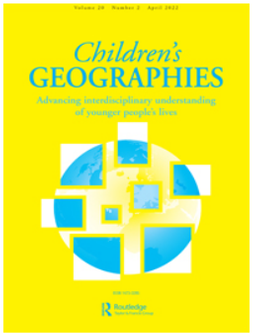

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Embodied spatial learning in the mobile preschool: the socio-spatial organization of meals as interactional achievement

Helen Melander Bowden and Katarina Gustafson

Department of Education, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This study explores meals as a locus for children's socialization into the socio-spatial organization of a mobile preschool, i.e. a preschool in a bus. Building on ethnographic fieldwork with video-recordings, the analysis is informed by ethnomethodology and conversation analysis to explore the everyday interactional organization of meal practices. Conceptualizing space as both a resource for interaction and as achieved in interaction, the study investigates how children and pedagogues create space for meals inside the bus and in outdoor spaces. The results demonstrate how the socio-spatial organization is made relevant as a learning object in interactions between pedagogues and children, and between peers. Knowledge of the socio-spatial organization is shown to constitute a critical aspect of competent participation in the mobile preschool. A trajectory in the children's embodied spatial learning is discerned, from socio-spatial configurations as objects of instructions to embodied habits.

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Introduction

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) institutions are structured by routine activities such as circle time, play, educational activities, resting, as well as meals. Many of these occur at the same time and place every day. Consequently, an important part of children's daily life and socialization processes, concern an understanding of the temporal and spatial organization of the preschool (Corsaro 2018). In focus for this study, are meals as a locus for children's embodied learning of the socio-spatial organization of a mobile preschool.

Mobile preschools, that is, preschools in buses, first emerged in 2007 and today constitute an established phenomenon in Sweden and elsewhere, in particular in the Scandinavian countries (Ekman Ladru and Gustafson 2020). Mobile preschools are in many ways similar to other ECEC practices. However, due to the mobile preschool 'being on the move' as pedagogues and children travel by bus to different places on a daily basis, there are also differences. For example, the mobility of the preschool has implications for how pedagogues, as well as children in their peer cultures, organize daily routines. Not least this applies to meals, that are served in various places, mainly inside the bus but also outdoors. In contrast to stationary preschools, where the participants have their meals sitting around tables, the children of the mobile preschool are required to learn how to create space for meals in socio-materially diverse locations, such as sitting on a lawn, a graveled parking area or in their seats in the bus.

CONTACT Helen Melander Bowden helen.melander@edu.uu.se
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Swedish ECEC has a long tradition of serving hot lunch meals as well as morning and afternoon snacks, and a considerable amount of time is dedicated to these activities (e.g. Kultti 2014). One aim is to provide the children with healthy food, however, research shows that meals are also arenas for socialization, where norms and values are negotiated (e.g. Ochs and Shohet 2006; Punch, McIntosh, and Emond 2010; Rosenlund Hansen, Hansen, and Kristensen 2017). In this study, we approach meals as a locus for socialization processes related to the socio-spatial organization of the mobile preschool. We adopt an interactional perspective based on ethnomethodology and multimodal conversation analysis to the analysis of space (Hausendorf 2013; Mondada 2013) in order to unpack the embodied social practices critical to the organization of everyday activities. In taking this approach, we aim to shed light on how socio-spatial configurations for meal practices are achieved in interaction as children and pedagogues create space for meals in diverse locations. In particular, we focus on situations in which the socio-spatial organization of the meal is made relevant as an object of learning in interactions between children in the peer group as well as between children and pedagogues. The study thus contributes with knowledge about how children are socialized into the socio-spatial organization of the preschool and its associated norms and values, as they learn to participate in the everyday practices of the preschool over time.

Meal practices in preschools

Research on meals in educational contexts has focused on topics such as nutrition, taste, and healthy eating (e.g. Brembeck et al. 2013; Sepp and Höijer 2016), not least in relation to debates of childhood obesity as well as the need for a daily meal for children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. Pike 2008; Poppendiek 2010). In addition, meals have been argued as arenas for socialization, communication and language learning, as well as for negotiations of social and moral order (e.g. Valentine 2000; Kultti 2014; Hansen 2016; Os 2019). However, Punch, McIntosh, and Emond (2010) direct attention to the lack of studies of meal practices within the field of children's geographies and argue for the relevance of a spatial approach as a lens into children's daily lives. They find that focusing on 'taken-for-granted' activities such as daily eating, enables knowledge of socialization, identities, and hierarchies in childhoods as well as a recognition of the mutuality between space and everyday activities. In such a vein, Rosenlund Hansen, Hansen, and Kristensen (2017) discuss ECEC mealtimes as an ambiguous space for complex processes in child–adult relations where tensions arise due to the daily meal simultaneously being a homelike and educational space that is under negotiation by children and pedagogues. Valentine (2000) has pinpointed school dining halls as spaces more or less absent of adults and hence important for understanding children's social life as well as the social order of school. Meals in primary and secondary schools have often been regarded as spaces for free-time and for hanging out with friends. In contrast, Pike (2008) and Daniel and Gustafsson (2010) show how adults, in the context of 'healthy-eating' programs in British primary schools, emphasize nutrition and discipline at the expense of children's social spaces. Pike (2008) demonstrates how the spatial organization regulates how children move, queue and pick up food, in ways that promote healthy eating rather than social interaction. Consequently, lunch, that used to be a space for children's informal interaction and peer-cultures, becomes connected with a number of restrictions (cf. Daniel and Gustafsson 2010).

Several studies witness that meals for younger children are governed by adults and constitute arenas for educational and socialization processes, for example showing that while pedagogues tend to primarily focus on nourishment, the children orient to interaction and play with peers (e.g. Alcock 2007; Johansson and Berthelsen 2014). What children are supposed to learn and how they are expected to behave during meals depends on cultural contexts (e.g. Aukrust and Snow 1998; Ochs and Shohet 2006). Balldin and Ljungberg (2014) argue that bourgeois family norms and values govern how meals are conducted in Swedish ECEC, as they are arranged in a

homelike style where children and pedagogues sit together, eating and socializing, where ideals of healthy food as well as good behavior are appreciated. Alcock (2007) demonstrates how pedagogues had the possibility (and obligation due to serving tasks) to move freely and leave the room while the children remained at the table. Nevertheless, the children were shown to create space for social interaction, even 'though physically constrained by chairs and table, the children used their bodies, their imaginations, their voices and the only available objects (mugs, chairs and table) to communicate playfully' (Alcock 2007, 286).

By focusing on how participants in mobile preschools create space for meals, this study contributes to the field of children's geographies by adding an interactional perspective on how space is oriented to and achieved in interaction. In addition, this knowledge contributes to ECEC research where notions of space and socio-spatial organization of meal practices have at large not been a focus of interest.

Embodied spatial practices and the interactional production of space

The spatial turn in social science (Casey 1996; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 2005) and in social studies of childhood (e.g. Holloway and Valentine 2000; Christensen and O'Brien 2003), has opened up for theoretical understandings of space as relational processes that are co-created in everyday activities (e.g. Ekman Ladru and Gustafson 2018; Kellock and Sexton 2018; Punch, McIntosh, and Emond 2010). Opposing an essentialized and static understanding of space, Massey (2005) provides a theoretical framework for a conceptualization of human beings as co-producers of space in and through various practices, or in Lefebvre's (1991, 26) words: '(Social) space is a (social) product'.

We approach the concept of space using ethnomethodology and multimodal conversation analysis (EMCA, e.g. Goodwin 2000; Mondada 2013). EMCA is concerned with the meaningful and patterned character of everyday life, and studies how social order is produced in and through processes of social interaction. Using as data video-recorded interactions in naturalistic settings, the analyses explore the methods members or participants use to achieve social actions and to interpret the actions of others (Heritage 1987). The sequential and temporal organization of social interaction is explored as it is accomplished by participants by mobilizing a range of vocal, verbal, and embodied resources which are publicly displayed and monitored *in situ* (Mondada 2014). The analyses trace how social action gradually evolves; how participants produce intelligible and accountable actions whilst interpreting and acting upon publicly displayed and mutually available actions. Whether we are acting individually or together with others, our activities are informed by our membership of society and our social relationship with others. Hence, activities are identifiable as being of a specific kind – for example eating lunch in preschool – in that they form part of a 'grammar' of activities known by and recognizable to the society's members (Francis and Hester 2004, 2).

EMCA encompasses a view of context that builds on the assumption that it is through interaction that context is built, invoked, and managed (Heritage 1987). Importantly, space is considered as both resource *and* achievement. Instead of accounting for space in terms of spatial parameters of a speech situation existing somehow *a priori* to interaction, space and the speech situation are assumed to be *interactively achieved* (Hausendorf 2013, 276). In other words, the material surroundings simultaneously figure in interaction as constraints and as resources, thereby space is understood as both action-shaping *and* action-shaped (Mondada 2013; Streeck 2013; see also Goffman 1963). The approach thereby contributes to an interactional conceptualization of space as well as a spatial conceptualization of interaction (Mondada 2013, 250; see also Best and Hindmarsh 2018). Consequently, an EMCA analysis explores 'how interactional space unfolds moment by moment within the coordinated adjustment of various simultaneous streams of action and sets of multimodal resources' (Mondada 2013, 250). Attention is on how different sign systems (e.g. language, body, and various materialities) are assembled and understood by focusing on how participants orient to particular, locally relevant arrays of semiotic fields that, as action unfolds,

dynamically change as new fields are added while other are treated as no longer relevant (Goodwin 2000). In line with Best and Hindmarsh (2018, 2), we argue that the adoption of an interactional lens can produce novel insights into the ways in which participants, in the present case children and pedagogues, 'use, inhabit, experience and, in doing so, constitute their space', thus shedding light on the interactional achievement of socio-spatial configurations for mobile preschool meals.

The mobile preschool: fieldwork, setting, and data

Our data draw from a 14-months ethnographic field work in one mobile preschool, the 'Pippi bus', where the second author conducted participant observations, spending whole days (in all 44 days spread over the period), making video-recordings (appr. 150 hrs.) and taking field notes documenting everyday activities.[1] The study was approved by a regional ethic committee. Written consent was obtained from pedagogues and the children's guardians. Since the children cannot be expected to give full approval for research, care was taken during fieldwork to be sensitive to any discomfort displayed by the children and to stop processes of documentation whenever called for. All names stated in the presentation of the results, are pseudonyms.

Mobile preschools are part of the Swedish ECEC system offering both day care and education to children when their parents work or study. They are conducted in remodeled buses, equipped with a kitchenette with a fridge and heating cabinet and with seating arranged in fours and twos around small tables, and travel on a daily basis to various locations (see e.g. Balldin and Harju 2020; Ekman Ladru and Gustafson 2018, 2020). As all Swedish ECEC they follow the Curriculum for the Preschool (2018). One rationale for mobile preschools is to offer children 'new learning environments', in combination with municipalities' challenges in addressing the lack of space for preschool children. The number of preschool buses have successively increased and today there are approximately fifty mobile preschools all over Sweden (Ojala, Ladru, and Gustafson 2020). Being a participant in the mobile preschool implies mastering competences such as safely riding the bus, walking in lines, as well as eating meals in diverse spaces (Gustafson and Ladru 2020).

Mobile preschools are mostly organized as one division of a stationary preschool. In the Pippi bus, located in a medium-sized Swedish city, children between ages 4 and 5 spend two years, meaning that every autumn half the group are newcomers. The bus accommodates 20 children and three pedagogues, with one functioning as bus driver. The children are on the bus weekdays between 9 am and 3 pm and, depending on parents' work schedules, at the stationary preschool before and after bus hours. In the morning, the pedagogues pick up food canteens from the stationary preschool kitchen. The bus travels a 30 min drive to various locations where they spend the day, mostly in nature spaces but also in public spaces, such as museums and play grounds. Going to a variety of locations implies both constraints and possibilities; logistics and practical issues are seen as constraints while possibilities of being outdoors and learning on site as well as eating in nature, are advantages. In our data, most of the meals (35 out of 41) were eaten inside the bus, probably due to this being a convenient way of serving the meal. Three meals are served each day: a hot lunch as well as morning and afternoon snacks. Lunch consists of a hot dish with side salad, water or milk to drink, and rye bread. Fruit is served as morning snack and afternoon snacks usually consist of sandwiches and milk or water.

Analytic approach

In order to explore the socio-spatial organization of meals, we combine ethnography with multimodal interaction analyses. The analyses are based on extracts from video-recordings of meals inside the bus and outdoors, and encompass participants' use of talk, body, and objects that they treat as relevant in the unfolding organization of actions (e.g. Goodwin 2000; Mondada 2014). The analyses follow the sequential organization of actions, focusing on how utterances and actions emerge over time as participants build action by incorporating resources provided by others and the

material environment. Ethnographic information furnishes an additional set of interpretive resources, enabling a richer account of the activities and practices that the participants engage in by placing them within a larger context and meaning system (Goodwin 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

The selected examples are representative of how the socio-spatial organization of meals is oriented to and made relevant as an object of learning. We have chosen a variation of pedagogue-child and child–child interactions, as encounters between on the one hand new and on the other experienced children and pedagogues constitute perspicuous settings for the exploration of norms and values related to this organization (cf. Ochs and Shohet 2006). This selection also provides ground for the tracing of a longitudinal trajectory, as new children become more experienced.

The extracts have been transcribed following conventions developed within EMCA (see Appendix). In order to analyze how participants draw upon a multitude of resources for the organization of action, we have created transcripts that encompass the temporal adjustment between talk and other resources (e.g. body postures, spatial configurations, etc.) as well as the coordination of gestures and other actions (Mondada 2018). We have embedded line drawings made from video frames in the extracts. Not all details are included in the drawings, which represent a filtering and an upgrade of what can be seen in the video frame (cf. Lynch 1990). Figure-ground relations are emphasized thus highlighting analytically relevant embodied actions and the participants' orientations to the material environment. As the participants speak Swedish, we provide indicative translations into English line by line.

The interactional achievement of socio-spatial organizations for meals

To contextualize our analyses of children and pedagogues creating space for meals, we begin by describing the organization of an ordinary lunch (section I). Against the backdrop of this description, section II explores instructional encounters in pedagogue-child and child–child interactions. We use examples from inside the bus and outdoors, showing how the socio-spatial organization and its associated norms and values are made relevant as new children are socialized to the practices of the mobile preschool. In the last section, we show how meals outdoors toward the end of the preschool year have become an embodied routine and how the children negotiate space as part of activity transformations.

Section I: the socio-spatial organization of an ordinary lunch in the bus

The daily lunch-meal follows more or less the same routine each day. Just before 11 o'clock, the children and pedagogues return to the bus after the morning's activities. The children line up outside the bus, engaged in play and interaction while queuing to embark. One pedagogue fetches food from the trunk, carries it to the kitchenette and starts preparing the meal, while the children get on the bus in turns and go to their seats. Each child has a dedicated place where s/he sits in a car safety seat, placed four and four around small tables, some also in pairs (see schematic overview of the bus in Extract 2).

As the pedagogues prepare the lunch, the children sit in their seats. While a good deal of a day in the mobile preschool is spent on the move, mealtimes also constitute moments of stillness, where the children are expected to inhabit space by staying in place (Casey 1996, 23). During waiting-time, some children quietly look out the bus windows while others engage in interactions with peers. The children are asked to only interact with the children at the same table in order to keep the noise level down. The fixed positions of the children's bodies thus condition the possibilities of interaction to a limited number of co-participants (cf. Laurier et al. 2008). The backs of the seats rise above the children's bodies and in some parts of the bus the children are out of hearing and sight from pedagogues as well as other children. In other words, the interactional space (Mondada 2013) is intimately related to the layout of the bus as well as to whether the children are within eyesight and hearing of

the pedagogues. The children actively negotiate the interactional space in diverse ways; as when peeking between the seats to watch and talk with peers at other tables or when hiding behind the high seats.

The pedagogues divide the tasks between themselves in order not to throng in the small kitchen area. One pedagogue apportions the children's food in plastic bowls (Sw. 'kåsa', see Extract 3), while another prepares the plates with vegetables that one of the children distributes to the tables. Similar to flight attendants (Gustafson and van der Burgt 2015), the pedagogues walk up and down the narrow aisle several times until every child has a bowl and cutlery. The children behave as flight passengers, sitting and waiting to be served.

When everyone has food, the children start eating. The pedagogues sit down and eat in the back of the bus, by the kitchenette. Consequently, during the larger part of the meal the children sit on their own without adult presence but plenty of time and space for peer interaction. After a while, drinks are served. One of the pedagogues carries plastic cups in a tower, and stopping at each table asks the children a question that is related to the ongoing educational theme before distributing the cups. Making the questions into a daily routine was based on a request from the children who enjoyed the routine. Upon answering, the children receive the cups and milk or water is served. Sandwiches are handed out by another adult who walks up the aisle with a tray with different kinds of bread. Each child is approached and expected to answer what they want. Children and pedagogues engage in small talk while the adult spreads butter on the sandwich.

When everyone has finished eating, the children clear the tables. They take turns climbing down from their seats to bring bowls, forks, and cups to the back door, where they scrape off leftovers in a bucket, put bowls and cups in a plastic box, and forks in a jar. During an hour, an hour and a half, children and pedagogues interact in and through familiar movements and routines while using the design of the bus and other material objects such as utensils and food to collaboratively create space for lunch inside the bus.

Section II: instructing the spatial order of meal servings in encounters with new children

We continue our investigation of meal practices by in-depth analyses of particular cases, showing how the socio-spatial organization is made relevant as an object of learning. As the analysis of Extracts 1–3 will show, the specificities of the interactional space for a given activity are normatively and socially oriented to by the participants and actively configured and accomplished in interaction (cf. Mondada 2013, 256). This is particularly visible in encounters between children who are newcomers to the mobile preschool and pedagogues as well as more experienced children.

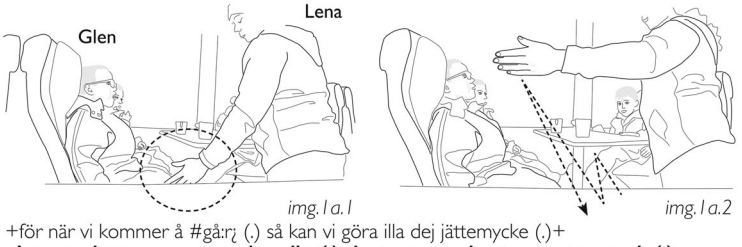
Every year in May there is a priming event for the new group of children who will start in the fall. This time fourteen newcomers spent one day with five experienced children. In the morning, when all the children had boarded the bus, they were welcomed and informed about what was going to happen during the day. The pedagogue told the children about appropriate behavior on the bus cautioning them that different rules may be applicable depending on the places they visit. She underlined that the experienced children will help the new and show them what and how to do (Gustafson and Ladru 2020). She informed them that all meals would be eaten inside the bus.

In Extracts 1 and 2, both pedagogues and older children are involved in instructing the new children about how to make space for meals. The children have to learn new and diverse eating practices, but also to recognize that meals follow certain spatial scripts.

Shaping the body in relation to spatial arrangements

After a day in the forest, the children are on the bus, waiting for the afternoon snack. One of the pedagogues, Lena, is walking down the aisle, when she notices that Glen is sitting with both legs stretched out into the aisle. When we join Extract 1, Lena has stopped by his side. An instructional sequence follows, in which the pedagogue uses language, her body, and references to the material environment in order to account for the importance of keeping the legs straight.

1 LENA: nåt som e <jä:tte>+viktigt# de e att man sitter <ra::kt fra:m> me be:nen?+
something that's <rea:lly> important is that you sit <strai::ght fo:rward> with your le:gs?
+*stretches left arm toward Glen's leg and holds her hand on the side of his knee --->*
img #*img. 1*



img. 1 a. 1 *img. 1 a. 2*

2 +för när vi kommer å #gå:rˌ (.) så kan vi göra illa dej jättemycke (.)+
'cause when we come and wa:lkˌ (.) then we may hurt you very much (.)
->+*moving straight arm back and forth, showing walking in the aisle*+
img #*img. 2*

3 +om du sitter #me benen+ ut i gången.+ ( )
if you sit with your legs out in the aisle. ( )
+*pointing showing legs moving out into the aisle*+
img #*img. 3*

4 +(1.1)+
5 *lena* +*turns around and walks away*+ *img. 1 a. 3*
6 Glen: ja vill ha en till- ¤ja vill ha en till macka:.¤
I want one more- I want one more sa:ndwich.
¤*leans forward in direction of Lena*¤

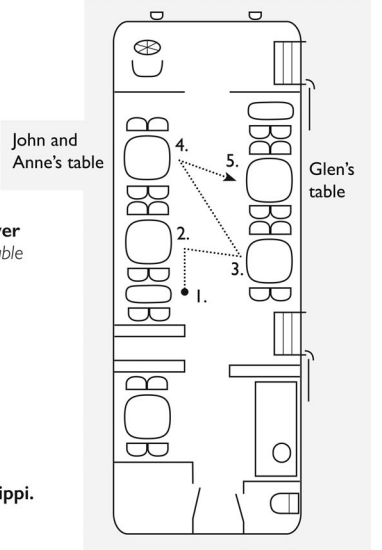
Extract 1. Sitting still in order for others to move around.

The instructions are framed as concerning something '<rea:lly > important'. Using prosody, prolongations, and emphasis 'sit < strai::ght fo:rward > with your le:gs?' (line 1) and stretching the arm towards Glen's leg holding her hand on his knee, the verbal instructions and embodied action mutually elaborate upon one another, thereby highlighting the child's required body posture (Goodwin 2000). The gentle touch is used to mildly control and direct the child's bodily conduct in ways that display that it was not in accordance with the expectations of the preschool activity, what Cekaite and Berghner (2018, 949) call an 'affectionate-controlling touch'. The pedagogue accounts for why this is important, first setting the scene 'cause when we come and wa:lkˌ' accompanied by the simultaneous production of a swinging arm depicting the pedagogues' movements in the aisle. A reversed 'if + then' construction (cf. Hepburn and Potter 2011) follows, 'then we may hurt you very much (.) if you sit with your legs out in the aisle.', that projects what may happen if the child does not follow the instructions (lines 2-3). All through the instructional turn, the boy gazes at the pedagogue without responding. As she turns around and walks away, he produces a request 'I want one more – I want one more sa:ndwich', but the pedagogue has already turned her attention elsewhere.

Narrating routinized patterns and spatial scripts

Some further implications of the fact that the children are sitting still while the pedagogues move around during meals, is demonstrated by our next example. Seeing the pedagogue walk away, Glen sits back. After a while he repeats his request (line 8, Extract 2). The pedagogue is not within hearing, and instead two of the more experienced children that are sitting across the aisle, John and Anne, volunteer to share their knowledge about the time-spatial organization of the snack, as it is accomplished by the pedagogues' routinized movements between the tables.

6	Glen:	ja vill ha en till- ¤ja vill ha en till macka:.¤ **I want one more- I want one more sa:ndwich.** *¤leans forward in direction of Lena¤*
7		(10.2)
8	Glen:	ja vill ha en till macka::. **I want one more sa::ndwich.**
9		(1.0)
10	John:	Gle::¤n:. (.) Gle::n:. så här gör vi på bussen när **Gle::n:. (.) Gle::n:. this is how we do on the bus when**
11	*glen*	*¤turns gaze toward John --->*
12		vi får macko:r¿ (.) de ¤börjar me de: bordet där:r borta:¿ (.) **we get sa:ndwiches¿ (.) it begins with tha:t table o:ver the:re¿ (.)** *¤points toward table in the front (nr. 1)*
13		¤där¿ se:n ¤går de över till de bordet ba:kom¿ **there¿ the:n it goes over to the table behi:nd¿** *¤points toward table on the same side (nr. 2)*
	glen	*->¤gaze to the front*
14		fram lite hö:ger¿ **forward a bit to the ri:ght¿**
15	Anne:	sen g[år de ö:ver till erat bord,] **then it goes o:ver to your table,**
16	John:	[*sen går de över till de bordet¿] *sen går över **then it goes over to that table¿ then it goes over** **pointing at table on LS (nr. 3)* **pointing at same table*
17		till de: bordet¿ *se:¤n går de över till vårat bord. **to tha:t table¿ the:n it goes over to our table.** **points at own table (nr. 4)* *glen* *¤gaze at John--->*
18		*se:n ert.* **the:n yours.** **points at Glen's table (nr. 5)**
19		(1.1)
20	John:	så:: är de me mackor. (.) ombo:rd på ¤Pippi. **tha::t's what it's like with sandwiches. (.) on boa:rd Pippi.**
21	*glen*	*->¤gaze to the front*
22	Anne:	e:n börjar om. en börjar- **o:ne starts again. one starts-**
23	John:	dom kör så här, (.) dom drar som en (.) v- typ så här. **they go like this, (.) they draw like a (.) v- kind of like this.**
24		dom drar som e:n (.) diama:nt. (.) så här drar diamanter. **they draw like a: (.) dia:mond. (.) this is how diamonds draw.**



Schematic overview of the bus (not in scale) and the 'diamond'-like path of the sandwich

Extract 2. Pedagogues moving in predictable patterns.

The instructional interaction is initiated as John summons Glen and frames the upcoming as an instruction about how things are done in the bus – 'this is how we do on the bus when we get sa:ndwiches' (lines 10-12) –, a 'prospective indexical' (Goodwin 1996). As John positions himself as an expert, Glen is positioned as a novice and as someone who does not yet know the routines of the mobile preschool (cf. Melander 2012). As it turns out, these routines may be quite sophisticated. As Glen turns his gaze toward John, John initiates a narrative about where the serving of the sandwiches begin 'with tha:t table o:ver the:re¿' (line 12), depicting a pattern of how the sandwiches travel in the bus. After a while, Anne attempts to contribute and in line 5, overlapping with John, presents the for Glen crucial information 'then it goes over to your table,'. However, John does not agree and ignores her contribution by repeating, as soon as she has stopped talking, that next is what is marked as table number 3. He proceeds to explain that the next table in turn is Anne's and John's: 'the:n it goes over to our table.'. In fact, it is not until they have been served that it is time for Glen's table: 'the:n yours.' (line 18). In other words, not only does John position himself as knowledgeable about how things normally happen on the bus, but the instruction points toward a temporality and order according to which John (and Anne) will get sandwiches before Glen.

John summarizes his instructional narrative by concluding 'tha::t's what it's like with sandwiches. (.) on boa:rd Pippi'. He adds a metaphorical description of the pedagogues' movements depicting the pattern as a diamond: 'they draw like a: (.) dia:mond' (line 24). The pedagogues' movements are understood as constituting a complex yet predictable pattern that makes it possible to foresee the right time for a request for another sandwich.

Organizing bodies and objects to create space for outdoor meals

In contrast to the structured material space of the bus, when outdoors, the children and pedagogues are faced with the challenge of providing structure to open space. Given that a considerable amount of time is spent eating and drinking, the participants face the practical problem of staying in place (Casey 1996, 23). As will be shown, they use various materialities and embodied resources to organize the meal in recurrent and recognizable patterns.

In Extract 3, it is early August and the group has spent a day on the beach. Fourteen out of eighteen children are newcomers. There are several new routines that include moving around and sitting still in other ways than in the bus, such as washing hands outdoors, walking with food bowls, as well as sitting on the ground during the one hour meal. What food is served and the (temporal) order of the serving, including routines with questions asked while giving out cups etc., are the same, but the ways pedagogues and children move and handle their bodies during the meal are different in relation to eating indoors.

We will show how these aspects are brought up in interaction between a pedagogue and newcomer children as they are preparing to eat sitting on blankets that are spread on a big lawn. As they are laid out on the ground, the blankets constitute a grid, a semiotic field or contextual configuration (Goodwin 2000), that provides the participants with anchoring points (Streeck 2013) for the organization of the meal. When Extract 3 begins, the children are sitting in groups on four blankets, with their legs and feet on the grass. Some children have collected food, whereas others are waiting for their turn. As the children are picking up food, one of the pedagogues turns to the whole group, and accounts for why they are sitting on the border of the blankets (line 1).

An interesting feature of the instructions is that they are framed as accounts: 'the reason why … ' (line 1, see also Extract 1). That the children are sitting on the borders of the blankets is established, and now they will learn why; to secure that there is room for everyone (line 3). In other words, the blankets work as anchoring points (cf. Streeck 2013) for groups of children, where an exact positioning of the body is done to assure that each child has enough room, and no food is spilled. A line of rule-like declarative descriptions follow that tell the children what to do and why: 'the bo::wl should always be on the la:wn'. The adverb 'always' underlines the information as valid not only in this situation, and indicates a generic rule. The milk and water should similarly be placed on the grass (lines 16-20).

The conveyed information is presented as something that the new children must learn, whereas the older children are accountable for already knowing (lines 2-3, '>but Joh:n.< (.) I want you: too to be quiet so that the others can lea::rn'). Moreover, the experienced children are expected to be quiet and listen to information they already know so that others may learn. The pedagogue thus orchestrates the interaction, by producing moves that specify who is to listen and who is to talk. In this public interactional space, not all talk is ratified as relevant. When one of the children asks a clarification question (line 7) about what the word 'kåsa' refers to (line 6), the pedagogue holds the food bowl for the children to look at (img 2.1). However, when the same child asks a follow-up question (line 9), this is not responded to but instead the instructional work regarding appropriate embodied behavior is privileged.

The sequence contains classic instructional sequences, so called I(nitiation)-R(esponse)-E(valuation)-sequences (Mehan 1979), with the children responding in (disorganized) chorus. In line 10, the initiating turn takes on an interesting shape as the pedagogue invites the children to think about the consequences of spilling food: '>'cause < what happens if you spi:ll food on the blanket.'. She produces a rhetorical question 'is it super co:zy to sit in ketchup and macaroni' (line 12) describing

1 JENNY: e:::h, (.) å ni::- nu #när ni få:r mat. anledningen till att vi sitter s[å här på ka:n]ten.
u:::h, (.) an' you::- now that you ge:t food. the reason why we're sitting like this on the bo:rder.

2 LENA: [varsego:] *((distributing food to a child))*
here you are

3 JENNY: de e de:ls f[ör att ni alla ska få plats. (.)]
is pa:rtly so that everyone has a place. (.) (that there's room for everyone)

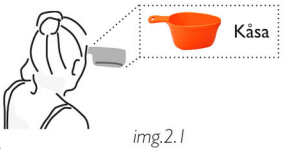
4 LENA: [tog du nå majs. ja där ligger majs.]
did you take some corn. yes there's corn.

5 JENNY: >men Joh:n.< ja vill att du: också e tyst så att dom a:ndra kan lä::ra sej.
>but Joh::n.< I want you: too to be quiet so that the o:thers can lea::rn.

6 (1.1) kå::serna ska allti stå på grä:smattan. a:ldrig på fi:lten¿ [likadant-]
(1.1) the bo::wls should always be on the la:wn. ne:ver on the bla:nket¿ the same-

7 Emil: [vilka (dom här)]
which (these)

8 JENNY: dom +hä:r. dom kallas för en# kå:sa¿
the:se are called a kå:sa¿ ((appr. translation bowl))
+holds the kåsa for the children to see--->
img *#img.2.1*



img.2.1

9 Emil: varför de:?+
why:?
jenny *-->+*

10 JENNY: >för att< va hä:nder om man spi:ller maten på filten.
>'cause< what ha:ppens if you spi:ll food on the blanket.

11 Emil: de blir flä::cko:r. *((the verb is not correctly inflected))*
there will be sta::ins.

12 JENNY: m. å är de jättemy:sit å sitta i ketchup å makaroner när man ska s[itta på fi:lten.
m. an' is it superni:ce to sit in ketchup an' macaroni when one is to sit on the bla:nket.

13 Child: [nä::ä.
no::o.

14 Children: nä::[:::::::::::::::::::::[::: *((in chorus))*
no::::::::::::::::::::::::

15 David: [eller ligga. [eller ligga.
or lie down. or lie down.

16 JENNY: likadant mjö:lken å va:ttnet. vart ska de: stå nånstans.
same with the mi:lk and the wa:ter. where should tha:t be.

17 David: grä[smattan.
the lawn.

18 Children: [#på grä::se:t..
on the gra:::ss.
img *#img.2.2*

img.2.2

19 JENNY: °på gräsmattan.°
°on the lawn.°

20 David: gräsmattan.
the lawn.

21 Emma: och man kan hålla kå:san u::tanför¿ om man vill hålla i:.#
and you can hold the bo:wl ou::tside¿ if you want to ho:ld i:t.
img *#img.2.3*

img.2.3

22 (4.2)

23 JENNY: <e:: Ka:spers filt.> nu kan ni: komma.
<uh::: Ka:sper's blanket.> now you: can come.
((the children on Kasper's blanket run up to Jenny to collect food))

Extract 3. Organizing bodies and objects to create space for meals.

an undesired situation, that invites a negative aligning assessment. The use of the superlative 'super co:zy', works as an extreme case formulation (ECF) suggesting something ridiculous. Exaggerating, joking, and somewhat teasing, 'ECFs are used and oriented to in *metaphoric*, "essentially so," "as if it

were so" ways, performing irony, teasing, and joking', doing a nonliteral description (Edwards 2000, 370). That the children orient to the joking connotations of the question, is displayed in the way one child produces an aligning 'no' in overlap, which at the completion of the pedagogue's turn is followed by a number of voices chanting a prolonged 'no::::'. Displaying an understanding of the moral implications, David adds another 'rule-breaking' behavior that upgrades the description 'or lie down.' (line 15); lying down not constituting an appropriate eating behavior.

In the extract there is also an example of how experienced children intervene in the instructions. Emma, who has already got food and is holding her bowl in her hand while eating (img 2.3), expands on the instructions regarding the bowl in line 21, clarifying that you can also 'hold the bo:wl ou::tside¿ if you want to ho:ld it', that is not only placing the bowl on the grass but holding it outside when eating.

The blankets are used not only to provide a spatial framing, but to organize the temporality of the meal. The children are summoned to collect food one group at a time with reference to the blankets: '<uh:::: Ka:sper's blanket.> now you: can come.' (line 23). This routine is repeated for the different stages of the meal, and the children are expected to sit down and wait until each blanket-group is summoned, for example to take care of their dishes and leftovers.

In sum, the analysis shows how the blankets are used as a resource to define the interactional space for meals and to configure a material structure for the arrangement of the children's bodies. The pedagogue instructs the children on how to sit, hold their eating utensils, and why. Similar to what occurred in Extract 1, where Glen was instructed to sit with his legs facing forward, the children's bodies are shaped, emphasizing the importance of being able to control your body.

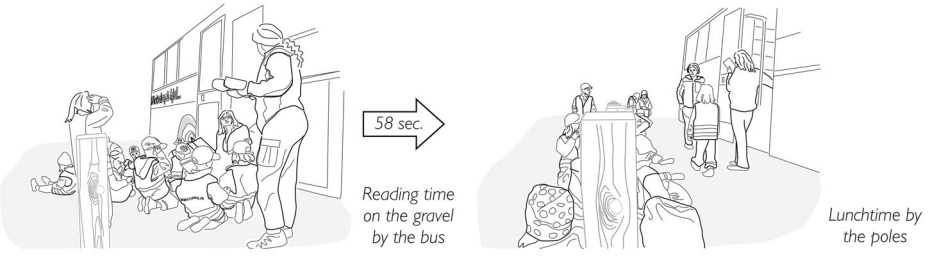
Section III: reconfigurations of interactional space as embodied habits

In this section, we demonstrate how the children, who are now experienced mobile preschool children, in a seemingly uneventful way, transition between activities thus transforming the interactional space through a change of orientation and a new distribution of the participants' bodies (Mondada 2013). Toward the end of the preschool year, in May, lunch is served outdoors. The bus is parked on a graveled parking area, where there is a line of 1,5 meter poles placed every second meter. In comparison to Extract 3, where the pedagogues brought blankets that were used to configure a semiotic structure to the open space (cf. Goodwin 2000), here the participants instead use resources available in the environment as anchoring points (Streeck 2013) for the organization of the meal.

The children are gathered around the pedagogue Karin who is reading a book, sitting on the steps of the bus. All but one child, who is standing next to the poles, are sitting down on the ground. Another pedagogue approaches the group, carrying six bowls with food. She interrupts the reading suggesting that the children sit down by the poles while Karin continues reading. However, Karin objects, claiming that the children are not going to hear, and suggests that they continue reading some other time (Extract 4, line 1). The moment the children hear that the pedagogues are talking, they rise and on their own accord move toward the poles. The relocation is swift and in a minute the spatial arrangement is altered from sitting together to spreading out, sitting in pairs with the backs toward the poles. However, although brief in time, the movement from the gravel to the poles is accompanied by several negotiations over where to sit.

When we join Extract 4, the children have begun relocating. The announcement that they will read another time, accompanied by the imperative 'sit down behind the poles' (line 1), work to encourage the children to rearrange their bodies in order to attain an appropriate spatial configuration for the meal. Without any explicit intervention from the adults, the children help each other, but also compete over a place where they can sit.

Svea has sat down by a pole when Iris approaches a boy, who she interprets is on his way to sit down by the same pole as Svea. She first asks him 'can I sit behind Svea' in an attempt to pre-empt a projected move toward Svea's pole. She suggests, in the shape of a request that sounds like an offer,



1	KARIN:	[vi fortsätter å läsa en annan gång.] (sätt er bakom stolparna) **we'll continue reading some other time. (sit down behind the poles)**
2	Iris:	[får ja sitta bakom Sve:a.] *vill du# sitta bakom dä:r då.* *((to boy))* **can I sit behind Sve:a. do you want to sit behind the:re then.** **points at a pole to the left of where Svea is sitting** *img* *#img.3.1*
3	KARIN?:	vi kan ändå läsa [( )] **we can still read**
4	Molly:	[a::] du::mma:. var ska ja sitta. **a:: si:lly::. where am I supposed to sit.** ((*at this stage almost all children have spread, approaching the poles*))
5		[ja vet inte var ja sa:tt för#ut.] **I don't know where I sa:t before.**
6	KARIN:	[( ) höra där borta] då skulle ja ha haft **hear over there. then I should have had**
7		den här [mikrofonen vi får ta å fixa såna där] grejer= **this microphone we'll have to get some stuff like that**
8	Petra:	[bara sitt nånstans.] *((to Molly))* **just sit somewhere.**
9	KARIN:	=så vi kan hö:ra- lä:sa ute. (.) vi ska ordna de. a:? **so that we can hea:r- rea:d outside. we'll arrange that. ye:s?**
10	Magnus:	( ) ((*to Karin*))
11	KARIN:	då ty◊cker ja att du ska sitta där:◊ ((*to Magnus*)) **then I think you should sit over there.** ◊*points to a pole in front of her and Magnus*◊
12	*anne*	*walks up and stands by a pole next to Molly*
13	Niklas:	oj oj o::j ( ) ((*sits down by a pole*))
14	Molly:	+ja: satt +här. ((to Anne)) **I: sat here.** +*takes a step forward, approaching the pole*+
15	Anne:	ne:[j. **no:.**
16	Molly:	[näj ja satt här. +m[en ja: satt hä:r.+#] *((whining))* **no I sat here. but I: sat he:re.** +*attempting to push away Anne without success*+ *img* *#img.3.2*
17		(.) +(°dumma°)+ **(.) (°silly°)** +*turns away from Anne*+
18	Magnus:	[( )]
19	KARIN:	[de blir bra.] eller så kan du (.) **that's fine. or you can (.)**
20		stolpen bakom Sara å Klara om du vill de eller ( ) **the pole behind Sara and Klara if you want that or ( )**
21	*molly*	*walks to the other side of the pole from where Anne is sitting and sits down*

img.3.1

img.3.2

Extract 4. Experienced mobile preschool children negotiate space.

'do you want to sit behind the:re then' as she points to the pole to the left of Svea's (img. 3.1). In other words, she attempts to orchestrate another child's movements in order to achieve a preferred spatial configuration. Although not immediately sitting down, these are the spots that Iris and the boy eventually choose.

The negotiations do not always run as smoothly. Standing beside the poles, Molly asks herself 'a.: h silly. where am I supposed to sit. I don't know where I sat before.' (lines 4-5). Earlier in the

morning, the children had their fruit sitting by the poles. Molly makes relevant a common spatial configuration in the preschool, where each child is assigned a specific spot thus acquiring ownership over it. Molly's question is not explicitly addressed to someone, but the girl standing beside her, Petra, responds in a manner that undermines the relevance of sitting in the same place as before: 'just sit somewhere.' (line 8). Molly and Petra remain standing as more children are sitting down. Suddenly Anne comes walking up to the pole next to where Molly is standing, and begins to sit down. At this time, Molly takes a quick step toward the same pole and claims ownership to the spot: 'I: sat here' (line 14). Anne immediately protests, but Molly persists and repeats 'no I sat here. but I sat here' in a whining voice, gradually escalating her claim to the spot by using her body in an attempt to physically push away Anne (img. 3.2). However, she is not successful and turns away from Anne as she exclaims a soft 'silly'. Eventually Molly sits down on the opposite side of the same pole.

As has been shown, the children negotiate space with each other without adult intervention. However, in the extract there are also examples of how the children turn to the adults. First, in line 10 Magnus, who has been standing not far from the reading pedagogue, probably (not hearable on the video recording) asks her where he should sit. She points to a pole in front of them. However, the boy is not satisfied with the suggestion and rather than sitting down starts walking to the side. He produces another utterance to which Karin answers 'that's fine. or you can (.) the pole behind Sara and Klara if you want that or ( )' (lines 19-20) displaying that Magnus has queried about a specific spot. Rather than indicating another spot, the pedagogue opens up for alternatives to choose from. The child is thus attributed agency and the right to decide where he wants to sit.

Embodied spatial learning and the becoming of a mobile preschool child

As Punch, McIntosh, and Emond (2010) suggest, the examination of everyday routines as pedagogues and children create space for meals in different locations, enables knowledge of how children are socialized into the practices of the mobile preschool. The in-depth analyses of meal practices, shed light on the intricate details of the socio-spatial organization of the mobile preschool. Adopting an interactional lens allows us to capture the real-time work of 'spacing', as children and pedagogues inhabit, experience, and constitute their space. Such an approach demands that we take seriously not only the material design and configuration of the environment, but that we consider spatial arrangements, movement, and orientations of participants (cf. Best and Hindmarsh 2018; Mondada 2013).

The analyses show how the participants use materialities in the environment (e.g. bus seats, blankets, poles) as anchoring points (Streeck 2013), in relation to which some bodily behaviors are encouraged whereas others are discouraged. While inside the bus, the children learn to keep their bodies still and out of the way due to the narrow space, in particular leaving the aisle free for the pedagogues' movements. The creative use of environmental structures is highlighted in the case of eating outdoors and demonstrates how meals are organized around objects of various kinds, from cups and eating utensils to larger structures such as blankets and poles. The participants' use of blankets to create a semiotic structure in relation to which actions are organized (Goodwin 2000) is a case in point, showing how pedagogues and children simultaneously inhabit and produce space. When describing the mobility patterns of the meal, such as how the sandwich travels in a diamond-like shape, the children also incorporate the material design of the bus in order to make sense of the socio-spatial organization of the meal.

In addition to previous research about meals as loci of socialization processes (e.g. Aukrust and Snow 1998; Ochs and Shohet 2006), language learning (e.g. Kultti 2014), and as a space for peer interaction (e.g. Alcock 2007), our study contributes with knowledge about how the socio-spatial organization of the mobile preschool *per se* is oriented to as an intrinsic aspect of participation in everyday routines. As such, the study contributes with knowledge about the interactional

work that is invested in preschool children's embodied spatial learning, and highlights the competencies required of a mobile preschool child. In all, participation in the mobile preschool, entails learning routinized patterns for as well movement as stillness. An important aspect is the shaping of the body. The new children are instructed about how to position and control their bodies, such as when sitting inside the bus with legs forward, as well as on the border of a blanket maneuvering eating utensils. The 'expert' mobile preschool child is displayed in how experienced children know how to create space for meals as they transition from one activity to another, and in how the children link their knowledge of the pedagogues' mobility patterns to the material design of the bus, as they identify routinized mobility patterns for the performance of a meal. Over time, a trajectory in the children's embodied spatial learning is discerned, visible in how socio-spatial configurations are the object of instructions in the beginning, and more or less taken-for-granted toward the end of the preschool year. The analyses show how the children actively engage in learning how to participate in meal practices. In addition to what we have focused on in this study, the children sometimes resist participating in everyday routines and use their knowledge of how the meal practice is organized to create space for their own, sometimes subversive, activities that may challenge the order of the preschool. This is a fascinating area for further explorations (see Gustafson and Ladru 2020).

Overall, preschools are characterized by routines where the space of the preschool is used for a variety of activities, requiring a continuous transformation of space (Corsaro 2018). Since the participants in the mobile preschool eat in places not originally designed for meal practices, it becomes apparent how these spaces are collectively produced for meals in interaction by children and pedagogues as well as in interaction with the materialities of the location, along the lines of Lefebvre's (1991) notion of the social production of space. This is for example visible in how the space of the bus changes when the preschool children and pedagogues are eating lunch and in and through their interactions transform the bus into a lunch room, as well as in how the space of the parking area changes when the children sit on the gravel and eat.

The conceptualization of space as interactional achievement, affords an understanding of how meal practices are performed in relation to how meals are performed elsewhere. The space for an outdoor meal is created in relation to the organization of the lunch inside the bus. However, the organization of the meal also follows routines recognizable from other preschool (and school) settings. Mobility patterns and scripts are thus transferred and translated into new socio-material locations, showing links between the performance and lived experience of meal practices in various locations. Thus what Francis and Hester (2004) refer to as a 'grammar' of activities is invoked, whereby the particular meal is identifiable and recognizable as an activity of a specific kind: a preschool meal. Although our empirical interest is mobile preschools, the results of the study show the value of focusing on the seemingly unnoticed, taken-for-granted practices of socio-spatial configurations of everyday activities, thus shedding light on crucial aspects not only of socialization into competent participation in mobile preschools, but of preschools more generally.

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ORCID

Helen Melander Bowden http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4769-4479
Katarina Gustafson http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7800-195X

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Appendix

Talk has been transcribed according to conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (2004) and for embodied actions we have used a simplified version of Mondada (2018).

[… …]	Overlapping talk
(2.1) (.)	Numbers indicate length of silence in seconds. A dot indicates a micropause.
., ¿?	Punctuation marks indicate intonation. The period indicates falling intonation, the comma continuing, the inverted question mark slightly rising and the question mark rising intonation.
::	Colons are used to indicate prolongation or stretching of the immediately prior sound.
-	A hyphen indicates self-interruption.
word	Underlining indicates stress or emphasis.
° °	Degree signs indicate talk that is quieter than surrounding talk.
< >	Left/right carets indicate that talk between them is slowed down.
> <	Right/left carets indicate that talk between them is speeded up.
+ +	Gestures and actions are delimited between symbols, one symbol per participant.
–>	Gesture or action continues until the same symbol is reached