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Sarah Fdili Alaoui

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Workshop on Experience Explicitation Interviews for Movement Researchers and Practitioners.

Sarah Fdili Alaoui
LRI, Univ. Paris-Sud, CNRS,
Université Paris-Saclay
91405, Orsay, France
saraloui@lri.fr

ABSTRACT

Accessing the user, the audience or the participant's lived experience of a movement based interaction, installation or artwork is a challenge that movement researchers and practitioners face during the making process and the evaluation of their work. In psychology, experience explicitation interviews developed by psychologist and researcher Pierre Vermersch allow to bring the participant back to a moment of evocation of a past activity in order to access different dimensions of their lived experience that may not be immediately present to their consciousness. We propose a workshop to movement researchers and practitioners that introduces techniques from experience explicitation interviews in order to bridge the gap between human embodied experiences and movement and computing.

KEYWORDS

Experience Explicitation, User Experience, Qualitative Methods, Movement Experience.

1 INTRODUCTION

In movement computing and practice, it is fundamental to account for the participant's lived experiences that result from an interaction with the technology or emerges simply from moving or witnessing movement. Such experiences represent the core of what the movement and computing community is seeking yet struggling to articulate.

Because we are highly embodied, most of our bodily or mental experiences are implicit. We know, our body knows, but we don't know that we know. In doing an action, we don't even need to be aware of the means of our success to succeed. Actions are thus opaque to the very one that accomplishes them. Therefore, describing lived experiences is not easy, and not directly accessible to the participants nor to the interviewers. In some academic contributions, there are attempts to describe movement experiences when there is a need to evaluate user's experience. However, these papers only scratch the surface of what the participants have actually intimately lived, through questionnaires, and quick informal interviews and focus groups.

Experience explicitation interview technique have emerged from the work of Pierre Vermersch [2], and is carried out in various

communities such as psychology, ergonomics, health and security...etc. It is a technique for the a posteriori verbalization of an activity carried out by a subject in terms of its material and mental actions. This technique allows the subject to explicitate what is unconscious in the course of the activity. Pierre Vermersch has developed this interview technique to allow for an evocation of the past, an emergence of the implicit, and a verbalization of the lived experience. The particularity of the interview is to discards judgments in order to focus on the facts. At the end of the explicitation interview, the interviewer and the interviewee should have information on how the latter has done a task or an action and the precise singular lived experience of it.

I have followed a training in the experience explicitation interview technique and I see its great value in accessing the lived movement experience. I propose a workshop of three hours to introduce experience explicitation interviews to movement researchers and practitioners.

2 NOTIONS IN EXPLICITATION TECHNIQUES

During the workshop's three hours, I won't go into the totality of the method because that would require a complete week of training. However, the workshop will be a teaser that will give an overview of the different notions that allow an understanding of the fundamentals of the interview technique. We will discuss the following questions:

- What are the conditions of the explicitation interviews?
- Pre-taught: how to make emerge the unconscious that we do not easily access?
- How to use the sensorial channels to access the experience: the visual, the auditory, the kinesthetic, the smell, the taste?
- What is the grid of listening that allows to discards judgments in order to focus on the facts?
- How can I guide the participant towards the evocation state?
- How can I fragment the moment evoked?
- What are the different layers of the lived experience: The ego, the corporal, the sensorial, the emotional, and the cognitive?

2.1 SKILLS DEVELOPPED

I will use in the workshop the sets of skills that have been compiled by Nadine Fingold to explain and introduce the explicitation process [1]:

First the interviewer learns how to solicit a specified situation: The explicitation relates to a singular moment to evoke and is not in the realm of the general. Therefore, the evocation of the experience requires bringing back the interviewee into that specific time and space where the experience occurred.

Second, the interviewer learns how to identify the types of information present in an account of experience. There are satellites information of the action that the interviewer needs to pay attention. They are represented in the figure 1: The action itself is the goal of the interview and is in the center, the context is in front, and comments and judgments are behind. The skills and knowledge are on the left and the goals on the right. The interviewer's goal is to bring the interviewee into an evocation of the action itself, avoiding judgments and comments.

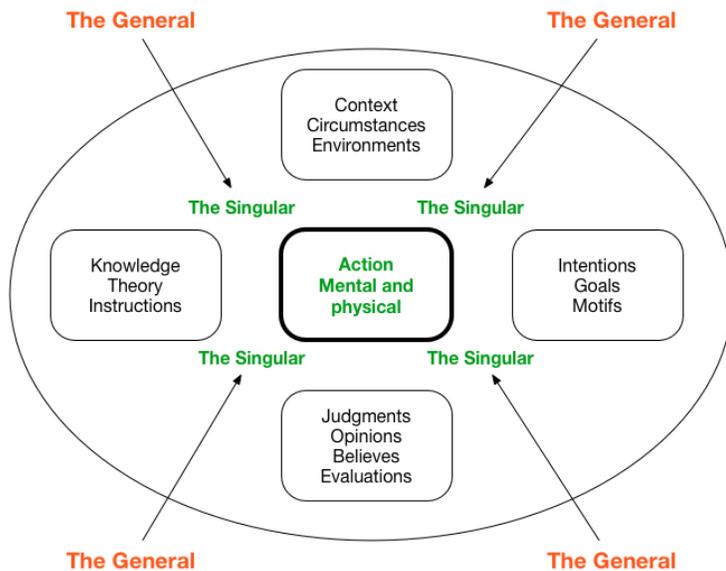


Figure 1: The action in describing experience and the satellite information.

Third, the interviewer learns how to ask non-inductive questions. According to Fingold, one question could cause to direct the attention of the interviewee to a cognitive act, and induce an emotional state, either positive or negative (closure, discomfort, destabilization). Perlocutionary effects meaning "what is the effect of my questions on my interviewee?" are essential to take into account in order to maintain the safe communication contract and to access the lived experience of the participant.

Fourth, The interviewer learns how to distinguish and identify when the interviewee is being in an evocation state through an incarnated position of verbalization and not the habitual position of verbalization.

The interviewer learns how to make and respect a contract of communication with the interviewee. Thereby, the interviewer needs to be patient and to learn to take the time instead of rushing into the answer. There are no expectations to have. The interviewee is always right: they have the memory of the experienced. They cannot be forced into evoking an experience or giving a specific answer. All silences should be welcome, and taken as an opportunity to rest, and allow the memory of the experience to emerge. In this interview, we are dealing with a passive memory. Pressure is to be avoided in order for the experience to unfold. The posture of listening in experience explicitation supposes to erase the ego and to avoid any projection, hypothesis or interpretation. For a researcher this means humility and taking a position of not knowing everything in advance. The interviewer needs to be an egoless pure receptacle that welcomes what the interviewee brings. The goal is to let go of a goal, of one's own interest but rather to accompany the interviewee into re-evoking the lived intimate experience. This path is not usual in research, and requires willingness and practice in unknown territory.

3 CONCLUSION

Gaining access to user's lived experience and describing it is an expert activity, which have to be learnt, and which can only achieve precision through practice. According to Pierre Vermersch, the lack of expertise of the user can be compensated by the expertise of the interviewer, the academic, the practitioner who train to convey interview techniques in order to guide the interviewee towards their subjective experience and also towards the expression of it. My hope is that this workshop would instill the desire to develop further this technique in order to investigate, from a place of curiosity and goodwill, the intimate lived experiences of those who we design for and with.

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