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Coordinating multiactivity transitions in dance rehearsals: spatial configurations and instructional practices

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This study explores the mechanisms behind activity transitions in dance rehearsals, focusing on how participants manage multiactivities in instructional situations. The research uses multimodal conversation analysis to examine the spatial configurations and interactional practices of a professional choreographer and two nonprofessional dancers. The analysis reveals how participants create activity transitions, mobilize resources, and maintain continuity across activities, emphasizing the crucial role of spatial positioning and timing in managing transitions. By maintaining one activity while introducing others, participants effectively coordinate multiple activities without disrupting the rehearsal's flow. The findings contribute to an understanding of multiactivity in social interactions and offer practical insights for instructional practices in dance and other embodied activities.

KEYWORDS

multiactivity, activity transitions, dance rehearsals, spatial configurations, interactional coordination, instructional practices, multimodal conversation analysis, choreography

1 Introduction

A recurring challenge in social interactions is transitioning from one activity to the next. Participants can solve this interactional problem by negotiating transitions (e.g., Robinson and Stivers, 2001; Deppermann et al., 2010; Lerner et al., 2011; Reed et al., 2013), announcing a transition (e.g., by counting as in Broth and Keevallik, 2014; Pitsch and Krug, 2023), or using an activity transition marker (e.g., Keevallik, 2010; Mazeland, 2019). While these studies focus on the transitions of consecutive activities, this paper explores the transitions between activity arrangements, where multiple activities are coordinated simultaneously to create multiactivities, emphasizing the instructional context of a dance rehearsal.

As described by Haddington et al. (2014), multiactivity involves the simultaneous coordination of multiple perceptually salient and equally relevant activities. Activities such as instructing, operating, dancing, making music, or discussing are interactional and participatory courses of action, each utilizing multimodal resources. Coordinating several of these activities simultaneously adds complexity, particularly in instructional environments like dance rehearsals, where instructors must balance physical demonstrations with verbal explanations (Mondada, 2014a). In such contexts, participants must navigate the activities of performance and knowledge transmission, creating a dynamic interplay between showing and telling. This study investigates how these transitions unfold in the instructive environment of a dance rehearsal, where a choreographer directs two dancers in developing a couple's dance.

Using a multimodal conversation analytical methodology (Mondada, 2019; Goodwin, 2018), the paper explores how transitions from single activities to multiactivities are structured, how the choreographer negotiates her role as an instructor, and how spatial configurations and interactional practices shape the teaching process. The analysis reveals that transitioning from

one activity (monoactivity) to multiple activities (multiactivity) involves projecting activity transition, mobilizing multimodal resources, and aligning new activities with ongoing activities. In this context, this study highlights the spatial adjustments necessary for maintaining simultaneous activities and aims to contribute to our understanding of how multiactivities function as instructive tools in creative contexts.

2 Spatial configurations in dance rehearsals: instructions in multiactivity contexts

2.1 Multiactivity in social interaction

Multiactivity refers to situations where participants engage in multiple, simultaneous activities (Haddington et al., 2014). This phenomenon presents a complex interplay of coordination practices, requiring participants to concurrently maintain involvement in and relevance of several courses of action. Research has explored how participants manage these complex bundles of activities in face-to-face interactions. More recently, studies have examined the co-occurrence of multiple activities and how individuals coordinate them (Nishizaka, 2014; Hoey, 2018; Kamunen, 2019). Simultaneous coordination practices enable interactants to merge various courses of action into a single interactional unit, effectively creating a multiactivity (Mondada, 2011). However, this complexity can lead to conflicting resource demands, requiring participants to prioritize certain activities over others (Ticca, 2014; Kamunen and Haddington, 2020).

An activity represents an interactional and participatory framework through which individuals coordinate their social actions. As a participatory framework, activities serve as an orientation structure for actions, mostly realized through multimodal practices utilizing multimodal resources. This conceptualization aligns with conversation analysis, viewing activities as supra-sequential contexts encompassing sequences of actions and their situational practices (Pomerantz and Fehr, 2011; Goodwin, 2000).

The distinction between activities, actions, and practices lies in their hierarchical organization and differing levels of granularity (Schegloff, 2000). Actions refer to discrete, interactional moves embedded within an activity and represent the micro-level units of participation, such as utterances or gestures, which are contextually interpreted by interlocutors (Deppermann and Streeck, 2018). Actions are not inherently confined to single turns; they may span multiple conversational units depending on their interactional function (Schegloff, 2007). Practices, on the other hand, denote the habitual methods or resources utilized to enact actions. These include linguistic structures, gaze direction, gestural movements, and other multimodal tools that enable intelligibility and coordination among participants (Selting, 2016). Activities provide a macro-level framework within which actions are realized and practices are deployed. For instance, a dance instruction as an activity structures related actions, such as giving and receiving directorial feedback, which are realized through multimodal practices like speaking, gesturing, and rhythmic movements.

The notion of activity is intrinsically connected to the concept of participation, as activities are understood as interactional frameworks within which individuals engage and contribute to the social organization of a situation. Participation is not merely about being present but involves active alignment with the multimodal practices that constitute an activity, allowing individuals to signal their involvement and interpret the contributions of others (Goodwin, 2007). Activities thus function as participatory categories, where individuals dynamically negotiate roles and responsibilities, making their actions intelligible and accountable within the interactional ensemble (Schmitt, 2012; Maynard and Clayman, 1991). This becomes particularly evident in dance rehearsals, where multiple activities become simultaneously relevant. For example, within an instruction activity, the choreographer can perform the action of giving a directive. Within the same instruction activity, the person receiving the directive may use the practice of nodding to indicate understanding. If the activity of dancing is added, in which one or both individuals participate with different practices (such as rhythmic movement or merely monitoring), the participants find themselves in a multiactivity situation. In other words, activities are participant frameworks whose involvement is multimodally displayed. This can occur explicitly through social actions or implicitly through spatial positioning or orientation toward other participants. In multiactivities, participants are not necessarily involved in multiple actions but rather in multiple frameworks that render certain actions relevant. This means that participants can demonstrate, through multimodal methods such as engagement displays (Goodwin, 2018), nodding (Klatt, 2024), or facial expressions (Dix and Groß, 2024), that they perceive themselves as part of an activity, even if they do not perform actions in a narrower sense (Krug, 2023a).

Therefore, the phenomenon of multiactivity highlights the complexities of simultaneous engagement in multiple activities. Participants must manage overlapping demands through intrapersonal coordination, aligning their multimodal contributions, and interpersonal alignment, synchronizing their actions with others in the interaction (Haddington et al., 2014; Deppermann and Schmitt, 2007). Unlike purely cognitive or mental tasks, activities are observable through their situational enactment, making them accessible for analysis within the ethnomethodological framework (Lehn, 2019). This emphasis on accountability ensures that activities can be accounted for as socially organized phenomena.

2.2 Activity transitions in instructional dance settings

Spatial configurations play a pivotal role in numerous creative settings. For instance, studies of theater (Schmidt, 2018; Krug, 2023b), opera (Löfgren, 2024), and orchestra rehearsals (Messner, 2024) have shown that spatial configurations are crucial for structuring interaction and learning. These settings involve participants learning movements and interpreting spatial cues from their instructors, much like in dance rehearsals (Krug, 2022a).

Dance rehearsals are inherently multimodal, involving verbal instructions, gestures, body movements, and spatial arrangements. As Mondada (2014b) points out, verbal instructions in complex settings are often coordinated and interwoven with physical demonstrations to achieve various situational goals. In dance and other embodied activities, instructions can be conveyed through bodily demonstrations intertwined with verbal commands, forming „complex multimodal gestalts" (Mondada, 2014a). Consequently, learners in instructional dance settings must navigate the spatial dimensions of their own movements and those of their instructor,

integrating multiple modalities to grasp the choreography. Studies on dance in interaction (e.g., Bassetti, 2014; Bassetti and Bottazzi, 2015; Keevallik, 2020) often focus one how dance instructors employ language, gestures, facial expressions, and spatial positioning to guide dancers through complex choreographies. For instance, an instructor may move into a dancer's physical space to demonstrate proximity or alignment or position themselves at a distance to allow dancers to take control of their spatial orientation. Focusing on spatial orientation, Keevallik (2015) emphasizes that spatial framing extends beyond physical positioning to include the direction of attention and the enablement of embodied learning. In her analysis of dance classes, Keevallik demonstrates how teachers combine gestures with their spatial orientation to instruct dancers on how to move through space. This positioning provides learners with a visual model and sets spatial boundaries for where specific movements should occur.

The instructor's spatial positioning relative to the dancers is both an anchor and a guiding tool for projecting or maintaining a locally relevant "transition space" (Lerner et al., 2011). This notion refers to a brief—but structurally meaningful—interactional interval that occurs as one activity reaches completion and before the next begins. In dance rehearsals, the transition of instructional activities, such as demonstrating or correcting, is often tied to spatial positioning. For instance, Broth and Keevallik (2014) illustrate how dance instructors utilize spatial configurations to manage their instructions. By adjusting their positions, instructors can shift between demonstrating movements and observing dancers. Keevallik (2015) expands on this by showing how dance instructors use spatial frames to manage different levels of participation. Instructors may adjust their position within the rehearsal stage to shift between directive roles, such as directly demonstrating a movement, and more observational roles, such as watching and providing feedback. Projecting these activity transitions is often accomplished through spatial repositioning. For example, an instructor may move to a new location in the rehearsal stage to signal a transition from instruction to performance. These spatial transitions are essential for managing the rehearsal's progressivity and ensuring that dancers understand when to shift from observing to performing or from one choreography sequence to another.

Although not in dance situations but in the context of musical masterclasses, Reed (2015) examines spatial synchronization in rehearsals, particularly how teachers position themselves to coordinate the instructional focus. Reed suggests spatial positioning in such settings corresponds with the engagement space—narrow distances between instructor and student project corrections; wider distances open up the space for student performance (Reed et al., 2013). This spatial coordination can also be observed in dance rehearsals but is linked with temporal alignment. Krug (2022a, 2022b) explores how the timing of movements—such as delays, accelerations, and synchronizations—intersects with spatial arrangements to create alignment between dancers and instructors. This time and space coordination is essential for ensuring that rehearsals progress smoothly and that dancers internalize the choreography and instructions.

For this paper, coordination is understood as the synchronization of actions and multimodal resources—such as verbal communication, gaze, and spatial orientation. In his study on coordination in paramedic emergency drills, Deppermann (2014) distinguishes between interpersonal and intrapersonal coordination. Interpersonal coordination involves multiple team members aligning their actions to achieve a shared goal, requiring them to interpret each other's actions in real time and adapt to shifts in the situation, observable as social action. Intrapersonal coordination refers to an individual's management of their own multimodal resources to fulfill multiple, sometimes conflicting, responsibilities. For instance, a paramedic may need to listen, talk, and perform manual actions simultaneously, integrating these actions in a way that aligns with the broader team's goals and immediate demands. For dance rehearsals, this means that dancers coordinate their own multimodal resources to perform a dance (intrapersonal coordination). At the same time, they also align themselves interpersonally with others involved, adjusting their own movements and steps to match those of their partners. Additionally, dances often require intercorporeal coordination (Meyer and Wedelstaedt, 2017; Meyer et al., 2017; Goodwin, 2021), especially in partner dances, where two people act "as one body."

Building upon the concepts of coordination introduced by Deppermann (2014) and expanded by Krug (2022a, 2022b), this paper examines shifts in multiactivity involving intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intercorporeal coordination, recognizing that each form demands its own temporal logic and interactional practices. While previous studies have focused on transitions between activities—where one activity is dissolved in favor of another—in dance work, it is often observed that the dance activity is maintained while other activities are simultaneously switched, such as explaining and instructing. These concurrent activities form a multiactivity, illustrating how dancers and instructors navigate complex layers of coordination without interrupting the ongoing dance activity.

3 Data and methodology

This study investigates spatial configurations and multimodal coordination in dance rehearsals, focusing on how choreographers and dancers manage activity transitions and synchronize their actions across multiple, co-relevant activities. Drawing on multimodal conversation analysis (Mondada, 2019; Goodwin, 2018), the research uses video data from a German dance rehearsal where a choreographer instructs two actors in developing a couple's dance. The primary aim is to understand how spatial and temporal resources are mobilized to facilitate transitions from single activities to multiactivities. The dataset consists of eight hours of audiovisual recordings of several dance rehearsals. Approximately 70 percent of the data include dances where either only dancing occurs or the choreographer gives instructions while music is playing, rendering spoken language unintelligible. The remaining 30 percent consists of evaluations, technical discussions, or instructions. For the study, instructions realized as multiactivities were selected, amounting to 16 cases. For this paper, a total of five cases were chosen, each illustrating a specific aspect of coordination. For transitions from mono to multiactivities, these aspects are intrapersonal coordination (excerpt 1), interpersonal coordination (excerpt 2), and intercorporeal coordination (excerpt 3). For transitions between multiple multiactivities the aspects are simple multiactivity transitions (excerpt 4) and complex multiactivity transitions (excerpt 5). The remaining 11 cases can each be assigned to one of these types. The analysis follows GAT2 transcription conventions for spoken interaction (Couper-Kuhlen and Barth-Weingarten, 2011) and Mondada's (2018) multimodal annotation conventions to capture the spatial and embodied aspects of the rehearsal.

The rehearsal was part of a larger theater production in which the choreographer worked with two actors (a male and a female), guiding

them through the development of a specific dance sequence—a waltz. Importantly, neither of the actors was a professional dancer, making the choreographer's instructional role crucial in leading the learning process and managing their gradual acquisition of dance techniques. The choreographer's role extends beyond mere technical instruction. She mediates between the abstract elements of choreography and the actors' physical embodiment of the dance, using multiactivity configurations. This mediating role is vital because the actors are not trained dancers and require multimodal feedback to adjust their performances (cf. Zemel and Koschmann, 2011). The choreographer uses multimodal resources to manage the actors' movements within the spatial frame of the rehearsal, helping them align their bodies with the rhythm of the waltz.

In the context of this rehearsal, the choreographer has a dual role as instructor and participant in the dance. She provides instructions and engages in the dance, using her movements to demonstrate the correct form and timing. This simultaneity requires her to manage both the epistemic demands of teaching (ensuring the actors understand the choreography) and the deontic demands of directing (ensuring the actors comply with her instructions). Throughout the rehearsal, the choreographer shifts between these roles depending on the demands of the interaction. For example, during activity transitions, she may provide direct verbal commands or explain why specific movements are necessary. The analysis examines how these multiactivity transitions are constructed and maintained within the rehearsal.

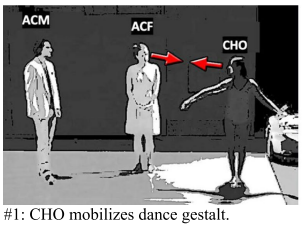
4 Transitions from mono to multiactivities

In focused interactions, as described by Goffman (1963), every monoactivity emerges from an interactional transition from one activity to the next (Robinson and Stivers, 2001). Extending this concept, multiactivities can also arise from monoactivities or transitions between previous multiactivities. This section explores how participants navigate transitions from monoactivities to multiactivities, particularly in dance rehearsals; the following section will discuss transitions between multiactivities in dance rehearsals.

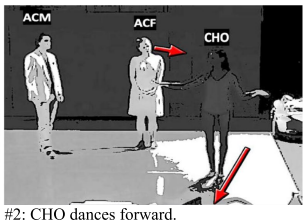
Transitions from monoactivities to multiactivities occur when a new activity is added to an existing one without replacing it. Unlike the dance instruction data analyzed by Broth and Keevallik (2014), where the start of a new activity is signaled by counting or projection markers, the participants in the present cases gradually mobilize the multimodal resources necessary for the added activity. In the initial phase of integrating a new activity, participants coordinate the formation of a multimodal gestalt with the existing activity. The multiactivity becomes fully established only when both activities are synchronized. This synchronization can be achieved through intrapersonal coordination (excerpt 1), interpersonal coordination (excerpt 2), and intercorporeal coordination (excerpt 3).

The first excerpt focuses on the choreographer (CHO), who instructs the actress (ACF) in a new movement pattern. This instruction is framed as a (deontically weak) suggestion and is intrapersonally coordinated with a dance activity, resulting in a multiactivity dancing suggestion. The transition starts with a suggestion, followed by the mobilization of the dance gestalt, and finally culminates in the realization of the multiactivity dancing suggestion.

Excerpt 1: intrapersonal coordination of a multiactivity



#1: CHO mobilizes dance gestalt.



#2: CHO dances forward.

026	CHO	**then you dance maybe two or three EIGHT,**	[current activity:
		dann tanzt ihr vielleicht zwei drei ACHT,	*suggestion*]
027		**just how you *FEEL?**	
		so wie ihr euch FÜHLT?	
	cho	*assumes dance posture ->	[dance gestalt
028		**then you open #1 UP?***	is mobilized]
		dann macht ihr AUF?	
	cho	-->*	
029		***and then you move FORward,**	[*dancing suggestion*
		und dann macht ihr nach VORne,	is realized]
	cho	*dances forward ---------->	
030		(1.0)	
031	ACF	**[uh-huh,]**	
		hmhm,	
032	CHO	**[THIS; #2]**	
		DIEses;	
033		(1.0)*	
	cho	-->*	
034	CHO	***you can also come BACK a little bit,**	
		könnt ihr ein bisschen nach HINten	
		kommen,	
	cho	*dances backward-------------------->>	

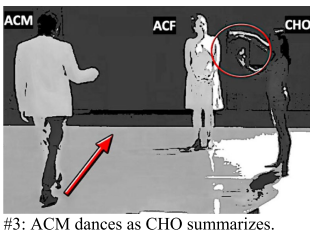
The choreographer (CHO) begins by making a visually directed suggestion to the female actor (ACF), using mutual gaze and body orientation, along with verbal instructions (lines 026–027). This suggestion is recipient designed as a possible singular activity, *then you dance maybe* (line 026) and visually addressed through sustained eye contact, indicating engagement through visual participation. The actress reciprocates by displaying her engagement visually (#1). At this point, the participants collaboratively engage in the activity of suggesting, which they carry out using various resources. The activity of suggesting here includes two action pairs: suggesting a dance move and accepting the suggested dance move. These action pairs are distributed between the choreographer and the actors in a corresponding manner. The choreographer performs the act of suggesting using verbal resources, addressing the actress with eye contact, and establishing the participant framework through body orientation (as only the actors, not the director or assistant director, who are also present, are addressed). The actress, in particular, demonstrates engagement with the activity through sustained eye contact with the choreographer. Then, the choreographer starts to mobilize resources relevant to the upcoming new activity. During her verbal contribution, she projects the dance as an additional activity (line 027). While maintaining a mutual gaze with the actress, she begins to prepare her arms and adopts a dance posture. This gradual mobilization is verbalized as *then you open UP* (line 028), projecting the forthcoming dance activity to her co-participants. The choreographer coordinates the start of the dance activity with her verbal suggestion. She initiates dancing (kinesthetic participation) while beginning a new turn-constructional unit verbally (line 029). This simultaneous action establishes a multiactivity, as she maintains a mutual gaze with the actress during the dance description (line 029). In this way, the choreographer dances what she suggests and suggests what she dances. The fact that these two activities do not represent parallel activities but are inseparably intertwined and form a multimodal gestalt is demonstrated by the actress's reaction: she follows the choreographer's movements with her gaze and provides a feedback token, *uh huh* (line 031), fulfilling her part in the two-action pair structure of the suggestion activity and thereby indicating shared

involvement in the multiactivity. The fact that the multiactivity of the dancing suggestion has achieved its instructional goal from the choreographer's perspective at this point is evident in the choreographer's action of suggesting the next dance move, *dancing back*, after the actress ratifies the first suggested dance move. Analogous to the first suggestion, verbal resources introduce the suggestion and make it accountable as such, while kinesthetic resources perform the proposed move. When the choreographer breaks mutual gaze due to physical distance and provides an updated reference to her dance figure (line 032), the actress continues to display engagement, thereby indicating that the suggestion activity is specifically directed at her, as she is referenced as an agent of the dance: *and then you move FORward* (line 029) and *you can also come back a little bit* (line 034). Although the choreographer dances herself, she only acts as a placeholder for ACF's future performance.

Within the instructional multiactivity, the two activities (suggesting and dancing) serve distinct functions. The verbal modality counts the beat (line 026) and designates relevant figures—for example, *open* (line 028). In contrast, the kinesthetic modality provides visual information on posture and the sequence of steps. Only the direction of the dance—*forward*—is conveyed through both modalities. In this way, different interactional activities (suggesting a movement and demonstrating this movement via dancing) can occur simultaneously within an instruction. Additionally, the spatial configuration suggests that this is a watch-and-learn situation, where the instructor demonstrates a concept or technique that the student is expected to replicate in the next iteration.

The next excerpt differs in that regard. It shows a situation where two participants—CHO and the male actor (ACM)—jointly create a multiactivity. This occurs at the end of a rehearsal when CHO summarizes the results of their work, and ACM takes the opportunity to dance along during what initially begins as a purely verbal summary. This dancing along affects the summary, as CHO starts to summarize interpersonally what ACM is dancing, and ACM dances what CHO is summarizing. In this way, an instructive multiactivity of a dancing summary emerges. The coordination unfolds in the following way: initially, participants engage in a summarization activity, which is followed by the mobilization of a dance gestalt. After all resources for the dance are gathered, the multiactivity of dancing summary takes place.

Excerpt 2: interpersonal coordination of a multiactivity



#3: ACM dances as CHO summarizes.

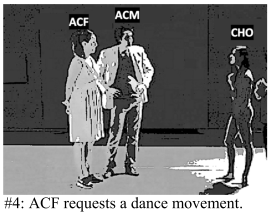
006	CHO	**let's see what you HAVE;**	[current activity:
		lasst uns mal feststellen was ihr HABT;	*summary*]
007	ACF	**yes exACTly;**	
		ja geNAU;	
008	CHO	**so (--) you TAKE your time,**	
		also (--) ihr LÄSST euch zeit,	
009		**he [LOOKS at you,]**	
		er beGUCKT dich	
010	ACM	**[yes*(.) exACTly;]**	
		ja (.) geNAU;	[dance gestalt
	acm	*straightens shoulders, moves tw. ACF->	is mobilized]
011		(1.0) #3	
012	CHO	**he TURNS,***	
		er DREHT sich,	
	acm	-->*	
013	ACM	***I TURN;***	[*dancing summary*]
		ich DREH mich;	
	acm	*turns -*	

The choreographer initiates a summary activity of individual dance figures (line 006), with the actress confirming participation in the activity (line 007). The actor moves to the outer edge of the performance area, preparing for potential engagement in a dance activity. The choreographer then describes her perception of the observed dance (lines 008–009), prompting the actor to engage further. The actor responds by verbally affirming the choreographer's description (*yes (.) exACTly*; line 010) and begins to adjust his physical posture—straightening his shoulders and moving toward the actress. This action thereby mobilizes the necessary resources for the dance activity. His verbal and physical cues align with the ongoing summary. As the choreographer continues her verbal summary (*he TURNS*; line 012), the actor initiates the dance figure by performing a turn and verbalizes his action (*I TURN*; line 013). This synchronization results in simultaneously realizing both activities—the summary and the dance—forming the multiactivity of a dancing suggestion.

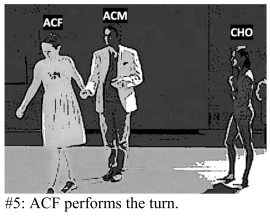
The coordinated actions between the choreographer and the actor demonstrate how participants manage two interdependent activities: participating in the summary and performing the dance. The choreographer adjusts her verbal descriptions to align with the actor's movements, treating his dance not as a separate activity but as an integral part of the ongoing multiactivity. Her pause before introducing *he TURNS* (line 011) aligns with his movement toward the appropriate position, showing mutual adaptation and enabling his participation in their joint multiactivity.

The following excerpt reveals the full potential of multiactivities in instructional settings. ACF asks CHO to show her a turn in the waltz. When CHO declines this request (a waltz does not traditionally include a solo turn for the lady), ACF upgrades the request to a dancing request, coordinating it intercorporeally with ACM and thereby demonstrating the seemingly impossible turn. This practice is successful, as CHO subsequently begins to demonstrate a possible movement. The transition mirrors the earlier examples: it starts with a current activity (here, a request); next, resources for the dance are gathered, and once everything is in place, the activities merge into an intertwined multiactivity dancing request.

Excerpt 3: intercorporeal establishment of an multiactivity



#4: ACF requests a dance movement.



#5: ACF performs the turn.

001	ACF	**can you just do one TURN for us,**	[current activity:
		kannst du uns nur eine DREHung,	*request*]
002		**=because we have this THING here,**	
		=weil wir haben ja diesen DISS ge DISS,	
003		**we don't really turn in WALTZes,=do we?**	
		und WALzer eigentlich drehen,=eher nich?	
004		(1.5)#4	
005	CHO	**hm not that I (-) that I KNOW right now;**	
		hm nicht das ich (-) das ich jetzt WÜSSte;	
006	ACF	**but something SUBtle;**	
		aber irgendwas deZENtes;	
007		**where you can TURN-**	
		wo man sich DREHen kann-	
008		**=*we've DONE something similar before,**	[dance shape
		=wir haben eben sowas ähnliches geMACHT,	is mobilized]
	acf	*turns to ACM, raises both hands--->	
	acm	*grabs ACF's hands --->	
009	ACF	***if I could somehow turn OUT,** *	
		wenn ich mich irgendwie AUSdrehen könnte,	
	acm	*puts right hand on ACF's back*	
010		*(1.0)#5	[*dancing request*]
	acf	*turns out -->	
011	ACF	**so now *I could turn back IN,**	
		so jetzt wieder REINdrehen könnte,	
	acf	-->* turns back into dance position -->	
012		**=well [I don't KNOW;]***	
		=also ich WEISS nicht;	
	acf	-->*	
013	CHO	**[well uh no] she enters HIS arm;**	
		also äh nein sie steigt in SEIN arm;	

In this instance, the formation of the multiactivity requires intercorporeal coordination between the two dancers. Couple dancing involves both dancers acting as one body, with movements synchronized with each other. This intercorporeality aligns with the principles of dance, where synchronization and rhythmic alignment are essential (Keevallik, 2015).

The actress addresses the choreographer, requesting a demonstration of a turn in the waltz (line 001). A request is an activity that consists of at least two actions: formulating the request and accepting/declining/modifying the request. So, when the choreographer hesitates (line 005), the actress persists by expanding her request and verbally describing her idea (lines 006–007). This maintains the activity of requesting. To mobilize the resources necessary for the co-relevant activity of dancing, the actress turns toward the actor, raising her hands—a physical invitation to assume the dance position (line 008). The actor accepts her invitation by grabbing her hands and placing his right hand on her back (line 009). Both participants coordinate intercorporeal actions, assuming the dance position and mobilizing the necessary resources for the dance activity. After completing her verbal description (*if I could somehow turn OUT*; line 009), the actress begins the dance movement (line 010), creating the multiactivity of a dancing request. She performs the turn while continuing her request verbally (*so now I could turn back IN*; line 011). The actor assists by responding to her physical cues, enabling the execution of the couple's dance without additional verbal instructions. The choreographer observes and provides feedback, eventually correcting the figure (*well uh no she enters his arm*; line 013). This indicates that she has engaged with the request through multiactivity, allowing her to grasp and address the figure presented and eventually fulfill her part of the request activity to answer the request.

The actress carefully organizes the activities of requesting and dancing with her co-interactants, maintaining a mutual gaze with the choreographer while engaging in kinesthetic interaction with the actor. The actor monitors the actress and responds to her movements, taking part in the dance activity without explicit verbal instruction. Observing the multiactivity, the choreographer can provide input and corrections, demonstrating how the multiactivity illustrate concepts within the dance production project.

The three analyzed sequences exemplify how participants in dance rehearsals transition from monoactivities to multiactivities through sequential and multimodal organization. This process unfolds in three key stages. First, participants fully engage in the current activity, ensuring its effective execution before introducing new elements. This initial activity could be a suggestion, as in excerpt 1; a summary, as in excerpt 2; or a request, as in excerpt 3. Next, participants gradually mobilize resources for the additional activity by adjusting their physical postures and positions. For instance, in excerpt 1, the choreographer assumes a dance posture. In excerpt 2, the actor adjusts his posture and moves toward the actress. In excerpt 3, the actress and actor assume the dance position through intercorporeal coordination. Finally, participants coordinate the timing to initiate both activities simultaneously. This simultaneous start is often marked by verbal cues of movement such as *and then you move FORward; I TURN;* or *if I could somehow turn OUT*; accompanied by synchronized physical movements.

Coordination efforts occur across different levels. In intrapersonal coordination, as seen in excerpt 1, a single participant (the choreographer) manages multiple participation modalities—verbal and kinesthetic—to transition into a multiactivity. In interpersonal coordination, exemplified in excerpt 2, participants adjust their actions based on each other's contributions, with the actor and choreographer synchronizing their verbal and physical actions to establish multiactivity. In intercorporeal coordination, demonstrated in excerpt 3, physical coordination between two participants is required to perform a shared activity; the actress and actor act as one body, relying on mutual responsiveness and physical cues. The analysis demonstrates how participants create activity transitions by performing the ongoing activity in a way that allows for the integration of the additional activity. In the context of instructions in dance rehearsals, they primarily rely on verbal and proxemic participation methods for the ongoing activity, while gestural and kinesthetic methods mobilize resources for the additional activity. The timing and integrability of resource mobilization are crucial to ensure that both activities can be realized concurrently. The simultaneous start is facilitated by verbal markers like *and*, *so* or *if you can,* projecting the addition of a new activity (cf. Mazeland and Huiskes, 2001). Physical movements, such as adjustments in posture, gestures, and especially spatial positioning, indicate readiness to engage in the additional activity. Visual engagement, including maintaining or shifting mutual gaze to include or focus on different participants, aids in coordinating the transition, as the following excerpts will illustrate.

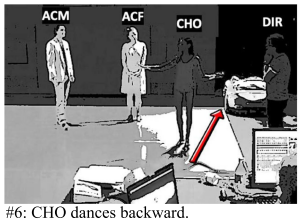
5 Transitions between multiple multiactivities

Transitions between multiple multiactivities are inherently more complex than transitions from mono to multiactivities. While the latter involves adding a new activity to an existing one, resulting in simultaneous coordination, transitions between multiple multiactivities require converting several activities. To negotiate these transitions interactively, participants often organize their multiactivity switches by maintaining one of the activities throughout the transition. This continuity allows for modifying other activities, making new ones possible while preserving structural compatibility. The resulting new multiactivities may introduce new participant frameworks and can be executed as a simple multiactivity transition (excerpt 4) or a nested multiactivity transition (excerpt 5). In both cases, the dance activities—established through proxemic-kinesthetic participation methods—are maintained, while activities sharing verbal participation methods (such as proposing, reassuring, instructing, and explaining) are exchanged.

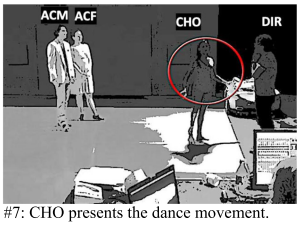
In the following excerpt 4, the choreographer executes a transition between two multiactivities—dancing proposal to dancing reassurance—by maintaining the gestalt of one activity (dancing) while altering another (from proposing to reassuring). This approach enables the handling of different interactional activities, e.g., the demonstration of the movement proposed by ACF in excerpt 3, which is now being incorporated into the choreography by CHO. She first suggests this new movement to the actors before turning away from them as the primary audience and addressing the director (DIR), who is artistically responsible, to confirm whether the movement aligns with his vision. When DIR asks which movement she means, CHO uses the multiactivity of a dancing reassurance to demonstrate the movement in question.

The transitions unfold in three steps: First, establishing a new participant and activity frame through reorientation; second, maintaining the ongoing form of the remaining activity; and third, addressing the local relevance within the newly added activity.

Excerpt 4: simple multiactivity transition by maintaining a partial activity



#6: CHO dances backward.



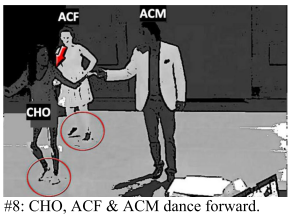
#7: CHO presents the dance movement.

```
033  CHO  *(1.0)
     cho  *dances -->
034  CHO  you could also come a bit towards the#6 BACK,   [dancing
          könnt ihr ein bisschen nach HINten kommen,        proposal]
035       and THEN maybe +this goes+ along with the
          und DENN vielleicht kommt dieses mit der
          presentation;*
          präsentation;
     cho  ------------>*
     cho                 +gaze shifts from ACF/ACM
                           to DIR+
036       =*I'm not sure if you MEAN that?                  [reassurance]
          =ich weiß nicht ob du das MEINST?
     cho   *maintains dance posture ----->
037  DIR  WHICH,
          WELCHe,
038  CHO  um (.) that uh (.) they're basically             [dancing
          ähm (.) dass äh (.) sie sich quasi                reassurance]
          (--)* PREsenting#7 themselves,
          (--) PRÄsentieren,
     cho   -->* dances ------------>>
```

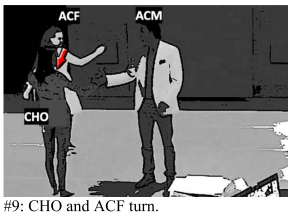
At the outset, the choreographer initiates the multiactivity of a dancing proposal. She begins by silently dancing for a moment (line 033), then integrates verbal engagement by proposing, *you could also come a bit toward the BACK* (line 034). This verbal participation, directed at the actor and actress, is synchronized with her dance movements. The dance gestalt conveys information about body posture, step sequence, and direction, while the verbal proposal clarifies the intended recipients. As she concludes this movement beside the actor and actress, the choreographer reorients her gaze toward the director, shifting the participant framework (line 035). The actress responds by stepping back beside the actor and both actors refrain from further engagement, indicating they no longer perceive themselves as active participants in the ongoing interaction (cf. #7). For the transition to the new multiactivity to succeed, the choreographer maintains the dance activity. By preserving her dance posture and movements, she projects the continued relevance of this activity to the participants. She then addresses the director, stating, *and THEN maybe this goes along with the presentation/ I'm not sure if you MEAN that?* (lines 035–036). This shift introduces the activity of reassurance as she seeks confirmation from the director regarding the choreography. The director's query, *WHICH* (line 037), prompts the choreographer to provide further explanation. She integrates her dance into the reassurance activity, responding, *um (.) that uh (.) they are basically (–-) presenting themselves* while demonstrating the dance figure (line 038). By maintaining a mutual gaze with the director and continuing her dance movements, she addresses his request for clarification within the shared activity of reassurance, addressing the local relevancies within this new activity. The choreographer thereby transitions between two multiactivities by reorienting physically—changing her gaze and body orientation to establish a new participant framework—while maintaining the dance gestalt to ensure continuity. She also alters the verbal activity, switching from proposing to reassuring to address the interactional needs. This approach allows the choreographer to manage different interactional activities without disrupting the rehearsal's progressivity. Her activity transition becomes immediately relevant to the actors who interpret her spatial reconfiguration as a change in the participant framework and take a more observing position as overhearers—most notably in ACF's spatial repositioning from #6 to #7.

In the final case of this paper, the choreographer navigates a more complex transition involving multiple multiactivities and participant frameworks. She transitions from a dancing instruction to a dancing explanation and back to a dancing instruction, managing different participant framings (first, both the actress and actor, then the actress only). Again, one activity (dancing) is maintained throughout, requiring transitions only between the other activities.

Excerpt 5: double multiactivity transition by maintaining an activity



#8: CHO, ACF & ACM dance forward.



#9: CHO and ACF turn.

```
029  CHO  when *one (-) % °h this ONE two three ONE       [dancing
          wenn man (-) °h dieses EINS zwei drei EINS       instruction]
          +[two three ONE two three-  ]
            zwei drei EINS zwei drei-
     cho       *dances -->>
     cho                %grabs ACM's hand -->>
     acs  +ACM & ACF dance-->>
030  ACM   [when we're here @in FRONT,]+(-) +              [dancing
           wenn wir hier VORne sind,                        explanation]
     cho                  @looks at ACM -->
     cho                                 +nods+
031  CHO  EXactly;#8
          GEnau;
032       =[on]e two THREE?                                [re-establishing
           eins zwei DREI?                                  dance gestalt]
033  ACM   [hm]
034  CHO  and then maybe @you TURN around?                 [dancing
          und dann vielleicht DREHST du dich um?           instruction]
     cho             --> @looks at ACF ---->>
035  ACF  yes;#9
          ja;
```

The choreographer works on the choreography with the actress and actor, establishing the multiactivity of dancing instruction. She holds the actor's hand, integrating him intercorporeally into the activity. After a brief pause and an audible inhale (line 029), she begins counting the waltz rhythm while dancing, *ONE two three ONE two three* (line 029). The actress and actor synchronize their movements with her, engaging in the dance. As they dance, the actor poses a question regarding the timing of the instructed dance movement, *when we are here IN front* (line 030), initiating the multiactivity of dancing explanation. This requires the choreographer to manage additional interactional demands of maintaining the dancing instruction relevant for the actress while simultaneously reacting to ACM's request. She looks at the actor and nods (line 030), then provides a minimal verbal response, *EXactly* (line 031), fitting it into the rhythmic structure of the dance instruction. Immediately after addressing the actor's query, the choreographer resumes the counting, *one two THREE* (line 032), re-establishing the dancing instruction. Her emphasis on the last beat is probably an indication that, in terms of coordination, this nested multiactivity transition places high demands on her lung capacity. She then introduces a new dance figure directed at the actress—*and then maybe you TURN around* (line 034)—accompanied by a gaze shift toward the actress. The actress responds affirmatively and performs the instructed turn (line 035).

In this sequence, the choreographer transitions between multiple multiactivities by maintaining the dance activity, ensuring the dancing continues uninterrupted to provide continuity for all participants involved. She manages participant framings by shifting attention between the actor and actress as needed. Additionally, she times her verbal participation by inserting responses and instructions within the rhythmic structure of the dance to avoid disrupting it. By addressing the actor's need for clarification within the constraints of the dance, the choreographer demonstrates adept coordination of simultaneous activities.

In dance rehearsals, coordinating instructive multiactivity transitions involves maintaining one activity—dancing—to enable shifts between multiple activities. Participants establish and maintain multiactivities as members' solutions to different situational activities during rehearsals. They achieve this by maintaining structural compatibility and ensuring the ongoing activity is compatible with the new one. By adjusting participation modalities—using gaze, body orientation, and verbal cues—they project shifts in activity and participant frameworks, addressing various interactional needs without disrupting the rehearsal flow. Timing resource mobilization is also crucial; participants align the initiation of new activities with appropriate moments within the existing activity's structure. In conclusion, establishing and maintaining multiactivities serve as participants' solutions to handle different situational requirements in dance rehearsals. By maintaining one activity and modifying others, participants navigate complex interactional landscapes involving multiple activities and participant frameworks.

6 Conclusion and discussion

This study has investigated processes of activity transitions within dance rehearsals, focusing on how participants manage and coordinate activities in instructive multiactivity situations. By analyzing interactions involving an instructing choreographer and two dancers, the research has illuminated how transitions from monoactivities to multiactivities and between multiple multiactivities are accomplished. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of multiactivity in social interactions and offer practical insights for instructional practices in dance and other embodied activities.

The analysis revealed that transitioning from a monoactivity to a multiactivity involves a structured, three-step process:

1 *Establishing the transition*: Participants initiate the transition by projecting a new activity to be integrated. This involves projecting the upcoming shift and preparing co-participants for the addition of a new activity.
2 *Mobilization of resources for the new activity*: Participants gradually mobilize the necessary multimodal resources—such as gestures, spatial positioning, and verbal cues—to facilitate the new activity without disrupting the ongoing one.
3 *Simultaneous start of multiple activities as one intertwined multiactivity:* Both the existing and the new activities are initiated simultaneously, allowing participants to engage in multiple activities concurrently and coordinate their actions effectively.

By expanding an existing monoactivity with a newly added activity, participants create a multiactivity that enables them to handle complex interactional needs. Aligning the new activity with the existing one during the initial phase ensures that both can be started simultaneously, maintaining coherence in the interaction.

Transitions between multiactivities are more complex due to the need to convert several activities into others. The study identified a three-step process for these transitions:

1 *Establishing the new participant and activity frame:* Participants reorient themselves physically and interactionally to establish new participant frameworks and activity contexts. This reorientation projects the shift to a new multiactivity.
2 *Maintaining the ongoing gestalt:* One of the activities from the existing multiactivity is maintained throughout the transition, providing continuity and structural compatibility between the activities.
3 *Processing the local relevance within the new activity:* Participants address the immediate interactional needs and relevancies within the newly established activity, allowing them to handle the changed situation without dissolving the multiactivity structure.

By retaining one of the activities, participants can transition to a new multiactivity seamlessly, effectively managing the complexity of simultaneous activities. The findings contribute to the multiactivity and activity transitions literature by detailing how participants navigate complex interactional environments. The study extends previous research on transitions between monoactivity frameworks (Robinson and Stivers, 2001; Deppermann et al., 2010). As the analyses illustrated, spatial configurations are crucial in facilitating activity transitions. Participants' physical arrangement and movement enable the projection of activity transitions and the mobilization of resources for new activities. By adjusting their spatial positions and orientations, participants project shifts in activities and establish new participant and activity frames. Maintaining one of the activities during transitions between multiactivities allows participants to handle changes in relevance and interactional demands without abandoning the multiactivity structure. This practice ensures continuity and coherence in the interaction, highlighting the importance of structural compatibility in managing complex activities.

The study supports and expands upon existing research on multiactivity and interactional coordination (Haddington et al., 2014; Deppermann, 2014). It demonstrates how participants employ multimodal resources to manage simultaneous activities and transitions. This multimodal approach aligns with the work of Keevallik (2015) on coordinating temporalities in talk and dance and contributes to a richer understanding of embodied interaction.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is based on a specific context involving a small number of participants in a specific setting of a dance rehearsal. Future research could explore activity transitions in larger groups, different cultural settings, or other domains where multiactivity is prominent, such as healthcare, education, or workplace interactions. Examining how technological mediation affects activity transitions in virtual or hybrid environments could further enrich the understanding of multiactivity in contemporary interactional contexts.

This study has demonstrated how participants manage activity transitions in dance rehearsals, highlighting the importance of spatial configurations, multimodal resource mobilization, and maintaining

ongoing activities. By detailing the structured steps involved in transitioning from monoactivities to multiactivities and between multiple multiactivities, the research has shown that multiactivities are members' practical solutions to complex activities, such as instructing movements.

Data availability statement

The datasets presented in this article are not readily available because of the data protection regulations regarding the consent forms of the study participants. However, it is possible to review the data on-site together with the author. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to maximilian.krug@uni-due.de.

Ethics statement

Ethical review and approval was not required for the study on human participants in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. Written informed consent was obtained from the individuals for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

Author contributions

MK: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Generative AI statement

The author(s) declare that no Gen AI was used in the creation of this manuscript.

Publisher's note

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