

## **Amateur Anthropologist Interview Transcript**

### **Opening Script**

Stating my identity just for the record of the activity. My name is Kamna Yadav and I am a Computer Science graduate student at Utah State University. This interview transcript is part of a homework assignment for a graduate computer science course at Utah State University. Its purpose is to help the interviewer obtain and improve observational and inquiry skills required for working with users in developing human centered interface designs. During this interview, the interviewee (Ms. Astha Tiwari, my roommate in this case) will be going about a normal activity that she takes part in regularly and in an environment native to the activity. Meanwhile, the interviewer (myself) will be observing the activity, taking notes and asking questions about the activities. The questions will be to discover the “how’s” and “why’s” for doing the activities in the way they were observed being done. I will just be gathering data for the transcript purpose and to see if there is any aspect of the activity that can benefit from some improvements.

This interview will provide us with information about what is being done during the interview, behavior of the interviewee during the activity as well as the reason behind such a behavior. It provides an exercise for the interviewer to practice their skills of observation, become more detail oriented and learn to better communicate with others. The goal of this interview is to allow the interviewer an opportunity to increase their interviewing skill set in preparation for applying these same skills to a class project. The class project will involve research and similar interviews for another group-chosen activity. From this research, a human centered interface design will be developed to address a topic or problem presented within the studied activity.

### **Contextual Description**

I will be observing/interviewing my roommate for a duration of ~50 minutes, while she is preparing dinner for all of us. I would be using the following pseudonyms throughout the transcript:

R: Roommate (Interviewee who’d be cooking)

I: Interviewer

F1: Friend 1 who comes for dinner at our place

The interview starts from our living room where the interviewee is initially seated and is planning out the details of her activity. However, majority of the interview takes place in the kitchen as that’s where most of the cooking and preparation part would be done. For the record, today’s date is September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016. It’s a warm and pleasant Saturday evening. My roommate is an Indian female in her early twenties. We are in the same graduate program at the University. We moved into this place together some three weeks back and have been loving the place since then. But this being our first time

away from home and both of us being busy with our coursework, cooking food regularly has been a problem.

The interviewee is a friend of the interviewer (and also a student of the Human centered design class) and has cheerfully agreed to being a part of the interview. It was informed to her, although she was already aware of it, that this interview would take around 45 to 50 minutes and would also involve being interrupted and questioned while doing the activity (cooking in her case). Once she agreed to providing her inputs and time for the interview, she was also made aware that the interview is being done for a class assignment and the details would be shared with the professor who might use it for instructional purposes in the future. Knowing the risks of breach of confidentiality, she agreed for the interview and we started our respective activities (me interviewing and she cooking).

Apart from the main interview, we were joined by one friend during the process (details of their activities shared in the transcript). He was also explained about the activity going on and since he wanted to gain the experience of an interview, he was also explained of the details of the activity and consent was taken.

It was checked with all the interviewees whether they had any questions and proceeded since no queries were there.

[6:30 pm] Both of us (interviewer and main interviewee) are sitting in the living room and it being a Saturday, both of us have been thinking of the menu for the dinner. A lot of names of delicacies can be heard during our **brainstorming process**.

[6:38 pm] After a lot of discussion and brainstorming, we've both agreed upon Chapatti, Dhal, Rice, Raita and Mix vegetables for our dinner. My **roommate would be doing the cooking today because she loves making food** and we've finalized on her favorite dishes for dinner.

I: Can you tell me a little more about the list of dishes that you'd be cooking today?

R: Well after a lot of thinking, I've decided to cook something special. I'll be making an Indian cuisine today. I'll make Dhal which will be used as a curry for the rice. So I'll definitely have to cook Cumin Rice (giggles). Rice and Dhal is usually eaten with Raita, so I'm thinking of making that as well. Then I'm thinking of having Chapattis to accompany the Rice. And finally for the Chapattis, I'll make a mixed vegetable.

I: Wow. That sounds delicious. Okay, so before we start I'd like to know about how much time would it take for the food to get ready and have you decided on the order in which you'd be making the dishes?

R: Well, I'm planning to start with **soaking the rice in a bowl and then I'll start with chopping the vegetables** required to make the vegetable curry and the dhal.

[6:45 pm] After this small discussion we move from our living room to the kitchen. My roommate started off with clearing up the kitchen table and I helped with it. She started taking out ingredients and settling them onto the kitchen center table for ease of access. She also started soaking some rice in a bowl.



**This is how our kitchen looks like on any normal day**

I: Hey I've got a question. I mean how do you decide how much rice to soak and for how long?

R: Well, since I'm making rice for three people, I'll go with one and a half cups and soak them into a bowl so that we all have sufficient to eat and also we'll be having chapattis so that won't be a problem. As for the soaking part, I usually do that for around 15-20 minutes. It helps in reducing the cooking time of the rice.

I: Okay, is there anything that I can do for you?

R: No, I like doing stuff by myself. Meanwhile you can help yourself with a cup of tea if you want.

I: How often do you cook?

R: I used to cook almost every day when I was in India. But now-a-days, finding time to cook is not so easy. Still I try to cook at least thrice a week.

I: Okay and how good are you at cooking?

R: I have been cooking for some time now. I've learnt a number of things from my mother. She's a very good cook.

I: Can you tell us a few things that you can cook?

R: Umm (thinks for a moment). I can cook rice (many varieties), parathas, chapattis, almost all vegetable curries, pasta, spaghetti, pizza, dumplings, burgers, and other stuff of the kind.

I: Wow. That's a long list. I'm glad we are roommates (wink). And what according to you is the dish that you are best at cooking?

R: My friends say that I cook good pasta. You should try it sometime. I'll cook for you.

[6:48 pm]: We've soaked the rice and kept them aside. Our center table looks like a kitchen garden right now (winking). There are just so many vegetables settled on it. She's getting the chopping knife and the peeler and a plate to keep the chopped veggies.

I: Okay, I can see a lot of onions, green chilies, tomatoes and other veggies here. How many are you going to chop for today?

R: Since I'm preparing these veggies for the dhal, raita and the mixed vegetable curry, we'll need to chop a lot of them.

I: Still would you mind giving me a rough idea about the counts? Just for my recipe book.

R: Cool. I would love to see your recipe book sometime. So, I will need 2 tomatoes, 1 green chili, 3 or 4 garlic cloves, half medium sized onion and a hint of ginger for the dhal. For the Raita I will need a half medium sized onion, 1 tomato, 2 green chilies. And for the mixed veg curry I think I will go with the same amount of these veggies plus one large capsicum, one small cabbage, one small can of beans and 3 potatoes. I hope I answered your question.

I: Thanks. Yes, you did very nicely. So tell me do you think you cook better than your mother?

R: No way. She's my inspiration and teacher for cooking. I have learnt all from her and it would take me some time to cook even closely to her techniques.

I: Okay, that reminds me of another interesting question. Who do you think is a better cook, your mother or your grandmother?

R: Tough question (winks). My grandmother is an incredible cook. She's taught my mother a lot of dishes and honestly my mother is still learning.

I: So do you watch any cooking shows back in your country? Can you name any?

R: Yes. I used to watch Khana Khazaana a lot. I've learnt a lot of recipes from that show. Sanjeev Kappor incidentally also happens to be my favorite chef.

[6:57 pm]: She has almost chopped the 2 required onions and 4 tomatoes. We're about to start with the other veggies. We have used a chopping board for the purpose because that eases the process of chopping.

I: Hey, you know what. When I chop onions I get very teary eyes. I don't know how but you do manage to cut them without any tears. What's your secret?

R: (laughs) My mom once told me that chewing a gum helps a lot when chopping onions. So, that's what I usually do.

I: I'm glad I asked you to help me through this assignment. I'm getting to know so much stuff about cooking.

I: What according to you is the hardest thing to cook?

R: Umm. I'll say that Biryani is the hardest to cook. Cooking a good biryani can take anywhere from 3 to 4 hours and even more than that. I haven't yet been able to make a good one myself.

[7:05 pm]: Amidst the conversation, she had chopped all the veggies and was now all set to start the main cooking part. Meanwhile we've got someone at the door. And here's one of our neighbor. He lives two apartments away and has come down to our place for a tea.

I: Hey. How are you? You took some time coming back this time. Been busy with something?

F1: Yeah. I had this really difficult assignment lined up for yesterday. Finally done with it. Feeling relieved. Feel like making a cup of tea?

I: Well, I'm working on this assignment of mine. I need to keep taking notes so that I don't miss on stuff. How about you make us all tea?

F1: My pleasure ma'am (sarcastic laugh).

[7:10 pm]: So my newly arrived friend has started preparing tea for all of us. And my roommate has placed the rice in the rice cooker and they're almost done. She's started preparing the dhal. Now, I'll continue interviewing her about the dhal so that I do not miss on its progress. All this was possible because we have a 4 burner induction which makes it easier to cook multiple things at the same time.

I: So, how do you prepare dhal? Mind sharing your recipe?

R: Yeah sure. Till now, I've heated the pan and poured 2 table spoons of oil into it. Now, I'll place some cumin seeds into the pan and toss them until brown. After that, I'll cook the chopped garlic, onions, green chili and ginger for some time. Also, since my ingredients for the gravy are common between dhal and mix vegetable gravy, I'll prepare the common ingredients together and then separate them out into two halves and continue with two separate recipes.

I: Wow. That's a good move. So, till this gravy is ready, should we check on the raita?

R: Yes. Let me get some yogurt from the refrigerator.

[7:13 pm]: She's getting ingredients for raita and starting to make it. Meanwhile our tea is ready and F1 hands a cup of tea to each of us. All of a sudden our fire alarm went off and that was when we realized that we had forgotten to turn the chimney on. So, we turned it on and continued cooking.

I: Umm. The tea tastes great. What are your opinions on cooking meals at home? What are some advantages and disadvantages that come to your mind?

F1: Well, for starters its difficult and takes time. Otherwise I love the idea of cooking at home. It's tasty, healthy and budget friendly.

I: I cannot agree more to it. I too love the taste of home cooked delicacies. Should everyone learn to cook? What do you think?

F1: Well in my opinion cooking is something that everyone should learn. It is very important to stay healthy and fit when staying away from home.

I: Hey let's have a look at the Raita which seems almost ready. How's the curry going Astha?

R: Everything's almost done. Now the only thing remaining is Chapattis. Which is the toughest part of the cuisine.

I: Toughest in what terms? Can you elaborate it a little bit for me?



R: Actually preparing chapattis on these induction cook-tops is not an easy process. Most of the times I end up burning my chapatti. It's not the case with gas cook-tops.

I: Oh I see. That must be why my mother always cooked chapatti on gas and the curries and other stuff on an induction.

I: How do manage to make round chapattis every time?

R: Actually the secret lies in the first step of making a chapatti. When making the dough balls, always make sure that they are round. That way it is very easy to flatten them to a round roti, with a round pin. The effort needed is much less, if you get that step right.

[7:30 pm]: We are done with all the cooking. Everything's ready. Will summarize on the interview after eating this delicious dinner. ☺

Adding photographs of some of the prepared items. Could not click for the chapattis because we were all too hungry by that time ☺.



### **Final Note:**

This interview was quite knowledgeable and interesting for me. I learnt how to use a chopping board more efficiently and quickly. I also learnt about using a rolling pin for making round chapattis. I have highlighted a few points where people had joined us and caused interruption in the interview process. Also, how the interviewee handled all the tasks along with the interview. I also highlighted the points how the basic equipment in the kitchen when used in a synchronized manner provide better efficiency and how having a 4 burner cooktop helps prepare multiple dishes in small amount of time. I learnt that there is a lot in human centered designing that can be used in our kitchens to make cooking easier and more efficient.