

An Ethnographic Study of a Day Out in Family

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OVERVIEW

To observe of a family during their day out, we defined a study in the wild to get involved through going and looking their activities [1]. Thus, in order to articulate the fieldwork we determined several settings. The study was conducted gathering data in public and private space. The first part was based on conversations in the family's home, however, the larger part of the activity occurred in the public space (i.e. City Centre, Lenton Recreation Ground and some streets of Nottingham).

The family itself is composed of Javiera (Female 29), Runa (Male 28) and Elsa (Female 5), all are anonymous names assigned randomly to protect their identities. Javiera and Runa are both International Postgraduate Students in the University of Nottingham, they are married and fulfil the role of parents in the family. Elsa is their daughter, she is a student in a Public School.

The study started on Friday's morning with some conversations between the family, however, the main activity was done on Saturday's afternoon, and it took 6 hours. We captured the data through different in situ methods from a mixture of video and audio recordings, as well as fieldnotes. The family provided useful feedback after the analysis.

Informed consent was gained before the study begins. We took a special care because of the participation of an under-age integrant, however, both parents agreed the consent form. Due to the possibility to join other integrants during the day out we prepared a set of forms, nonetheless, it was not necessary to use it.

ANALYTIC APPROACH

The aim of this study is to make observable the ordinary organisation of a family during a day out by an ethnomethodological approach. On one hand, we will report an account of the sequential ordering of the activities, from the planification to the return [1]. On the other hand, we will provide a thick description of the actions and interactions while the family's members decide *what to do?* and *where to go?* Bringing the unnoticed into a view [2][3].

Decision-making process is along the activity a very common aspect repeated several times during the activity. A

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day out is an activity that include different destinies, mobilisation and events by means of; it requires negotiations between the members of the the family. Those integrants build their experience while change their plans or their activity, thus, improvisation and creativity re-build their context and their experience iteratively [4].

We will be unpacking the unremarkable around the decisions-making process in a day out. The family negotiate around destinies, pathways, timetables, among others, affecting the sequence of the actions and interactions. Negotiation is a permanent strategy that exists not only in the planification stage; in every activity is implicated a negotiations and consequently agreements or disagreements [5]. Therefore, we will bring the observable and reportable of the activities and actions in the sequential order. Additionally, we will show what are the accounts about the actions and interactions in fragments of their conversations (e.g. sharing, complementing, ignoring), and accounts *in and of* the actions and interactions.

STUDY FINDINGS: THE INTERACTIONAL ORDER OF A DAY OUT IN FAMILY

A day out in family involves several actions done by the members in an specific order, thus, a sequential order might be abstracted and diagramed to assemble an Ethnographic record. The flow of the actions has been categorised in five activities (1) planning the day out, (2) preparing diverse articles, (3) eating out, (4) playing in the park, and (5) returning home (see Figure 1). In the sequence is documented what took place around the day out, and the actions and interactions in those spaces (i.e. what was done, how was done). Although, a day out could be perceived as a one day activity, some sub-activities might start days before and, similarly, it might finish days after. In this study case, the planning section started one day before the rest of the activities, the following day all of them were performed in its totality.

The connection between activities and actions is mainly linear and sequential; just when the actions of a category have been completed the following sequence could start, at least in this abstractions of the real situation (e.g. before checking the routes to travel to the City Centre {8} it has been necessary: to share ideas about potential places to go {4}, to compare advantages and disadvantages between those options {5}, and to make agreements {6}), nonetheless, this is not written in stone. Sometimes actions might happens in a nonlinear sequentiality (e.g. although the routes were checked during the preparation {8}, some features of the travel were discussed while they compared advantages and disadvantages {5}). Inside the same

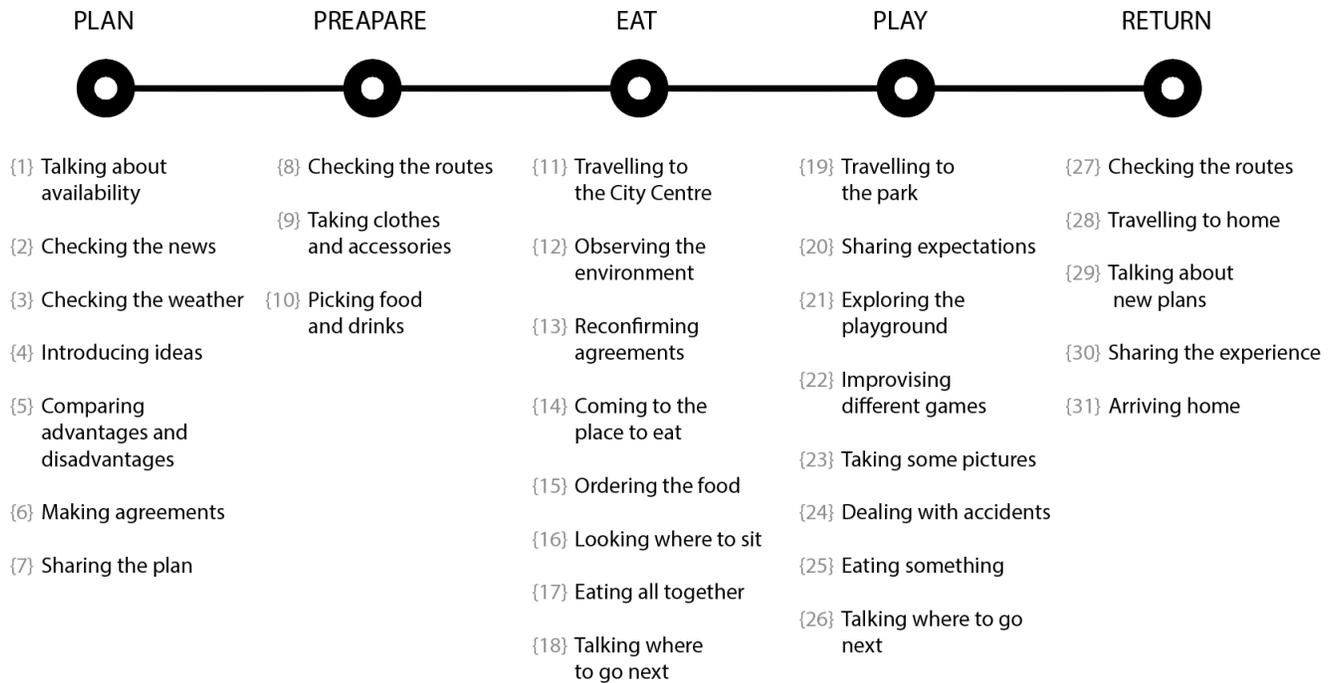


Figure 1. Mapping the sequential order of a day out in family

category used to be more usual to find actions happening transversally or iterating around some others.

Planning the day out

Planning an activity is a set of actions assembled in a logical order. The motivation of one of the members toward having a day out is the trigger through evaluating availability. Setting a potential date makes possible to filter activities by time in the searching process. Different sources are used to complete the action (e.g. event calendar in a local independent newspaper and events feed in social networks). Checking the weather is a transversal action repeated in different parts of the activity, however, it begins as a way to acquire more elements to assess ideas before sharing with the other integrants. The range of manners to check the weather are many diverse ways, sometimes it is enough looking through the window or to the sky; in other occasions it is necessary read a web published prognostic in a web site. With or without findings in the news, integrants share ideas based on their previous experience, and continue presenting what they would want to do. The following step is a comparison about the advantages and disadvantages of the purposes, there are several factors taken into account when deciding (e.g. the environmental conditions, the costs of the activities, timetables, distances and ways to go, and fixed activities to do during the day) the discussion leads the group to build the first approach to the final plan. When it starts to get some shape the members reaffirm the decisions to until receive a positive feedback, however, some details might still be undefined. Some decisions might be pending, the plan should be completed

enough to move to the following category Prepare, nonetheless, some components might be undefined.

Fragment 1 - Complementing an idea

The sequence provides information about how the members support each other's ideas, creating a desirable plan for everybody. In this conversation Elsa, Javiera and Runa are having a breakfast at home; after checking the news and finding no options they start talking based on their own experiences.

R: Because + I was going to propose finally + there is nothing to do.
 J: ah::m
 R: There is nothing to do for today.
 J: Y-uh:
 E: Just french lessons.
 R: [So, I was going to- propose a walk in the park, ((both look to the window))I-don't-know-maybe + We could have a lunch (2.0) in the downtown maybe (2.0) in the: Jamaican (.)
 J: ↓Jacket Potato(.)
 R: Jacket Potato.
 J: I want it so:: much! ((hands on the cheeks))

The three members of the family were sit in the dining room. Runa and Javiera were one in front of the other, Elsa was sit in the middle. In the conversation both parents had an advantage about the spatial configuration, they were able to see each other while eating (e.g. bodily communication).

To introduced an idea Runa started talking about the current situation, "there is nothing to do" referring to the lack of information founded in the news previously. Then Javiera answered with an "m::" to show that she was listening his words and at the same time is a way to ask for more information. A similar structure continued to this pair when he reaffirm "There is nothing to do for today", and she answer "Y-uh:" knowing that Runa was going to say something else. In his proposal he mentioned an activity in the park, just after to say that word Javiera turned her head to look through the window checking the weather (this habit happened constantly during the day out. Sometimes by mobile apps, some others by looking to the sky and others feeling by their senses). Runa tried to receive feedback but he could not make eye contact, however he observed how Javiera was turning her head to observe the weather, he immediately caught Javeria's movement and Runa did the same practically for the same time (5 seconds), synchronising their behaviours. Runa and Javiera made eye contact when he finished his proposal saying "Jamaican", meaning the Jamaican truck food. He held the contact during a couple of seconds looking for the acceptance of his idea. That was an opportunity to receive Javeria's collaboration, she complemented the idea whispering "Jacket Potato". He would not understand if they had not made eye contact. Thus, she complements Runa's proposal to make an agree. Sometimes the elements of the conversation suggested a doubtfully conversation (e.g. finding eye contact repeatedly, inconvenient pauses, maybes), however, it was convincing as well (e.g. Javiera put her hands on the cheeks to show her desire to buy Jacket Potato), she made a proposal difficult to disagree. Hence, it might be said that complementing an idea was a negotiation supported by an specific co-orientation of the members, a sequence of turn-taking conversation, and synchrony in both verbal and nonverbal communication.



Figure 2. Planning at the breakfast - Saturday 09:07

Preparing before leave

When the plan for the day out is outlined members of the family consider necessary to complete some operations before leaving home. Therefore, preparing supplies has been defined as the second category. After the agreement of the plan the integrants find ways to allow the realisation of the plan and ways to improve their experience. Checking the routes help them to understand how to connect different places. Although, mobility features (e.g. the placement of the activity, the accessibility and routes) are commented in

the planification, in preparation category are analysed deeply to define the logistic necessary. Electronic devices are used for locate any place in the map and for analysing different options to travel, and then their timetables. Taking clothes and accessories is connected with the environmental conditions of the places to visit (e.g. winter hats, gloves, coats are extremely necessary in a cold winter day). Additionally, picking food and drinks for specific circumstances (e.g. in a park). Those activities also require different types of negotiations (e.g. adults are able to select what to wear, however, the daughter is dressed by their parents; conversely, food and drinks are agreements decided by everybody, thinking in the weight and volume of the bag).

Eating outside

In order to achieve the main goal of this category a set of actions have to be performed, most of this actions are organised around a specific topic (e.g. eating out and playing in the park). The first step is travel from an initial point, home, through the first stop; travelling itself is not the aim but it is a fundamental characteristic in a day out. Travelling might be considered as a way to achieve the main goal, nonetheless, a day out can not be elaborated without a trip out of home. Observing also becomes an insight to discuss again about the plan (e.g. which park to go after eating). Thus, reconfirming agreements is a common action especially when decisions have to be taken (e.g. where and what to eat). Conversations during the travel are constrained by the co-orientation of the members in the vehicle. During the journey, observing the environment is a moment of amusement and it also is linked to value visible events happening in the different places (e.g. observing performers in the wild); in a day out the attitude of the members is oriented to enjoy events across their journey.

A set of actions are performed sequentially and it leads the family to achieve one particular aim (i.e. eating outside). Arriving to the place to eat, buying the food, and eating the ordered food, among others are particular actions of the eating category. However, while the members are enjoying their day out new questions emerge and have to be fixed immediately in and through interactions (e.g. where to get off the bus, shortest path from the stop to place to eat, where to sit for eating the food). Thus, it is observable that the aim of the first stop is achieving some actions (e.g. coming to the place to eat, ordering the food, looking where to sit, eating all together) where the making-decisions process is involved (e.g. where to eat was defined in the planification, nonetheless, ordering the food implies little decisions that are taken in discussions by all the members). Finally, the integrants bring the agreed plan and they start checking and valorising their previous definitions; a process similar to the planification category may occur (e.g. checking the weather, sharing ideas, comparing advantages and disadvantages and making agreements). Completing this set of actions the eating outside category could be achieved and all the requirements might be fixed to start the following category.

Fragment 2 - Pressing

Javiera bought the food for everybody while Runa and Elsa were observing a beatboxer in the street. After that, she proposes to travel to the park for eating the lunch there because "it is windy". However, while they were walking by the Square she changed her mind.

- J: I could eat here. ((Elsa walk alone))
- R: (2.0) Really? ((Elsa climbs a platform, Runa and Javiera are waiting))
- J: Yup it's not so cold.=I said it, because it was freezing overthere. ((Elsa and Javiera walk))
- R: (1.5)But, let's turn around. ((points and walks))
- J: Here! ((points))
- R: Let's turn around and go eat there + in those little stairs.
- J: (2.5) ((Elsa and Javiera stop)) Honey, we are here(.
- R: ((Runa stops)) But, looking at the square, ↑not the shoe store.
- J: ↑Honey, looking forward? ((point))
- R: But, it's a square full of people, ((hand movement)) (it's) not a + shoe store. ((Runa and Javiera walk))
- J: Honey, here we can see more people than on the other side. (Runa and Javiera stop) ↑Elsa, let's go.

The family were walking together, Runa and Javiera at the edges and Elsa in the middle, Elsa was holding Javiera's hand and catching Runa's bag. Suddenly, Elsa ran to play with the furniture of the Square. Both parents synchronised their position through Elsa's motivation, they walked in the same way that she did, however, Runa stopped while she was climbing the public banquette, then Javiera stopped too. Elsa started running again and both parents walked faster while they were talking about where to sit (see Figure 3). Javiera wanted to eat in the Square, Runa agreed but he wanted to decide the specific place to sit. To show his proposal he pointed the middle of the Square while he pronounced "But, let's turn around". Javiera was a couple of meters ahead, she did not see his hand pointing the middle of the Square, however, she understood what Runa was saying and turned her head to the pointed place. She kept walking and replied "Here!", pointing the banquette, where Elsa were running. Runa pressed again, using another reference "those little stairs" Javiera looked the stairs and then looked the banquette, then she replied with another reference "Honey, we are here" and left the food bag on the banquette while she mentioned here, then she turned back to face Runa. Thus, pressing has been applied by the intention to synchronise positions every time (e.g. Runa following Javiera, and both following Elsa); a paired conversation around a milestone; and, indexicality to make visible the proposal.

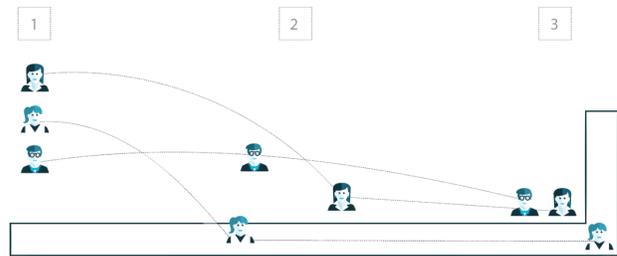


Figure 3. Walking in the City Centre - Saturday 15:12

Playing in the park

There are two big differences between eating outside and playing in the park, categories considered as the aim of the day out. Firstly, the nature of the activity, (e.g. parks have a ludic orientation); secondly, the knowledge about the place (e.g. the family had been in the City Centre and they also had ate in the Truck food before; however, it was their first time in this park). Thus, the family start sharing some expectations about parks (e.g. what they like to play in the park), followed by other exploratory actions to recognize the place. Some actions are related to the observation and discussion, and some others are based on specific dynamic actions in the ludic environment (e.g. using the elements of the playground, improvise games, challenge each others). Turning allocation is implicit in the interaction, sometimes it is orchestrated by one of the members (e.g. Elsa asking one of her parents to play with her somewhere or Javiera challenging Runa to perform some action in the playground). Nonetheless, it is not always necessary an explicit order, a slightly movement of the head and eyebrow could mean a modification of the spatial organisation. The organisation might seem invisible and almost automatic when an integrant wants to synced to the group (e.g. Javiera talking with Runa while he and Elsa are playing together). Taking some pictures is an action that occur regularly for families in a day out, when they are foreigners and if it is their first time in the place; the essence of the photography is determined by the evaluation of what is worthy before the shot, and sometimes by a posterior analysis, as well, sharing the electronic device with the rest of the family for their approval or disapproval. Finally, it is observable that playing in the park involves planned actions (e.g. eating fruits that were brought from home), however, it includes unexpected situations (e.g. dealing with accidents) triggering unexpected behaviours to fix the situation by actions and interactions.

Fragment 3 - Interrupting

Elsa is playing in the swing while Javiera and Runa are sit in a bench in the park. They have spent about one hour in the park, is the second time that they are talking about leave the park. This fragment illustrate conditions affecting the rhythm of the conversation. At the end Javiera starts talking about a different topic while Runa keep looking at Elsa playing in the swing.

J: ((eats apple))
 E: ((jump off swing)) †Dad (2.0)
 ((Runa and Javiera turn their head)) look!
 R: ((Runa stops looking at Elsa and gets apple))
 R: (4.0)what do we do?=-Should we go home?
 J: (2.5)(I) don't know.
 R: Perhaps a coffee? ((turn his head)) (1.5) but, I don't know whe:re + there is no, I mean + in the route there is no like Nero or like + Juan Valdez †I was thinking
 E: [†Dad! ((Runa turns his head))I jump off the swing, ((makes eye contact)) like sh::: ((jumps))
 R: Upa!
 J: [ah:m
 E: [look.=Always look at me! ((Runa turns his on Elsa))

The spatial organisation of the members in the scene was divided in two groups, Javiera and Runa were sit in a bench while Lucia was playing in the swing next and behind them (Figure 4). Javiera's body was oriented to Runa, she had complete visibility of Elsa on the swing. Conversely, Runa had a constrained visibility, he had to turn his head through each side to pay attention to each one. Elsa was playing backwards in the swing and she called their attention saying "Dad", she was standing and looking at him for 2 seconds. Then Runa turned his head on Elsa, she got on the swing again and said "look!". They were back to back and Runa turned his head again through Javiera and asked her about the plan, while they were maintaining a conversation about potential activities to extend the day out Elsa shouted louder "†Dad!". This time he turned his head and tilted slightly his body to hear what she was explaining. Elsa completed his ended saying "look.=Always look at me!" Runa fixed his orientation toward Elsa. The interruption was an unexpected behaviour during the conversation about the plan. The first time it was managed modifying temporarily the body orientation; however, the in second interruption Runa received an stronger request that break the flow of the conversation between when Runa kept his body oriented to Elsa and backward Javiera.

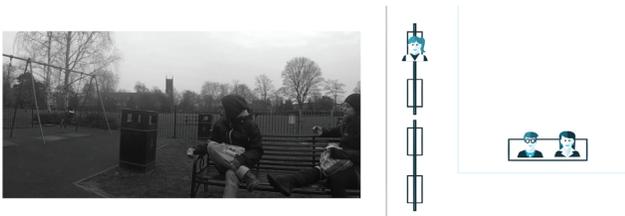


Figure 4. Talking in the Park - Saturday 16:36

Returning home

When the integrants decide to come back home a sequence of actions are performed to conclude the experience. Again checking routes is an important component, although, it may be the first time of the members in an specific place, they have in their knowledge their map position and the mental model of the transport system in the city. Additionally, the places to go where determined by position, therefore, those factors are discussed superficially without the necessity of additional resources. To start travelling is the following step, it is again related with synchrony, they are leaving the park at the same time (e.g. Javiera starts walking and says to the others "let's go"; a couple of seconds later Elsa runs behind Javiera; then Runa walks). During the travel observing the environment remind them actions done during the day, the family take a time to remember some activities and they start talking about new plans, those may be influenced by observing the environment, as well. The interactions inside a vehicle are constrained by its structure (e.g. the three integrants are sit in the second floor of the bus, in the first lines. Javiera and Elsa are occupying the first pair of seats, however, Elsa is looking back, she is talking with Runa who is sit in the following line). The day out starts as a selection of the family to do activities outside home, therefore, it is completed when they are in home again.

CONCLUSION

A day out in family have been presented from an ethnographic analysis unpacked in multiple sequences. It is remarkable that the *decision-making* is a process extended along the entire day in an iterative cycle. Negotiation complements this process by members discussions, it starts with the introduction of an idea and hopefully might receive a pair answer.

Deciding *where to go* and *what to do* are determinants of the experience and define the sequential order of the actions. Members actions and interactions define and modify both instances by complementing, pushing, ignoring, discarding or clarifying (see Appendix A). The key methods that we have found in negotiation are *adjacency pairs* in verbal and nonverbal communication when a member is engaged; dynamic *spatial organisation* affecting the relation and communication of the integrants.

Checking the weather, checking the routs and travelling are actions repeated several times in different moments of the day out. *Temporal organisation* may not be the main aim of the day out, nonetheless, it is key action that help the members to achieve their plans.

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