

Mobility and Learning Through Tourism: Touristic Learning of Children During Family Travels

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ABSTRACT

The perspective of mobile learning research has transitioned from using mobile technology for education to learning as a human and non-human practice surrounding mobility. This study exemplifies tourism in an increasingly mobile society as a mobile learning practice. Specifically, the learning of children during family travels and the mutual organization of human and non-human interactions are emphasized. Interviews with 12 Japanese parents revealed that children's touristic learning encompassed the translation of various actors in tourist destinations and the spatiotemporal creation of a knowledge network different than that of settled areas and textbooks. Family tourism suspended cultural norms by moving children to boundaries, enabling them to learn beyond the usual constraints. Moreover, this article contends that children's learning through tourism comprised negotiations with parents before tourism, accidental learning along the way, and reconfiguration of life afterward.

KEYWORDS

Children, Family Travel, Human and Non-Human Practice, Mobility, Tourism, Touristic Learning

INTRODUCTION

This article investigates mobile learning from the standpoint of tourism. Regarding mobile learning research, as mobility turns have occurred, the perspective gradually transitioned from using mobile technology for education to learning as a human and non-human practice surrounding mobility. Tourism (i.e., mass tourism/leisure tourism) is a concrete activity that intertwines tourists, places, movements, spaces, and communities. Touristic learning can be correlated with mobile learning as a practice rooted in tourism that involves boundary-crossing from residences to tourist sites. However, few studies have concentrated on children's learning through tourism, due to which this article aims to examine children's touristic learning via family tourism based on interviews with twelve Japanese parents.

Mobile Society and Learning

The current mobile society epitomizes large-scale movements of people, objects, capital, and information across the world, including local processes of daily transportation, movement through public space, and the travel of material things within everyday life (Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006). To date, social science has adopted a sedentarist approach taking fixity, closed spaces, and territorial

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models for granted, not addressing issues related to mobility sufficiently (Urry, 2000). In recent years, a mobility paradigm (mobility turn; Urry, 2007), focusing on movability in a mobile society, has emerged. The mobility paradigm criticizes humanism, which posits a human subject capable of thinking and acting independently of the material world (Latour, 2004), and attempts to capture varying mobilities of information and objects symmetrical with humans. Thus, the inspection of how humans and non-humans are constituted and connected in time and space from the perspective of mutual intersection is essential.

In a mobile society, education and learning are closely related to (im)mobility. These aspects are shaped by various mobilities, such as commuting to school (Fotel & Thomsen, 2003), blended learning (Gourlay, 2021), studying abroad (Beech, 2015), and academic mobility (Metcalf, 2017). Nevertheless, immobility does lead to a loss of educational opportunities. Denial of mobility results in limited access to education, namely “residualized” schools and “immobile” communities (Gulson & Symes, 2017), prison education (Farley & Hopkins, 2017), and school closures and at-home learning during pandemics (Onyema et al., 2020). Notably, the development of educational opportunities, including mobility, applicable to both formal and informal learning is imperative. Accordingly, this paper considers learning in mobile lives and societies, as opposed to learning “moored” within a single classroom, workplace, home, and community.

Within the domain of mobile learning, representing learning on the move, mobility turns have occurred (Enriquez, 2011, 2013). That is, the research concerning mobile learning has shifted from the utilization of mobile technology for education to learning as a human and non-human practice surrounding mobility, such as bodies, materials, spaces, communities, contexts, and boundaries. Previous studies have inscribed mobility into the learning design from a technically deterministic viewpoint, using portable and handheld devices (e.g., Pinkwart, Hoppe, Milrad, & Perez, 2003). Conversely, Enriquez (2013) asserts the employment of the mobility paradigm and relationalism as a practical perspective on mobile learning. She discusses the mobility of learning through physical and material relationships reconfigured within technologies and media spaces, devoid of undue emphasis on learning as something that goes on in the mind. Similarly, Engeström (2009) proposes “wildfire activities” as a new relational pattern of mobility and learning. These activities are characterized by expansive swarming, sideways transitions, and boundary-crossing, formed everywhere simultaneously, multi-directionally, and reciprocally (e.g., birding, skateboarding, and disaster relief of Red Cross). Given that mobility turns and relationalism can enrich the concept of mobile learning, I propose expanding the study perspective from learning via mobile devices to learning via mobility.

Tourism as Mobile Learning

According to Urry and Larsen (2011), tourism (i.e., mass tourism/leisure tourism) emerged with the rise of the mobile society. Since the popularization of tourism in the nineteenth century, tourism has depicted multiple enlightening and educational aspects. To date, this phenomenon has established learning practices via travels to places different from home, school, or workplace. Formal tourism constitutes educational tourism for school events, while informal tourism entails leisure tourism and family travel. Previous studies on informal tourism solely targeted the attainment of individual knowledge and skills (Poria, Atzaba-Poria, & Barrett, 2005; Scarinci & Pearce, 2012), lacking consideration of tourism as a hybrid practice of humans and non-humans. Except for a few examples of mobile learning as an interaction between tourists and technologies (Kukulska-Hulme, Sharples, Milrad, Arnedillo-Sánchez, & Vavoula, 2009), tourism in the context of mobile learning has received little attention. Thus, this article deals with leisure tourism as a contemporary mobility practice and explores mobile learning with regard to leisure tourism.

Learning in leisure tourism can be regarded as mobile learning through boundary-crossing, starting from residence to a tourist destination (cf. Pimmer, 2016). Tourists’ participation at tourist sites differs from the participation of host members (i.e., insiders) belonging to a community of practice within the sites (Wenger, 1999) due to the briefness of their visit (Minnaert, 2012); hence, surveying

and leaving sites as outsiders. While comparing wildfire activity and tourism, commonalities are present with sideways transitions and boundary-crossing via swarm expansion but they differ in the relationship between swarming and community. Although wildfire activities materialize through the movement of communities composed of swarming, communities of tourism destinations are spatially fixed and organized by insiders, such as hosts, tourist organizers, and residents. Therefore, learning through tourism involves learning by outsider swarm moving across boundaries to tourist destinations.

This movement does not imply that outsiders learn alone via tourism and mobility. Rather, this paper aims to not reduce learning to any single individual but views it as an association of human and non-human actors (Latour, 2012). Taking the example of driving from Tokyo to Kyoto, Callon (2004) demonstrates that driving is a collective action that mobilizes a network of people, materials, highways, firms, and traffic laws. Likewise, mobility and learning in tourism are collectively organized as a network by human actors and non-humans. This perspective is common to tourism as a practice (de Souza Bispo, 2016) and learning as a practice (Wright & Parchoma, 2011). Consequently, this research considers touristic learning as mobile learning rooted in tourism as a practice.

Children's Touristic Learning

A lack of tourism research on children compared to adults is evident because in family travels parents are seen as decision-makers and children as passive objects not yet physically, socially, and psychologically mature (Khoo-Lattimore, Prayag, & Cheah, 2015). In such studies, the decision-making processes of parents regarding travel preferences and vacation expenditures are stressed (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Delamere, & Havitz, 2008). Nonetheless, children have been recently highlighted as “active agents” (Carr, 2011) of tourism who are crucial for the “family gaze” (Larsen, 2005), as they are needed to portray a united family and create travelogues in collaboration with parents.

Family travel is an ambivalent event for children. In terms of photography, common in family tourism, children influence their parents' gaze, leading to relational and communal performances involving bodily and verbal negotiations and interactions between children and parents (Larsen & Urry, 2011). These performances do not signify a situation wherein parents and children are always together. Rhoden, Hunter-Jones, and Miller (2016) specify a family's visit to the beach as proof that the child does not necessarily want to share the entire experience with his parents, but rather be distanced away in a safe place to play in his world. Contrariwise, tourism may not always be enjoyable for children, as family vacations are sometimes an obligation that some children have to endure (Poria & Timothy, 2014). The very act of traveling, or being on the move, might be considered boring by children (Schänzel & Smith, 2014).

Hence, touristic learning (i.e., mobile learning) and practices of children during family travels remain unclear. It is unknown how humans, such as children, parents, and other people in tourist sites, and non-humans, such as objects and technologies, are organized in this learning due to which this study asks the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How is children's learning conducted on the move during tourism?

RQ2: How are humans and non-humans constituted in children's touristic learning?

METHODS

The Context of the Study and Participants

Even before the pandemic, Japanese parents and children traveled to various destinations, including aquariums, art museums, theme parks, natural sites, hot springs resorts, archeological sites, temples, shrines, and food (JTBF, 2020). Automobiles were more commonly used than trains, bullet trains, airplanes, and rental cars for transporting families to and between tourist destinations. Japanese children experienced a myriad of interactions at tourist sites; for example, in Japanese museums, children have

been shown to interact and collaborate with parents, exhibits, and technology (Hope et al., 2009). Family trips were most common in August when schools were closed for a long vacation (JTBF, 2020). During summer vacations, elementary and junior high schools often give children homework to decide the theme and the research by themselves, and some children summarize their experiences and learning of tourism. As explained later, touristic learning is closely related to homework.

To inquire Japanese parents about their children's actions, interaction with people and objects, and learning at tourist sites, twelve parents were recruited from the participation pool of a specialist qualitative research company according to the following conditions: those with children in elementary school or junior high school; those who had experienced leisure tourism with their children; those who think their children had learned through tourism; and those who agreed to participate in the online interview. The participants all resided in Tokyo or Osaka, both major cities in Japan, or nearby prefectures, belonging to middle-class families. In total, nine participants were mothers and three were fathers, and their ages ranged from thirty-three to fifty-three years. Each parent was asked to choose one focal child, as one particular child's touristic learning was studied in-depth. The twelve children selected comprised five girls and seven boys aged between ten and fifteen years. In the interviews, parents were questioned about their children's touristic practices and learning. Table 1 shows the age and gender of the participants' parents and children, and the main tourist sites they visited or their touristic experiences.

Procedure and Data Analysis

A 1.5-hour semi-structured online interview was conducted with each participant in January 2021 due to the ensuing pandemic to prevent the spread of infections via face-to-face interviews. Interview questions were based on relationalism and designed to explore how humans and non-humans are involved in, and associated with, children's touristic learning during family leisure trips (mostly pre-pandemic tourism), and the dynamism in their learning environment, namely, learning about the participants' children through tourism, their interactions with human and non-human actors, parent-child relationships in tourism, and the changes in their daily lives because of tourism. All participants were asked the same questions, but when delving into their children's specific touristic activities and touristic learning, additional questions were posed in relation to each participant's story. To explore and gain insights into the diversity of children's touristic learning, the tourist destinations were not limited to permit participants to tell their stories extensively. The participants provided tourist photos related to the theme when necessary and were asked relevant questions. All interviews were digitally recorded, with consent from the participants and confidentiality.

Participants' statements were initially transcribed verbatim and analyzed in Japanese before being translated into English, and all names were changed to preserve confidentiality. Data analysis was initiated after the first interview and was conducted inductively with three types of coding: open, axial, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Open coding included line-by-line, detailed data analysis, and data were coded under various headings according to the data content. The codes were constantly compared to events that emerged in subsequent interviews. In axial coding, the codes were interlinked and described the specific core codes. Finally, in selective coding, the core codes were interlinked to result in some categories. No new categories and core codes of data were obtained in the tenth interview. However, in order to ensure theoretical saturation, two more interviews were conducted, and theoretical saturation was reached as no new categories and core codes were added. The categories, core codes, and examples of quotes extracted from the data analysis are listed in Table 2.

RESULTS

Touristic Learning to Translate

The tourist sites created landscapes that differed from textbook knowledge. Many participants narrated their children's episodes while contrasting their tourism knowledge with their textbook knowledge. P7 visited a famous burial mound with her child, as described in the textbooks. The child had already

Table 1. Characteristics of participants

Parent (Participant*)	Gender of parent	Age of parent	Gender of child	Age of child	Main tourist sites visited/ touristic experiences
P1	Male	43	Girl	11	Camping and hunting experience World heritage historical factory Japanese castle Astronomical observation
P2	Female	49	Girl	14	Work-experience theme park Instant noodle museum Space and science museum Japanese castle
P3	Male	33	Boy	10	Pottery studio Work-experience theme park Camping Cultural facility in Taiwan
P4	Female	38	Boy	10	Swimming in the sea Hand-grabbing ayu fish experience Zoo, aquarium, and amusement park Dinosaur museum
P5	Female	42	Boy	12	Aquarium Children's museum of science Farm work experience Mobility theme park
P6	Female	53	Girl	14	Work-experience theme park Theme park in Singapore Steelworks tour Art museum Parasitological museum
P7	Female	40	Boy	12	Beverage factory tour Dam tour Historical and cultural facilities Burial mound
P8	Female	47	Boy	13	World heritage temple Mayonnaise factory tour Dinosaur museum Ascetic Buddhist priests experience Food and beverage factory tour Atomic Bomb Dome
P9	Female	47	Boy	15	Rice-planting experience Fishing port tour World heritage temple Art museum in Taiwan Scuba diving
P10	Female	51	Boy	14	Work-experience theme park Honey factory tour Beverage factory tour Deep-sea research facilities tour Rice-planting experience
P11	Male	50	Girl	12	Traditional culture experience Ranch tour Limestone cave Zoo, aquarium, and amusement park
P12	Female	36	Girl	12	Beach in Guam World heritage historic village Theme park in Hong Kong Glamping Traditional village in Thailand

Note. *parents were interviewed

Table 2. Linkage between categories, core codes, and examples of quotes

Category	Core code	Example of quotes
Touristic Learning to Translate	Spatiotemporal knowledge of tourism	My son had learned about the Sakitama burial mound at school, so we went there. The sword that was mentioned in his textbook had pompous decorations as a national treasure, and the deployment of surveillance cameras insinuated that it was not ordinary. As soon as he saw it, he said: “This sword is the one in the textbook.” Additionally, the mounds shown in the textbook constitute only a small part of the actual mound group. We walked around the other mounds, as he observed the many different types of mounds. (P7, Son)
	Emotional arousal	We went to see the Kayan people in an old village without electricity and toilets. I told my daughter she should be grateful for the opportunity to go to school because in the village, little girls were nursing babies. Even after returning home, she often said, “I am truly grateful to be able to go to school in Japan.” Exposure to many different lifestyles gave her a culture shock. (P12, Daughter)
	Performative activities	At the Otsuka Museum of Art, we saw replicas of paintings from around the world and also wore costumes. [...] We wore blue turbans and earrings and took photos inside a frame. The picture [Vermeer’s “Girl with a Pearl Earring”] was extremely attractive, and my daughter liked it. She found it amusing to take photos with other children and adults. Usually, she dislikes museums, but this time she enjoyed the experience. Mostly, museums are silent spaces, but in this museum, you could talk loudly, which was just fine for the kids. (P6, Daughter)
Tourism Activities Interwoven by Parents and Children	Shared gaze	I did not want my son to have a superficial experience of the grand Kurobe Dam. So, I showed him NHK’s Project X [a television documentary] to provide him some basic knowledge. It was an excellent documentary, which led him to understand how this dam had been built, and with so much effort. [...] [How was your son when you visited?] The story of the dam’s construction was covered in Project X, so he was kind of reviewing it. First, we worshiped at the cenotaph, and then walked around to see where the cranes had been placed and where workers had carried earth and sand. (P7, Son)
	Scaffolding children to learn	My son wanted to see the Atomic Bomb Dome as he desired to make it the theme of his homework during the summer vacation. I talked with my child about the fact that it would be very scary and painful for him to see the tragic pictures, and I asked him if it is okay. [...] I told him that some photos might be agonizing, and that he should know about them before the visit. [...] Atomic bombing is an inescapable part of the story of World War II and peace, and I wanted him to know about it. [...] We visited the Dome, where he observed the exhibits and learned about the great pain inflicted on humanity, as well as the efforts to help the victims. (P8, Son)
	Parent-child separate tourism	At my son’s request, we went to the Nijo-jo Castle. My son was very satisfied. The castle was very spacious, and we were able to go inside and walk around the corridors. He was looking closely and thinking a lot about the history while listening to the audio guide. [...] I stayed a few steps behind, watching over him. (P8, Son)
Peripherality of Touristic Learning	Negotiation before tourism	Before we finally decided to visit Taiwan, my son considered various options by consulting a travel magazine. [...] I showed him a special feature on Taiwan in Rurubu [a travel guidebook]. He identified places where to eat and shop, which intrigued me as well, and we decided on them together. I respected his opinions as we finalized the destinations for our four-day trip. I made the decisions regarding the finer details. He wanted to visit Jiu fen, the place where Spirited Away [a Japanese animated movie] was set. He also wanted to visit a historical museum and an art museum. (P9, Son)
	Accidental learning along the way	On the way to travel, we went all the way overland through the Kanto area on the highway. During that time, I explained to my son that Shizuoka Prefecture is spread over a large area and has cold weather. We did not go there to let him experience these things, but I showed him souvenirs at rest areas. We also saw locally made products and savored local delicacies at restaurants. (P4, Son)
	Propagation of learning after tourism	At the history museum, where we learned how Shirakawa-go [a Japanese historic village] was built and became a World Heritage Site, my daughter picked up a pamphlet, photographed the exhibits, and took notes. Later, when she completed her homework at school, she organized this information and submitted it. [...] I think this visit has been extremely useful for her. If she is asked a question about Shirakawa-go in a school test, I think she will be able to tackle it. (P12, Daughter)

learned about the burial mound during school lessons. The appearance of the tomb and the sword, which is a national treasure, was displayed according to the textbook, and the child looked around them saying, “This sword is the one in the textbook.” However, the burial mound and the sword were not alone as they were surrounded by explanations, excavated items, and surveillance cameras.

The relationship between these objects gave children the impression of “pompous decorations” and “it [the sword] was not ordinary.” Due to the presence of multiple burial mounds, the child visited other sites in the vicinity and grasped their arrangement and spatiality not mentioned in textbooks.

A wide variety of actors, such as objects, artifacts, and technologies, along with the staff and experts, are mobilized and related to one another in tourist areas. They formed a network of interactions and were mutually organized through a process called “translation” (Callon, 1986). In tourism, heterogeneous actors are translated, generating a network that is different from textbooks. This point is not to say that the knowledge in textbooks is false and the scenery of tourist sites is authentic, but the editing of textbooks and the construction of tourist sites involve different actors and are translated in different ways. The network of such actors at the tourist site is varying in their relationship with children. Hence, children do not acquire knowledge about given fixed actors during tourism; rather, they learn by translating dynamic actors.

Touristic learning enlightened the invisible network of knowledge for the children. Several participants mentioned visiting product factories (e.g., a honey factory, a beverage factory, and a steel factory). P10 took her child on a tour of an instant noodle factory. The child observed a series of production processes from instant noodle manufacturing to packaging, including an exhibition of the founder’s idea, the history of product development, and the social background that led to the current production method. Also, a learning opportunity related to a food production process in nature was present. P1’s child had an animal-catching experience on a camping trip. She listened to hunters’ commentaries on methods and techniques for catching mountainous animals with other participants and experienced going into the trap like an animal. Afterward, she went to a mountain with hunters and entrants to set the traps, and when they checked the next morning, a deer and wild boar were caught. She also ate the meat of prey and came to realize that animals sustain human life.

The production process of the food serves on the table and the ecology of species that do not inhabit settled areas are usually black-boxed for children. The entrance (i.e., ingredients) and exit (i.e., dishes) are clear, but the process is invisible. The black box can be opened via mass-production tours and conventional production experiences. The former is an institutional place where the tour route is set up in an industrial building or factory, whereas the latter is a pliable route explored through an interactive relationship with nature. Both organize humans and non-humans in different ways and attempt to create a visualization here and now for children, who can learn by gazing at and participating in each process.

Besides, the time experience of tourism was different from that of school, especially when involving a natural environment. P9 visited a farmer with her children and participated in a series of rice cultivations: planting, weeding, and harvesting. During school classes, this process was taught in roughly two hours, but the actual cultivation took half a year. In that time, the family visited on several occasions, and the children helped the farmers in taking care of the fields, preparing the soil, and observing the process of rice growth. Tourism in a natural environment involves not only the organization of plants and soil but also the temporality of plant growth and agricultural processes. The destinations are not simply static places to travel back and forth, but dynamic spaces imbued with time and sensuous (van der Duim, 2007). Even if children visit the same tourist spot multiple times, the translation of actors in each visit is different, facilitating the renewal of touristic learning.

Tourism stimulated children’s emotions and encouraged them to translate and reflect. According to the parents, many children enjoyed touristic learning during their travels, such as exploring archeological sites, farming, camping, nature walks, museums, and overseas cultural experiences. Yet, tourism sometimes evokes conflict in children. P12 talked about a visit with her child to the mountain village of the Kayan people in Thailand where no electricity or toilets were available, and a little girl was babysitting an infant. The child got a culture shock at how different their lifestyle was from that in Japan, and came to appreciate that she could go to school daily. Children experience sightseeing via emotions; hence, the translation of humans and objects at tourist sites can create conflicts among children and recursively highlight their lives and cultures.

From the perspective of performance in addition to gaze in tourism (Urry & Larsen, 2011), touristic learning has both performative and visual appeal that not only inculcates an appreciation for objects but also acts with them. P6 and her child visited a museum where visitors saw paintings from around the globe; besides, they could disguise themselves as persons depicted by the paintings. The child chose to dress up as Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring" by wearing a pearl earring, wrapping a turban around her head, and moving around to take pictures. In the past, the child disliked museums because she had to be quiet, but this experience allowed her to enjoy talking with parents and playing the person in the museum.

Visual tourism, like museums, suppresses "children's instinct to run around and touch and crawl upon things" and requires "that one learn to appreciate things through the visual sense and have the self-discipline to conduct one's body and family" (Larsen & Svabo, 2014, p. 112). Under a pretense, however, the children can expand the possibilities by wearing costumes and adornments on their bodies, translating the portraits in the process. The tourist performances override the norm of quietly appreciating prepared paintings and following predetermined routes. Instead, the children create touristic learning by performing and translating with people, objects, and places at a tourist site.

Tourism Activities Interwoven by Parents and Children

During family trips, a gaze of tourism was shared between parents and children. P7 went with her child to sightsee Kurobe Dam, a renowned dam in Japan. She had visited the dam before and knew about the background and the many sacrifices behind its construction. She wanted her child to understand the history of dam construction as well, so she showed him a TV program about the history of the dam before their visit. There, they shared gazes toward the location and role of heavy construction equipment, the flow lines for transporting earth and sand, the memorial to the victims, and ruminated stories inscribed on the traces of the dam. Family trips are not merely collective tourism by parents and children, but a practice of sharing and attuning such gazes (Larsen & Svabo, 2014). Knowledge and desires passed on by parents to children as an inheritance is embedded in these tourist sites.

Moreover, the parents conveyed their children about the temporality of the world through tourism. P4, while visiting a tourist zoo with her child, reminded her child that the animals in the zoo can only be seen then and may not be there the next time they come. P9 informed her child about the beautiful sea at the beach resort by stating, "The sea is beautiful. The color of the sea was totally different when we saw it from the airplane... I told my child that we would like to come back to Okinawa again, but that I do not want it to be dirty the next time." The dynamic network surrounding animals and nature is volatile. Therefore, the presentness of the world and the imagination of the future can be transmitted from parents to children through tourism.

Taking photos at tourist spots was an act that left traces of the gaze of tourism and parent-child relationships. Most of the participants mentioned that they would take photos with their children at various sites. For instance, P3 photographed his child talking with local people during his travel to Taiwan with family. He commented that photography allows parents and children to reminisce about vacations in the future. Temporality and presentness are to materialize through photography. Taking photographs is not only a joint practice for parents and children but also acts as a reminder necessitating the retracing of tourism in the future (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Sometimes, the parents help their children in traveling away from the cultural norms of their settlements. This occurrence is particularly evident in tourism that children project on tourism sites for adults. P8 and her child traveled to the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima. Before the visit, she told her child that this place was a tourism site for adults so there would be terrible and painful exhibitions; "I talked with my child about the fact that it would be very scary and painful for him to see the tragic pictures, and I asked him if it is okay" and "Atomic bombing is an inescapable part of the story of World War II and peace, and I wanted him to know about it." When the family visited the dome, the child found it hard to look at the pictures, but did follow through with the exhibition and

learned about the facts of the bombing and the experiences of the survivors. He was also interested in post-war orphans around his age.

Such travels temporarily move people from the obligation of their home into “liminoid” spaces where many of the usual cultural norms are suspended (Turner, 1982). “Liminoid phenomena develop most characteristically outside the central economic and political process, along their margins, on their interfaces, in their ‘tacit dimensions’” (Turner, 1977, p. 44). Most children are constrained in their daily activities, such as through parental filtering and age restrictions, and adhere to cultural norms. Such children, usually protected outside the central economy and politics, momentarily abandon their daily norms, roles, and statuses, and peripherally travel to sites that are not intended for children, with partial help from their parents. Therefore, these liminoid activities during tourism promote children’s learning beyond the constraints of their settlement area.

On liminoid travels, some children did not always gaze and perform communally with their parents. P4 went sightseeing with her child at a castle in Kyoto and went around the castle and its surroundings. During the trip, the child walked along the corridors and watched the inside of the castle, while the parent watched from behind without talking to the child. The parent said that “He was looking closely and thinking a lot about the history while listening to the audio guide. [...] I stayed a few steps behind, watching over him.” Although the parent and child were in the same space, they gazed at different things. As the child moved through space at his own pace, he learned about historic buildings, national treasures, and historical landscapes.

The rhythm of society and life is gaining momentum in a mobile society, and education is catching up to that speed; hence, children are taught more topics and information in a shorter period in the classroom. Curricula, syllabi, educational materials, and tests have become measurable and standardized to allow children to move with the progress of globalization. To counter this approach, a slow education movement has been implemented in schools by various countries, but fast education has become mainstream in Japanese schools because the former has not been approved by parents (Doghonadze, 2016). The participants in this study recognized the difference between field trips and family leisure tourism, as shown by the following statements: “Children’s degree of independence is totally different. During their social studies field trips, their teachers accompanied them, and so they could not explore independently” (P3), and “During the family trip, children enjoy independence of movement. I think if they have independence, they can enjoy themselves better and learn many things quickly. I do not think this is the case with school trips” (P5). Japanese children are free to travel to and walk around tourist sites at their pace. They can learn about the locality and the uniqueness of sites they are interested in over time, in contrast to the highly competitive educational market.

Peripherality of Touristic Learning

It is noteworthy that tourism is more about a visit to a well-known place than an extraordinary place (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Several participants and their children traveled to highly rated places based on web reviews or visited sites recommended by their friends. Even if the parents are somewhat familiar with the sites, their children do not know about them well. Some participants agreed to go to sites that their children wanted to visit, and the parents and children finalized the destinations together (P9’s narrative of the code “Negotiation before tourism” in Table 2). The children tend to actively negotiate with their parents (Carr, 2011), and their collaborative tourism practices even commence before the visit.

Touristic learning was not limited to just tourist spots but included learning along the way, which was also an opportunity for the children to learn by chance. P4 and her child talked together on the way to the destination about the length and breadth of the prefecture they were in, observed the local climate, looked around goods sold in the area, and ate famous foods at local restaurants. From the child’s outlook, the encounters along the way depended on the situation at that time, and nothing was predetermined even though he knew the destination. Interactions that resulted in unexpected learning were also seen in other children’s tourism, including a sudden conversation with locals on a

trip abroad (P6), a conversation between a parent and child when they came across an industrial area while traveling (P11), or observation in a stratum that unexpectedly appeared while rafting down a river (P12).

Some elements of tourism are decided beforehand, but there are many events that people encounter by chance during the actual visit. Žižek (2014) argues that an event is “something shocking, out of joint, that appears to happen all of a sudden and interrupts the usual flow of things; something that emerges seemingly out of nowhere, without discernable causes, an appearance without solid being at its foundation” (p. 2). Although tourist routes might be structurally determined, such events along the way of and within tourism are not embedded within any given structure and can exist after their unexpected arrival. Accidental and contingent encounters in these events force people to think (cf. Deleuze, 1994). In other words, touristic learning can be regarded as an event wherein thinking is driven by accidental encounters on the move.

After a trip concludes, touristic learning restructured various activities in daily life. The child of P7 completed school homework utilizing the knowledge gained from visiting a historic building during his summer vacation and the notes and photos taken at that time. The work was different from textbooks or descriptions of tourist spots, as it covered a unique activity of a child where he interacted with various actors. P4’s child became interested in geography through a visit to a tourist site and tried to learn more about it by asking his parents to buy books, borrowing books from the library, and putting a globe and a flag puzzle in the living room of his house. Thus, the practice of tourism impacts the daily life of children who retranslate it by editing the traces of tourist sites, expanding learning activities with new objects, and rearranging home spaces.

This type of touristic learning, including peripherality, is positioned as a crucial activity in the mobile information society. During interviews, some parents said that there are limits to what parents, classes, and media can teach and that they want their children to come into contact with knowledge, objects, and things that their children cannot comprehend via daily life, school, and media information. P1 also commented that when telling something to others, his child could speak more confidently based on the child’s own tourism experience than the information available on the internet or television. Nowadays, children in addition to adults have easy access to a vast amount of information through various types of media (Newman, Fletcher, Schulz, Andi, & Nielsen, 2020), so they are more likely to be exposed to misinformation and disinformation. Tourism is an activity that takes time away from easily available information and knowledge. Thus, this type of learning is pragmatic that translates objects and places while moving bodily and physically, thinking about various things, and reconstructing daily lives.

CONCLUSION

This article ascertains how children learn while sightseeing and traveling, and how humans and non-humans are organized in their learning. The results of the interviews reveal that children’s touristic learning is a practice of translating various actors comprising tourist sites, such as objects, animals, nature, paintings, and ruins, to create spatiotemporally a network of knowledge different from that of settled areas and textbooks. By moving children to liminoid places, tourism suspended cultural norms of home and school, allowing them to learn beyond daily constraints at their pace. Touristic learning has extended from limited learning at tourist destinations to negotiations with parents before tourism, accidental learning along the way, and reconfiguration of life afterward.

Encounters occur between the lines of movement of heterogeneous actors, leading to learning (Engeström, 2009). Correspondingly, tourism organizes learning by visitors as outsiders, who then encounter, observe, and follow traces and lines of relationships between human and non-human heterogeneous elements. Encounters in tourism include accidental reconnection or rewiring to a different society, resulting in a new understanding and communication (Azuma, 2017). Thus, touristic learning is not a static activity that uncovers a fixed structure of knowledge in a predetermined way,

but a dynamic event of encountering a new network of knowledge, being accidentally rewired to a new world, and creating a connection to multifarious actors. Such a view of mobility and learning from the perspective of tourism should provide new understandings, explanations, and research methods of informal mobile learning.

I only interviewed the parents in this study, but interviewing children themselves could enrich the analysis and discussion of touristic learning. Additionally, the possible reason why theoretical saturation was reached with a small number of participants is that they possessed similar characteristics in terms of class and region. Therefore, future studies should include participants of various socioeconomic statuses. This article also could not sufficiently mention members and activities of a community of practice of tourism sites that establish touristic learning, which remains a research limitation. Community-based organizations and assemblies for sustainable tourism development are necessary for future work (Sheller, 2020). In addition, although tourism has been premised on physical movement, the means have changed. Virtual tourism, wherein people do not physically visit a tourist site, has come to be discussed, especially because of the recent pandemic (Freudendal-Pedersen & Kesselring, 2021). It is hoped that much research is conducted on the relationship between virtual and real tourism, and touristic learning in virtual tourism.

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