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Embodied spatial practices and everyday organisation: The work of tour guides and their audiences

Katie Best and Jon Hindmarsh

Abstract

This paper introduces an interactional perspective to the analysis of organisational space. The study is based on the analysis of over 100 hours of video recordings of guided tours undertaken within two sites (an historic house and a world-famous museum), coupled with interviews and field observations. The analysis is informed by ethnomethodology and conversation analysis in order to focus on the everyday organisation of these tours, and the lived experience of inhabiting museum spaces. We use an interactional lens to unpack the 'embodied spatial practices' critical to the work of tour guides and their audiences, which reveals how the sense and significance of the workspace emerges moment-to-moment, and in relation to the ongoing work at hand. As a result, for those with an interest in organisational space, the paper introduces a novel perspective, and methods, to highlight the dynamic and interactional production of workspaces. Additionally, for those with an interest in practice, the paper demonstrates the fundamental import of taking spatial arrangements seriously when analysing the organisation of work.

Keywords

Space, workspace, practice, embodiment, tour guiding, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis

Introduction

There is now a significant and well-developed body of work concerned with 'space' in studies of work and organisation. These studies bring together a range of concerns with "space, place, region, surroundings, locale, built environment, workspace, 'environments' … private/public space, building, territory and proximate space" (Taylor & Spicer, 2007: 326). Indeed, Taylor and Spicer provide a lucid categorisation of these studies, outlining three broad areas of scholarship in the field that treat (i) *space as distance*, exploring issues relating to organisational location, design, as well as developments like virtual work (Hatch, 1987; Halford, 2005; Myerson & Ross, 2003; Fayard & Weeks, 2011); (ii) *space as a materialization of power relations*, revealing how architecture, workspace and working environment establish and maintain managerial control (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004; Baldry, 1999; Sewell & Wilkinson, 1992; Baldry, Bain, & Taylor, 1998; Fleming & Spicer, 2004; Dale & Burrell, 2007; Zhang & Spicer, 2014; Courpasson, Dany, & Delbridge, 2017) and (iii) *space as lived experience*, focusing primarily on the social production of space (Yanow, 1998; Watkins, 2005; Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Thanem, 2012; Munro & Jordan, 2013; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015).

This paper aims to advance this third strand of work by attempting to elaborate our understanding of the ways in which people inhabit and constitute the sense and significance of space. Thus, our interest with the notion of space is not at the macro-level, or indeed with distance, or geographical or Cartesian conceptions of space. Rather we are acutely concerned with the local workspace. While there is a significant tradition of studies that take seriously the lived experience and social production of space, we will show how the adoption of an explicit interactional analytic lens can produce novel insights into the ways in which organisational members use, inhabit, experience and, in doing so, constitute their workspace.

To pursue these concerns, the paper explores an intriguing activity for the study of workspace: site-specific tours, featuring guides and their audiences. The guides must lead audiences around rich and complex environments and produce temporary workspaces to discuss and consider key objects, artefacts, stories, histories, concepts and phenomena. Audiences, for their part, co-produce and participate in the workspace. Thus, the demands of guiding and being guided allow us to consider how guides and their audiences produce spaces for showing and seeing. To analyse these activities, we pursue a praxeological approach to space (Suchman, 1996; Mondada, 2013) that draws on ethnomethodology and conversation analysis and that rests on the analysis of audio-visual recordings of naturally-occurring work. This moves the analytic focus away from individual experiences of space, to the interactional production of space.

In taking this approach, the paper aims to deliver empirical and conceptual contributions to the spatial turn within organisational studies. The empirical contribution is to describe and unpack the embodied spatial practices that enable tour guides and their audiences to coordinate successful tours. The conceptual contribution aims to demonstrate how adopting an *interactional lens* reveals (i) the fundamental significance of interactional practices to make sense of how people inhabit, and constitute, the emerging sense and significance of organisational spaces and (ii) the value of taking seriously spatial organisation when unpacking and interrogating work practices.

Interrogating work/space

It has been argued that many studies of organisational space have tended towards a treatment of space that is 'fixed,' 'immobile,' 'limited' and 'limiting' – indeed architectural space is often presented as something that constrains action, structures opportunities for action and that remains stable over time (Halford, 2008; Taylor & Spicer, 2007; Munro &

Jordan, 2013; Costas, 2013). Thus, and in many ways, studies of organisational space can imply a certain kind of spatial determinism, where space is presented as an 'external, objective reality' (Dale & Burrell, 2007: 207) that shapes action and conduct within – a kind of 'terminal architecture' in which workers are marshalled by spaces into particular configurations and activities (Pawley, 1998).

Indeed, Edenius & Yakhlef (2007:197) have criticised scholars for analysing space as if it 'contains petrified or dead bodies, lacking in enactment, incorporations and liveliness'. So, the architectural space that pervades organisation theory can be seen as driving the analysis towards disembodied understandings of space, where people have little agency, acting in ways that the space dictates. Moreover, while space is often recognised as socially constructed, a space is seen as holding meaning for significant periods of time (e.g. de Vaujany & Vaast, 2013).

As a result of these far-reaching and fundamental critiques, organisational scholars have started to emphasise more fluid and practice-focused treatments of space (Munro & Jordan, 2013; Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Thanem, 2012; Watkins, 2005). These studies resonate with a wider call in the social sciences to consider the social production of space (rather than the social construction of 'a' space), to be found in the works of de Certeau (1984), Lefebvre (1991), Löw (2008), Hamm (1990) and others. The work of Lefebvre is perhaps the most influential in this regard, exploring the reciprocal relationship between spaces and social action, and arguing that "(social) space is a (social) product" (Lefebvre, 1991: 26) .

Here, we are particularly inspired by the notion of 'spacing.' In line with the conceptual shift from organization to organizing (Czarniawska, 2008), Beyes and Steyaert (2012) propose a parallel move for organizational scholars from a concern with space to 'spacing.' This "entails a rethinking of space as processual and performative, open-ended and multiple, practiced and of the everyday" (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012: 47). In turn, this demands an attention to real-time orientations and engagements with properties of space. So, it "directs the organizational scholar towards embodied affects and encounters generated in the here-and-now and assembled from the manifold (im)materialities" (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012: 53) and "implies taking on board a conceptual awareness of the material, embodied, affective and minor configurations of space" (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012: 56). So, spaces are not seen to hold static 'meanings', but are rather invested with significance through social actions – indeed the sense and significance of different settings inevitably changes over the course of events and activities within a day (Goffman, 1959; Dale & Burrell, 2007; Lyon, 2016).

In drawing on Lefebvre, many working in this area recognise the significance of the body, materiality and interaction for the production of space. However, we would suggest that the corresponding empirical treatments of spacing, spatial practices and spatial work display two key limitations.

Firstly, the analytic eye tends to focus firmly on the individual. They often involve interviews with individuals about their experiences of, and perspectives on, organisational spaces (Yanow, 1998; Watkins, 2005; Liegl, 2014); observations about how individuals transform or inhabit spaces (Thanem, 2012; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015); or personal reflections or autoethnographies on experiences of space (Lucas & Wright, 2015). Sometimes these accounts refer to the social qualities of space, the value to being with others, the desire

to be away from others and so forth, and yet the analysis unfortunately rests only on the individual.

Similarly, Munro and Jordan (2013) use the notion of 'spatial tactics' from de Certeau (de Certeau, 1984), to draw attention to the ways in which street performers constitute 'workspaces' (or performance spaces) and, in so doing, momentarily and perhaps ongoingly shape the significance of the space. However, in drawing heavily on the metaphor of the 'speech act' to elaborate spatial practices, it could be argued that de Certeau retains a focus on the individual or, at most, what multiple, independent individuals accomplish. Therefore, the 'tactics' remain with the performer and we lose a sense of the role that audiences might play in performances.

A second limitation is that interviews and field observations routinely (and maybe inevitably) struggle to capture the *real-time* quality of embodied spatial practices that are critical to a more fluid and processual understanding of workspace. Indeed, presenting their case for an analysis of 'spacing,' Beyes and Steyaert (2012) demand a concern with an analysis that 'dwells in the midst of things' (McCormack, 2007: 369):

> "… can I describe in words or images how I enter each day through the door of my office from when I am now writing this sentence? Can I replay this entry in slow motion and make visible all the affects, materials, movements which are strung together at that moment? Can I connect in that description the rhythm of my steady-typing fingers, the knocking on the door just two seconds ago by two colleagues who ask whether I want to join them for lunch…" (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012: 46)

Those who undertake this kind of "molecular" analysis of organisational space have increasingly come to recognise the value of visual data. For example, Beyes and Steyaert propose the use of video art experiments, inspired by the art work of Bill Viola. They argue that Viola's slow-motion video projects reveal the everyday 'rhythms' of work and organisation, in step-by-step detail. In a similar attempt to realise LeFebvre's call for 'rhythmanalysis,' Dawn Lyon creates an audio-visual montage to capture the rhythmic production of space in Billingsgate fish market (Lyon, 2016). She augments time-lapse photography (see also Simpson, 2012), taken from above the fish market, with audio recordings collected on the market floor ('soundwalking'). In both articles, however there are limitations to the proposed uses of visual data. Indeed, as Lyon herself suggests, these methods provide "no room to linger on the details of embodied skills and knowledge" (Lyon, 2016: 7.3) and they "cannot capture the nuances of [the depicted] interactions" (Lyon, 2016: 6.1). So, once again, we miss the interactional qualities of 'spacing.'

To address these limitations, we will adopt a "situational approach" (Nicolini, 2017) to practice-based studies. Practice-based approaches are well suited to the study of the lived experience of organisational space, as these studies "[emphasize] that behind all the apparently durable features of our world - from queues to formal organisations - there is some type of productive and reproductive work" (Nicolini, 2013: 6). In this regard, they enable us to explore the social production of workspaces as an "apparently durable feature of our world."

However, rather than build on Lefebvre, our paper contributes to studies that aim to deliver a praxeological approach to space (Suchman, 1996; Mondada, 2013). This takes

inspiration from work by Adam Kendon (1985) to consider how spatial concerns cannot be reduced simply to matters of architecture. As Kendon suggests:

> "the establishment and maintenance of spatial-orientational arrangements, is one way that participants can provide one another with evidence that they are prepared to sustain a common orientational perspective… By co-operating with one another to sustain a given spatial-orientational arrangement, they can display a common state of readiness" (Kendon, 1985: 237)

Following on from this Lucy Suchman develops an emergent, dynamic and fundamentally interactional definition of the workspace that underpins our analysis:

> "it is the constitution of [spatial-orientational arrangements] through material and interactional means that makes up the more and less shifting boundaries of a shared workspace… From that state [people] are able to conjoin transactional segments dynamically and in ways responsive to contingencies of the moment, through partial shifts in gaze, changes in body position and the like" (Suchman, 1996: 42-43)

This approach demands that we consider how people display their treatment of the workspace in and through their work. It is an approach that is fundamentally concerned with the *interactional* foundations to work. It utilises the advantages of audio-visual recordings and uses them to focus squarely on *interactional practices* of spacing. In doing so, it contributes to a wider body of workplace studies that take seriously the interactional practices that underpin a range of organisational issues and concerns (e.g. Goodwin, 1995; Heath & Luff, 2000; Hindmarsh & Pilnick, 2007; Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2013; Llewellyn, 2015;

LeBaron, Christianson, Garrett, & Ilan, 2016; Hindmarsh & Llewellyn, 2016; Yamauchi & Hiramoto, 2016).

Methods: Studying tour guiding as frontline work

As has been argued elsewhere, tour guides – as frontline workers – attend to the strategic aims of their organizations, which typically concern issues of audience engagement and education (Balogun, Best, & Lê, 2015). The spatial practices that we are exploring directly relate to their skilled work in bringing strategy into being. However we focus in this paper on the more practical challenges of managing a tour, in which they perform a role which combines path-finding through a space and interpretation of it (Cohen, 1985).Tour guides must show audiences around complex spaces that are rarely designed for guiding; maintain their interest and attentiveness despite copious distractions; and move audiences on to make space for other visitors. Thus, tour guiding provides a perspicuous setting for the study of spatial practices and mobile formations (see also De Stefani & Mondada, 2014).

Research sites

The data that inform this paper were gathered through fieldwork in two UK museums: 78 Derngate and the V&A (Victoria & Albert Museum).

78 Derngate is a small townhouse in Northampton, UK. It is a domestic space, elaborately decorated by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. It has been extensively restored and visits are generally only by guided tour, given by volunteers. The tours follow a set route through the house and garden and can leave as frequently as once every fifteen minutes. The V&A is a very large museum dedicated to art and design, housing an extraordinary range of objects from all over the world, with a focus on the applied arts. Guided tours of the V&A

are free, optional, and also run by volunteer guides. They range from a general tour to more specific themed tours around specific wings of the museum, such as the Islamic galleries, or the Medieval galleries.

Data collection

Various forms of data were collected in our two research sites. The core dataset consists of audio-visual recordings of guided tours. This was augmented by interviews with guides and various forms of participant observation.

Audio-visual recordings Approximately 70 tours were recorded over the course of 18 months. In the V&A, the first author followed the tours with a camera attached to a tripod. Once a group stopped at an exhibit, the tripod was placed in a suitable location and the researcher left the group's line of sight to minimise intrusion. In 78 Derngate, the space was too cramped for the author to follow the tour easily and set up a camera spontaneously at each stop. Instead, cameras were left recording at pre-selected locations throughout the house.

Although it is arguable that no filmed interaction, if the participant knows about it, is ever truly naturally occurring, it has been shown how participants quickly engage in the business at hand with little regard for the camera (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010). In addition, making use of technologies, such as wide-angled lenses, radio microphones and so forth, allowed the camera to be some distance from the participants, again making the camera less intrusive.

For tour guides, who were often recorded on multiple occasions, we followed a traditional model of consent – we discussed the project with them, provided further information as necessary and those happy to participate signed a consent form. Only one

guide was uncomfortable with being filmed as she was fairly new to the occupation, but she supported the project as a whole. The guides at both institutions were enthusiastic about the project, saying in some cases that they looked forward to the findings to improve their own guiding, and in other cases that they felt pleased to be able to help with a study of this type. For tour participants, an 'opt out' model of consent (Homan, 1991) was applied in line with previous interactional studies of museums and galleries (vom Lehn, Heath, & Hindmarsh, 2001; Llewellyn, 2015; Balogun et al., 2015). The option to opt out is provided through signs prominently displayed around the museum. Even if participants opt out after they have been filmed, data containing their image is destroyed. Only one visitor did not want to take part, and the researcher offered not to film, but instead the person decided to stay to the back of the group and out of the view of the camera.

Interviews and fieldwork In addition to the video data, three other types of qualitative data were collected by the lead author. Firstly, participant observation in over fifty tours over the course of six weeks, including museum, theatre, boat, bus, gallery, construction site, historic house, castle, palace, city walking, factory, nature, and stadium tours. Secondly, ethnographic data, including field notes and informal interviews, mainly with the guides in 'backstage' areas (the staff room, etc.). Thirdly, learning to guide at 78 Derngate, which involved attending an initial training session, shadowing a guide, preparing a tour script and ultimately, giving tours herself. These data were used to check and develop our analyses of observed practices and were especially helpful in understanding the demands and expectations on the tour from both the perspective of a 'guide' (e.g. the key opportunities and challenges in managing different audience types, the way that an object is referred to or handled based on museum policy, etc.) and an 'audience member' (e.g. the problems and

confusions that can arise in the course of tours, the pressures to ask or not ask questions at different times, etc.).

Data analysis

Our approach to data analysis is driven by ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks, 1992) and is consistent with a growing body of work within management and organization studies concerned with embodied interactional practices (Alby & Zucchermaglio, 2006; Hindmarsh & Pilnick, 2007; Llewellyn & Burrow, 2008; Heath, 2012; Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2013; Llewellyn, 2015; LeBaron et al., 2016; Hindmarsh & Llewellyn, 2016; Yamauchi & Hiramoto, 2016).

The nature of the phenomena of interest demand close and detailed attention to the unfolding character of action, and therefore specific sequences of conduct are transcribed using derivatives of the Jefferson orthography common to conversation analysis (see Heath et al., 2010). Consistent with this approach we use a small set of examples to illustrate our findings. One example (not selected for this paper) was initially used at a data session with members of the research group. The group watched the fragment together, accompanied by a detailed transcript of talk and key actions. The spatial organisation of the tour emerged as just one of many topics from the session, but one which the first author thought might be interesting. She then spent time compiling a collection of video fragments which appeared to be particularly revealing with regard to relationships between spatial organisation and everyday organising. She prepared detailed transcripts of talk and action which at times resembled something like sheet music, with a set of symbols developed to reflect common actions to and away from artefacts or areas in the room, with different lines on the page given over to different participants.

These detailed transcripts allowed the authors to explore relationships between the everyday work of the guide and spatial organisation. A review of a range of literatures on (organisational) space highlighted the problems with treating space as having a fixed meaning or relevance for interaction. The data appeared to problematise the matter further. Thus, the authors refined the analysis in relation to other studies of space and spacing from across the social sciences. This process encouraged a reconsideration of some concepts in the literature that we will explore through the empirical sections of the paper.

Practices of pacing and placing bodies in space

One of the key activities in a tour is the assembly of 'workspaces' in which guide and audience can consider and inspect key features of the setting. These workspaces are assembled and then disassembled as the tour moves from point of interest to point of interest. This activity starkly reveals the roles of 'pathfinder' and 'interpreter' (Cohen, 1985), where the guide leads the audience on a path that engages the audiences in series of spaces and objects.

These shifts of focus involve a significant re-arrangement of bodies. This is, after all, something which requires the movement of a number of people, often within a small space, to gather around a particular exhibit in a way that they are able to see and appreciate that object. Take, for example our first extract, which involves a transition from consideration of the fireplace to a discussion of the dining table. The fireplace has a concealed coal scuttle, which is an elegant solution to the ugly problem of where to store coal. The dining table is made of solid wood and sits in the middle of the room. Audiences have to walk around the table as they come into the room. The transcript, Extract 1, lays out the guide's talk during the shift from one artifact to the next.

Extract 1

1 Sarah: often his f- his facades (0.3) when he first
2 started out were (0.2) were, using all sorts of
3 tricks in of recessing and stuff and that, that
4 sp-SPILLS in˚tuh˚-to his ar:t (0.4). I
5 think. Now, the ^dining ^room table (1.8) that
6 is the original that would have (0.4) Mister and
7 Missus Bassett-Lowke WOULD huhv:e had their
8 meals off.

The guide is talking about the fireplace and her audience is arranged around it. Interestingly summative assessments are routinely treated as marking shifts in topic and focus during guided tours and often initiate periods of spatial re-organisation. And so it is here: 'that spills into his art' is a summative assessment and it prompts some audience members, such as Maria, to begin to turn away from the fireplace.

Extract 1a

PLEASE PLACE EXTRACT 1a HERE

When the guide says 'now, the dining room table', she turns and points to the dining table (see Extract 1a). Perhaps confusingly, there are two tables in the room – the dining table and also a raised coffee table in the window bay – and so the qualifier, as well as the gesture towards the dining table, is used to make it clear which one to turn to. Andy and Fred are the

only people looking at her at this moment and so are the only audience members who see her pointing gesture. They turn towards the table. Other members only hear her talk. For instance, Maria and Max turn to the guide and from there towards the table that she is pointing at. The guide pauses for 1.8 seconds after saying “dining room table” while her audience reassembles and reconfigures around the new focus for her talk. She only begins to talk again when her audience is all looking towards the table (Image 5).

Rather than introducing the table and continuing on, the guide holds off from revealing anything else until the audience is in a suitable position to see it. So time is built into the tour guide’s talk to allow for the audience to re-position themselves in the museum space. Thus, the tour is crafted with regard to the emergent spatial organization and perspective of visitors.

The pause in the guide’s talk both encourages a reconfiguration of the spatial assembly and is also sensitive to the adequate completion of this reconfiguration for the practical purposes of the guided discussion of the table. Thus, the occupational performance of the guide is tailored to the reconfiguration of the museum space.

While Extract 1 is rather straightforward, our next instance is somewhat more complex. It relates to a shift in focus from the wall cabinet to the windows.

The guide has just finished talking about the wall cabinet, which has been made to look expensively paneled when, in fact, beading has just been glued onto the glass (see Extract 2). He has turned his body towards the windows, which are properly paneled, but with poor quality glass. He is working to draw each audience member’s attention to them so

he can point out the aesthetic decision made by Mackintosh or Bassett Lowke to use substandard glass to make the windows look older than they are. The guide steps forward, says ‘now, around the windows’, extends the word ‘windows’ and then hesitates slightly (‘(0.2) umm’). This hesitation seems to align with a trouble for him in moving through the space: Suzy is standing in his path. Suzy steps out of his way and as she clears his path, the guide moves forward and continues his tour talk. So, Suzy treats the hesitation as relevant to her own conduct and facilitates the guide’s move towards the window.

Extract 2

PLEASE PLACE EXTRACT 2 HERE

When the guide reaches the window, he says ‘this fascinates me, this does’, and points at a particular pane of glass. However, his tour participants are not yet in a position to see the details of the glass, and therefore they will not be able to witness the ‘fascinating’ pane. So, his comment appears to prompt a number of members to move closer and again we can see how slight perturbations and pauses are built into the talk to allow for the spatial reorganisation of the tour assembly:

‘I think it would be a job to get glass as ba-, to buy gla-glass as bad as that in nineteen seventeen (0.5). it’s really (0.5) erm (0.3) quite quite poor glass (1.0)’

The guide is looking towards the audience in this passage of his tour talk and seems highly sensitive to their movements. His perturbations and restarts provide opportunities for

the audience to re-position themselves to see the glass pane before he delivers more detailed information. So, the tour is shaped with intimate regard to the reconfiguration of the assembly.

For example, as the guide first points to the glass, Dawn and Alf both begin to edge towards the window. These movements are cautious, because other audience members are in front of them, making it difficult to move closer without pushing through or past them. As Dawn moves around one side of the table, Alf tries to edge around the other, but he is blocked by Jane, who is herself trying to move, and who in turn is blocked by Hazel. Hazel seems sensitive to the moving crowd behind her because as they edge closer, she moves sideways towards Bea and Suzy. They, in turn, move further across. So this collaborative work of the audience –rearranging themselves following the initial prompting of the guide – enables Jane, Alf and Dawn to move into position to see.

So the talk that facilitates and encourages the shift in focus is shaped, initially, around the guide's own movements and subsequently provides time and opportunity for the audience to re-position themselves. Indeed, it is only when the audience settles down at the end of 'quite poor glass', that the guide begins to progress more fluently:

> *And I think it's deliberate. (0.6) And if you notice, the-these are individual pieces leaded together again in a very Scottish, s::ort of lattice.*

Previous studies have revealed how 'explanation sequences' from guides are expected to be delivered when the audience is in a stabilised formation (De Stefani & Mondada, 2014). Here, we see that substantial interactional work is required, by guide and audience members

alike, to reach a stable formation in which people are largely organized to see the pane of glass. Only then does the guide progress the tour, as only then is his audience in a position to engage in the tour's content and learn more about the exhibit.

So, the tour talk is intricately crafted around the specific *spatial* challenges that guide and audience face. The challenges of forming the workspace may involve a simple switch of the head away from one artefact to the next, or in the latter case, reorientation may involve, for guide and audience, movement across a room full of other people to reorient to a small object that it is hard to see. The production of the tour talk can be seen to be closely articulated with the constitution of the temporary workspace. This workspace has been interactionally configured, despite challenges, to allow for the work of the tour. It is a space where bodies of guide and audience are positioned to be able to see and discuss a key feature of the room.

Also, we see how talk is a key feature of the embodied spatial practices that we are describing; for tours, talk is central to 'spacing.' We can see how some of the pauses or hesitations in tour talk are built to allow time for movements and adjustments. These practices are oriented to by the tour's members to deal with the challenges of assembling around a new artefact, to constitute the temporary workspace. Furthermore, this points to to relevance of interactional *time* for *spatial* practices. The progressivity of tour talk is organised with regard to the spatial work, and, reflexively, the spatial work is achieved in part through resources (hesitations, perturbations, and so forth) provided in tour talk.

Designing instructional practices for different spatial configurations

We can see, then, that a key task for the guide and audience is to organise a temporary workspace in which to manage interaction around key foci of the tour. However the shape and character of the workspace has ongoing implications for the design of the guide's work. The workspace, as we have discussed, involves guide and audience members assembling around some artefact (or set of artefacts) that becomes their domain of scrutiny. As we shall see, guides are intimately attentive to the configuration of the workspace, and design their conduct for the recipients with regard to their relative position *vis a vis* the artefacts of interest. To explore this, we present two short extracts of data from one tour. They were filmed moments apart in the same room of the V&A.

A Rafael cartoon (a to-scale, mirror-image, hand-drawn, paper template for a tapestry) hangs on one side of a large hall and opposite it is positioned the tapestry made using that cartoon. The cartoons were not therefore designed to be exhibited. In Extract 3, the guide presents the cartoon to the audience; then in Extract 4, the guide presents the tapestry. In Extract 3, the guide is positioned between audience and cartoon. As she starts to say Christ has 'his left hand raised in blessing' she raises her own left arm into a similar form to Christ's arm in the cartoon. The guide is positioned in front of the audience allowing all audience members to see and compare both the guide's gesture and cartoon simultaneously. Indeed, the guide's gesture is similar to that of Christ, with one important difference. Christ's forearm is held out and away from his body, but the guide keeps her forearm parallel to and running across her body. By keeping her arm more in parallel to her body, the guide does not block the audience members' view of the picture – the picture still remains the focus, as demonstrated by the audience's continued orientation primarily to the cartoon as opposed to the guide's gesture.

Extract 3

PLEASE PLACE EXTRACT 3 HERE

Compare this to Extract 4, moments later, when guide and audience have turned to face the matching tapestry on the opposite wall. The guide is now behind the audience and as she mentions Christ's blessing again, she stretches her right arm towards the tapestry at a slight upward angle. In this location, it is certainly visible to Annabel and Piola and may be peripherally visible to Claudia. Having all her fingers outstretched, the guide's gesture does not appear designed simply to point at the picture.

The gesture is again iconic, and again seems designed to imitate aspects of Christ's gesture, but this time her gesture *is* projected from her body, just as Christ's is. This seems oriented to the different spatial configuration and relationship between guide, audience and tapestry. The design of the gesture enables the audience, once again, to orient primarily to the tapestry rather than turning to the guide, and yet they are able to see the guide's gesture. It draws on different aspects of Christ's gesture, in order to be both iconic but also understood in light of the arrangement of the guide, the audience and the object they are considering.

Extract 4

Guide: ... you notice the two most (0.3) umm (1.3) ehh=obvious things, one is that (.) christ's robe is red, (0.6) a:nd uh (0.4) ehhehh (1.6) secondly, (0.3) umm t'eh (0.6) his right hand is raised in blessing

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PLEASE PLACE EXTRACT 4 HERE

Although this pushes us beyond a strict sequential analysis, we would argue that the guide's gesture in each case seems shaped with regard to the spatial organisation of the tour. The gestures are configured to enact Christ's depicted gesture while ensuring that they do not obstruct the visitors' view. Thus, the gestures are fundamentally 'recipient-designed' (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), with regard to the spatial assembly of recipients in relation to the objects of interest.

In his book on New York City guides, Wynn (2011) points out that Goffman's (Goffman, 1974: 33) notion of 'uncontained participation' – where unplanned for contingencies reveal themselves over the course of an interaction – is particularly relevant to that of the tour. Wynn uses this to refer to external factors which beset the tour, such as heckles, a new building, or an event, affecting the tour. Here we can see a more subtle rendering of how guides are attentive to 'uncontained participation', in that the contingencies involved in 'spacing' routinely come to play in how guides design their tour.

Thus, whilst there is often an assumption in the literature that a space's material and architectural features have a heavy hand in shaping what occurs within the space, here it can be seen that the relative positioning of participants is important to the work of the tour, and yet routinely overlooked. So, in the same 'space' – a room in the V&A – we can see the possibility to organise a range of different 'workspaces' for the practical purposes of the tour, and these workspaces have different implications for the guide's work.

By talking in general terms about what *typically* happens in this room or that – with these architectural features or those – the agency of the participants and the emergent character of their work would be lost. Thus the idea that space has fixed meaning is rendered somewhat problematic. Indeed de Certeau's work on the 'practice of everyday life' (de Certeau, 1984) argues that we are too quick to understand space in its most general sense, but that no one uses space in a general sense – they use it in a specific way. To suggest through generalisations about how people use space that space has a fixed meaning is thus problematic for understanding space because it ignores the contingencies of the more fluid notion of 'workspace' that we are engaging with. The architecture has little sense or significance in the absence of human activity. And once we consider real-time human activity, we are drawn to notice the relevance of the position and conduct of human bodies for the character and organisation of those social activities.

Forms of participation and emerging spatial configurations

We have shown how the guide designs her tour, and her interpretation work, in relation to the position of her audience, and the shape of the temporary workspace. Our final data extract (Extract 5) will reveal how the involvement of the audience members is similarly sensitive to the changing position of the guide. Indeed, this section further develops the argument by showing how even the smallest shifts in the spatial organisation around a single exhibit can have significance for the workspace, and for forms of participation in the work of the tour.

In this case, the guide is standing in front of a display case that contains a reliquary relating to St Thomas a Beckett. The audience is arranged around her. The murder of St Thomas a Beckett at Canterbury Cathedral brought many pilgrims to the city at a

considerable profit to the church. The shrine was made to hold his relics and placed behind the Archbishop's throne in the Cathedral. The guide is initially turned to her left, looking with wide eyes and raised eyebrows towards Lydia (Image 1) as Lydia looks back to the guide and nods. Sofia – who is standing close to Lydia – also nods at the guide as the guide says 'so that the pilgrims would come'.

Then, the guide turns to the far right hand side of the audience and as her gaze reaches Andie, Andie turns her own head away from the reliquary and looks at the guide. When the guide says 'wealth for the churches', Andie produces a series of nods (Image 3).
Later, as the guide says 'because it comes from', she turns back towards the other side of the audience. Andie stops nodding and returns her gaze to the reliquary. As the guide says 'Limoges', Lydia turns to the guide and begins to nod (Image 4).

Extract 5

PLEASE PLACE EXTRACT 5 HERE

Thus, the positioning of the audience members relative to the guide, exhibit and other audience members is relevant to the work at hand. While their absolute position in space is unchanged, their participation rights and responsibilities fundamentally transform as the guide turns her head – as she shifts her spatial orientation from one area of the assembly to another, the tour guide encourages different forms of participation from her audience members.

The turn of the guide's head is enough to reshape the significance of different spatial positions within the audience. As the guide looks *to* them, *away* from them and *to* them again, Lydia and Sofia move between active displays of engagement in the guide's talk to more focused inspection of the artefact itself. The orientation to differing responsibilities is revealed by audience members looking at and nodding to the guide in some moments, in some spatial arrangements, and not in others.

Goffman talks about the 'participation framework', using the term to refer to the sum of the participative roles of all those within perceptual range of interaction at any time. Goffman explains that in any moment of speech, someone might be a speaker or listener, a direct participant or an over-hearer and so forth (Goffman, 1981). In this sense, the participation framework is quite transitory, shifting from one person to another at different turns of talk (or even within a turn at talk, see Goodwin, 2007). Here, we demonstrate how, in the context of guiding, the spatial organisation can transform the participation framework. Indeed, it is transformed time and time again by the smallest shifts in the assembly and within turns at talk.

This is a very subtle feature of the interaction and it is common to interactions we are all familiar with. However, it has particular relevance and significance in this particular activity. These moments where the guide shifts orientation around the assembly present opportunities for the different audience members to demonstrate interest, display confusion, or even pursue opportunities for questions and queries. A key issue for any presenter (including, but not exclusively, tour guides) is assessing feedback in the course of their performance. Greatbatch and Clark (2003) discuss how management gurus partly address this issue through the use of humour and laughter. Here, the shifting gaze of the tour presents

certain expectations on audience members, and if they are not met with displays of appreciation, engagement or understanding, the guide can (maybe even, should) re-shape their monologue or pursue further involvement.

Each audience member's opportunities for action, for inspection of the exhibit, for displaying understanding, for other forms of participation, are similarly transformed moment to moment. They share the same space, in broad terms their position within it is relatively stable, and yet within the unfolding course of events, their rights and responsibilities as members of a guided tour transform. More broadly, the importance of such subtle shifts in the spatial organisation of the assembly resonates with many other work settings, for instance, as the eyes of the expert shift from novice to novice or, even, as the eyes of a CEO drift around the meeting table. The physical 'space' does not change but the spatial organisation of the workspace most certainly does, in that there is a change in the interactional significance of locations in the room relative to others (and, in the context of guiding, to the exhibit) at any moment in time. So, the forms of participation open to individuals, indeed expected of them in the context of the work at hand, are re-shaped moment by moment.

Discussion

Through our analysis, we have shown how guides and audiences configure and reconfigure workspaces to accomplish the tour. These shifts are critical to ensure multiple forms of audience engagement, from simply being able to see an exhibit or feature to being able to display understanding of the tour. This is important so that the audience can see relevant artefacts, thereby both accessing and learning about the content of the tour, and so that the guide can assess interest and understanding. These matters are crucial to the museums' agendas, as well as being central to the audience members' experience of the tour. These

practices are not held solely by the tour guide, but also rely on the 'working audience' (Best, 2012) to display to the guide and to each other where they need to be, and what they need to do, in order to participate in the tour. Unless the audience members recognise, orient to and engage in spacing, the guide would struggle to accomplish the tour or deliver on the museum's strategic aims – the audience would not know where to look, or when to move on, or how to display appreciation.

Our distinctive contribution to the wider literature on organisational space lies in the way in which we have adopted an analytic lens that focuses on interactional practices, rather than the practices, perspectives or concerns of the individual. As we argued, this contrasts markedly with many previous studies and we suggest that our findings have significance for a range of concepts and themes that permeate this field.

Firstly, the concept of workspace

We are relating a very distinctive notion of workspace, drawn from the work of Suchman (1996), to recent work on spacing and spatial practices within management and organisation studies. We believe that this sense of workspace addresses many of the aims, concerns and limitations of the literature on spacing and spatial practices.

For instance, the notion of spacing "implies taking on board a conceptual awareness of the material, embodied, affective and minor configurations of space" (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012: 56) and demands that we undertake studies that dwell 'in the midst of things.' Suchman's notion of workspace – where the "constitution of [spatial-orientational arrangements] through material and interactional means that makes up the more and less shifting boundaries of a shared workspace" (Suchman, 1996: 42-43) – provides a fluid,

dynamic and highly practical notion of workspace to help us to engage in these aims. We have used it to show how tours exploring a museum, or an historic house, produce temporary workspaces for showing and sharing interpretation.

Thus, we are contributing a novel approach that engages and develops core interests and concerns in the literature with space as lived experience (cf. Yanow, 1998; Watkins, 2005; Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Thanem, 2012; Munro & Jordan, 2013; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015). As a result, our concern with space is not limited to architecture, but rather with the sense and significance of spatial arrangements or bodies and objects (such as exhibits) within the physical setting. Furthermore, we do not see the participants constrained by the architecture, but rather focus on their practices of establishing multiple, temporary workspaces as they explore architectural and material features.

Our argument is that prior studies have recognised, but often struggle to capture the dynamic and ongoing production of workspaces. In addition, our video data, enables us to reveal how changing spatial organisation has significant practical relevance for work practice. Importantly, therefore, we are able to demonstrate how seemingly minor (re)configurations of workspaces – or spatial-orientational arrangements – have implications for the contributions of different participants to the accomplishment of work in process. Thus, this perspective reveals the ongoing significance of workspace for our understanding of the coordination and organisation of work.

Secondly, spatial tactics and practices

The notions of spatial tactics from de Certeau, and spatial practices from Lefebvre, are very influential in contemporary studies of space as lived experience. These authors are

acutely aware of the *social* production, and character, of space. Lefebvre (1991) argues that social relations are also spatial relations, that the two are fundamentally entangled. Similarly, de Certeau (1984: 131) suggests that practices such as walking in the city imply relations among differentiated positions, which "thereby establish a conjunctive and disjunctive articulation of places" creating a "mobile organicity of the environment." Thus, he encourages us to move away from the architect's view of spatial design, to consider how spaces are inhabited and experienced as social settings. However, the empirical work in studies of space as lived experience often rests too firmly on the individual's conduct, as the research tends towards interviews with, or observations of, individuals (Thanem, 2012; Watkins, 2005; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015). In de Certeau's case (and subsequently, the work of Munro & Jordan, 2013), this is further compounded by the reliance on the metaphor of the speech act for understanding spatial practices, thereby understandings social relations as provoked by an individual's conduct, rather than the interactional character to spatial practices.

In this paper, we have adopted a more explicitly interactional approach that reveals the practices in and through which participants collectively come to constitute, manage, and work through, workspaces. Indeed, the production and management of the workspace is not something owned by the practices of one individual or another. Rather, spatial practices are co-produced in the work of all parties to the encounter. Interestingly, Zhang and Spicer (Zhang and Spicer, 2014: 741) draw on a range of authors to argue that organisational space "remains open to multiple interpretations and experiences," because users approach space very differently due to "their life histories, cultural heritages, and professional and gender backgrounds." However, rather than focus on the potentially endless regress of multiple

interpretations, we rather consider how parties to an encounter ‘co-produce’ or ‘co-constitute’ intersubjective workspaces for the practical purposes at hand.

A related point is that many studies counter criticisms that the analysis of organisational space is often disembodied (Edenius & Yakhlef, 2007) by drawing inspiration from Lefebvre to discuss the relevance of the body for our understanding of space (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Lyon, 2016). However, our analysis encourages a closer concern with participants’ *bodies in interaction*. Guides and their audiences are acutely aware of the position, orientation and (verbal and bodily) conduct of members of each other within the workspace - these positions and orientations are fundamental to the ways in which they inhabit the workspace and contributions to the tour; and in contributing to the work in hand they adjust and re-adjust with regard to one another. As we saw in Extract 5, audience members switch between looking at exhibits and active displays of understanding as the guide looks towards and away from them. So, even minor reconfigurations in bodily conduct and orientation can be seen to transform the sense and significance of someone’s place within the workspace. Those shifts encourage different forms of participation, whether they are guide or audience member. So, the analysis demands that to fully comprehend spatial practices, we should not focus on individuals and individual bodies, but, rather, concern ourselves with the range of materials, resources, bodies, talk and arrangements that are brought to bear in constituting and attending to different spatial arrangements at work. Thus, this more dynamic perspective on workspace has methodological implications and conceptual consequences for organisational scholars.

Thirdly, relations between time and space

Many studies of organisational space invoke a concern with time – particularly in relation to the changing meaning of a space over time and so forth. For example, de Vaujany

and Vaast (2013) provide a considered and insightful exploration of spatial transformations of Paris Dauphine University over a 50-year period. However, our analysis deals with more intimate links between spatial practices and *interactional* time. We see how the very progressivity of the guided tour is bound up with the management of movements through and within the workspace. In Extracts 1 and 2, we see quite concretely, how the description of museum artefacts and stories is hearably timed to enable the guide to move across the room, and the participants to be able to see the focus for discussion. In particular, perturbations in talk can be seen to encourage and provide time for the tour group to assemble around a new artefact of interest before the tour progresses. Indeed, for us, embodied spatial practices do not rest solely in the bodily gestures and movements of individuals, but just as clearly relate to talk. For instance, the guide's work talk is delayed or timed with regard to movements through space and reflexively the guide's talk provides resources for participants to assess how they should move through space. Thus, the paper proposes a more fluid treatment of the relations between space, time and (interactional) practice – one that captures concerns with change, but relates them to the concrete interactional details of work practice.

Practical implications

While our analysis makes a distinctive contribution to academic literatures concerned with organisational space, there are also some practical implications of the work, specific to tour guiding.

Firstly, the training of tour guides largely focuses on interpretation and research, with only a small part, if any, of most courses or training programmes concentrating on the physical and communicative aspects of the job. How bodies and spaces are marshalled in ways which build understanding, focus and enjoyment within audiences are aspects of the

role that are routinely overlooked but which this research reveals to be critical. We would hope that this study provides some justification for including more detailed considerations of embodied spatial practices in training, giving guides the opportunity to understand, explore and reflect upon the ways in which they can shape their tour, its meaning, and the audience experience through the ways in which they organise themselves and others within the confines of the tour site.

Secondly, in highlighting the close regard that guides play to the ecology of the tour site when leading their tour, this paper perhaps reveals some of the challenges that designing technology guides (audio guides, smartphone tour guide apps, etc.) poses. Encouraging audiences to orient carefully to particular objects, for example, is something that is central to the work of the guide as revealed here, but routinely ignored on most audio guides. The research in this paper may be used to prompt further exploration of whether, and if so how, spatial work might be managed by audio guides and other tourist apps.

Conclusion

In sum, this paper contributes an approach and methods to address key developments and limitations in the field of organisational space, especially the concern with space as lived experience. Our work engages in a wider commitment to deliver a praxeological approach to space (Suchman, 1996; Mondada, 2013), and demonstrates the significance of this approach for debates around space in management and organisation studies. The interactional lens that we adopt demands that we take seriously not only the material design and properties of the scene, but more fundamentally consider the spatial arrangement, movement and orientations of participants. In contrast to previous studies in the field, we adopt an approach that allows us to capture the real-time work of spacing. It further demands that we consider the displayed

relevance these spatial and material concerns for participants themselves in organising their work; and how participation in work tasks is shaped and designed with regard to those spatial-orientational arrangements. We believe that this advances our understanding of organisational space and presents a distinctive way forward for future studies of work and spatial practices.

The range of verbal, gestural, spatial and material resources that are brought to bear in any one moment of interaction has been termed the *contextual configuration* (Goodwin, 2000). We suggest that this notion encourages those concerned with spatial practices, and indeed multimodality and sociomateriality, in organisation studies to explore the ways in which these different resources are drawn together in moments of interaction; to consider how participants themselves constitute the sense and significance of different aspects of context (Hindmarsh & Llewellyn, 2016). While we have focused on guided tours, these issues and concerns have much broader relevance as in many settings of work, organisation and apprenticeship, "parties organize their bodies in concert with each other in ways that establish a shared focus of visual and cognitive attention" (Goodwin, 2007: 69), whether that be the boardroom table, the sales pitch, the open plan office, or the apprentice's workshop.

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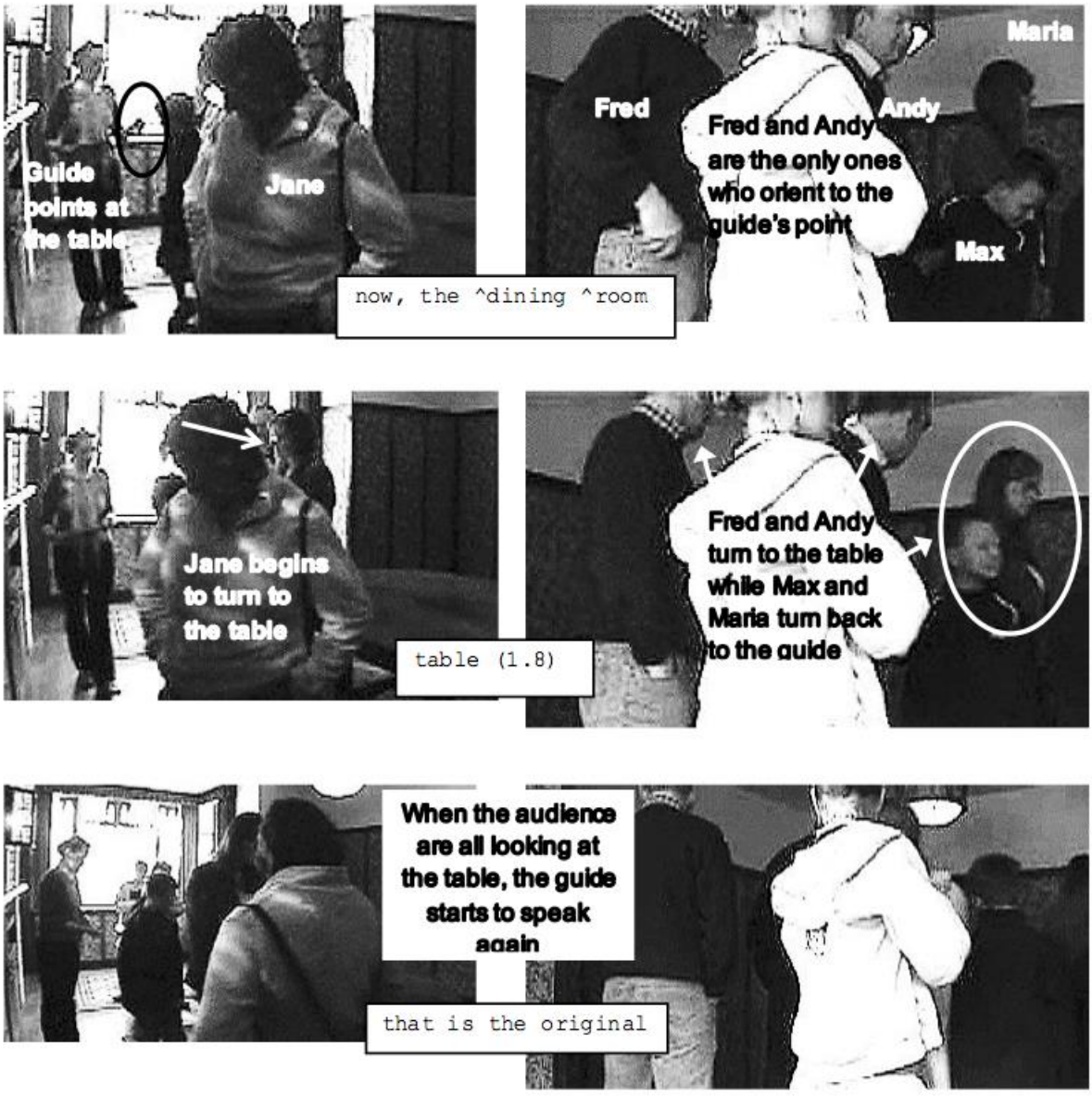

Guide points at the table
Jane
now, the ^dining ^room
Fred
Andy
Maria
Fred and Andy are the only ones who orient to the guide's point
Max
Jane begins to turn to the table
table (1.8)
Fred and Andy turn to the table while Max and Maria turn back to the guide
When the audience are all looking at the table, the guide starts to speak again
that is the original

Extract 1a.

Guide steps towards the window

(1.8) now around the windows:,
(0.2) umm,fascinates me,

Suzy steps out of the guide's way

this does=y'see, if you

Guide points at the window pane

Suzy, Bea and Hazel turn around

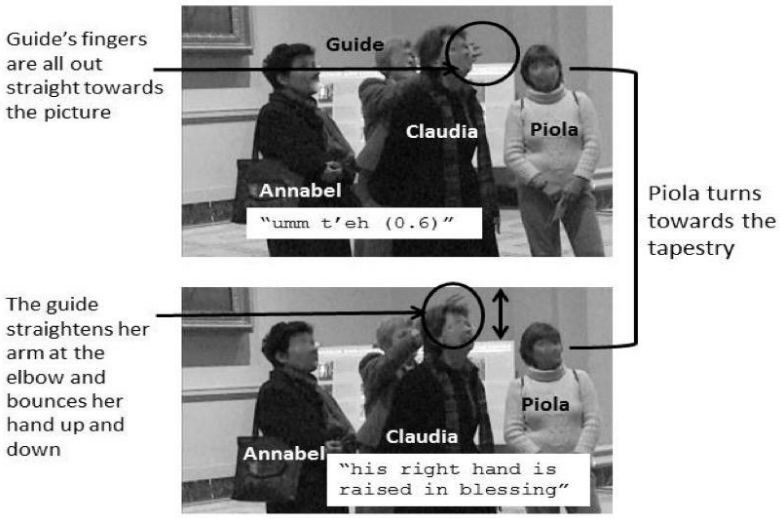
look at these side windows, (1.7)

Guide carries on pointing while the audience members orient to the window

I think it would be a job to get glass as ba-, to buy gla-glass as bad as that in

Extract 2.

Extract 3.



Extract 4.

Andie
Sofia
"a part of a saint ·hh, so that the pilgrims would come"
Lydia nods

Andie
Guide turns to the other side of the audience
Sofia
"and would create"
Lydia

Andie
nods
Sofia
"umm, wealth, as well, for the churches, but this is particularly interesting"
Lydia

Andie
Sofia
"because it comes from limo:ges"
Guide turns to Lydia
Lydia nods

Extract 5.

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