

DEVS306 PRESENTATION 1: INTERVIEWS & OBSERVATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Suvi & Daria:

- Interview and observation conducted at Gloria Multicultural Centre, 18.03.2016, Jyväskylä
- Interview with Jilan, female immigrant to Finland of Malaysian origin, about education
- Participant observation of 'Breakfast @ Gloria' event

Annukka & Boram:

- Observation conducted at *Tilia* restaurant, 23.03.2016, and interview conducted at *Wilhelmiinan Konditoria* café, 24.03.2016
- Interview with a girl from Colombia in her late 20s, female immigrant to Finland, about education, work and gender differences
- Participant observation of "lunchtime at a university restaurant" and of a group of three students

SUVI & DARIA'S INTERVIEW

Conducted at Gloria Multicultural Center with Jilan from Malaysia. Jilan has been living in Jyväskylä for seven years. Our interview focused on education.

Our planned questions:

1. How did you make your way to Finland?
 2. What is your educational background?
 3. Have you learnt Finnish?
 4. Do you intend to return to education at any point in the future?
 5. What differences do you think there are between education in Finland and in your country of origin?
 6. How do you think education helps adjustment in Finland/another country?
 7. Do you wish to find employment in Finland?
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SUVI & DARIA'S OBSERVATION

Conducted at Gloria Multicultural Center during the 'Breakfast @ Gloria' gathering and subsequent parent and child singalong event.



FINDINGS FROM SUVI & DARIA'S EXERCISES

The interview: Jilan is originally from Malaysia. She has been living in Jyväskylä for seven years, and came here “for love”. She studied IT at university in Malaysia, and learnt Finnish through a one-year intensive course when she first moved here. She’s not sure about returning to study in the future, but if she did, she would study entrepreneurship. She thinks that education in Finland is more practical and interactive than in Malaysia. She feels that she has adjusted well to life in Finland, and has already been working here for several years.

The observation: Twenty to thirty adults and approximately a dozen children were in attendance during the breakfast and sing-along. Only four of the adults were men. All children were under five years old. Of the four men present, only two were obviously participating in the events, and one of these two seemed quite new to the setting.

SUVI'S INSIGHTS

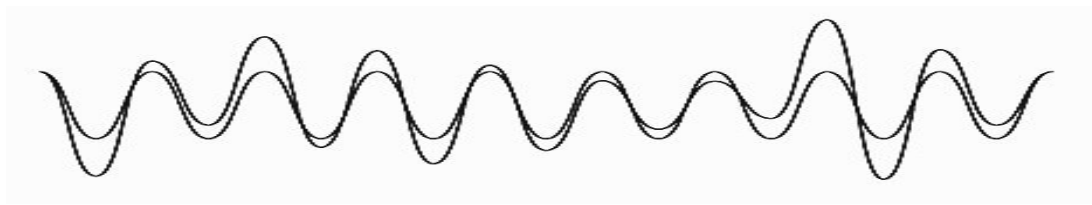
Interview

- “Family café” atmosphere, surroundings familiar to the interviewee made the situation feel casual, relaxed
- Expectations very different from actual outcome
- Discussion after felt more fruitful than the actual interview
- The interviewee answered a question that clearly was uncomfortable to her

Observation

- Mother-child/children or father/child groups
- Some people preparing food or drinking coffee close to kitchen corner - volunteers, workers?
- Mothers talking over breakfast, topics revolve around children's development
- Most children play with each other, a few stay passively close to parent/guardian
- English & Finnish are spoken

DARIA'S INSIGHTS



Interview

- First ‘breakthrough’ manifested as Wolcott’s “talk less, listen more” imperative (2005, 105).
- Second ‘breakthrough’ at end of planned questions, when Jilan relaxed and talked more freely.
- Difficult to avoid the interview turning around, but friendly rapport gained would be beneficial to any follow-up interviews later.

Observation

- Most adults in attendance were female.
- Two people who appeared in charge of mornings events were middle-aged women, although newcomers seemed to perceive one of the men as a figure of authority.
- Aware that my interpretation possibly skewed by my own values. Would further observations help with this?

SUVI & DARIA'S CONCLUSIONS

Both exercises were very useful. The interview didn't go according to plan 100%, and had to be modified on the spot - but that was ok. We got answers to our questions, reliable data, and developed a friendly rapport with our interviewee.

Daria found it difficult to conduct the observation in a detached and objective manner - something to work on. Perhaps to gain credible data a series of observations in this setting would be necessary.

ANNUKKA & BORAM'S INTERVIEW

Conducted at *Wilhelmiinan Konditoria* café with a Colombian female immigrant who has been living in Jyväskylä for three years already. The interview focused mostly on education, work and gender differences.

The flow of the interview:

1. Introducing each other, building rapport and creating a relaxed atmosphere for the interview
 2. Introductory questions (How long have you been living in Finland, work and study background, the main reasons for moving to Finland? etc.)
 3. Comparing Finland and Colombia:
 - The differences in education
 - The differences in working life (focusing primarily on entrepreneurship)
 - The gender differences
 4. Expression of appreciation
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ANNUKKA & BORAM'S OBSERVATION

Conducted at *Tilia* restaurant during lunchtime, focusing on a conversation between three students from different countries while observing the general atmosphere of the restaurant.



FINDINGS FROM ANNUKKA & BORAM'S EXERCISES

The interview: The Colombian interviewee came first time to Finland about 5 or 6 years ago “due to love”. After spending a 2-month holiday in Jyväskylä, she fell in love with Finnish culture, environment and society in general and decided to study a Master’s Degree here at JYU, majoring in corporate environmental management. She just started a trading company with her Finnish husband (recently married), importing goods from Colombia to Finland. She finds Finnish and Colombian societies very different in terms of gender differences and the opportunities offered in academic and working life.

The observation: The restaurant didn’t seem very full at first glance, maybe around 40 people in their 20’s and 30’s present. The two closest tables to us had a group of three people from different nationalities (thus speaking in English, primarily about languages and customs) and two Finnish girls (who seemed to be gossiping). A few people eating alone, mainly males.

ANNUKKA'S INSIGHTS

Interview

- Natural, relaxed atmosphere - the interviewee wasn't a total stranger, plus some other links "bound us"
- Hard to keep the balance of not asking too direct and short questions and of not building the questions too vaguely and long (and perhaps leading the interviewee to answer in a certain way)
- The possible difficulties in understanding because of language and accent
- Finding an appropriate environment for the interview

Observation

- Girls seemed to use more nonverbal communication, touching, gestures, facial expressions etc. than guys
- Mostly younger females seemed to be gossiping while groups of males talking more about general issues - eavesdropping
- More males eating alone than females (guys don't feel as uncomfortable eating alone as girls?)
- Are my presumptions leading me to observe and see the things that I "want to see"?

BORAM'S INSIGHTS

Interview

- Preparation, building rapport
- The interviewee was vocal and active (Talk less, listen more, Wolcott 2005) but improvising without knowing the interviewee was difficult
- The questions became expanded and elaborated
- Indirect questions first and direct one at the end of interview (Wolcott 2005)
- Considering all part of interchanges
- Art of gift giving (Art of diplomacy, Wolcott 2005)
- No royal road but only practicing can enhance skills coupled with reciprocity and faith

Observation

- Good use of opportunity to learn what I intend to learn
- The difficulties in analysis (Observe yourself observing, Wolcott 2005)
- The importance of building and maintaining rapport
- Plan B for unexpected distraction
- Preparing cultural shock
- Capturing the moment
- Don't put note-making off
- Who I am? (Personal thought)
- The level of participation (Between getting passive and active)

ANNUKKA & BORAM'S CONCLUSIONS

Even though the interview and the observation session were rather short, they were very useful. We learnt some valuable lessons (and different techniques for future practice).

When transcribing the interview, we realized that we didn't fully comprehend the interviewee's answer to one of the main questions, which we didn't notice when interviewing.

The "intentionality" of the research and our own presumptions about the interviewee (or about the "targets" of our observation) can cloud the results. How to best avoid this?

Also Boram had different style for note-taking, interviewing, observing and transcribing than Annukka.

REFERENCES

- Wolcott, Harry F. (2005), *The Art of Fieldwork* (2nd ed.). Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.

