object to be observed. But this is what makes the moments when she does 'turn to the audience' - physically and metaphorically - so interesting and relevant.

This begs the question as to whether there is an organisation to talk, turn, and gesture at a higher level of communicative content. If talking and walking are timed to align with particular spatial arrangements then perhaps there is a dynamic of spatial 'projection' at work (Streeck & Jordan, 2009). This notion would play into the idea of social choreography (Goodwin & Cekaite, 2014; Tulbert & Goodwin, 2011), sets of established and prescribed movement 'figures' that are combined and adapted to fit different social and spatial arrangements. We might advocate for an alternative analytic starting point, that precedes turns at talk and starts with movement through spaces.

Another way to build on these observations is to extend from Schegloff's (1998) work on body torque. Here Jefferson could be seen to be establishing a primary body orientation laterally along the 'line of movement' and a secondary temporally limited secondary body orientation in which she engages the audience. In this way we might detect the 'layering' of different action imperatives. Similarly, the lateral pacing (the primary orientation) could be linked to gaze aversion during the production of a coherent line of reasoning. Perhaps disengagement is a necessary product of cognitive load. Finally, body torque is implicated in the production of relevant gestural



regions. Here, it is the movement *between* body orientations that implicate the constitution of spatially and socially oriented behavioural spaces.

A final issue is the use of the term 'multimodal'. Conversation Analysis was originally premised upon the analysis of talk (Sacks et al., 1974). As the approach developed, analysis emerged that combined talk with embodied behaviours such as gaze, gestures, and posture (Mortensen, 2012). The term "multimodal conversation analysis was suggested to accommodate such changes (Stivers & Sidnell, 2005). However other CA analysts question this nomenclature and suggest an alternative, 'embodied conversation analysis', arguing that the use of the term multimodal implies separate 'modes' of human communication, rather than coordinated 'social action,' which necessarily combines them (Heath, 2000; Deppermann, 2013; Streeck, 2013). This paper agrees with this alternative and avoids *a priori* separation of human behaviours into separate 'modes'. Instead, the activity of 'walking' is an embodied activity wherein 'steps,' 'turns' and 'figures' are formed through a combination of body movements which, in turn, combine with talk to form and construct the activity space of the lecture hall.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has analysed a very specific situation and instance of embodied movement. The lecture itself is a constrained institutional form of behaviour, that is premised upon preconceived spatial and participant arrangements. The arrangement of bodies and activities could be generalised to other institutional situations, such as a political rally, a theatre performance, or a musical recital.

What is important is the manner in which behaviour constitutes the spatial arrangements. For example, if we were to talk of the staging area in Jefferson's lecture, we would be inclined to define it in terms of where she walks, the path of her movements, and the limits of those movements. The 'stage' is prescribed by her walking and turning in place. In turn, this behaviour is responsive to the material and spatial layout of furnishings and materials. Walking behind a desk that contains written lecture notes is necessarily oriented to those material arrangements. Maintaining a certain distance that enables the reading of the notes, if necessary, provides limits to the walking path.

While Jefferson's pacing up and down could be seen as idiosyncratic and peculiar to a particular style of academic lecturing, the rhythmic ordering is the more fundamental structuring feature. At the same time as admitting to this specific set of factors, this paper holds out the possibility that the achieved rhythmic ordering of walking itself provides a foundation for behaviour, whether that

be produced as gestures, gaze movements or, indeed, talk. The latter is perhaps the most controversial.

What happens to our sense of analytic genesis when we accept the idea that the pace and pauses in talk might be aligned with embodied movements? What happens to the prioritisation of talk when more fundamental structuring is in play? Might we not argue, as is perhaps indicated in a number of multimodal analyses, that we produce talk to not only be heard but to be seen by others? This becomes especially convincing when we realise that gestures are constituent elements of behaviour and not less important or less meaningful 'additions' to talk. They work not simply as 'metalanguage' to use a term from Bateson (Ruesch & Bateson, 1951), but form with talk a meaningful embodied gestalt. Combined with the social proclivities of meaningful action, talk and movement are necessarily oriented to visibility and spatial sensitivity. We could all be said to be 'presenting' to others (Goffman, 1959). As a minimum, we could be said to be sensitive to when and how we are seen.

A further general point is that much of social interaction is achieved 'on the move'. Whether that be ambulation by foot or vehicle, people move and talk routinely. Even when the body frame is static, movement of arms, heads, legs etc. animate talk. It is very difficult at that stage to separate talk and movement. Indeed, it is difficult to maintain the notion of 'multiple modes' or multimodality. Just as the dancer knows that meaningful social action is achieved through the total body, so perhaps the social scientist needs to understand and accept this central fact.

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## Original Transcript

The transcript created by Maurice Nevile can be found at the Talbank repository, <https://ca.talkbank.org/access/Jefferson/Poetics.html>.

## Notation

L→ step on left foot moving rightwards (as seen by audience and camera)  
L← step on left foot moving leftwards (as seen by audience and camera)  
L(turn) left 'pivot' turn to right (as opposed to 'step turn')  
R(turn)..... right 'pivot' turn, showing complete turn movement  
(1.0) pause, indicated in tenths of a second  
|1.0| timed period, demarcated by 'timing points' aligned with  
accompanying transcription elements  
~~~ action, aligned with vocal utterance (tenths of a second, aside from  
single actions such as claps)  
.... gaze movement  
[ verbal overlap  
| timing point, relating to aligned point in action line  
|~~~~|~~~~ ((action 1; action 2))description of sequential actions  
|~~~~~|~~~~~ ((action 1, action 2))description of simultaneous actions