MEANING-MAKING

IN

YOUNG CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

VOLUME 1

J. DEGUARA

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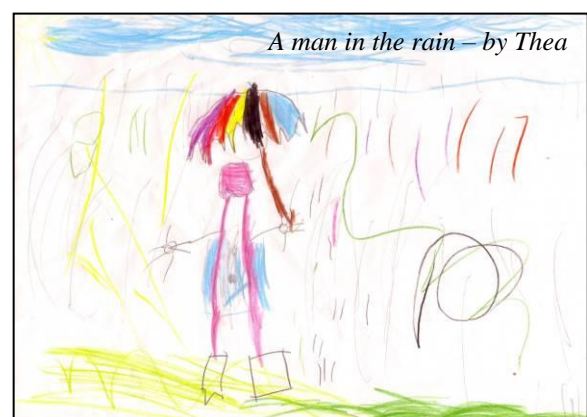
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A man in the rain – by Thea

"Drawing can be seen as a meaning-making process in which children draw signs to express their understanding and ideas in a visual-graphic form"

- Marit Holm Hopperstad (2008, p.134)

Abstract

This study investigates the multiple layers of meaning-making young children represent in their drawings. Taking a social semiotics theoretical framework to analyse children's drawings, this study is designed around four main research questions: to examine the modes children use, the themes they illustrate, the meanings they communicate, and the possible influences that affect their drawings. It is developed around three case studies of four-year old children who attended the same school in Malta.

The data were collected over four months, where the three children were encouraged to draw in both the home and school settings. During and post drawing conversations were held with the children and their parents, to bring out the meanings conveyed. The observations and conversations were video-recorded and transcribed. In total, the children drew two hundred, twenty-three drawings. The children's participation was supported throughout the data collection process: they video-recorded themselves, collated the drawings in display files and provided insightful understandings about their drawings.

Developing a *simple-complex* mode criterion, which was represented on a purposely-created *Data Cross-grid*, the findings show that the three children had personal preferences in their use of *semiotic styles*. Findings from the study also illustrate that they drew a broad range of subjects with people, animals, and weather and sky features featuring prominently. The *Data Cross-grid* also represented a simple-complex theme criterion, where results indicate that the children had different *drawing patterns* and *configurations*. Ultimately, the *Data Cross-grid* provided a unique profile for each child as a drawer. The meanings in the three children's drawings were complex and extensive. These were reflected in four main distinctive functions: *drawing as a constructor of identity, drawing as a communicator of the self, drawing as a processor of knowledge,* and *drawing as a play process*. The children's drawings were also influenced by a variety of home, school and other community and cultural influences. In conclusion, the study brings out the importance of recognising drawing as a semiotic and visual language children use to process, create and communicate meaning.

To

my family

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Declaration of authenticity

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work. I confirm that no part of this work has been previously submitted, published or presented elsewhere. Any material or work represented in this thesis which is not my own, has been acknowledged and appropriately referenced.

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Josephine Deguara
April, 2015

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"Drawing … is a means for surfacing the meaning-making of young children."

- Susan Wright (2011, p.158)

Chapter 1

Introduction

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

I developed this study on the belief that early years' education should provide young children with opportunities to communicate through different modes, such as play, drama, sculpting and drawing, besides the widely acknowledged verbal and written ways. Perceiving drawing as a semiotic activity and a "method of meaning-making" (Van Oers, 1997, p. 238), I built this study on the work of other researchers such as Ahn and Filipenko (2007), Anning and Ring (2004), Coates (2002), Coates and Coates (2011), Hall (2010b, 2008), Hopperstad (2010, 2008a), and Wright (2010b, 2008, 2007b, 2006, 2005, 2003). My main interest was to analyse the meanings children create and communicate through their everyday, free drawings. Considering drawing as a language of communication, I explored how three, four-year old, Maltese children, Luke, Thea and Bertly[1] used different modes to draw in both their home and school settings. I also analysed the emerging themes and socio-cultural influences that contributed to their unique meanings.

In this first chapter I provide an overview of the key theoretical concepts underpinning this research. I also recognise my ontological and epistemological positions that offer some insights into my personal perceptions, inspiration and rationale. I then provide an outline of the methodology that structures my data collection process. Subsequently, I discuss the significance and contribution of my research to the field of study.

1.2 Defining Drawing

The Oxford Dictionary of English defines drawing as "a picture or diagram made with a pencil, pen or crayon rather than paint" (Stevenson, 2010, p. 532). This definition can be considered as shallow if drawing is merely understood as a mechanical activity limited to creating an impersonal representation of realistic objects. Contrastingly, a description by Paine (1997), recognises drawing as a creative activity that is "deeply resonant with the expressive side of personality and

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[1] These are the children's real names. In Chapter Four I justify the use of their actual names.

feeling and therefore having the potential for interaction" (p. 147). Comparably, Eisner (2013) recognises drawing as an "elementary form of expression" (p. 13) that allows children to develop their imagination, emotional responses and personality in a creative way. Describing drawing as a product, a process and an expression of relationships, several scholars (Adams, 2002; Albers, 2007; Coates and Coates, 2011; Hall, 2008; Kress, 2000b) regard it as a purposeful way of making meaningful marks. Embracing this last definition, I consider children's drawings as multimodal artefacts which they use to form and interpret a system of sign-making that permits them to shape and translate their mental images onto paper. I also deem drawing as an effective way that resonates with the children's ways of communication; a visual language which according to Clark (2005a), helps them convey what they cannot easily express through other modes.

In this study, I position my definition of drawing within a theory of social semiotics as developed by Kress and others (Hodge and Kress, 1988; Kress, 2010, 2003a, 1997; Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, 1996), which involves the construction, interpretation and communication of meaning through signs and across different modes. I explicitly regard children's drawings as "multisemiotic" (O'Halloran, 2009, p. 98) where the use of two or more semiotic resources intertwine through the interplay of different modes to create a text. Thus, I consider drawing as a spontaneous and complex mode of communication which children embed with other modes, such as talking, writing, cutting and gluing, to create a "riche mêlée of meaning-making" (Anning and Ring, 2004, p.117) in which they take intentional decisions of what and how to represent.

In a discourse of social semiotics, both the end product and the drawing process are considered as vital in uncovering the different layers of meaning-making (Frisch, 2006; Hope, 2008). To analyse the end product, in this study I examine both the from of children's drawings as well as their content and meaning. In my delineation of the physical aspect of drawing, I take on Stevenson's (2010) definition, where he regards drawing as a picture made with any medium other than paint. This is because I regard painting as a mode that involves a different process than drawing, which due to its wet composition, might exclude the use of other media and modes as intended by this study. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, by children's drawings I

mean, two-dimensional texts that represent images, graphics or mark-makings which young children create on paper through the use of any medium (excluding paint) they find at hand and which they deem appropriate.

In this study, I explore children's drawings from a "contextual drawing analysis" (Frisch, 2006, p. 76), that is, the children's ordinary drawings, which they do out of their free will or as encouraged by adults. Children develop such a process through an on-going dialogue with themselves, the image they create, the materials they use and the people who are within close proximity, where they use drawing as a language to symbolise and communicate their world in a meaningful way to others (Cox, 2005; Leigh and Heid, 2008; Wright, 2011). I therefore hold children's drawings as "graphic representations" (Machón, 2013, p. 77), as, "the depiction of an object, situation or event which may or may not be preset". I also consider their drawings as a means of knowing and understanding, of thinking and feeling, and a form of social and interactive communication, where children engage in "a constructive process of thinking in action, rather than a developing ability to make visual reference to objects in the world" (Cox, 2005, p. 123). As is explained by Danesi (2007) and Machón, (2013), what makes representational drawings different from creative drawings, is that while the latter is unconventional, the former uses traditional practices guided by intention which are modelled within the social conventions, community practices and visual cultures in which they are created.

1.3 Philosophical Underpinnings

At this stage I consider it important to outline my "researcher positionality" (Sikes, 2004, p. 18), and explain the philosophical stance that guided the design of my study. I begin by situating my ontological and epistemological positionings, which are followed by a discussion about a children's rights perspective and socio-cultural theory that shaped my research.

1.3.1 My ontological positioning

Jackson (2013) defines ontology as "the philosophical study of the nature of reality… and how there may be different perceptions of what is known" (p. 52). Taking an interpretivist, ontological position, I consider that reality is experienced, interpreted

and constructed through individual conception and social interaction within an "inherently meaningful" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 191) process. Distinctive from positivism, which is guided by the notion that there is one single truth that is waiting to be discovered objectively and which favours the use of quantitative methodology and the need to make generalisations, an interpretivist paradigm is qualitative in nature, and gives importance to individuals and to the words and meanings they convey (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Emphasising depth and detail, it holds the belief that "our social world is not just waiting for us to interpret − it is always already interpreted" (Hughes, 2001, p. 35).

Research from an interpretive perspective "can be thought of something which is very often carried out with people, in places, creating events from within" (Sharp, 2009, p. 5). As an interpretivist I considered it as essential to adopt a participatory approach where, entering in dialogue with the children, I listened to their stories of their home and school drawings. To achieve this I adopted Nicolopoulou, Scales and Weintraub's (1994) approach. This approach consists of integrating "the formal analysis of children's narratives into a more comprehensive interpretive perspective" (p. 105), which necessitates that children's representations and narrative texts are analysed beyond the linguistic structure to include the symbolic form, that has the function to confer meaning. This implies that the interpretation of the inferred meaning, which includes recognising abstract concepts, thoughts, ideas, experiences, emotions and values, is a fundamental requirement to understand children's drawings. Nicolopoulou et al.'s (1994) approach is relevant in this context as it fits with my interpretive stance, where together with the children, I decoded the *structures of meaning*" (p. 106) of their drawings and attributed narratives, to analyse both the meanings that lay at the surface level of their representations as well as the deeper, implied meanings. This facilitated the construction and co-construction of children's realities and identities (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Capturing both the form and content of the drawings helped me to develop an in-depth and detailed analysis to answer my research questions. Nicolopoulou et al.'s (1994) approach also resonates with my thesis: that children's drawings and the accompanying narratives are full of meaning and provide invaluable insights about the children and their personalities, their ways of thinking, their experiences, relationships and understandings of the world.

As advised by Clough and Nutbrown (2012), I recognise that in a qualitative and interpretivist approach the research and the researcher can become inseparable as the researcher gets "on the inside" (p. 64) of the research, where personal values and subjective interpretations can have an impact, I argue, that my understanding was informed by the context, the relationships I developed with the children and their families, and the first-hand experience I had of their views and narratives. This interaction between negotiated meanings and shared interpretations is critiqued by Bernstein (1974 as cited in Cohen et al., 2007), who argues that such collaboration could be prejudiced by the context. I recognise that my data was contextually situated, but I counter argue that this is an aspect which enriches and validates the data even more, where I maintain that the social and cultural contexts and their influences form an integral part of the children's reality. Moreover, agreeing with Kincheloe and McLaren, (2005), I consider relationships between individuals and the interaction with the context as worth investigating, even more so in this study, as it answers one of my research questions.

1.3.2 My epistemological positioning

An ontological positioning, which relates to the reality of the world, is inextricably linked to the epistemological perspective which pertains to the nature of knowledge of that world and how it can be obtained (Jackson, 2013; Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005): it is "a way of understanding and explaining *how we know what we know"* (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). The epistemological stance, according to Snape and Spence (2003), informs the choice, purpose and goals of a study. Crotty (2005) recognises three clearly defined distinctions of epistemological positions, which include objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism. In my study I embraced a constructionism view, which claims that meaning comes into existence through our engagement and interpretation of the world; a stance which tends to be favoured by qualitative researchers.

Constructionism contrasts with objectivism, which pursues the idea that reality or meaning is residing in objects and waiting to be discovered. It also differs from subjectivism where meaning is not considered as being constructed between subject and object but is imposed by the subject on the object (Crotty, 2005). A constructionist perspective values the daily, unremarkable experiences that are

generated through a collective interplay between meanings and the continuous attempt to make sense of experiences through shared understandings (Schwandt, 2000). In my study I translated this by observing the three children, in their everyday contexts of the home and the school. Constantly taking into consideration their socio-cultural backgrounds, I listened to their narrations which provided extensive background information about their past experiences, histories and events. Within this milieu, I recognised that meaning-making is a dynamic and hybrid process that emerges, is situated, and makes sense within particular socio-cultural contexts.

In the next sections I discuss my position of adopting a children's rights perspective within a socio-cultural framework.

1.4 Adopting a Children's Rights Perspective

With an agenda that promotes greater children's participation worldwide (Hill, Davis, Prout and Tisdall, 2004), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) demands its member states to respect children's rights, including their right to voice their opinion and take decisions in matters that affect them. From my interpretive and constructionist position, I embrace a children's rights tradition that endorses a participative approach where I regard children as social and knowledgeable actors who are able to act and interpret the world they live in (Bitou and Waller, 2011; Farrell, 2005; James and James, 2004; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998; Mayall, 2002, 2000b; Moss and Petrie, 2002). I therefore hold the position that children can be trusted as "active participants" (Alderson, 2005, p. 30) and reliable "informants" (Morrow, 2005, p. 151), who are capable of understanding, investigating and contributing towards the research process, and whose drawings and views are worthy of investigation (Christensen and James, 2000a; Greig, Taylor and MacKay, 2007; Uprichard, 2010). As suggested by Fraser, Flewitt and Hammersley (2014), within the framework of this study, I consider children as the primary producers of research, knowledge and data, where I involved them as partners in the data collection process where together, we collected, organised and interpreted their drawings.

1.4.1 Perceiving children's voices

Frequently considered as "'the right to be heard', 'the right to participate' or 'the right to be consulted'" (Lundy, 2007, p. 930), the concept of voice is problematic as it carries different connotations. For Dahl (1995) the "voice [of the child] reveals the deeper meanings and perspectives of individuals, and reflects learners' personal realities" (p. 124). Bucknall (2014), takes a more complex position, claiming that "voice is not only about expression but perhaps more importantly, about being listened to and being heard: it is about being taken seriously" (p. 71). This perspective of voice as an opportunity for children to communicate their ideas is also embraced by Papatheodorou (2002), who claims that such a disposition allows adults to get in-tune with the children's needs and understand their perspectives. Similarly, albeit differently, Cruddas (2007) ascertains that voice goes beyond the expression of the self to include a "complex product of past meanings and sedimented histories enacted within a dialogic context" (p. 485), where children construct and co-construct meanings through their active interaction and participation with others, and across texts and situations (Clark and Moss, 2001; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2007; Harcourt and Einarsdottir, 2011; Santos Pais, 2000). Listening to children's voices is therefore, a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and ambiguous social construction which transforms and changes in a process of dynamic interaction (Komulainen, 2007; Rinaldi, 2006b, 2005). It is a dialogue within the self and between the self and the others in an attempt to listen and understand others from their own perspective (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). This perspective is in line with socio-cultural theory which also informs this study where, supporting Smith's (2007b) view, I maintain, that children's voices are influenced and construed by everyday contexts, experiences and human relationships.

Within this study, I perceive voice as a way for children to participate and have a say in what they do and communicate what they think. Taking Rinaldi's (2006a), Sheridan and Pramling's (2001) and Skivenes and Strandbu's (2006) suggestions, I enabled the children's voices to be heard, by creating spaces for them to communicate their understandings in modes and media that suited them. I tried to achieve this by prompting children to use drawing as a language for communicating their meaning-making processes about matters that interested them; matters, which, in my view, are frequently misunderstood, overlooked or regarded as insignificant by adults. Within

this context, Clough and Nutbrown's (2012) concept of "radical looking" (p. 26), or in other words the "exploration which makes the familiar strange" (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012, p. 26), and which questions what Mukherji and Albon (2010) regard as the "taken-for-granted practices and assumptions" (p. 25), comes in as a relevant notion. This allowed me to look at children's drawings and gain insights into their contributions, reflections and meanings of their everyday experiences from their viewpoint. It also provided me with information about how other people and the environment, influence what children think, feel and communicate. This changed and informed my knowledge about what, how and why children draw.

1.4.2 Ways of listening

Listening is an active, interactive and reflective process of communication that involves hearing, interpreting, constructing and exchanging connections and meanings (Clark, 2005b; Clark, McQuail and Moss, 2003). It is a dynamic, ethical and democratic process, which is open to different modes of communication in a milieu of respect (Moss, 2006). Conversely, Rinaldi (2001), describes listening as, "an active verb, which involves giving an interpretation, giving meaning to the message and value to those who are being listened to" (p. 4). Through their social semiotics concept, Kress and others (Kress, 2010, 1997; Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, 1996), provide a similar way of listening, which I espouse with Malaguzzi's metaphoric notion of the "hundred languages of children" (Edwards, Gandini and Forman, 1998, p.12) as both support the theory that children use a range of "symbols and codes" (Dahlberg and Moss, 2006, p. 49) to communicate their thoughts and understandings.

Guided by The New London Group's (2000) concept of "multiliteracies" (p. 25), that also denotes "alternative forms of communication" (Yelland, Lee, O'Rouke, and Harrison, 2008, p.10), which are pluralistic, flexible, and dynamic, I also draw on Bearne and Wolstencroft's (2007), Jewitt's (2002) and Kress' (2000a) notion that children make use of a range of linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial modes such as movement, drama, gestures, drawing, story-telling, play, and other forms of literacy, to help them illustrate their understandings. This notion goes beyond a passive way of listening to verbal utterances, to entail a process of listening and being listened to "with wide eyes and open minds" (Nutbrown, 1996, p. 47). Drawing on

these perspectives, I define listening as an interactive process of verbal and non-verbal ways of communication or in other words, through multimodal ways of text production which capture the children's different voices, constructs of meanings and theories. This process of "multiple listening" (Rinaldi, 2005, p. 22) helped me understand how children think and learn, question and make connections, and live and interpret reality.

1.4.3 Doing research *with* children

Adopting a children's rights perspective encompasses a broad range of paradigms and methods that facilitate the involvement of children as participants (Fraser, et al., 2014; Kellet, 2014). In the context of my study I realised this by undertaking research "*with*" (Mayall, 2000a, p. 121) children, rather than *"on"* or *"about"* them. The latter position is frequently challenged and considered as problematic as it often underestimates children, assuming that they are vulnerable, poor informants, incapable of contributing towards inquiry, and unable to fully understand information or of taking informed decisions (Coyne, 2010; Gallagher, Haywood, Jones and Milne, 2009; Keddie, 2000).

Mayall (2000a) explains, that while research *about* children is exclusively planned, initiated, led and interpreted by adults, research *with* children, is not predefined, but necessitates flexibility and creativity on the researcher's part who, as Pink (2007) suggests, needs to adapt and modify the methods along the process of data collection. This was one of the most difficult aspects of my study where I had to constantly be sensitive to the children's needs, think-in-action and be open to adapt my methods, tools, and the data collection process as it transpired. As is argued by Darbyshire, MacDougall and Schiller (2005), and Tay-Lim and Lim (2013), this demanded of me to be knowledgeable about the research process and in-tune with the overt and covert messages children convey, so as to implement appropriate methods that could effectively elicit their perspectives. Basing my research on the belief that "the best people to provide information on the children's perspectives, actions and attitudes are children themselves" (Scott, 2000, p. 99), as they are the ones who are able to provide expert information about their experiences (Thomson, 2008), I considered the three children's viewpoints and together with them took decisions that changed the data collection process. To achieve this insider's perspective, I tried to see the world

through the children's eyes, while, as O'Kane (2000) suggests, recognising their competence to construct and communicate their perspectives and ways of doing things.

1.5 A Socio-cultural Perspective

This study was also informed by a a socio-cultural perspective (Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky, 2012/1962), which, as several scholars argue (Lansdown, 2005a, 2005b; Nyland, 2009; Rogoff, 2003, 1997, 1995, 1990; Smith, 2011, 2007a, 2007b, 2002), is in congruence with a participatory approach. Both theories view children as social beings who are able, competent agents and active constructors of their knowledge and understandings; skills, which they develop through their participation, contribution and joint interaction with others. This occurs in contexts which listen to and support the children's efforts to articulate their thoughts (Hart, 1997; Lemke, n.d.; Lewis, Enciso and Moje, 2007; Luria, 1987).

Taking a transformative perspective and keeping culture at the core, a socio-cultural stance embraces the belief that integrating social structures, cultural mediation, different modes of participation and continuous deliberation between individuals, help create joint meaning-making that is inextricably intertwined with and interdependent on the contexts they occur in (Berthelsen, 2009; Correa-Chávez, 2005; Edwards, 2003; Engeström and Miettinen, 1999; Hall, 1997a; Keller, 2005; Rose, Jolley, and Burkitt, 2006; Suad Nasir and Hand, 2006). More specifically, socio-cultural theory illustrates that, the interaction between children, the context and the culture in which they live, that include artefacts, texts and experiences such as drawings, "are mediating tools for children to create meaning within and across cultures" (Wright, 2010b, p. 26). These influence the children's thinking processes and help them acquire new knowledge of the world (Vygotsky, 1997/1941). Such theoretical positioning was reflected on two levels in my study. Building on the work of other researchers such as Anning and Ring (2004), Coates (2002), Coates and Coates (2011), Einarsdóttir, Dockett and Perry (2009), Hall (2008), and Ring (2006), on one level, I provided children with opportunities to construct and communicate their thoughts and ideas through their drawings. On a second level, I explored the influences of the context on the children's drawings.

Inspired by the work of scholars such as Cope and Kalantzis (2000), Einarsdottir et al. (2009), and The New London Group (1996, 2000) I located my study within what Unsworth (2001) calls the "socio-cultural construct of literacy" (p. 15), where, I merged socio-cultural theory and participation theory with the main theoretical framework underpinning my study, that of a social semiotics (which I shall discuss with more depth in Chapter Two), and which also recognises the importance of the social and cultural elements. In such a theoretical perspective, the resources and materials available are also considered as "mediating tools" (Ring and Anning, 2004, p.8), that influence the form, content and meaning of the children's drawings. This position, which is a variant of the constructionist approach (Hall, 1997b), is also affirmed by Ivashkevich, (2009) who suggests that:

> When studying children's drawing, it is important not only to understand the relationship between their [the children's] daily verbal interactions and visual meaning making in different sociocultural contexts but also to grasp the complex array of sociocultural factors that influence the meaning construction manifested through graphic activity.   (p. 52)

Taking this theoretical stance and embedding it with Kress' (1997) notion of social semiotics, I consider children's drawings within a framework of multimodality, where children use different modes to express their personal emotions, knowledge and meanings as influenced by the practices of their social and cultural worlds.

1.6 Aims and Overview of the Study

The main aim of this study, which takes an "exploratory" (Schoeman, 2014, para. 2) slant, was to understand how and what meaning, young children create and communicate through their drawings. My main interest rested on investigating the "ordinariness" (Mavers, 2011, p. 1) in children's every day drawings. Another aim of the study was to encourage and enable children to articulate the meanings they attributed to their drawings and together with them investigate the complexity of their interpretations to actively make sense, negotiate and understand their drawings.

I conducted my investigation through the development of case studies of three children, two boys and a girl, who attended the same kindergarten class in a school in Malta. After acquiring the necessary ethical consent from all the respective gatekeepers, the parents and the children, in January 2012, I held a series of

preliminary visits in both the home and schools settings to get to know the children and their environment, inform them about the study and introduce them to the visual methods of data collection to be used.   Between February and April 2012, I conducted the main data collection phase, where I observed and with the help of the children and their parents, I video-recorded the drawing process. While I tried to involve the Kindergarten Assistant[2] as a data collector and hold conversations with her about her views of the children's drawings, this did not work out as predicted as she tended to be busy with managing the whole class. A more detailed discussion about the research methods I used is explained in Chapter Four.

1.7 The Research Questions

My initial interest, which emanated from my prior experience as an early years' teacher as well as my inspiration from the Reggio Emilia Approach (Malaguzzi, 1998) was in researching children's meaning-making processes through all the different modalities they use. However, I soon realised that this design was too broad and I needed to narrow my focus. After considerable thought, where I also reflected on the different aspects of the local practice, I opted to centre my investigation on the mode of drawing. This guided me to adopt a social-semiotics theoretical framework (Kress, 1997), which led me to explore the modes children use to draw, and the themes that emerge from their drawings. As from the onset of my study, I wanted to investigate how children perceive meaning-making in the two domains of the home and the school, and whether there was any relationship between both settings; an interest which I maintained. However, I chose to be more explicit and focus my attention on the influence these settings could have on the children's drawings. As a result, I formulated one overarching research question that helped me remain focused:

- How do four-year old Maltese children use drawing to create and communicate meaning at home and at school?

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[2] Kindergarten Assistant is the name given to an Early Years' practitioner in Maltese kindergarten settings. I shall sometimes be using the acronym KGA for Kindergarten Assistant.

Subsequently, I developed four, more specific sub-questions as follows:

- What *modes* do young children use to create their drawings at home and at school?

- What *themes* emerge from young children's drawings at home and at school?

- What *meanings* do young children create and communicate through their home and school drawings?

- What *influences* young children's home and school drawings?

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the international fora of discussion about young children's participation as it provides an exemplar of involving them in research. I hope that it can also act as a catalyst for the local context where as Psaila (2009) concluded, children's participation within educational settings tends to be overlooked.

Throughout this study I gave particular importance to the semiotic aspect of analysing children's drawings. I developed a *Data Cross-grid* which is my original contribution to the field of knowledge. As I explain in more detail in Chapter Four, this *Data Cross-grid* stipulates another way to analyse the form and content of children's drawings, by categorising the modes they use and the themes they represent. As I shall discuss in Chapter Eight, results from the *Data Cross-grid* can be used to provide an overview of the children's drawing patterns, tendencies and semiotic styles, which might contribute to identify a child's drawing profile and identity. I aspire that such a grid will be critically analysed, improved and perhaps used to investigate other modes children use to create meaning.

Another significant issue which arose in this thesis, and which might call for further debate, was the ethical dilemma I was faced with, when the three children requested that I use their real names and show their faces when using photos and video-clips. They did not accept to have their faces pixilated as they considered it to be dehumanising. Besides, they were adamant that they wanted to be acknowledged for their commitment towards the study and be recognised as authors and owners of their drawings: hiding their faces obliterated this. Basing my arguments on similar standpoints (see for example, Alderson and Morrow, 2011; Holliday, 2004;

Nutbrown, 2011) in Chapter Four, I contend that if I hold children as competent participants in the research process, then, ignoring their request and silencing their voices by masking their faces, could be considered as unethical and insensitive. While I realise that this might be a controversial issue and I acknowledge that such a stand might not be as appropriate in other studies, I hope that my challenging of "the silent elimination of images of children" (Nutbrown, 2011, p. 11), contributes to the ethical debate in the field of early childhood research within an agenda that respects their rights and voices.

This study is also significant as it fills a gap within the Maltese context, where, research in the area of early childhood education is limited, and no research to date has been conducted that addresses children's meaning-making through their drawing. Local studies (Amato and Genovese, 2009; Bankovic, 2012; Deguara, 2009; Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.), indicate that children attending Maltese kindergarten settings are exposed to formalised, adult-led structured literacy instruction, where drawing is undervalued and not deemed part of the literacy equation. While the current Maltese, *National Curriculum Framework for All* (Ministry of Education and Employment, 2012), acknowledges that there are several tools of communication, it limits communicative competences to the teaching and learning of the written and spoken language and the use of digital technology, thus, completely excluding other modalities. Therefore, this study might bring attention to the value of drawing as a mode of communication and meaning-making for young children.

1.9 Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is organised in eight chapters. In Chapter One, the introductory chapter, I discussed drawing as a semiotic configuration through which children construct and convey meaning. I also conferred my philosophical positioning and theoretical frameworks that informed this study. Furthermore, I discussed the research questions and the significance of the study to the early years' field. In Chapter Two I shall present the focal conceptual framework that guided this study, where I develop a critique of literature about social semiotics theory. In Chapter Three I shall discuss my review of literature about children's drawings, where, I make links between theoretical frameworks, current research and perspectives of drawing. In Chapter

Four, which is the methodology chapter, I shall present my design of the study and describe the data collection process. I also deliberate on the challenges of doing research with young children and the transpiring ethical issues. In Chapter Five I discuss the data analysis process, which I metaphorically compare to the weaving process. In Chapter Six, I shall present the findings and discussions of one case study in-depth. Subsequently, in Chapter Seven, I shall discuss the drawings of the three children in relation to the four research questions of the study. This thesis concludes with Chapter Eight which involves a discussion of the findings as well as recommendations for future research.

Jack and the beanstalk – by Bertly
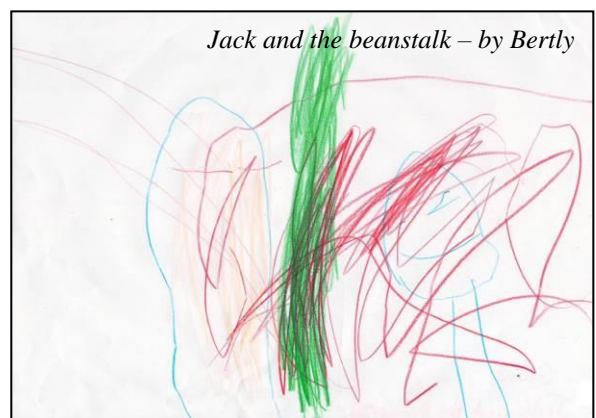
"Children make signs … which reflect the meanings they want to convey."

-Gunther Kress (1997, p.69)

Chapter 2

Social Semiotics: The Theoretical Framework Underpinning This Study

CHAPTER 2
SOCIAL SEMIOTICS:
THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
UNDERPINNING THIS STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the main theoretical framework that underpins this study, that of social semiotics. I begin by defining multimodality and discuss how children use multiple modes to create signs. Elaborating on the form and content of a sign and their function of interpretation, I argue that sign-making is a social process created and interpreted with others. I then discuss how children are very able at creating texts that are impregnated with layers of meanings. Defining drawing as a "visual language" (Hall, 2009, p.185) which children use to communicate their meanings and a sign to be interpreted, I conclude this chapter by describing meaning-making from a social semiotics perspective and discuss how signs are often considered as visual metaphors of meaning.

2.2 Defining Multimodality

Kress (2010) explains multimodality as a "normal state of human communication" (p.1) that emerges through the use of a "multiplicity of ways in which children make meaning, and the multiplicity of modes, means, and materials which they employ in doing so" (Kress 1997, p.96). This makes up what Stein (2008) defines as a "communicational ensemble" (p. 1). The theoretical concept of multimodality considers how the use and integration of multiple modes (ex. movement, gesture, written text) and modalities (ex. the body for movement and gestures, the pen for writing) create meaning (Hibbert, 2013; Jewitt, 2008; Vasudevan, 2011). Moreover, Kress and Street (2006) claim that multimodality is interested in what "signs 'are made of', the affordances, the materiality and the provenance of modes and signs in that mode" (p. viii). Comparably, Graham and Benson (2010) define multimodality as the way "modes work together to create overall summative meaning" (p. 95). On the other hand, Norris (2004) describes multimodality as interaction, where children use a range of different modes to create representations, convey meaning and communicate with others in an integrated and multi-layered way. I regard a definition of

multimodality as eclectic and multi-faceted, and one which, as Jewitt (2009a) and Stein (2008) claim, includes multi-theoretical and methodological perspectives that are extended from a range of multimodal resources that humans have developed to represent, interact and communicate their meanings.

Kress and Jewitt (2003), identify modes as an "organised set of resources for meaning-making" (p. 1). Kress (2008) classifies modes in two categories: time-based modes such as speech, dance, gesture, action, and music; and spaced-based modes such as image, drawings, paintings, sculpture, and other 3D constructions. In Table 2.1 I organised a number of modes under five elements, that differ, albeit overlap with Kress' time-based and space-based two-partite categories to include the linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial modes. The list is by no means exhaustive, but it provides an indication of the different modes that can exist in interplay with each other.

Table 2.1
Modes in Multimodality

Design Element	Mode
Linguistic	writing (font and typography), speech;
Visual	images, diagrams, pictures, drawing, painting, sculptures, construction, page layouts, screen formats, colours;
Audio	sound effects, music, voice, narratives;
Gestural	body language, posture, gestures, movement, facial expression, gaze, action, dance, emotion, behaviour;
Spatial	environmental, architectural, geographical meanings;

Kress (1997) states that, "no sign or message exists in just one single mode" (p. 12) but as Jewitt, (2008, 2003) and Walsh, (2009, 2008) also suggest, modes are always in multimodal synthesis, where they interact, converge, support and are in a synchronised interplay of each other. It follows that meanings communicated through a mode are separately and simultaneously intertwined with meanings made with those of other modes, where the interconnection between modes forms part of the creation of meaning (Jewitt, 2009a; Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, and Tsatsarelis, 2001). As various scholars (Cordes, 2009; Kress, 2010, 1997; Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Leander and

Vasudevan, 2009) claim, communication between modes is made available and shaped through the power of social, historical and cultural production which transforms, combines and interweaves modes simultaneously to develop what Lemke (2009) classifies as "synergistic construction of representational meaning" (p.162).

Several studies were seminal in accentuating children's multimodal ways of creating meaning. Hammond's (2009) and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) works for example, focused on analysing still images, while others (Jewitt, 2002; Hull and Nelson, 2005; Levy, 2009; Vincent, 2006), analysed children's interaction with screen texts and digital modes. Contrastingly, in her studies, Pahl (2009, 2003b, 1999b) focused on children's model-making and map-making (Pahl, 2001a); with the latter mode also investigated by Mavers (2007a). Other works on multimodality include Franks and Jewitt's (2001) and Flewitt's (2006, 2005b) studies that analysed children's posture, gesture, speech, gaze, facial expressions and body movement. Wohlwend (2009) on the other hand, analysed the mode of play while Kress (1997) and Kress et al. (2001) discussed the use of diagrams, space, colour, art, drama, music, sound-effect, action and animation. Other researchers (Anning and Ring, 2004; Coates, 2002; Coates and Coates, 2011; Dyson, 1993b; Hall, 2010b; Mavers, 2011; Pahl and Rowsell, 2005) explored how young children make meaning through written texts, drawings and words. What these studies commonly reveal is that each particular mode and every experience in accessing, reading, and interconnecting modes, provides unique experiences of multimodal meaning-making for children. Modes are then organized through dynamic relationships into sets of semiotic resources, which are reflected in complex interactions, that help children make meaning in a combined, multi-layered way (Jewitt, 2009c, 2008; Kress, 2010; Mavers, 2011). This notion is supported by findings from Haggerty and Mitchell's (2010) study, who from their exploration of how young children make meaning, concluded that some modes are better suited to some tasks than others and what can be derived from one mode might not be derived from another or from a combination of both; thus, emphasising the distinctiveness of each mode. Integrating pictures with words, for example, has become the contemporary way of presenting information that produces a new combined code of writing and image (Flewitt, 2006; Kress, 2000b; Unsworth, 2002). The implication of this is that we need to recognize that "all communication is multimodal" (Jewitt, Kress, Ogborn and Tsatsarelis, 2000, p. 339),

and separately or interactively, different modalities present different dimensions of meaning. Therefore, as Kress and Jewitt (2003) rightly claim, "in order to understand the new forms of multimodal representation in a world of multi-mediated communication and their implications and effects on learning, new ways of thinking, new theories of meaning and communication are needed" (p. 4).

To provide a cohesive and specific definition of modes, I draw on Kress et al.'s (2001) three theoretical principles, which create a basis of multimodal communication. Their first principle highlights the notion of "modes as media" (p.43) which are used to make and communicate meanings according to the social requirements of communities. In their second principle they consider all modes as equally significant, where they put speech, reading and writing at the same level of other modes. The third principle holds that as a result of interplay with each other, modes are always in a fluid state of transformation. I now discuss these principles in a sequential way, where I highlight the fact that these notions overlap and are intimately linked to the concept of multimodality.

2.2.1 Modes as media that communicate meaning

In their first principle, Kress et al. (2001) perceive modes as media that communicate meaning. While media are usually considered as the constituent through which meaning is realised (Bezemer and Kress, 2008), in a multimodal interplay, "media become modes" (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 20), where the distinction between the two becomes seamless. This integration and combination of different modes and media enables different kinds of interaction which allows children to create and recreate a range of new modes to generate different meanings more easily and comprehensively (Jewitt, 2009c, 2006; Kress, 2010, 2003a; Kress and Jewitt, 2003).

While what is a mode is still questioned, I base my definition of a mode on Kress et al.'s (2001) notion that a mode is the medium through which meaning is articulated: it is the meaning-making resource. A mode is fluid and dynamic, and changes according to the needs of the sign-maker who transforms existing modes and creates new ones according to his interest and needs. Jewitt (2008), states that modal affordance entails "what it is possible to express and represent easily with a mode" (p.

25), that is, how a mode is used, and what does it mean and do. Various researchers (Forman, 1994; Iedema, 2003; Kress, 2010, 2008, 2004, 2003a, 2000a, 2000b, 1997; Pahl, 2006b; Price, Björkvall and Kress, 2012), claim that each mode has different characteristics and properties which, through its affordances or constraints, offers different meaning-making potentials. For example, words convey a different meaning from pictures, where verbal narration conveys different notions from images (Hull and Nelson, 2005; Kress, 2003a). These in turn, shape and represent knowledge differently and create differential possibilities for development at the physical, cognitive and affective levels (Kress, 2004, 2003a). Consequently, each mode can be used for a specific purpose to create unique opportunities for meaning-making, where its affordance can lend itself to a transformation of its properties (Halliday and Hasan, 1985; Kress and Jewitt, 2003).

At this stage, I find it opportune to bring to the forefront Kress and Jewitt's (2003) claim that while children have the possibilities to choose which media and modes to use that will best communicate their intentions, the limitations of the modes available and the constraints of their affordances might make it difficult for them to fully represent all that an object might mean to them. Likewise, Katz and Cesarone (1994) argue, that the use of modes and media might demand of children to compromise between the affordances of the medium and the meaning they would like to communicate, where children have to find ways of how to make use of a mode to best capture the meaning they want to convey.

2.2.2 All modes are equally significant for meaning-making

Kress et al.'s (2001) second principle, leaves from the position that all modes are equally important for communication and meaning-making. However, societies, institutions and communities tend to prefer and value certain modes over others. A typical example is that of literacy, which, in formal school settings is frequently narrowed to the teaching of reading and writing. Meanings conveyed through these modes are more accepted and regarded as the main means of expression, and other modes of communication are frequently relegated to positions of secondary importance (Kress, 2010; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Leland and Harste, 1994; Makin, 2007). In their study which focused on the interactions of one teacher and the literacy experiences of a group of young people in a multi-ethnic school, Bourne and

Jewitt (2003) concluded that, language is not always the best or only mode to use for communication. Similarly, Norris (2004) maintains that while we think that we communicate best through language, yet multimedia has repeatedly illustrated that we also communicate through non-verbal modes such as gestures, gaze, pictures or diagrams, which can convey more meaning that words alone can. In an ever-changing world which is quickly embracing multimodality, we cannot be oblivious to what is happening around us and continue to think of learning and communication only in terms of writing and speech, but we should embrace multiple forms of literacy to include the manipulation and interpretation of visual and digital texts (Jewitt, 2006; Kress et al., 2001; Miller, 2007). Multimodal social semiotics is therefore, a theory which gives all modes equal importance and is interested in what modes can do in a dynamic and continuous interplay and reliance of each other (Kress, 2008; Mills, 2009; Vasquez, 2005).

Kress (2003a, 2000a, 1997) created a shift from envisaging literacy as a matter of competence in learning to read and write, which is a time-based, sequential and organised mode, to incorporate the analysis and interplay between a range of modes of communication, which are space-based and simultaneously organised. This enabled the transformation of the linguistic paradigm to perceive language as "design" (Jewitt, 2006, p.8). Jewitt (2003) explains design as the mixing of modes, while Kress and Jewitt (2003) and Kress (2004) amplify its meaning by stating that design refers to the use people make of the available resources at a specific moment and within a specific environment to realise their interests and meanings. When developing a text, the sign-maker creates his design by making use of different components of the text that include the positioning and juxtaposing of different modes (Bearne, 2009). Design is therefore, "the making of complex signs-as-texts" (Bezemer and Kress, 2008, p.174). Kress (2005) coined the term "reading as design" (p. 17) to mean the ways in which a text-producer orders a text into a semiotic arrangement of genre, layout, and designs it into a complex sign. Likewise, the reader of the sign can too manoeuver his way around the presented text and design it according to his interests. Therefore, concepts of writing as composition, and reading as decoding, have been extended to a notion of meaning-making by design.

2.2.3 Modes as a process of transformation and translation

Relating to Kress et al.'s (2001) third principle that modes are always in a fluid state of transformation, I consider modes in interplay between processes of transformation, translation and "transduction" (Kress, 1997, p. 29). The New London Group (2000) defines transformation as involving "re-presentation and recontextualization … [where] transformation is always a new use of old materials, a rearticulation and recombination of the given resources or available designs" (p. 22). Comparably, according to Bearne (2003) and Kress (1997), transformation refers to the children's ability to represent their mental thoughts into words or images. Using multiple modes, children constantly transform and flexibly modify their signs, which take form of texts, objects, stories or play episodes, into metaphors to derive new and more intensified meanings (Kress, 2010, 2003a, 1997; Mavers, 2011). In transformation, an image of an object takes a different meaning from a 3D construction of the same object, and if it is accompanied by words, those same words can give a different dimension to its meaning. In her studies, Pahl (1999b) illustrates the "fluid quality" (p. 23) of multimodality, where she brings the example of children moving within the same modes of drawing, writing and playing, to transform their drawings into props to play with.

In transduction, which refers to "remaking meaning across modes" (Mavers and Newfield, 2012, para. 1) the writing might be remade as drawing, or speech as action where an existing idea is translated through different modes. Beyond a process of transformation, transduction, involves:

> successive transitions from one mode of representation to another –
> from drawing; to coloured-in, labelled drawing; to cut-out object; to
> object integrated into a system of other objects, changing its potential of
> action; from one realism to another; from one form of imaginative
> effort to another.   (Kress, 1997, p. 29)

This process becomes increasingly complex when more than one mode is entailed. The shifting across modes, which is always context-related, inevitably brings translation and changes to the meanings conveyed, from "meanings made in one mode or ensemble of modes to meanings made in another mode or ensembles of mode" (Bezemer and Kress, 2008, p.175). In one of Pahl's (1999b) studies, a drawing of a duckling that related to the classical story of *The Ugly Duckling*, was for

example, transformed through the modes of drawing and cutting, into a robotic one with a Spiderman sword-like protrusion added to it. Transformation and transduction frequently produce hybrid texts which are nonlinear, interactive and dynamic, that allow the sign-maker to personalise the meaning-making process through his choice of modes (Anstey and Bull, 2006).

My perception of multimodality is based on these definitions, where I embrace the view that multimodality involves fluency and efficiency in being able to simultaneously read and combine different modes of a text, and to subsequently derive unique meanings that suit the interests, contexts and agenda of the child.

2.3 A Social Semiotic Theoretical Framework

Within this study, I perceive multimodality from a social semiotics viewpoint, as developed by Gunther Kress and others (Hodge and Kress, 1988; Kress, 2010, 2003a, 1997; Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, 1996). According to Siegel (2006), social semiotics is the most apt theory to understand multimodality as "it offers a way of thinking about meaning and text that does not privilege language over all other sign systems" (p. 68). Social semiotics is defined by Chandler (2007) as the "study of signs" (p. 1), as anything that stands for something else. In such an interdisciplinary field, the focus is on the orchestration, interpretation and expression of a range of signs across different modes, modalities and representations, where the aim is to comprehend how people in a particular social setting create and understand meanings.

Kress (2004) explains *social semiotics* by separating the term in two. The word *social* emphasises the social dimensions in which meaning is created in action: "namely to the role of people in meaning-making" (Kress and Jewitt, 2003, p. 9). In social semiotics, which here overlaps with socio-cultural theory, people are considered as active agents in shaping, creating, and exploring meanings in specific contexts, societies, cultures and situated moments in time (Hodge and Kress, 1988; Jewitt, 2009a; 2009b; Kress, 2010, 2004, 2000a; Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Siegel, 2006). The social aspect of how individuals mediate, communicate and represent their meanings in the concrete social world, is according to Kress (2010), the "source, the origin and generator of meaning" (p. 54) of the semiotic process. While meanings

can be similar for all humans, they are very culture-specific where the conditions, experiences and interpretation in which signs and meanings are made in one culture might not be the same as in another (Fulková and Tipton, 2011; Kress and Mavers, 2005).

Semiotics on the other hand, comes from the Greek word *semeion*, which means *sign*: it is the study of "signs, sign-makers and sign-making" (Stein, 2008, p.2). Considered by Saussure as "the science of the life of signs in society" (Kress, 2003a, p. 40), such an interdisciplinary field of "meaning-making enquiry" (Connelly, 2008, p. 160), is explained by Kress (1997) as "the meaning of systems of signs" (p. 6). Similarly, Albers (2007) defines *semiotics* as the "study of how meanings get communicated and how they are constructed to maintain a sense of reality" (p. 5). What makes social semiotics different from dominant discourses of semiotics, such as Saussure's (1974) perspective of language, discussed further down, is that it focuses on *making* rather than *using* and conforming to ready-made sign systems to create meaning (Kress, 2010, 2000a, 1997, 1993; Kress and Jewitt, 2003). In a theory of social semiotics, which puts people at the centre of the meaning-making process, people not only use resources that are made available to them but actively design, interpret and transform new semiotic resources and signs of communication (Kress, 2000a; Mavers, 2011).

In Halliday's (1994, 1974) social semiotic perspective, language is used in everyday conversations and literacy texts, both as an expression to communicate meaning as well as an interpretation and expression of cultural values, attitudes and beliefs (Kramsch, 2000). In his book *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*, Halliday (1994, 1978) shifted the focus of language from the structured and mechanical aspect of creating isolated sentences, to the text as discourse and a combination of socio-cultural meaningful functions. Therefore, he provided new perspectives on semiotics by combining the individual's social action in the environment with language as a way of meaning-making. As Halliday (1978), explains:

> In the microencounters of everyday life where meanings are exchanged, language not only serves to facilitate and support other modes of social action that constitute its environment, but also actively creates an environment of its own, so making possible all the imaginative modes of meaning … The context plays a part in determining what we say; and what we say plays a part in determining the context.   (p. 2 – 3)

To achieve this Halliday (1994) proposed a model with three functional overarching components that are necessary for presenting and producing a text for communication: the "ideational" (p. 23) or in other words, the subject matter, the "interpersonal" (Halliday, 1994, p. 23) that involves the construction of social relations and the "textual" (Halliday, 1994, p. 23) that refers to the creation of coherence. These three meta-functional principles are always "generated simultaneously and mapped onto one another" (Halliday, 1978, p. 112) to inform theories of multimodal communication that can be applied to all semiotic resources. The ideational component reflects the interpretation, presentation and representation of the world through experiences of actions and events that occur in the external world. The interpersonal component reflects a process of communication and meaning-making through the social interaction between people, where, by his means of text creation, the originator tries to influence others. The textual component puts together the ideational and interpersonal components to create a meaningful text with a coherent message that is relevant to a particular situation in time; one that reflects the full semiotic complexity of textual communication and multifunctional meanings that meet the needs of everyday social spaces and interactions. In simpler words, Halliday's meta-functions are concerned with "who does what to whom, where and when" (Stein, 2008, p. 20). So meaning, in this sense, structures the text to meet the interests of both the creator and the audience. Through Halliday's (1978) theory of functional linguistics, social semiotics shifted from analysing fixed, monomodal sign systems within a language, to analysing socially and culturally situated multimodal sign processes of communication (Iedema, 2003; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996; Kress et al., 2001). I now discuss the main principle of a social semiotics theory, that is, signs and sign-making.

2.4 Signs and Sign-making

The concept of sign-making is the basic unit in social semiotics. All representations are a complex form of sign making (Mavers, 2011, 2009a). Signs are recognised as "anything that communicates meaning" (Wright, 2011, p. 159); as "something that stands for something else in some way" (Danesi, 2007, p. 29). These can vary from everyday signs in public places such as restaurants and roads, to individually-made texts such as drawings, paintings and images (Chandler, 2007); the latter are of interest to this study. "Signs … are always multimodal" (Kress, 1997, p. 10) and rely on the availability of semiotic resources and their suitability to make meaning (Halliday, 1978; Stein, 2003). The definition of sign-making within a theory of social semiotics is captured by Kress (2010) who explains, that:

> Signs are always newly *made* in social interaction; signs are *motivated*, not *arbitrary* relations of meaning and form; the motivated relation of a *form* and a *meaning* is based on and arises out of the *interests* of makers of signs; the forms/signifiers which are used in the making of signs are *made* in social interaction and become part of the semiotic resources of a culture.   (p. 54 – 55).

Kress (2010) underlined three important principles of sign-making which provide a starting point for analysing meaning. These include the notions that "signs are motivated conjunctions of form and meaning; that conjunction is based on the interest of the sign-maker; [and this is done by] using culturally available resources" (p. 10). Thus, as Barthes (1964) claims, a sign is a composition of the "signifier" (p. 10), that is, an amalgamation of *form* and *content,* or in other words, the *how* and *what* children draw (Thompson, 1999) and the "signified" (Barthes, 1964, p. 10), that is, the meaning conveyed. Eisner (2004) suggests that the materialistic *form* of the sign (the signifier), that is, an image, object or sound, cannot be separated from its *content*, and these are inextricably linked to convey the sign-maker's *meaning* (the signified). This is in line with Kress' (2003a) concept, that "the sign is always meaning-as-form and form-as-meaning" (p. 37), which he explains as:

> one of *aptness*, of a 'best fit', where the form of the *signifier* suggests itself as ready-shaped to be the expression of the meaning – the *signified* – which is to be realised. *Aptness* means that the form has the requisite features to be the carrier of the meaning.
>   (Kress, 2010, p. 54 – 55).

A sign is therefore a complex, always newly-made message where the sign-maker uses his agency to identify the semiotic resource and culturally-shaped means, modes and forms of expression that are available and that are regarded as most suitable to communicate the meaning he wishes to express at a particular moment in time (Stein, 2003).

2.4.1 Form and meaning in signs

Social semiotics emerged mainly from two schools of thought: a continental, rationalist and structuralist form of semiotics, that derived from the work of Saussure (1974); and American semiotics, which is more behaviouristic and positivistic, that emerged from the work of Peirce (1931-58, as cited in Kress, 1997, 2003a, 2010). Both Saussure and Peirce, together with the more recent theory of Halliday (1978), provide a relationship between social interaction, cognitive action and meaning-making.

Ferdinand de Saussure was a pioneer in defining and analysing how sign systems work. He (Saussure, 1974) deemed the sign as an arbitrary combination of *form* and *meaning*, where he emphasised the relationship between the materialistic form of the sign and the concept and meaning it represents. The notion of the sign as created by the inner world of the individual is communicated to the external world in a tangible form within a stable and formal, abstract system of sign-making. Signs are then read and understood by people in social interaction with each other according to the conventions of the culture. Saussure (1974) adopted a structural stance of social semiotics, where the speaker and the receiver relate through the use of a closed, unchanging system of communication within conventional signs and patterns of language. According to Nöth, (1990) Saussure did not recognise the agency of the individual to shape signs or that of the receiver to interpret the text in order to create his own meaning.

In contrast, Peirce (1931-58, as cited in Kress, 2010, 2003a, 1997), provided insights in the use of signs as a representation of something else. His approach claims that the classification and interpretation of the sign by the receiver becomes in itself the meaning of the sign. Through "a process of ceaseless remaking of meaning, of *interpretants* newly formed in the transformative engagement with a prior sign"

(Kress, 2010, p. 62) readers actively transform, interpret and remake new signs according to their interests and knowledge. Peirce (1931-58 as cited in Chandler, 2007) proposed a triad model that consisted of the form and representations of the sign (the *representamen*), the interpretation and sense made of the sign (the *interpretant*) and what is represented (the *object*), which in Chandler's (2007) words, are all essential to qualify the sign. This suggests that the sign can be interpreted in many ways according to the specific meaning given by the sign-reader. Consequently Peirce distinguishes between three types of signs: *iconic signs*, which in their form communicate the meaning of the signified (for example, the drawing of a heart to mean love); *indexical signs*, where there is a cause in relation to that sign, (for example, smoke signals that there is a fire) and *symbolic signs*, where there is the relation between form and meaning as is acknowledged by convention (for example an image of children on a sign illustrates that there is a school nearby) (Kress, 2003a; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996).

In social semiotics, Saussure's theory (1974), that emphasises structure to making meaning that cannot be changed by individual action and Peirce's (931-58 as cited in Chandler, 2007) contradictory pragmatic notions that meaning-making is the result of the use and action of socially situated signs, are loosely amalgamated (Oksanen, 2008). Kress (2003a) rejects Saussure's idea of arbitrariness and perceives the process of sign-making as a transformative and agentive process between the form of the text and the sign-maker's identity, subjectivity and meaning-making. He argues that a new sign is always made that is motivated by the interests of the maker of the sign, his agency and his choosing the form for its aptness to express the meaning he wants to convey. While both Saussure and Peirce provided crucial insights about semiotics, yet, it was the work of Halliday (1978) and his notion that a comprehensive theory of communication includes other modes beyond the linguistic, that distinctly influenced and was further developed by Kress and others (Hodge and Kress, 1988; Kress, 2010; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; 1996; Kress et al., 2001).

Children's drawings are impregnated with layers of meaning. The study and interpretation of "layers of text" (Wright, 2010b, p.14) within social semiotics, derives from a branch of semiotics, generally known as "hermeneutics" (Danesi, 2007, p. 105). Hermeneutics perceives the visual text as having two levels of

interpretation: the message at the surface level (signifier) or, what Barthes (1977) calls the "denotation" level (p. 42); and a deeper (signified), "symbolic message" (Wright, 2010b, p. 15) or what Barthes (1977) defines as the "connotation" (p. 42) level. The denotation level, which is the "first order of signification" (Chandler, 2007, p. 142), involves an objective analysis of the form of the text, such as descriptions or representations (Frascara, 2004). It deals with the "direct, specific, or literal meaning we get from a sign" (Moriarty, 2005, p. 231); the "obvious or common-sense meaning of the sign" (Chandler, 2007, p. 139) or in other words, "what, or who, is represented here?" (Van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 37), to include concrete, depicted images of people, places, objects and events. On the other hand, the "connotation" (Barthes, 1977, p.42) level, which involves "higher levels of signification" (Penn, 2000, p.230) includes the interpretation of implied meanings "evoked by the object, that is, what it symbolizes on a subjective level" (Moriarty, 2005, p. 231), to include abstract concepts, emotions, ideas and values (Van Leeuwen, 2005; Frascara, 2004). It facilitates the understanding of the hidden meanings conveyed through images (Han, 2011). Various scholars (Fulková and Tipton, 2011; Kress and Mavers, 2005; Penn, 2000), claim that while meanings can be similar for all humans, they are very culture-specific and are regarded as "inducers of ideas" (Barthes, 1977, p. 23) that reflect socio-cultural associations, conditions and interpretations, where the signs and meanings made in one culture can carry different meanings in another. Thus, one has to have some cultural knowledge and be familiar with the context to be able to interpret the meanings conveyed. The concepts of denotation and connotation as a way to interpret children's texts, is useful for this study in that, they provide a structure of how to analyse meanings in children's drawings: a procedural outline which I explain in the Methodology Chapter.

2.4.2 Sign-making as a function of interpretation

Sign-making or text-making goes beyond the basic function of expression to involve also interpretation. Chandler (2007) and Kress (2003a), claim that anything can be a sign as long as it is interpreted by a sign-maker or a reader to signify something. Consequently, the reader does not merely try to figure out the meaning and the interest of the sign-maker; if this was the case, then, the reader would only be a passive recipient. Interpreting a sign or text involves the action of the reader who engages in an active process of interpretation based on his interests (Kress, 1997;

Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Mavers, 2009b). A distinction is therefore made between the making of the sign and its interpretation, where the first refers to the sign maker and the meaning he wants to communicate, while the latter refers to the sign as read and interpreted by the reader. Kress (1997), claims that both the creator and the reader are sign-makers. The first creates the sign to convey his meaning; the latter reads and interprets the sign according to the meaning he wants to give to the sign. Each creates and interprets the sign, guided by his experiences, culture, knowledge and interest. So from the same form, the sign maker and reader can create different meanings. Kress (1997) argues that the boundaries of the sign should be set by the reader rather than by the creator, where, using his agency, he transforms the sign and gives it his own interpretation and meaning. This creates an intersubjective process of meaning-making which as Toren (2007) explains, "entails that we make meaning out of meanings that others have made and are making" (p. 292). Toren contends that, when a sign-reader encounters a text, he assimilates the sign-maker's understandings to his own and in so doing, accommodates the ideas and world of the sign-maker's. Bringing examples from her longitudinal study where Fiji children drew pictures of their Sunday lunch, Toren maintains that these children were born in a ready-made world with established meanings, and through their texts, they created new meanings of the social worlds they were born in. This prompted her to conclude that meaning-making is an individual and subjective process that is always emergent and changing, which results from the shifting of modes, social contexts and time.

2.4.3 Sign making as a social process

Semiosis, sign making or sign decoding, is "the essence of what it means to be human" (Dyson, 1993a, p. 23) and "is always social" (Kress, 2009, p. 64). Being socially and culturally situated, signs are the result of human action, which have the intention to communicate meaning. Interrelating with socio-cultural theory, social semiotics acknowledges that the environment and circumstances surrounding the process of creating a sign are an integral part of sign-making (Kress, 2010, 1997). Thus, the social aspect of *semiosis* provides new insights into culture-specific meaning-making (Kress and Mavers, 2005). In a "social process of sign-making" (Jewitt, 2009a, p. 30) and "communication as sign production" (Stein, 2008, p. 2), individuals transform, regulate and create new signs, that are made and acknowledged within their specific social, cultural, and historical discourses, norms, genre and

practices (Jewitt, 2009a; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996; Mavers, 2011; Stein, 2008; Van Leeuwen, 2005). What is "on hand" (Kress, 1997, p. 29) ready to be used, read and interpreted is loaded with the meanings of that particular culture. As Kress et al. (2001) argue, this also means that the sign-maker has limited possibilities to generate new signs from the resources of representation that are available within that particular context, thereby creating a restricted potential for self-representation and meaning-making.

Kress (2010) describes "signs-as-meanings" (p. 55), where personal experiences are infused and integrated with conventional ones to create what the child wants to communicate. Basing his concepts on Halliday's (1978, p. 36) *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual* meta-functions mentioned above, Kress (2010) explains that from a semiotic perspective, meaning is made twice. It is "inwardly productive" (p.108) when the sign is interpreted and transformed by the reader according to his existing frameworks to "construct an experience" (Halliday, 1978, p. 36), (the *ideational*); then it is "outwardly productive" (Kress, 2010, p. 108), when through an interactive relationship between the viewers and the text (the *interpersonal*), meaning is conveyed through a compositional (the *textual*) representation. Thus, through the use of different modes that complement each other, the sign-making process is realised to illustrate the "relevance to the context" (Halliday, 1978, p. 36). As is pointed out by Mavers (2009b), this process regards representation and meaning-making as an individual process that is regenerated through inner resources of meanings and signs. Simultaneously, these meanings are also created within a social and cultural life, through action and interaction with others that are shaped by the norms of a specific social context.

Wertsch (1991) and Frisch (2006) argue that considering sign-making as a social process and embedding it within a socio-cultural perspective, expands textual analysis to comprise the context: dialogues, the material used, the environment and the culture the child lives in. This process comes into existence when two or more voices come into contact, mediate and interact: a speaker and a listener, or an addresser and addressee; where the sign-maker communicates his understanding to the other who is present or implied. This infers that there are always multiple ways and multiple interpretations of meaning; hence, multiple voices and 'multivoicedness' (Wertsch

1991, p. 67). Here, Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic concept which acknowledges that in sign-making multiple voices are in interaction with each other to convey a variety of perspectives, is relevant, in that, reading a text within a social perspective, is a process that is activated when an audience interprets the text. The sign-maker communicates his text to the reader, who not only reads it as is meant by the sign-maker but interprets the sign from his/her own perspective.

2.5 Children as Sign-makers

Kress (1997) argues that "children are competent and practiced sign-makers in many semiotic modes" (p. 10), where, making use of multiple signs, modes and literacies in a natural and spontaneous way, they show their ability to aptly connect form and meaning (Mavers, 2007b; National Council of Teachers of English, 1998-2008). During this process, children learn how different semiotic resources help create different symbols. In their representations, which are "open to all kinds of editing and re-description" (Abbs, 2003, p. 13) children as sign-makers become agents within their social lives and cultures. Their engagement with the text is frequently serious, intentional and purposeful to effectively produce meaning. The challenge is for adults to understand children's signs and meaning-making from their perspective. Kress (1997) claims that children demonstrate changes in the way they communicate and make meaning. While younger children tend to focus more on expressing what they want to represent, older children are also intrigued with communicating their meaning. This involves recognising the audience, its interest and needs as well as the environment in which the communication occurs.

Analysing the concept of social semiotics in relation to very young children, Kress, (1997) claims that prior to entering formal school, young children would not have learned to limit their meaning-making to culturally and socially facilitated forms and media. Once they enter formal education, children learn that their own semiotic disposition and ways of communication are frequently not valued and recognised in schools. Consequently, children are channelled and restricted to adults' ways where they learn that language and literacy are the main modes valued and used in school. The result of this "monomodal" (O'Halloran, 2009, p.98), way of representation, is that adults miss on seeing and understanding all the children's ways of communication with the consequence that some of their meaning-making is lost.

This is where, according to Kress (1997), schools fail to match the learning process with the children's potential, abilities, dispositions and their ways of creating and making meaning. The more children are integrated in the school culture, the more they are acclimatised in the shaped resources of the same culture (Kress, 2000a; Hodge and Kress, 1988). In this way children move from being agents of their own worlds of communication, to become communicative agents of their own society and culture.

2.6 Defining Meaning-making

People are meaning-makers: they have an inner predisposition to make meaning out of everyday experiences, which they express through their creation and interpretation of signs (Chandler, 2007; Danesi, 2007; Hartle and Jaruszewicz, 2009; Krauss, 2005). Meaning-making is a planned act of representation: the reason behind the making of a sign. It is the ability to refer to prior knowledge and interpret and create meaning from texts. Signs, which are the fundamental unit of meaning-making, are always meaningful (Kress, 2010, 2004; Kress et al., 2001; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, 1996; Mavers, 2011; Ormerod and Ivanic, 2002): "they are literally, full of meaning'" (Kress, 1997, p. 9). Social semiotics is interested in how meaning is produced and reconstructed through various signs, modes and texts.

Kress (2008) claims, that meaning is "made in many modes and made differently in each of the modes used" (p. 99). It is about *what* information is conveyed and *how* it is interpreted. Kress (1997) perceived meaning-making as "multisemiotic" (p. 79), that is created through several aspects of multimodality including "'interest'; the motivated sign; transformation; multimodality; representation; reading; resources for making of meaning; imagination, cognition and affect" (p. 87). In parallel to Kress' (1997) notion, Stein (2008) considers meaning-making as a social practice where children use a multiplicity of semiotic resources at one time to create and convey their understandings. Contrastingly, Mavers (2009b, 2007a, 2003) claims that while a social semiotics theory might seem to adequately develop a framework for meaning-making, yet, it does not provide a clear definition of making meaning; rather it attempts to "investigate meaningfulness" (Mavers, 2011, p. 38). However, Mavers still attempts to offer a description of meaning-making which she regards as a subjective "interpretation of what was done" (p. 38). The importance of subjectivity

to meaning-making is also highlighted by Wright (2008), who distinguishes meaning-making as a complex experience that involves multimodal acts, both in the resources used and in the texts produced, that appoint the engagement of the body, thought and emotions.

Meaning-making can also be the result of a process of "intertextuality" (Wright, 2007a, p. 3), which involves the shaping of a text and its meaning by another text (Dyson, 1993b; Ranker, 2009; Short, Kaufman, and Kahn, 2000). Intertextuality therefore includes the mediation of relationships between the social contexts and investigates how images act as "vehicles of meaning … [to] capture societal values about human relationships, myths, belief systems, and established norms" (Semali, 2002, p. 3). In a process of intertextuality, children differentiate, juxtapose and intermingle knowledge from different texts and transfer them across the boundaries of their intersecting social worlds of the home, the school and popular media (Wright, 2011) to recontextualise and create their own original texts that yield a "reverberation of connections" (Dyson, 1993b, p. 109). Thus, as is claimed by Bezemer and Kress (2008), recontextualisation, permits the transport of cultural meaning-making material such as genres, relationships, content, and symbols, between diverse sites, settings and texts, in a way that makes sense in the new context. On the other hand, to understand a text, a sign-reader has to generate links to his past experiences with other interrelated texts (such as books, pieces of art, play experiences, songs, films), and life connections that help bring meaning to the current text (Han, 2011; Semali, 2002; Short et al., 2000). These "intertextual threads" (Dyson, 2001b, p. 9), provide ways to trace and link the children's social, cultural, textual and communicative practices of their official and unofficial worlds of the school and the home to reflect their complex understandings, connections and range of experiences across their personal, social and ideological boundaries.

Meanings can be fluid, confusing and hypothetical. They move across modes, media and texts, through multimodal ensembles, time and space, and according to the needs of individuals, cultures and societies. They can change, shift and be transformed. What was meant now might not be accessible later, and what was conveyed is subject to interpretation depending on the individual, the context and the time. Each time there is a shift between modes, there is a shift in meaning-making possibilities. In

this way, modes interweave to create meaning (Franks and Jewitt, 2001). My understanding of meaning-making is based on Jewitt, et al.'s (2000) notion, who suggest that making a multimodal text is not merely an assembly of modes synchronised together but is a multi-layered process that stems from an interplay between a multiplicity of meanings that are interwoven and realised by the interactions between signs and modes. Different modes, media and material allow children the possibility to explore their semiotic aptness, which in turn can influence the meaning created, conveyed and interpreted (Mavers, 2011). Adopting the view as embraced by several theorists (Jewitt, 2009a, 2009c, 2008; Kress, 2010, 2003a; Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Stein, 2008) I argue that meanings are not fixed; they vary from time to time and from person to person, where "alternative meanings" (Mavers, 2011, p. 38), can be postulated by the form of the text, to create multiple interpretations and multiple connotations.

2.6.1 Sign-making as a visual metaphor of meaning

All sign-making is metaphoric (Kress, 1993; Kress and Jewitt, 2003). Perceived as another way to create meaning and "a feature of sense-making" (Egan, 1998, p. 58), a metaphor is one of the tools, which "enables us to see the world in multiple perspectives and to engage with the world flexibly" (Egan, 1998, p. 58). Chandler (2007) describes a metaphor as involving "one signified acting as a signifier referring to a different signified" (p. 127), while Van Leeuwen (2005) defines it as the "idea of 'transference' … transferred [ing] from one meaning to another, on the basis of a partial similarity between the two meanings" (p. 30). While initially metaphors were considered only as a language characteristic, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) insist that they dominate thought, processes and action. Deriving from cultural experiences, metaphors differ between cultures to draw on imaginative perceptions that facilitate connections to real life experiences and symbolise particular values (Edmiston, 2008; Hope, 2008).

Children's drawings are laden with metaphorical representations of their everyday life events which they intermingle with fictional stories (Nielsen, 2009). They use metaphors as playful drawing experiences that allow them the possibility to engage in imaginary narratives where they can translate fantasy into a reality. In fact, Hope (2008) argues that drawing is "a visual metaphor for ideas in the head and perceptions

of the observed world… [where] drawing acts as a bridge between the inner world of the imagination and reason and the outer world of communication and sharing of ideas" (p. 11). Metaphors dominate mythic thinking (Egan, 1998). Myths, which can be considered as an extended form of metaphors and complex sign systems, facilitate the understanding of experiences within a culture, that carry connotative ideological narratives to reveal meaning (Barthes, 1977; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

2.7 Children as Meaning-makers

There is a common agreement between scholars (see for example, Clark and Moss, 2005; Hall, 2008; Mavers, 2011, 2007b; Ormerod and Ivanic, 2002; Pahl, 1999b) that young children are "meaning-makers *par excellence*" (Wright, 2008, p.1). They are creative and resourceful meaning-makers where they represent their understandings effectively and skilfully by choosing from whatever "channels of communication" (Wright, 2010b, p. 75) are available to create complex, rich and detailed representations that are impregnated with multiple layers of meaning. Kress (1997) has shown how very young children "act multi-modally, both in the things they use, the objects they make, and in the engagement of their bodies; there is no separation of body and mind" (p. 92). For young children, "meaning is an act" (Eisner, 2013, p. 14), where the meaning of an activity lies within the activity. They use each resource, mode and medium available to create a sign and convey their meaning. By switching between different forms of representation and moving across different modes, children conceptually create compositions of texts or artefacts, as symbols of their interests and understanding where they come up with new combinations of form and a multitude of meanings and interpretations which can be regarded as their way to act in the world (Mavers, 2011, 2009b; Ormerod and Ivanic, 2002; Wright, 2011).

In their multimodal text creations, children make constant choices of how they can "bring[ing] meaning into being" (Kress, et al., 2001, p. 70). They decide which meanings to create and how those meanings are made. Their choice of media and modes depends on their availability, appropriateness and affordance to suit the need of representation and meaning-making of that particular sign (Mavers, 2011). Focusing on children's ordinary everyday experiences, Mavers, (2011), investigated "what might be taken for granted" (p. 10), to bring out "the remarkable" (Mavers, 2011, p. 10) in the children's everyday "unremarkable" (Mavers, 2011, p.10)

experiences of drawing, writing and mark-making. Mavers (2009b) claims that children's experiences are laden with serious semiotic processes and meaning-making, where, as Pahl (1999b) suggests, in their representations children "play within meanings they recognise and construct new meanings from material they already use" (p. 83).

Various researchers (Kenner, 2000; Kress, 1997; Kress and Jewitt, 2003) have explored how children use signs to create meaning. In their study, Anning and Ring (2004) claim that when children, for example, make cut outs from their drawings, magazines or greeting cards, cardboard, fabric, or from any other resources they find in the house to glue to their 2D representations, they would be using and mixing different modes in interplay with each other to simultaneously bridge, transform and create multi-layered meanings. While choosing and making use of the modes and resources available, they are also putting together their own and conventional knowledge to create a unique design, and hence form a particular meaning. Conforming to this, Mavers (2011) brought the example of Kerry who transformed a piece of tractor-feed paper into a-shaped-pierced-heart-with-an-arrow artefact. The heart, which is a conventional sign of love, is made with a mixture of her knowledge of colours, as well as conventional writing to construct and convey her meaning. Another example is provided by Kress (1997), who referred to his son's drawing to show how he used his knowledge of cars and their 'wheelness' to produce an image of a car represented by circles. The process of meaning-making allows children to develop their understandings through the use of different modes, sign-making and interpretation (Ranker, 2009).

Pahl (1999b) claims that if adults watch children working at their creations and listen to their narrations that accompany and explain the meanings behind their texts, they would be able to uncover the complex and intriguing ways of how children receive, translate and transform ideas into different designs. This is supported by Kress (1997) who observed that children use and interpret things in multiple and different ways where an object is "always more than one thing" (p. 141). As Mavers (2011) advises, the process of analysing children's meaning-making experiences is therefore a challenging task for any adult to keep track and understand. Kress (1997) argues that the real challenge lays in the fact that frequently adults fail to recognise the

children's perspectives and do not understand the many forms and modes children use to make meaning. Kress (2003b) maintains that while both adults and children use the same means to make and transform meaning, yet, there is a significant contrast between their different ways of meaning-making. Adults use conventional ways of meaning-making that are based on the "correct use of culturally ready-made resources" (p.154); contrastingly, children's means for meaning-making are based on their need to realise and express what they would like to represent, which in turn are guided by their interest of the moment. Wright (2010b) suggests that in an environment which embraces children as meaning-makers, adults should be sensitive to the children's "processes of textual production" (Chandler, 2007, p. 210) and to their "authorial intentions" (p. 198), to be able to understand their representations. This implies that adults should go beyond *what* is represented at the surface level and focus on *how* children produce a text and present their understandings and *why* (Hodge and Kress, 1988); hence, as Pahl (1999b) suggests, there should be an attempt to uncover the meanings, while taking into consideration the history, the context and influences behind a representation. This resonates with Wright's (2011, 2010b) perspective, who suggests that adults should not only try to understand the children's representation by interpreting the *content* drawn by the children, but should extend their analysis to the symbolic form that is being communicated. This calls for a co-construction of meanings between adults and children that enables the former to bridge the gap between the internal, subjective, meaning-making processes of the latter and the external, inter-subjective level of communication and interpretation of the readers in the community (Davis, 2005; Hall, 2008). This can only be achieved if, as Clark (2007) postulates, children's representations become the focus of an exchange of interpretations and meaning-making between children, practitioners, families and researchers.

2.8 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter I provided an overview of social semiotics, which is the main theoretical outline of this study. I began this chapter by defining multimodality where I discussed the use of modes to create form and meaning in signs. I then moved to discuss how children use metaphors as signs to create meaning. I concluded the chapter by considering children as meaning-makers par excellence.

In Chapter Three I present a critique of the literature about children's drawings where I discuss drawing as a mode of meaning-making.

Things falling in my dream – by Thea

"Drawing acts as a bridge between the inner world of the imagination and reason and the outer world of communication and sharing of ideas."

- Gill Hope (2008, p.11)

Chapter 3

Literature
Review:
How
Key Theorists
Have Perceived
Children's
Drawings

CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW:
HOW KEY THEORISTS HAVE PERCEIVED
CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a critique of the literature and discuss how key theorists have perceived children's drawings over time. I also analyse how theorists have influenced the way we currently investigate children's drawings. Referring to a theory of social semiotics, I begin this chapter by discussing drawing as a visual language of communication which children use to communicate their meanings. I also consider mark-making, which is the first form of drawing, as a sign that carries meaning. I then move to discuss the content of children's representations, where I acknowledge the importance of talk as a supporting mode to understand the hybridity of their drawings and ways of meaning-making. Subsequently, I examine the children's drawing styles and how drawing aides in the construction of their identity. In the last section, I refer to socio-cultural theory, where I discuss the main factors that influence the children's drawings within the contexts of the home and the school.

3.2 Drawing as a Visual Language of Communication

From a social semiotics perspective, drawing, as with any other text production, is recognised as an essential component of multimodal meaning-making (Kendrick and McKay, 2004; Kress, 2000b, 1997; Wright, 2011, 2003). It is a "multisemiotic" (Kress, 1997, p. 79) representational mode that uses a multiplicity of semiotic means concurrently which help children construct and communicate ideas, knowledge and experiences to others (Matthews, 2003; Wright, 2010b). For the scope of this study, I regard children's drawings as a single, multimodal act that is composed of a complex semiotic system where different modes, including writing, cutting and gluing, as well as expressive vocalisations and talk, amongst others, intermingle and interact into one "semiotic unit" (Wright, 2011, p. 160) to create a cohesive and meaningful representation.

In social semiotics, drawing, which is acknowledged as one of the first modes young children use to communicate, is not only valued as an end-product but also as a complex process of symbolisation. Children's drawings provide them with ways to "shape and reshape, revise and revision" (Abbs, 2003, p. 13) their hidden meanings and subjective understandings and interpretations. As discussed in Chapter Two, like with all other semiotic texts, children's drawings can be analysed both at the form level (*how*), as well at the content level (*what*). The content is then analysed at the "denotation" (Barthes, 1977, p. 42) level, which involves an objective interpretation of what is being represented and which together with the form of the drawing make up the signifier, and at the "connotation" (Barthes, 1977, p. 42) level, where the textual characteristics of the drawing are analysed for the meaning implied and conveyed, or in other words, the signified. From such a theoretical perspective children are considered as authors of their representations who are able to participate in discourses of form, shape and meaning-making (Fulková and Tipton, 2011).

Within this study, I perceive drawing as a visual language; a tool of mediation (Brooks, 2009b; Dyson, 1993a), that aids the "formulation of thinking and meaning"

(Brooks, 2005, p. 81) in young children. As several scholars (Albers, 2007; Davis, 2005; Edmiston, 2008; Hall, 2010b; Kress, 1997), claim, when drawing, children use multiple signs to internalise their concepts of the world to themselves, and to externalise those representations to others in a "tangible and permanent form" (Thompson, 1995, p. 11). Accompanying their images with other modes such as narratives and talk, children use their drawings as "an instrument through which … processes are played out" (Wright, 2011, p. 157). Drawing, therefore, is a complex process where thought, body and emotions are in constant interplay with each other (Wright, 2007b, 2003). This notion takes drawing beyond the domain of art to the levels of thinking, meaning-making and sense-making, which in turn informs the way in which we look at, interpret and understand children's drawings and art education in general (Cox, 2005).

3.3 Theories of Children's Drawings

Anning (2003) and Ivashkevich (2009), report that there has been a change in the way children's representations are analysed: from investigating drawings from a traditional, developmental way, which focuses on the appraisal of the final product, to a more post-modernist stance, that holds an interest in exploring contextualised meaning-making, where the process of drawing as well as socio-cultural influences are valued. In this section I discuss this transition and how six notorious scholars of young children's drawings, namely Luquet (1927/2001), Lowenfeld and Brittain (1947/1987) and Kellogg (1969), and more recently Dyson (1993a), Matthews (2003, 1999, 1998, 1997), and Coates and Coates (2011, 2006), perceived children's drawings along the years. In Table 3.1 below I summarise the different ways the six scholars interpreted children's drawings, where I represent their descriptions against age-related levels that are situated within a sequential and cumulative process. The levels should only be considered as indicators of how children draw rather than be interpreted as strict level descriptors, as otherwise it would translate itself into a deficit model, a position which I do not support.

Table 3.1
Children's drawings as situated within a sequential and cumulative process.

Approx age of child	Drawing from a developmental stage theory perspective			Drawing as intentional mode for meaning-making					
	Luquet (1927/2001)	Lowenfeld and Brittain (1947/1987)	Kellogg (1979/1969/1959)	Dyson (1993a)		Matthews (2003, 1999, 1998, 1997)		Coates and Coates (2011, 2006)	
	Description			Description	Examples	Description	Examples	Description	Examples
0– 2 years old			*Expressive gestures*: The Basic Scribbles: dots and lines.	• Initial exploratory behaviour of available media with no intention to symbolise.	•Explores body movement and graphic marks of drawing.	• *First generation structure*: Emergence of three basic actions which are grouped around objects and people that will be of importance in early drawings.	• *The vertical arc* – Actions / movement using whole body - reaching, touching and grasping objects and surfaces. Later, this vertical arc results in drawing spots. • *The horizontal arc* – scattering, gathering and retrieving objects. The child uses a marker to make horizontal strokes. • *The push pull* – Hand-eye co-ordination to reach, grasp, push and pull objects. Later the child uses a marker and experiments with various actions to create different marks on a surface.	• Lines as the technical basis for drawing.	• Circumferential outline to make figures or objects.
2 – 3 years old	• *Fortuitous realism:* Unintentional scribbles, mark-making and trace-making.	• *The Scribble stage*: • *Disordered* – uncontrolled markings. • *Longitudinal* - controlled repetitions of motions. • *Circular* - further exploring of controlled motions demonstrating the ability to do more complex forms. • *Naming* - the child tells stories about the scribble.	•*Placement Patterns*: Line formations that form a pattern drawn within a well-defined perimeter. •*Emergent diagrams and shapes:* Using single lines to form crosses and other shapes. •*Combines and aggregates:* A combination of two or more diagrams or shapes. •*Mandalas, suns and radials:* Circular shapes with straight lines dividing the centre or emanating from the border, or radiating from a point.	• The shaping of symbolic behaviour by social activity: using marks, gestures and words as a social activity to symbolise and represent objects and actions. • Meaning comes from gestures where drawing is used as a prop to supplement other modes and is combined in social play.	•Begins to use tools to create meaning in drawn marks – ex. Making several marks while jumping with a marker and interpreting it as being a rabbit jumping. • Drawing is used to complement story-telling and play.	• *The second generation structure*: Learning to separate and recombine drawing actions in a variety of ways.	• *Continuous rotation* – Continuous rotations in two or three dimensions emerge. Varied horizontal arc and push pulls by adopting the to-and-fro movements transformed into circular trajectory. • *Continuous lines* - Lines become attached to each other. • *Seriated displacements in time and space* Discontinuation of the line by dots or creating a series of points which follow a linear course. • *Demarcated line-endings* – Beginnings and endings of lines are marked by dots and dashes. Drawing actions may be represented by whole body movements such as hopping, jumping and twirling. Children begin to classify actions and their effects. • *Travelling zigzags* – Waves appear as push pull actions.	• Development of geometric symbols or schemas	• Drawing circles, followed by squares, rectangles and when mastered triangles.

Approx age of child	Drawing from a developmental stage theory perspective			Drawing as intentional mode for meaning-making					
	Luquet (1927/2001)	Lowenfeld and Brittain (1947/1987)	Kellogg (1979/1969/1959)	Dyson (1993a)		Matthews (2003, 1999, 1998, 1997)		Coates and Coates (2011, 2006)	
	Description	Description	Description	Description	Examples	Description	Examples	Description	Examples
3 – 6 years old	• *Failed realism:* Failing to create an adequate representation of an object from an intentional drawing • *Intellectual realism:* Children draw what they know rather than what they see.	• *The preschematic stage:* Circular images with lines which seem to suggest a human or animal figure. During this stage the schema (the visual idea) is developed. The drawings show what the child perceives as most important about the subject.	• *Early pictorialism:* Early pictures of animals, buildings, vegetation and transportation	• Begin to see similarities between real objects and their own graphic representations. • Talk accompanies drawings in an attempt to give meaning to their creations and to communicate their meanings to others. • Drawing is used as a mediator, to convey thoughts and intentions which in return might shape the drawing. • The emergence of writing as a prop to supplement other symbolic tools, such as gesture and talk.	• Children's play might help them create and transform their drawing and subsequently, the drawing can lead to a new kind of play.	• *The third generation structure*: Mark-making is organised and transformed. Structural principles are discovered. • The use of talk to describe and support the drawing. • The use of written symbols in drawings.	• *Closure* – Dots are enclosed in a circular shape that separates them between inside and outside. • *Parallelism* – Lines are drawn next to each other. • *Collinearity* – Combining two or more drawing actions ex. connecting a series of dots or shapes to a line. Consequently, they begin to draw objects and figures with more detail. • *Angular attachments* - Lines are connected to each other to form contrasting angles. • *U-shapes on baseline* –A u-shape mark is attached to a line and is imagined to rest. • *The production of visual narratives* – Talk is used to name and create a story from the drawings to represent meaning. • *The production of written forms* – The child uses the above-mentioned structures to create linear flow of handwriting; the writing of individual letters or characters either separately or in strings, like sentence forms.	•Drawing what they know. •Mixing of plans and front elevations. •The baseline and the sky line. •Avoiding overlapping •Disjunctures of scale •X-ray pictures •Emergent writing accompanies drawing	• Drawing objects with detail from memory. • Children use 3-D perspectives to create their own symbolic space perspectives. • Identifying grass / earth with a baseline acting as a support for objects and the sky with a skyline. • Drawing is simple with objects clearly separated . • Some objects are drawn proportionally large showing its significance to the child. • Simultaneously showing both the inside and outside of an enclosure to illustrate the importance of the inside structure. • Making marks / patterns as a response to writing made by adults.
6 + years old	• *Visual realism:* Children draw what they see.	• *The schematic stage:* Arriving at a 'schema', drawing an object in a definite way that illustrates the child's knowledge of the subject. Everything sits on the baseline.		• Using writing as a mediator: writing becomes a medium to give meaning to drawings replacing other media such as movement, play and talk. Distinction between drawing and writing is made.					

3.3.1 Children's drawings from a developmental perspective

George-Henri Luquet (1927/2001) can be regarded as a classical and important contributor who analysed children's drawings from a developmental perspective. He regarded children's first drawings as scribbles, unintentional trace making and simple creations of enjoyment. He believed that as children grow older, they acquire new skills that help them improve their drawings into more sophisticated and realistic ones. Through his work, Luquet (1927/2001) coined four terms to indicate the different stages of children's development in drawing: the terms "fortuitous realism", "failed realism", "intellectual realism" and "visual realism" (p. xvi-xviii), remain influential even if controversial (Refer to Table 3.1, column 1). Fortuitous realism indicates the phase, when the child unintentionally creates a drawing without a purpose, but through his realisation and interpretation, notices a similarity between his marks to a real-life object; a likeness which adults might not always see. The second stage of Luquet's failed realism is described as that phase when children intentionally try to create a drawing of a realistic object but, because of their alleged "synthetic incapacity" (Luquet, 1927/2001, p. xvi-xviii), and their lack of adequate motor skills, poor positioning and spatial relationship between objects and proportion, they fail to create a concrete resemblance as intended. Imperfections and lack of details make their drawing look less like the real representation. Luquet's next stage of intellectual realism refers to drawings that are based on what the children know, remember and experience rather than on what they see. This implies that children's drawings might not represent real life, but might include aspects of an object which are not necessarily visible from the location they are being observed. At this stage, according to Luquet, the child is more able at creating detailed drawings. The last stage of visual realism refers to children's drawings which capture the shapes of objects or scenes from a fixed point based on what they see (Barrett and Light, 1976; Jolley, 2010; Matthews, 1999). Luquet claimed that as children develop from intellectual realism to visual realism they come closer to adults' ways of representation, while simultaneously losing their passion to draw. According to Luquet, children frequently are tied to intellectual realism. Sato (2007) points out that for this reason, Luquet opposed structured art education that strives for aspects of visual realism in children's drawings.

Another significant description of children's artistic development was presented by Lowenfeld and Brittain (1947/1987), in their book *Creative and Mental Growth*. Like Luquet, they based their assumptions on stage theory where they regarded children's drawings as an incomplete version of adults' representations. Collecting hundreds of children's drawings, they identified six incremental and progressive stages (Table 3.1, column 2) of children's artistic development that start from early childhood to adolescence, where they regarded children's art as intertwined with their holistic growth. Ignoring the first two years of development, Lowenfeld and Brittain (1947/1987) identified the first stage as the "scribbling" (p. 189) stage, that evolves between the ages of two to four years, to indicate the children's emergent understanding of symbolism. Lowenfeld and Brittain (1947/1987) divided this first stage, into four sub-stages:

    i)   disordered, uncontrolled markings;

    ii) longitudinal, controlled repetitions of motions;

    iii) circular, exploring controlled motions to create complex forms;

    iv) naming, the child tells a story about his image.

Implying that children aged two years and older are only able to scribble in a disordered and uncontrolled way is, in my opinion, very limiting and highlights the deficit approach of this model.

In the second phase, which Lowenfeld and Brittain (1947/1987) label as the "pre-schematic" (p. 220) and which develops between the ages of four to six years, the child is regarded as able to draw recognisable forms of circular images to create drawings of humans or animals. They argue that the size of the object at this stage might indicate its importance to the child; a concept with which Coates and Coates (2011) agree. In the third phase, defined as the "schematic stage" (Lowenfeld Brittain, 1947/1987, p. 258), which develops in children between the ages of seven to nine, children draw an object in a definite way that reflects their knowledge of the subject. This stage is dominated by the concept of space, where objects are drawn in relation to each other and within a baseline and skyline as well as by x-ray pictures which illustrate the importance to draw what is inside for the child; two concepts which Coates and Coates (2011) consider as occurring at an earlier age. For the aim

of this study I only listed these first three stages in Table 3.1 as these specifically relate to the early years. However, Lownefeld and Brittain's (1947/1987) model also includes the stage of "dawning realism" (p. 306) that develops between the ages of nine to eleven, the "pseudo-realisim" (p. 391) stage which develops at the ages of eleven to thirteen, and the final stage of a "period of decision" (p. 436) which develops in adolescence. In their fourth stage of dawning realism, Lowenfeld and Brittain emphasise the children's awareness of their lack of ability to represent objects as they look. In the pseudo-realistic stage, which is inspired by visual stimuli and the child's subjective experiences and interpretation, the end-product takes a dominant value. In the last stage of a period of decision, children, according to Lowenfeld and Brittain, become more critical of their artwork and aware of their inability and immaturity in their drawings, especially when compared to those of adults. This attitude frequently discourages children, prompting them either to give up, or persevere and take up art seriously. Frisch (2006) claims that while Lowenfeld and Brittain's study was relevant and influential at their time, it did not include contextual data and ignored social and cultural influences. A similar albeit different study to Lowenfeld and Brittain's (1947/1987), was conducted much later by Machón (2013), who through his analysis of hundreds of children's drawings, came up with a list of processes that reflect the children's graphic development from the pre-scribble to the schematic, realism and symbolic stages. However, Machón also considered the use of drawing as a language and representation of space.

In her cross-sectional studies of children's drawings, Kellogg (1979, 1969, 1959), intentionally eschewed social and cultural differences, and emphasised that children's drawings evolve solely out of scribbling and follow a developmental "visually logical system" (Kellogg, 1969, p. 14), that reflects their maturation and stages of development. Starting from twenty "basic scribbles" (Kellogg, 1969, p.14) of dots and lines, loops, spirals and circles, that form the basics of all graphic representation, Kellogg (1969) states that children then move to draw a combination of diagrams and shapes, followed by "pictorialism" (p. 114), that is, the drawing of humans, animals and objects, which she defined as the last stage of young children's drawings (Table 3.1, column 3). Kellogg's affirms that during this transitional process, children's drawings develop, where they learn to transform symbols into images to consciously

represent their perceptions. It is at this stage, according to Kellogg, that children begin to function as artists, with a personal style and a repertoire of visual ideas. Staples New and Cochran (2007) drew a difference between Lowenfeld and Brittain's (1947/1987) and Kellogg's (1969) models, claiming that, while both presented children's drawings in a developmental framework, the former regarded children's drawing in relation to symbolism while the latter interpreted the appearance and intensity in children's drawings in terms of mechanical aspects and their interests in creating balanced abstract designs.

A limitation with such studies, according to Cox (2005), is that children's drawings are interpreted from an adults' perspective, where the focus is more on what they observed rather than what the child was trying to communicate. Anning and Ring (2004) claim that in such developmental theories, there tends to be more focus on the technical and cognitive aspects of the drawings rather than on the content, explicitly isolating and disregarding children's emotions and thought processes, their intentions, the contexts they live in and the meanings they create. As claimed by Matthews (1999), children do not begin to represent their perceptions when their drawings are a "correct form of representation" (p. 93) but as from their very first markings, children draw with intention and meaning. What is of more concern in such models is that they portray drawing in a deficit way that is geared at creating accurate representations towards reaching visual realism, which children frequently lack (Anning and Ring, 2004). Contrastingly, what can be termed as immature drawing, or a distortion of what is perceived, can be better defined as exploration or discovery of the process of drawing (Cox, 2005). Having said this, Coates and Coates (2011) claim, that Kellogg (1969) provided valuable insights into young children's ways of representation that can aid adults in understanding the children's meaning-making processes attributed to their drawings.

3.3.2 The emerging discourse of contextualised meaning in drawing

Other scholars moved away from analysing children's drawings from only a developmental perspective to embrace one of intention and meaning. Dyson's (1993a) model, which was later developed by Ring (2001), and Anning and Ring

(2004), differs from Kellogg's (1969) even if one can draw some parallelisms. While Kellogg focused mainly on children's cognitive development in drawing, Dyson (1993a) concentrated more on drawing as a vehicle for meaning-making. The fourth and fifth columns in Table 3.1 illustrate a summary with examples from Dyson's model. She first perceives drawing as an exploratory behaviour and later on as a tool for representing objects and actions. Subsequently, children begin to use drawing as an additional prop in play to ultimately utilise it as a mode of meaning-making. According to Dyson (1993a), initially children do not make distinctions between drawing and writing and use these two modes intermittently, to weave their own stories in support of their drawings. Maybe, the evolvement of the role of drawing and its relationship to talk and writing for children's meaning-making is the most significant observation in Dyson's model, a notion which Matthews (1999) and Coates and Coates (2011) also refer to.

In his book *The Art of Childhood and Adolescence: The Construction of Meaning,* (1999) and other publications (2003, 1998, 1997), Matthews moved away from a paradigm of "naïve realism" (Matthews, 1998, p. 90), to create a framework where he combined children's visual representations to their cognitive and affective aspects. In his theory of the "4 dimensional language of infancy" (Matthews, 1997, p. 285), that recognises the children's contextual and social environment, Matthews (1999) created a model of "action representation" (p. 21) which he presented through a scheme of three "generation structures" (Matthews, 1999, p.21) (Table 3.1, sixth and seventh columns). In the following discussion, I draw comparisons between Matthews' (1999) theory and Kellogg's (1969) perspectives. In his "first generation structure" Matthews, (1999, p. 21) highlights the children's exploration of pre-verbal gestures, or what he called, "three basic actions" (Matthews, 1999, p. 21) that include the drawing of strokes, spots and marks which serve as a way to signify later representations. Even if this stage strikes significant parallelism with Kellogg's (1969) notion of basic scribbles, Matthews' (2003, 1999) concept differs, in that he claims that children's early marking actions are far different from the scribbling stage as presented in conventional theory. He explains that as from the first representations, children engage in an "investigation of visual and dynamic structure" (p. 49) of movement, shape and emotions. At the same time they discern the

representational possibilities of mark-making, where children exhibit semantic and structural characteristics that are full of intention. He argues that as from these early representations, children record an event or object through their own perception and "process of attention" (Matthews, 1999, p.93), where drawing becomes a synchronisation of body movement, dialogue and sound effects that afford them with ways of making sense of the world around them. This view of children's scribbling as intentional and purposeful, is also supported by Hope (2008) who likewise claims that even from their first mark-makings, children are exploring the effect of their movement and the use of the crayon to create a mark on paper.

In Matthews' (1999) "second generation structure" (p.25), children create continuous rotations and lines, amongst others. Once again this is comparable to Kellogg's (1969) notion of emergent diagrams where children use lines, crosses and other shapes to draw. One of the drawing activities which Matthews (1999) focuses on in his "third generation structure" (p.25) is "collinearity" (p.27), that is, the children's activities of combining two or more actions to draw objects and figures with more detail. This is akin to Kellogg's (1969) phase of early "pictorialism" (p.114) and the emergence of early images. While Matthews does not directly refer to the children's use of language (verbal and written) in their drawings as part of his generation structures, yet, like Dyson (1993a), he also deals with the complex interrelationship between the children's drawings and the purposeful use of verbal utterances and conventional written symbols. According to Matthews (1999), as part of the "third generation structure" (p. 25) children begin to differentiate and intentionally make use of the different semiotic systems such as pictorial images, numbers and letters to create their representations and use talk to describe their drawings. Matthews (2003) claims that drawing extends language which in turn organises drawing. What is intriguing about Matthews' (2003, 1999) position is that while he acknowledges children's drawings within a developmental perspective, unlike Kellogg (1969) he does not tie it to a stage-like process but considers it as a "seamless continuum … organised and meaningful right from the start" (Matthews, 2003, p. 59/26).

Informed by Kellogg's (1969) and Matthews' (1999) patterns in children's drawings, together with their analysis of up to 800 children's self-directed drawings, Coates and Coates (2011) came up with a set of broad descriptions of children's structures in drawing for meaning (Table 3.1, columns eight and nine). Similar to Kellogg's (1969) notion of "expressive gestures" (p. 14) and Matthews' (1999) "first generation structure" (p. 21), Coates and Coates (2011) define children's first means of drawing as composed from lines which they intentionally use to make figures and objects. This is followed by the development of geometric symbols or schemas, a pattern also identified by Kellogg (1969). Subsequently, according to Coates and Coates (2011), children begin to draw what they know while mixing plans and front elevations. Drawing within a baseline and a skyline without overlapping becomes another important characteristic of children's drawings. Consequently, and similar to Dyson (1993a) and Matthews (2003), Coates and Coates (2011) highlight the importance of emergent writing as a response and support to children's drawings.

There is an obvious overlap and links between the six models. While all give importance to children's first level of elementary drawing behaviour and exploration of basic movements, first actions and patterns, these are perceived differently by the different theorists. Luquet (1997/2001), Lowenfeld and Brittain (1947/1987) as well as Kellogg (1969) analysed children's drawings largely from a developmental aspect based on visual realism, where they interpreted children's drawings as observable patterns within structural features, stages and levels. Pariser (1995) strongly criticises such a stance and questions the "unilinear graphic development and the presumed direct relationship between the achievement of 'realistic' perspectival rendering and the development of higher cognitive skills" (p. 94). He also claims that a stage theory perspective is narrow as it ignores the children's social, historical and cultural contexts. It also assumes that there is no relationship between drawing, thinking and other modes of communication. This argument is supported by Atkinson (2009) who claims that children's drawing should not be assessed by using particular models of development, as these tend to ignore the functioning significance and personal meaning the drawing has for the child.

Contrastingly, in their analysis of children's drawings, Dyson (1993a), Matthews (1997) and Coates and Coates' (2011), claim that as children draw from memory to include their perceptions and interpretations of an object, they create endless possibilities for meaning-making. Such flexibility where a circle can represent a car (Kress, 1997), a dot can represent a duck (Cox, 2005), while a combination of lines, arcs and dots can create a thunderstorm (Mavers, 2011), offers great opportunities for the intensification of sense-making. A noticeable commonality lies between Dyson's (1993a) and Matthews' (1999) models, who both highlight the children's phase of combining action with drawing, where children use marks, gestures, movements and words as a social activity to symbolise and represent objects and actions. Another similarity lies between Coates and Coates' (2011) reference to intellectual realism in children's drawings, Matthews' (1999) "third generation structure" (p. 25) where he gives importance to the children's organisation and transformation in mark-making and Dyson's (1993a) observation of the children's links of drawings to real objects. They all describe the beginning of young children's drawing practices constructed through a sign system as a means to create meaning. This relationship is then highlighted in the importance of the intimate liaison that exists between role-play and drawing. Dyson's (1993a) and Coates and Coates' (2011) models also bring out the importance of cultural and individual differences that exist in children's drawings. Likewise, their stronger reflection and identification of the relationship between talk, writing and drawing, brings out the importance of narration for the emergence of meaning in drawing, an aspect which I will pursue later on in this chapter. Although Luquet, (1927/2001), Lowenfeld and Brittain, (1947/1987), and Kellogg (1969) have contributed to the understanding of children's drawings better, the theoretical stance adopted by these scholars, conflicts with my position as an interpretivist and constructionist researcher, where I tend to favour more Dyson's (1993a), Matthews' (1999) and Coates and Coates' (2011) views, who regard children's drawings as intentional modes for meaning-making.

Other recognised influential scholars who valued children's drawing as a multimodal process of meaning-making, include Kress (1997), Mavers (2011), Pahl (2002, 1999b), and Wright, (2010b, 2010a, 2007b, 2006), amongst others. I have already mentioned these studies above; however, at this stage, I find it opportune to make

cross-references to children's representational drawings and narratives while narrowing down my argument on the relationship of meaning-making. In his significant study, Kress (1997), documented that the children's use of multiple of modes in drawing, complements and abets their ways of creating meaning. Subsequently, he claims, that children use their drawings as props in their play and accompanying narratives; an aspect also observed by Dyson (1993a), Pahl (2002, 1999b) and Wohlwend (2008). Another factor highlighted by both Kress (1997) and Pahl (2002, 1999b) is the children's flexible movement between modes in drawing, which frequently creates multiple transformations, interpretations and a shift in interests. Dyson (1993a), Kress (1997), and Coates and Coates (2011), highlight the importance of words as a mode with different affordances that complements drawings to fully illustrate action and narrative sequence that help convey meaning. In support of this, Anning and Ring (2004) claim that drawing should be perceived as an instrument for young children to represent their personal narratives and understandings and to subsequently communicate their significance to others.

3.4 The Content of Children's Drawings

Children's choice of subject matter is very wide ranging (Mavers, 2011). Children frequently use drawing as a source of pleasure where they link their inner thoughts, emotions and imaginings to the external world. Reflecting their cultural spheres, values and concerns, children's drawings represent a collage of personal events merged with fictional popular culture and real-life episodes (Jolley, 2010; Wright, 2010b), where "ordinariness" (Mavers, 2011, p. 1) takes centre stage. Children draw for several reasons: to document special occasions, to keep record of places they visited, to "pursue personal inquiries" (Thompson, 1995, p. 8) about objects or ideas that intrigue them, to share affections about people they care, to plan, to solve problems, or to communicate issues of concern (Adams, 2002; Jolley, 2010; Mavers, 2011). Through their drawings children also create narratives that take a life of their own, where they capture both the "mundane and the marvellous, the world as it is experienced and as it is imagined" (Thompson, 1999, p. 160) to discover the undiscovered and explore the unexplored. At times these representations can be limited to a single category annotated to a specific object or theme, while on other occasions, they are amalgamated into a cluster of topics that share a common

orientation and are construed and related to each other (Thompson, 1999). Various researchers (Albers, 2007; Coates and Coates, 2011, 2006) indicate that, children's drawings are informed by their localised social and cultural contexts, and signify intriguing similarities of representations while at the same time celebrate the uniqueness and variability that are particular to each individual child.

Classification of the content themes in children's drawings has been the issue of many research studies with various attempts made to organise them into practical, flexible and broad categories. In her book, *Analyzing Children's Art,* Kellogg (1969) categorised the content of children's drawings under five headings: humans, animals, building, vegetation and transport – umbrella terms which can still be identified in more recent studies. For example, Wright (2007b) claims that the content of children's drawings includes images of living things, environments and socio-cultural patterns, while in subsequent studies she (Wright, 2011, 2010a) categorises them into people, places, objects and events, a taxonomy also adopted by Matthews (1996). Excluding places and events, Hopperstad (2008b), similarly suggests that children's drawings represent objects, humans, animals or other inanimate. Describing drawing as a powerful and flexible tool to complete a variation of representational tasks, Atkinson (2009) broadens the description of content to include actions, events, time-sequences and narratives, besides people and objects. Lancaster and Roberts, (2006), on the other hand, classify children's drawings under a representation of things (people, animals, transport, containers, objects), actions (movement between two points and movement through time) and attributes (of size and quantity of both things and actions). On the other hand, Machón (2013), classifies children's drawings under eleven categories listed here in order of popularity: human figure, houses, sun as star, trees, clouds, flowers, cars, birds, mammals, transport and polymorphic natural elements. Likewise, in her doctoral thesis, Hall (2010b) made an attempt to catalogue the content of children's drawings, under fourteen main "content strands" (p. 116): people, natural environmental features, weather/sky features, animals, writing, symbols/patterns/abstracts, miscellaneous objects, names, fire, vehicles, buildings, human-made environmental features, toys/play equipment and numbers. While, as Hall (2010b) argues, there were common strands that were exemplified in all drawings, yet, children in her study had their own individual preferences for drawing

particular themes. Coates and Coates (2006) also indicate that certain topics are recurring in children's drawings. Referring to their findings, and in line with the above-mentioned studies, they argue that, for example, rainbows and butterflies, as well as houses, flowers and trees are frequently illustrated in children's drawings, where they often use a formula to produce them. Supporting Machón's (2013) findings, Hall (2010b), Cox (1993), and Jolley (2010), claim that the human figure has also regularly been one of the most depicted topics drawn by children across the world, albeit, with varied intensity that mirrors curtural variations. Furthermore, Coates and Coates (2011) specify that family members form a fundamental part of children's drawings, with the most common people depicted, being those of their parents; a claim confirmed by Machón (2013).

Taking a socio-cultural perspective, I argue that the content of children's drawings is frequently influenced and reflects their immediate social and cultural contexts across times: a position which I elaborate later in Section 3.10. In his book *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical,* Spencer (1854/1929) limits children's subjects in their drawings, to men, houses, trees and animals. Decades later, Kellogg (1959) concluded that children draw cars boats, flowers, aeroplane, people, animals and houses; illustrating a potential cultural and historical gap that might exemplify the upsurge in the use of transportation in everyday life. A similar progression was also noted by Coates (2002) who posits that children's drawings have experienced a progression, from drawing figures, houses and vegetation to include more culturally specific objects such as school buildings, motorways and popular culture characters such as Superman, Batman, and Pokémon, a phenomenon also illustrated in other studies (Anning and Ring, 2004; Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Coates and Coates, 2006; Jolley, 2010, Kress, 2010; Pahl, 1999b; Marsh and Millard, 2000). Such an evolution is also underscored by Marsh (2003), Hall, (2010b), Dyson (1997), and Coates and Coates (2011), with the latter specifying that storybooks, fantasy world and cartoon characters, television programmes, images from software, as well as digital games together with artefacts that are linked to these media texts, play a predominant influence in present-day children's drawings. A particular media-oriented subject which caught Coates and Coates' (2011) attention was the prevalance of rainbows in children's drawings induced by their dominance in children's

television entertainment, advertisments, theme songs and programmes. It appears that influences from popular culture where the "commercial culture often does become semiotic material for making sense of social experience" (Dyson, 1997, p. 15) brought unavoidable changes in children's graphic creations and concocted storylines, to include the drawing of animated superheroes and scenes rooted in mythical legends.

An added prolific influence on children's choices of subject matter, worth mentioning at this stage, is that children's drawings are frequently mediated by gender. Anning and Ring (2004) argue that significant others, together with the stereotyped messages that emanate from mass media and popular culture products, constantly send strong messages and beliefs about boys' and girls' identities and positions in society, that are reflected in the apparent dichotomous content of their drawings. Findings from various studies (see for example, Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Dyson, 1986; Hall, 2010b, 2008; Millard and Marsh, 2001; Thompson, 1999) suggest clear gender differences could be identified in children's drawings, and indicate that, generally speaking, boys prefer to draw themes of fire, monsters, vehicles and weapons as well as imaginative action scenes. Contrastingly, girls typically opt for serene and natural scenes of houses, flowers and people engaged in social, harmonious and romantic relations within the "family genre" (Niolopoulou, 1997, p. 164), that could also include elements of decoration and embellishment. Their drawings also include fashion elements, hearts and flowers (Anning, 2003).

3.5 Mark-making

Young children's representational drawings are not always appreciated by adults and are at times labelled as "disordered scribbling" (Matthews, 2003, p. 13), "mark-making" (p.17), and "messing about" (p. 11) with crayons. They have also been defined as "a meaningless result of muscular activity" (Kellogg, 1969, p. 1), or as "products of their [the children's] mind" (Hall, 2008, p. 15) which are "random, impulsive, chaotic, devoid of any educational value in any serious sense" (Matthews, 1999, p. 4). Identifying children's drawings as merely a scribble that might look "primitive or deficient in some way" (Atkinson, 2009, p. 151), a motor activity or "a matter of play with little significant value" (Eisner, 2013, p. 13) can portray mark-

making as a trivial, purposeless and insignificant activity. This interpretation fails to recognise the complex communicative possibilities and rich elements of drawing for meaning (Coates and Coates, 2006; Hall, 2010b, 2008; Lancaster, 2007).

Recent research (see for example, Adams, 2002; Anning, 1999; Cox, 2005; Buckham, 1994; Kress, 2000a; Lancaster, 2007; Lancaster and Roberts, 2006) contrastingly show that the different kinds of "multidirectional" (Mavers, 2011, p. 4), zig-zag, straight and circular lines, shades and patches can be full of meaning, sense for detail, intention and purpose. Key findings from Lancaster and Roberts' (2006) study, which they conducted with children under three years old, suggest that children indicated their intentions prior to their mark-making, whilst they also ascribed a meaning to their texts after they had completed their drawings. This is supported by evidence from a project by Lancaster (2007), who concluded that even children under three-years old are able to explore and use symbolic systems and mark-making in "highly intentional and reasoned ways" (p. 149). Agreeing with the above scholars, I regard that children are very much in control of the drawing process and in line with Hall (2009), I claim that even the simplest marks are valuable and can be imbued with intention and meaning. Here, I fail to agree with Maureen Cox (1997) who claims that children's drawings are rather an "accidental discovery" (p. 7) and do not represent any meaning.

While Luquet's (1947/2001) theory, discussed above, holds true to a certain extent, in the sense that as children grow older their representations become more realistic-looking; yet this does not imply that children's early drawing are meaningless, or that "visual realism is the hallmark of a 'good' drawing" (Hall, 2009, p. 182). Matthews (2003) claims that children seldom scribble but from an early age, even before they learn to talk, they continuously explore and investigate shape, pattern, location and movement in their own ways to form "a visual language of great eloquence and meaning" (p. 34). Similarly, Paine (1981), Lancaster (2003) and Atkinson (2009), suggest that children's earliest marks and images are done in a systematic and consistent way that reflect technique, intention and meaning, beliefs, thoughts and understandings. The fact that children's mark-making falls short of "adult paradigms of representation" (Atkinson, 2009, p. 145), should not reduce it to simply a stage in

children's development (Paine, 1981). As Dyson (1993a) argues, very young children do not try to represent objects from real life but they manoeuvre their drawings guided by their own purposes, processes of perception, intents, relevance and thinking in relation to their interests and attention at that particular time.   Often, it is adults who badly misunderstand children's drawings, mainly because their assumptions, expectations and perceptions of what drawing is, and how meanings are made, differ from those of the children (Kress, 2003b; Matthews, 2003; Wright, 2010b).

3.6 Drawing for Meaning: Communicating Inner Designs

Referring to a theory of social semiotics, I consider drawing as a semiotic "meaning-making tool" (Brooks, 2004, p. 42), "a means for surfacing the meaning-making of young children" (Wright, 2011, p. 158).   Children draw signs to convey their thoughts, understandings and emotions in a visual-graphic form, where they not only represent objects but they use their drawings to externalise and communicate inner meanings and designs (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007; Coates, 2002; Hope, 2008; Hopperstad, 2008b; Van Oers, 1997). Kress (2010, 1997), Mavers (2011) and Pahl (2002, 1999b), also support this notion and contend that children draw to explore and share their ideas with others, to record their experiences, to convey their learning, and to develop imaginary texts. Adams (2002) categorised children's drawings in three main functions of meaning-making: "drawing as perception" (p. 222) or in other words as a "tool for thought and action" (p. 221), where children follow their interests, explore and organise their thinking, feelings and ideas, and process their understandings of the world around them; "drawing as communication" (p. 222) where children communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas to others; and "drawing as manipulation" (p. 222), or "as invention" (Adams, 2004, p. 6) where children explore, develop and refine their thoughts to come up with creative ideas and alternative possibilities. Focusing on children's narrative, Ahn and Filipenko (2007), on the other hand, classified children's drawings in three different taxonomies of communication: "engendering" (p. 279), where children focus on the construction of the self as social and cultural beings; "re-configuration" (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007, p. 279) where they perceive themselves in relation to others; and "reconstruction/re-imagination" (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007, p. 279), where they use drawings as a dramatic and imaginative narrative to process abstract concepts and knowledge.

Atkinson (2009) describes drawing as a "powerful tool" (p. 7), which children use to articulate their notions and reflect the ways they shape their understandings. Children's drawings therefore, resemble a potpourri of intricate events, knowledge, emotions, narratives and perspectives, which as Malchiodi (1998) argues, make them complex texts to analyse where, "simple explanations and interpretations … are not always possible" (p. 19). Various scholars (Atkinson, 2002; Brooks, 2009a; Kress, 2010, 1997; Matthews, 1999, Wright, 2010b) agree that drawings provide invaluable insights into the children's thinking processes and present evidence of their cognitive and emotional growth. Likewise, Hope (2008), regards drawing as "a tool for thought" (p.7), where children use drawing as a receptacle for their ideas. In my view, children's drawings are a "dynamic enactment" (Wright, 2008, p. 18) of meaning generation, where they make sense of their ideas, emotions and knowledge to subsequently construct their own theories. Congruently, Susan Cox (2005), states that constructive processes of drawing allow children to be active participants and agents of their own learning, where they use their drawing to "purposefully bring shape and order to their experience, and in so doing, their drawing activity is actively defining reality, rather than passively reflecting a 'given reality'" (p. 12). Thus, drawing combined with talk, vocalisation and gestures, provides children with opportunities to "not only 'know' reality, but to create' it" (Wright, 2011, p.159). From my interpretive and constructionist position, it was fundamental for me to use the children's drawings as "a means of investigating what children know" (Kendrick and McKay, 2004, p. 111) and bring out what Nicolopoulou et al. (1994) describe as the "structures of meaning" (p. 106).

3.6.1 Meanings are fluid

Children's representational drawings are not fixed and their meanings are unpredictable, dynamic and fluid, in a constant process of change, where new meanings are continuously created: what is meant now might change later (Davis, 2005; Kress, 1997; Pahl, 2002, 1999b). Meanings are complex and "partial" (Albers, 2007, p. 134) where it is the sign-maker who decides what to include and what to leave out. Using symbols to manipulate images and concepts, and moving between modes to bring new possibilities and alterations to their drawings, children constantly design new interpretations and new meanings when drawing (Kress, 2003a, 1997;

Pahl, 2003b, 1999b; Wright, 2010b). Decisions about which semiotic resources are most appropriate and which meanings to communicate enfold throughout the process of production. This interaction is extended when children plan, describe, narrate, explain, question and evaluate their drawings (Coates, 2002; Cox, 2005; Mavers, 2011).

Kress (2010, 1997), Hope (2008), Mavers (2011) and Pahl (2002, 1999b), define the semiotic process of children's drawings as a transformation of meaning where children begin their drawing by representing their initial ideas which they change and develop as new ideas emerge. From her study with two, year-one classes, Hopperstad (2008a) concluded that children discover new possibilities of interpretation. Initial meanings are transformed into new ones, where, "meaning is changed when a new meaning is seen in a given visual form" (p. 92). An example of such transformation is illustrated by Cox's (2005), in her observation of a boy who drew a zebra. Using black and white colours he then drew some vertical lines across his drawing, which prompted him to change his meaning by stating that it was raining. Cox argued that a change in meaning can be given even after the drawing is finished. In her second exemplar, she illustrated how another boy drew several arcs above each other interpreting them as a rainbow. A few moments later, when someone near him sneezed, he changed his construal and decided that the drawing represented a sneeze. Transformations occur constantly in children's drawings, which bring the continuous emergence of multiple understandings that constantly permit for the creation of new perspectives and semiotic meaning (Dyson, 1993b; Flewitt, 2006, 2005b; Jewitt, 2009b, 2008; Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002, 2001; Pahl, 2003a; 2003c; Wright, 2005). Maureen Cox (1997) disputes this and argues that children's transformations in their drawings are not intentional, but occur because they are not able to hold on to their ideas of what they want to draw. This implies that children are not in control of the drawing process. In line with the various authors cited above, I counter argue that children are agents of their own drawings and they purposefully change their minds in response to the complexity and fluidity of the semiotic process and the immediate, present context, space and time.

Viewing drawings as semiotic processes, I also recognise them as "polysemic" (Christmann, 2008, p. 3); as signs that have multiple related meanings which the reader construes. As I argued in Chapter Two the reader may see, understand and interpret a sign in different ways from the sign-maker and thus, different meanings may emerge. Adults therefore can interpret children's drawings differently from the children's intended meaning. However, Wright (2011, 2008) and Atkinson (2002) caution, that an adult's interpretation should not be limited to analysing drawings from a realistic point of view or from culturally structured expectations, but should be developed through an intersubjective understanding, and a knowledge of the children's interests and their socio-cultural practices, as this enables a better understanding of the children's ideas, actions and feelings.

3.6.2 Copying

Children's drawings frequently involve elements of copying images, ideas, objects or scenarios, from storybooks, television and cultural productions, the surrounding environment or from each other. Considered as "an offence", (Mavers, 2011, p. 13), "illegal" (Dyson, 2010, p.8), "ethically 'wrong' or educationally unacceptable" (Mavers, 2011, p. 2), copying, especially from each other, is frequently deemed as puerile, unworthy, and not to be emulated. It is also perceived as a passive activity that hinders imagination and creativity, and of having the aim of keeping children busy without providing any intellectual challenge. However, both Dyson (2010) and Mavers (2011) dispute this idea and consider copying as an intrinsic part of the semiotic process. They argue that copying is not a mere replication, but frequently involves a "remix" (p. 12), of selectively borrowing, evaluating and transforming the existing material, ideas, images and techniques, which are then reinterpreted recontextualised and reconfigured into new designs. Links to personal experiences, knowledge and interests are subsequently made to create new forms, meaning and purpose (Mavers, 2011). Thus, copying should not be considered as a haphazard or effortless act, but rather as a process of reselecting, redesigning and reproducing meanings which are transformed to supplement, extend or diversify a text into another. So while, two drawings might initially appear to be the same, they are likely to be very different from each other to include different concepts, understandings and signs. It follows that in a process of copying, children use their agency, to shape and

design their drawings in a unique way that creates a personal meaning (Hopperstad, 2010; Mavers, 2011; Ring, 2010). As Mavers (2011) suggests "there is no such thing as a copy because copying is an agentive process of remaking afresh" (p. 16). Copying from each other, according to Dyson (2010) "mediates relationships" (p. 26) and manifests collegial interest and shared talking and thinking, that according to Pahl, (1999a) enables children to create links, experiment with possible ideas and co-construct meanings.

3.7 Talk and Narrative

In Chapter Two, I discussed that, like with all other semiotic modes, drawing has its own affordances and limitations. A drawing can be a good mode of communication to express what is understood and felt, yet, because of its arresting nature, it can be "the limit of meaning" (Barthes, 1977, p.152) in conveying less or a different connotation from what was planned and aspired. Kress (2003b, 1997) and Hopperstad (2008a) suggest that children are aware of this limitation, and they try to overcome it by combining talk and other modes such as gestures and vocalisations to enhance and inform the mode of drawing. Subsequently, children's telling facilitates adults' understanding of what they are communicating (Kress, 1997). Throughout this thesis, I consider the integration of the mode of talk to the mode of drawing as two inseparable and complementing modes that are fused together in a "single multimodal act" (Wright, 2010b, p.160) to enrich meaning. This is exemplified by Goodman (1976) who explains the interdependent relationship between drawing and telling, by stating that, "talking does not make the world or even pictures, but talking and pictures participate in making each other and the world as we know them" (p. 88 - 89).

Literature about the value of talk to drawing is limited (Coates and Coates, 2006). While the importance of talk that follows and describes the drawing is frequently considered as routine practice in early childhood studies, recent research (Coates and Coates, 2006; Cox 2005; Hopperstad, 2010, 2008b), suggests that the "draw-and-talk method" (Tay-Lim and Lim, 2013, p. 66), or what Wright (2008) defines as "drawing-telling" (para. 1), provides different insights into the children's immediate thinking processes. It also brings out the "co-emergence" (para. 65) of form and

content of the drawing and subsequently, illustrates the children's ways of concocting and generating their understandings. As Cox (2005) argues "talk and drawing interact with each other as parallel and mutually transformative processes" (p. 123), where the "children's simultaneous utterances … might potentially inform the nature and content of the work and help elucidate their intentions and processes of thinking" (Coates and Coates, 2006, p. 221). Likewise, conclusions from Kress' (1997) study indicate that drawing-telling, which can be described as a record into "the journey of meaning-making" (Tay-Lim and Lim, 2013, p. 12), allows children to explore complex notions and concepts to provide a more comprehensive account of their meanings. However, Coates (2002), Coates and Coates, (2006), and Wright, (2008), point out, that talking while drawing and post-drawing talk, frequently vary, where a different version is provided, confirming the fluidity of children's sense-making. I consider both forms of (during and post-drawing) talk as valuable, as together they provide a more comprehensive understanding of the children's trails of thought, interests and ways of meaning-making, albeit in different ways and to different extents.

In their study, Coates and Coates (2006) found that children use talk in three different forms when drawing: they talk about the subject matter of their text; they socially interact with their peers through "off-task" (p.226) conversations that focus on the development of their friendships; and they communicate with an adult who supports, asks questions, shares ideas, listens to their interpretations and co-constructs meanings with them. Irrespective of whether children are engaged in self-absorbed conversations or dialogue with others, their talk influences the drawing. In my view, these three types of playful drawing intertwine, merge and work in tandem with the children's drawing-telling. In the following section, I discuss each of the three variants of talk, while simultaneously refer to Wood and Hall's (2011) forms of playing while drawing, which only becomes "visible when the drawings [were] are shared through talk" (Hall, 2010b, p. 368).

3.7.1 Talking about the subject matter

Drawing in educational settings encourages "talk about ways of drawing" (Hopperstad, 2008b, p. 136). The first type of "drawing-telling" (Wright, 2008, p. 1) identified by Coates and Coates (2006) is when children converse about the process and subject matter of their representations. I link this type of talk to Wood and Hall's (2011) notion of drawing as a "space for intellectual play" (p. 267), where children use talk to develop imaginary and playful representations in three distinct forms: "playing *at* drawing, playing *in* drawings and playing *with* drawings" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 274-276). I consider this quality of playfulness in children's drawings as a "context for visual meaning-making" (Hopperstad, 2008a, p. 78), where, as Kress (1997) and Lindqvist, (2001) claim, play emerges through action and talk, which could be "inventive or narrative" (Pahl, 2009, p. 188).

In "playing *at* drawing" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 274), children use self-talk or their interaction with others to improvise, construct and extend their texts. Playing *at* drawing involves two playful forms of drawing: physical play and social play. When children engage in physical play *at* drawing or what Hopperstad (2008a) defines as "play with drawing as a dynamic world" (p. 79), children accompany their representations with body actions, gestures, sound effects and vocalisations that might include adding marks and chanting. On the other hand, in instances of playing *at* drawing at the social level, children interact during and in relation to the drawing process where they influence and support each other in creating visual meaning. They plan, describe and explain the implication behind their texts, dramatise and narrate, ask questions, seek and offer help in how to draw an object, and appraise each other's depictions. As Thompson (1995) reports, "the influence children exert upon one another is pervasive and profound" (p. 8) and can change the content of the drawing; a conclusion which is also supported by Coates (2002). Various other studies (Ahn, 2006; Coates and Coates, 2006; Dyson, 1993b) observed similar interactions where children engaged in detailed explanations, complex discussions or narrations of their drawings to themselves, a specific peer or to whoever might be listening to inform them about the subject and meaning of their drawing. Subsequently, through intersubjective communication, children develop a shared understanding of the text.

To capture the essence of their drawings, sometimes children engage in episodes of "playing *in* drawings" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 275). Wood and Hall (2011) suggest two forms: physical play and imaginative play. In physical playing *in* drawings children draw "action representations" (Matthews, 1999, p. 31) or what Jones (n.d.) defines as "action drawing" (p. 33), where they represent figures in action such as running, jumping or fighting. Subsequently, children talk about and describe the illustrated action to their audience. Conversely, when children engage in imaginative playing *in* drawings, which develops very much like dramatic role-play, albeit as a still drawing on paper, children imagine, draw and describe other people and themselves in assumed real or fictional selves. Often they take the role of main character of their text, which at times could also involve a shift between characters. Such narratives are frequently developed on real, daily experiences or mythic accounts packed with action.

On some occasions, children use the drawing as a space for "playing *with* drawings" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 274) which includes, a physical form of play and storytelling. In physical playing *with* drawings, children use gesticulation and movement merged with talk, as a way to demonstrate and extend the action that occurs in their representation in an attempt to explain what a still image fails to communicate. In storytelling or what Wright (2007a) defines as "graphic-narrative play" (p. 2) which involves "play[ing] with the graphic result of drawing" (Hopperstad, 2008a p. 79),the subject of the drawing takes the form of a "narrative function" (Van Oers, 1997, p. 244), a "visual narrative" (Golomb, 2004, p. 160), where children depict a rich amalgam of fantasy-based characters, plots and scenery which can be situated within the "heroic-agonistic genre" (Nicolopoulou, 1997, p. 166). This is frequently translated into spontaneous "play art" (Wilson, 1974, p.4), where children use "drawing as manipulation" (Adams, 2002, p.222), or "for invention" (Adams, 2004, p. 6) to explore, create and recreate dramatic images, embedded in layers of action, character development and running narrative. Through their talk, children develop imaginary and "possible worlds" (Bruner, 1986, p. 13) illustrated on paper, which help them organise and communicate fictional experiences to others (Coates and Coates, 2006; Dyson, 1993b; Malchiodi, 1998; Wood and Hall, 2011). This talk involves "embodied authoring" (Wright, 2007a, p. 1) where, alone or

in collaboration with others, children make a series of authorial decisions that involve when and how to develop the plot, alter the scenery and develop fictional characters or objects with magical and super powers. Moving from being an author to a director, to that of an artist, a scripter, a performer or a narrator of their text, children create an improvised and complex story full of personal thoughts and feelings, universal moral qualities of bravery, mastery and audacity, and immortal "emotional opposites" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 277) such as notions of good and evil, capturing and defending, love and hate, powerful and powerless, and life and death, that present children with ethical dimensions (Edmiston, 2008; Jones, n.d.; Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 277). These are frequently portrayed by endemic struggles between the good guys and the bad guys that end up with a victory for the good and righteous (Edmiston, 2010, 2008; Golomb, 2004; Wright, 2006). Calling it the "cult of the superhero" Marsh (2000, p. 210) claims that myths and legends presented in popular media, provide children with a rich source of imagination and narrative that thrive on the adventures of an omnipresent character with super powers with whom they could identify. Resonating with Dyson (1997) who states that, "superheroes stories allow children to feel powerful in a … danger-filled world" (p. 14), Edmiston (2008), Marsh (2000) and Jones and Ponton (2002) claim that such narratives can be appealing to children because while they deal with human truths of life and death, they fulfil their needs to master a sense of control and power in an adult-dominated environment.

Narratives are "an artful tool of meaning-making" (Ahn, 2006, p. 198), that not only provide children with a "mode of thinking" (Kangas, Kultima and Ruokamo, 2011, p.66) that helps them with making sense of the world (Barroqueiro, 2010) and shape and organise the way they experience their lives, but they also provide them with a "mode of action" (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007, p. 287), where children experience and re-experience themselves in relation to others (Nicolopoulou et al., 1994). The talk that accompanies children's drawings functions as a dynamic platform of mediation, where children use metaphors as a representation to convey their knowledge and abstract ideas (Egan, 1998; Nielsen, 2009). Talk about the subject of the drawings also allows children with possibilities for "crossing texts and re-configuration" (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007, p. 279) where they perceive and negotiate their concept of the

self in relation to others. Visual narratives are also a vehicle for children to explore abstract, scientific and moral concepts that allow them to "reconstruct" and "re-imagine" (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007, p. 279), the world not only as "they know it to be, but also … as they would like it to be" (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007, p. 279). Thus, as Bruner (1992) aptly puts it, "the central concern is not how a narrative text is constructed, but rather how it operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality" (p. 233).

3.7.2 Social talk in drawing narratives

"Text making is social action" (Mavers, 2011, p.50), where children use their drawing as a "medium of socialisation" (Nicolopoulou, 1997, p. 158) by responding to, negotiating, contesting and maintaining their relationships. This second type of drawing-telling as identified by Coates and Coates (2006), relates to the children's talk that accompanies the drawing but does not directly link to the subject matter of their drawings. In this form of "social communication" (Fulková and Tipton, 2011, p. 150), children playfully interact with each other while focusing on off-task issues. In such instances children talk, joke, share stories and explore notions about family and home, lived events and television programmes as well as friendship experiences with their peers, (Coates and Coates, 2006; Cox, 2005). Such conversations help them develop their social skills and maintain their relationships with others while they learn about their social worlds and how they can position themselves within it (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007; Dyson, 1993b; Kangas, et al., 2011; Kendrick and McKay, 2004). Comparable dialogues of socialisation between children were reported in several studies (see for example, Coates, 2002; Dyson, 1989; Hopperstad, 2008a; Nutbrown, 2006; Frisch, 2006) where scholars claim that children use their drawings as a platform for conversation that support and stimulate their ideas to make cognitive associations while simultaneously developing their companionships. In such instances, rather than focusing on the drawing, children value the quality of their conversations and consider them as the "crucial dynamic" (Boyatzis, and Albertini, 2000, p.44) of the experience. Thus, as is claimed by Frisch (2006), children's drawings have a "social value" (p. 82), where they represent their "social relations and contextual conditions" (p. 81).

3.7.3 Talking with an adult

The third type of drawing-telling identified by Coates and Coates (2006), relates to the interaction conducted between the child and the adult. During verbal exchanges with the adult, which are crucial to the meaning-making process, the child declares his intentions, seeks support, plays with ideas and exchanges his perspectives about the subject matter. Subsequently, through contextualised talk, the child and the adult engage in a co-constructed process of shared understanding and meaning-making, which liaises with a social constructionist view, where, knowledge about the child's interests, home background and experiences, aids the adult to support the child in his exploration, articulation and communication of his thoughts (Tay-Lim and Lim, 2013). In discussing the drawings with the child, the adult helps him to focus his attention and his thinking, and to mediate perception (Brooks, 2009a), while creating links between his subjective level of communication, that is, his meaning-making processes and his inter-subjective level of social interaction (Hall, 2008; Jordan, 2004). Hall (2011) and Ring (2010) argue that the drawing alone, without the accompanied talk, does not provide the adult with enough information, insights and understanding into the form of the drawing and its attributed meaning. Therefore, talk becomes part of the multimodal process, intention and sense-making that complements the limitations of visual representation, where sometimes, "the talk feeds into the drawing … [and] sometimes the drawing feeds into talk" (Cox, 2005, p. 123). However, as Coates and Coates (2006) argue, the adult has to value, be sensitive and aware of the children's in-depth and spontaneous sense-making.

Albers (2007) stresses that it is important that adults read children's drawings in a critical way both verbally and visually as this provides them with the children's insights about the text created. This underlines the role of the adult as an "interlocutor" (Wright, 2010b, p.28), who interacts with the child by listening, recording and being attentive to the child's purposes, and the content and meanings expressed. Wright (2011, 2010a, 2010b) explains that the main task of the adult as an interlocutor is to facilitate the externalisation of the child's internal narratives on paper and in real time. By assuming the role of the audience or a playmate who questions and comments, the adult engages in a relational, interactive and negotiated dialogue with the child about his drawings to understand his functions, reasons and

context (Wright, 2010b). Wright (2010b) suggests four open-ended elaborations as listed in Table 3.2, which can help elicit the child's meaning. These include clarification, mirroring or reflective probe, nudging probes and out loud thinking.

Table 3.2
Open-ended strategies that might help elicit children's meanings (Wright, 2010b, p. 28).

Strategies	Examples
Clarification	Can you give me an example? What did you mean when you said …?
Mirroring or reflective probe	When I hear you saying is … Have I understood you correctly?
Nudging probes	So what happened then?
Outloud thinking	I wonder about … What do you think?

This dialogue between the child and the adult creates an element of reciprocity "between the child and the materials … [and] between the child and the interlocutor" (Wright, 2010b, p. 171). It is a role that demands of the adult to go with the flow of the child's thinking processes, his ways of meaning-making and his perspectives to sensitively tune-in to his drawings by entering in dialogue with him (Anning and Ring, 2004). This allows the child to make sense of his thinking processes and to voice such processes to others (Wright, 2010b).

3.8 Drawing Patterns and Styles

While, as I argued above, most of the children engage in some sort of individual or group talk that helps them enrich their drawing experience, others prefer to be totally immersed in their drawings, where talk takes secondary importance. These differences, which Gardner (1982) distinctively identifies and classifies under various headings, form part of the children's individual drawing "patterns" (p. 117) and styles, or in other words, their "preferred way of responding to, organizing, and communicating about experiences" (Dyson, 1989, p. 69), in a visual format.

Gardner (1982) defines those children who use articulate words, very extensive narratives accompanied by dramatisations and possibly complex vocalisations to support their drawings as "inveterate verbalisers" (p. 117), or "dramatists" (Gardner, 1980, p.47). Such drawers, which Dyson (1989) terms as "socializers" (p. 68), like to depict actions, events, relationships, as well as imaginary tales and stories that brim with adventure, magic and fantasy. Contrastingly, "committed visualisers" (Gardner, 1982, p. 118) or "patterners" (Gardner, 1980, p. 47) prefer to focus their attention on the detail of their drawings, emphasising form, patterns, commonalities, and consistencies. While such drawers, which Dyson (1989) describes as "symbolizers" (p.68), and whose drawings include "autobiographical" (Thomspon, 1999, p. 160) content, could certainly use talk to explain their intentions, they do so reluctantly and in a minimalistic way. Besides, their drawings, which tend to be unpredictable, may be inspired by daily life episodes and can contain designs and symbols that are less personal and meaningful, like hearts, flowers and rainbows.

Gardner (1982) recognises other dichotomies that indicate the children's drawing preferences which include "self-starters" and "completers" (p. 117). Self-starters or what Thompson (1999) defines as "subject matter generalists" (p. 155) do not need encouragement to draw, but immediately engage in their drawings in a fluid and effortless way. On the other hand, completers are more hesitant to commence their drawings, but once started, they tend to be more creative even if unpredictable. Gardner (1982) also acknowledges that some children tend to be "person-centred … emphasising communication over creation" (p. 118), with their drawings mainly featuring persons. Others, tend to consistently be more "object-centred … feature[ing], physical elements and machines" (Gardner, 1982, p. 118). I must point out, that while I find such descriptions as helpful, as they offer a framework of children's drawing patterns and styles, yet, like Dyson (1986), Egan (1995) and Watson and Schwartz (2000), I hesitate to classify a child as having one distinctive drawing pattern. I hold the position that, a miscellany of categories might be identified for one drawer. Patterns and styles are fluid rather than absolute where they overlap, intertwine, merge and change according to the context, culture and development.

3.9 Drawing as a Constructor of Identity

Various researchers (Brockmeier, 2001; Hall, 2008; Jewitt and Oyama, 2001; Norris, 2004) claim that children's drawing preferences, patterns and styles, together with their personal interests and ways of creating meaning, interact with the available semiotic resources and modes to lead to another function of drawing, that of "identity-construction" (Hall, 2010b, p. 343). This notion is supported by others (see for example, Ahn, 2006; Kress, 1997; Nicolopolou, et al., 1994; Pahl, 2003b) who assert that children's texts act as symbolic and semiotic spaces which allow them to explore and gain an understanding of what Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, (1998) describe as a "sense of self" (p. 43). In their drawings, children refer to their past and future experiences, actions and relationships, to represent their world with intention and meaning, in a process of "authoring the self" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 81). This helps them form their identities. Thus, as Bleiker (1999) states, drawing becomes a large part of the children's identity and an important part of themselves. From an intertextual notion, Brockmeier (2001), Edmiston (2008) and Hawkins (2002) point out that children's hybrid compositions that include continuous social, cultural and individual dynamics, act as "tools of identity" (Holland et al., 2001, p. 43) for the exploration of "different possible selves" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 12). Through the shifting of modes, children use their drawings to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct their self-identity to negotiate "multiple personalities" (Wright, 2007a, p.22) and identity roles (Norris 2004), where "the self is seen as a product of the texts which write the individual into being" (Hawkins, 2002, p. 211). Considering children's drawings as artefacts, Pahl and Rowsell, (2010) and Rowsell and Pahl (2007) argue that children's drawings are full of remnants of "sedimented identities in texts" (p. 9) infused with their "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 6) or in other words, with their social practices, lifestyle, values, everyday routines and lived experiences, where texts, memories, emotions and identities intertwine to bring out who the children are.

Defining identity as "the specific characteristics of a person" (De Ruyter and Conroy, 2002, p.510), children not only use their drawings to illustrate features from their personal identity but also imagine, explore and create their "ideal identity" (p. 510), or what Kendrick and McKay (2004) define as "imagined identity" (p. 115); that

identity which is not yet realised but which they aspire to, would like to achieve or "imagine themselves in future roles" (p. 120). Making use of their graphic-narratives as "authoring space[s]" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 98) children draw an amalgamation of "real world" (p. 23), and "pretend identities" (Dyson, 1997, p. 14), to communicate who they are or wish to be (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007; Pahl and Rowsell, 2005; Wright, 2011). Using drawing as a playful space where myth and reality overlap, children explore personal and social issues that facilitate the formation of their "moral identity" (Edmiston, 2010, p. 205) and integrity. Describing identity as "dynamic and multidimensional", Hall (2011, p. 106) argues that children's drawings frequently involve some level of self-transformation, such as, altered bodily appearances, where for example, they change the colour of their hair or their height; explore different realistic and fantasy-based roles and draw themselves as a doctor, a bride, a pirate or a superhero; or engage in metaphoric resemblances where for example, they draw themselves as animals**.** Drawing on popular culture, also helps children to engage in a process of "authoring selves" (Edmiston, 2010, p. 205), where they create "fictitious identities" (Hagood, 2008, p. 540) which they merge with their "multiple everyday selves" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 19) and other particular characters and episodes in their real lives to create personal meaning-making. This confirms that the process of identity formation is not a "monolithical construct" (De Ruyter and Conroy, 2002, p. 511) but is composed of "multiple everyday selves" (Prain, 1997, p.460) where children explore their "particular" (Hagood, 2008, p. 540) and "alternative identities" (Hall, 2011 p. 108), to define and recreate their real identity (Bleiker, 1999).

Identity is a complex, multidimensional, emerging and fluid construct that is negotiated within the children's "multiple worlds" (Dyson, 1988, p. 383) to create a combination of real, imaginative and symbolic meanings out of a lived experience (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007). Influenced by the surrounding socio-cultural resources, situations and affiliations, children use drawing as a way to author their agency, which allows for the negotiation, emergence and co-construction of the self (De Ruyter and Conroy, 2002; Gee, 2000; Holland et al., 1998). This puts into perspective Kress and Jewitt's (2003) observation that "social semiotics views the agency of socially situated humans as central to sign-making …[where] people use the resources that are available to them in the specific socio-cultural environments in

which they act to create signs" (p.10). De Ruyter and Conroy (2002) argue that social contexts and interactions between the children's home, school and the wider world contexts influence their social roles and perceptions of self, where any changes in one's social and cultural setting results in a change in identity. This concept of identity was also explored by others (see for example, Coates and Coates 2006; Hall, 2010a; Hawkins, 2002; Leander, 2002; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007; Wright, 2010b), who concluded that drawing as a text, is a medium that affords children with the possibility to explore their roles, and construct and stabilise their identity as moral, social and cultural beings, or what Ahn and Filipenko (2007) define as "engendering" (p. 279). Through their shared conversations, storylines and meanings which accompany their embodied drawings, children explore multiple roles to "socially position" (Edmiston, 2008, p 98) themselves as individuals with a "recognisable social identity" (Kendrick, and McKay, 2004, p. 124). Through their drawing, children learn about power structures and the hierarchy of social relations, where they affirm their "positional identity" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 125), and situate themselves within the power relationships of their families and other social structures in which they function.

As argued above, when drawing, children engage in during and post-drawing interaction with others, which also has significant impact on the formation of their identity. When peers or an adult participate in the children's narratives of their drawings, they engage in a process of co-construction of meanings that leads to the co-authoring of "ethical identities" (Edmiston, 2010, p. 209), where personal identities interrelate and overlap with social and cultural ones. This changes the children's "relational identities" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 127), that is, the way they socially interact with others. This process which is very aptly captured by Edmiston (2008) who argues that:

> Children, like adults, have agency in authoring selves and, over time, identities. They do so by improvising responses to affect their relative position. They opportunistically draw on their cultural resources in response to particular situations, as mediated by their senses and sensitivities. They will co-author selves and identities when they improvise in a situation with an adult. (p. 98).

Using their agency when drawing helps children to construct their own unique identity and shape themselves as social beings within power structures, socially-constructed discourses and meaning-making practices, while simultaneously attributing and validating the identity of others (Ahn, 2006; Côté and Levine, 2002; Gee, 2000; Jewitt and Oyama, 2001; Holland et al., 1998).

3.10 Influences on Children's Drawings

As I have alluded in Chapter One, this study is also informed by a socio-cultural construct of multimodality which recognises that children use contextually situated signs that are embedded in social interactions, structures, cultural practices and every day routines to create their drawings. A discourse of drawing as meaning-making acknowledges the influence of the socio-cultural contexts on children's representations and claims that their drawings reflect particular situations as mediated by their senses (Edmiston, 2008; Einarsdottir, et al., 2009; Hall, 2008; Ivashkevich, 2009; Kress, 1997; Rose, et al., 2006).

Hall (2008) claims that, "young children's drawings cannot be easily understood out of context" (p. 2) where an understanding of the environment in which the drawing activity takes place is necessary to be able to comprehend the intentions and purposes children attribute to their drawings. Consistent with this view, I acknowledge that children "cannot be or think 'outside' of culture" (MacNaughton, 2004, p. 47), where their "social fabric cannot be separated from the way reality is construed" (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005, p. 320). In their drawings, children refer to images, episodes, knowledge and other elements that are presented to them by the historically accumulated and socially and culturally developed environment (Nicolopoulou, et al., 1994), which Gonzales, Moll and Amanti (2005) call "funds of knowledge" (p. 30), or in Gonazales' (2005) words, their "repository of knowledge" (p. 30). This knowledge shapes the children's intentions, imagination and sense-making in profound ways to reflect the constantly changing ordinary and familiar everyday routines, practices and objects (Amanti, 2005; Mavers, 2011). As is pointed out by Einarsdottir, et al., (2009) and Rose, et al., (2006), another feature of a sociocultural paradigm is that it also acknowledges the importance of the attitudes and practices of significant others, including peers, friends, parents and teachers, as they too shape the

drawing experience. Making use of their "networks of exchange" (Gonzales et al., 2005, p. 12), where family members act as a source of funds of knowledge, children "construct meaning about themselves as individuals and about themselves as social beings" (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007, p. 287), that help them grow and transform their "multiple bodies of knowledge" (Gonzales et al., 2005, p. 26).

As I argued in Chapter Two, a socio-cultural position also considers the significance of the resources and materials available, as well as the modes used and the content represented in the drawings, as these are informed by the children's social, cultural and historical circumstances they live in, which in turn, can also influence the meaning being generated (Einarsdottir, et al., 2009; Kennedy and Surman, 2007; Lancaster, 2007; Mavers, 2011). This is confirmed by several scholars (see for example, Hall, 2008; Ivashkevich, 2009; Ring, 2001; Thompson, 1999; Wood and Hall, 2011) who through their studies concluded that children's home contexts, including the daily events, together with the school context, cultural themes and experiences, form an essential part of the children's semiotic process and have a significant influence on what and how they draw. In Figure 3.1 below, which I adapted from Anning and Ring (2004), I tried to capture the way the home and school contexts are linked, where together with the interactions the children have with the self and others, influence the meaning-making processes in their drawings.

Figure 3.1
The influence of the socio-cultural context on children's drawings (adapted from Anning and Ring, 2004, p.7)
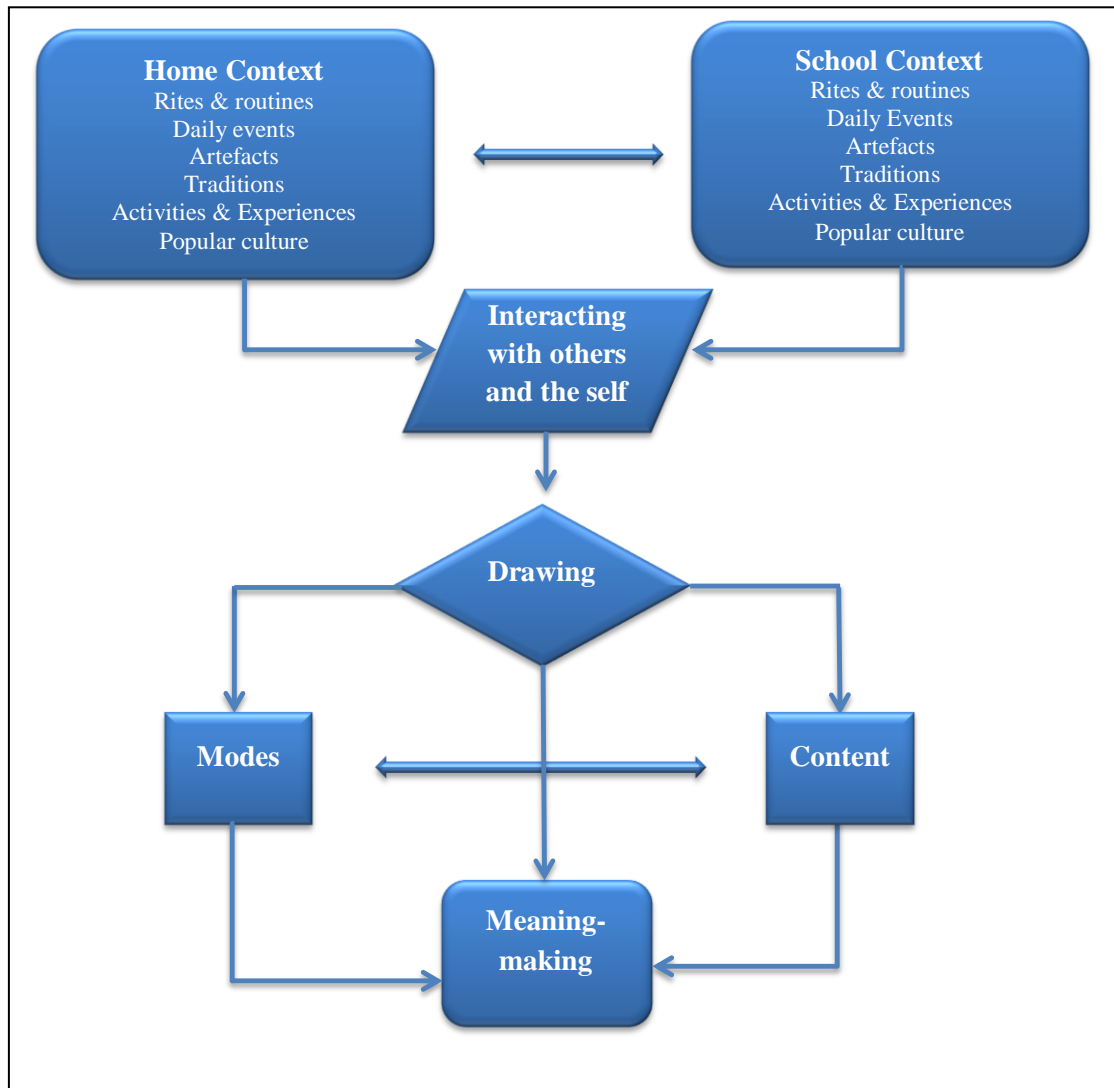
3.10.1 The influence of the home context

Douglas (1991) describes the home context as a shared living space with "aesthetic and moral dimensions" (p. 289) which, imbued with rites, routines and family heritage that impact the daily patterns, allows for the "realization of ideas" (p. 290), which are sedimented and emerge in the children's drawings. The home context, that is, the home environment, the family structure and relationships between members and their practices and lifestyle, shape the children's texts, and they do so in a different way from the school (Anning, 2002; Hall, 2010b; Pahl, 2002, 2001b; Ring and Anning, 2004; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007). Referring to artefacts such as ornaments, television, photographs and toys, as well as the experiences that occur in the home,

children's home drawings, reflect their home culture and related "socially and situated traces of practice" (Pahl, 2009, p.86). This is exemplified in one of Pahl's (2002), ethnographic studies where she discussed how three young boys, made meaning in different spaces of the house, while being inspired by the cultural resources present, to create texts that were a clear reflection of the home space in which they were produced. In the same way, Lancaster (2007) illustrates that very young children's drawings are strongly influenced by everyday contexts, experiences and events. Similarly, several scholars (Anning, 2003, 2002; Anning and Ring, 2004; Hall, 2008; 2010b; Pahl, 1999b; Ring, 2006; Rose et al., 2006) identify family members and shared family conversations as influential on children's drawings. They observed that drawing became "a socio-cultural activity" (Anning, 2002, p. 208) in families, where significant others made suggestions, asked questions, prompted or modelled to the children how and what to draw.

Various studies (see for example, Coates and Coates, 2011, 2006; Hall, 2010b; Marsh, 2006, 2005, 2003; Marsh and Millard, 2000; Pahl, 2003b; Wright, 2011) suggest that children's home and school text creations are predominantly influenced, linked and extended with images from globalised, contemporary popular culture. Disney cartoons and films, television programmes, storybooks, play cards, imaging from software and digital games, together with artefacts that are linked to these media texts, significantly impact what and how children represent. However, as Wright (2011) argues, while children copy ideas from popular culture, they also infuse their personal thoughts, understandings and meanings in their graphic representations. In fact, findings from Anning and Ring's (2004) case studies provide evidence that children's drawings frequently contain an intermingle of everyday life scenarios and images from popular culture merged together and displayed in elaborate scenes. This is supported by Thompson's (1999) findings who highlights that, in their drawings, children incorporate a miscellany of scientific and historical facts, media-mediated elements, personal experiences and narratives, which they mediate through the home context.

3.10.2 The influence of the school context

Children enter school with certain drawing preconceptions, skills, experiences and an open-attitude towards drawing, which they bring from the home context and the community in which they live. However, schools tend to prefer the academics and frequently consider drawing as merely a time-filler or perceive it as a way to represent objects, people, places and events in an accurate and realistic way, where its use as a meaning-making tool is often limited (Anning, 2002, 1999; Einarsdottir, et al., 2009; Millard and Marsh, 2001). The school context, with the topics discussed, the activities that occur and the interactions between the teacher and children communicates values, perceptions and expectations and is a main influence on the children's school drawings (Einardottir et al., 2009; Hopperstad, 2010; Rose, et al., 2006).

Teachers play a significant role in shaping the children's drawing experiences (Anning, 2002; Hall, 2008; Rose et al., 2006). Their confidence and attitude towards drawing, and the way they model and share the drawing experiences with the children, are all important aspects that influence the drawing process and the way children make meaning at school. Conclusions from Hall's (2008) and Rose et al.'s, (2006) studies indicate that usually teachers communicate positive opinions towards drawing, encourage children, and give them the space and choice to decide on the modes and content of their drawings. This highly contrasts with findings from Anning's (2002) study who claims that teachers tend to focus more on the teaching of reading and writing, where they consider drawing as a way to keep children busy. She also concluded that frequently teachers are hesitant to engage with children while drawing, and when they do, their support is often tentative and superficial, leading to a decrease in interest.

As I have already argued in Section 3.7 above, peers provide "multiple forms of mutual influence" (Boytazis and Albertini, 2000, p. 44) on each other's drawings in a significant way, where the content and meaning can be co-constructed during the drawing process. They show, display and evaluate each other's drawings, share ideas and support and inspire each other what to draw. They model, observe, compare and evaluate their techniques and copy from each other in an effort to improve the

drawing content, and their skills and knowledge about the subject matter (Cox, 1997; Frisch, 2006; Hall, 2008; Thompson, 1999). Influenced by their peers, children tend to willingly change the content of their drawing in order to conform to their friends' thematic preferences, drawing styles and techniques while seeking acceptance (Gee, 2000).

In her study, Hopperstad (2010), acknowledged the influence of peers; however, she concluded that children's drawings, which in her case, were mainly teacher-initiated, were primarily influenced by texts read and topics discussed in class, followed by events experienced in their social worlds. While she claims that it is highly challenging to trace all the children's interest represented in their drawings, as frequently, they contain multiple meanings and changing interests, she identified that. in the main, the children in her study were interested to draw facts and events learned and experienced at school. Hall (2010b) confirms this and states that the theme or topics discussed in class are amongst the predominant influences in the children's school drawings; however, she also notes that the teacher, peers and classroom practices are likewise noteworthy influences.

In conclusion I support Dyson's (2001b), Kalantzis and Cope's (2000), and Pahl's (2001b) claims and argue that while the home and school contexts are frequently considered separately, in reality they interact, intersect and intertwine in the children's drawings to echo practices from each context. The home-school settings influence each other, where meanings cross borders and sites, and the influences of one context are recontextulaised and transformed to the other to create intertextual meanings between the children's both worlds.

3.11 Chapter Summary

Perceiving drawing as a multimodal sign of representation I began this chapter by directly positioning drawing within a theory of social semiotics. I then discussed drawing as a visual language, where children use different modes to create the form and content of their drawings and to communicate meanings to others. This was followed by an overview of the theories that inform children's drawings, where I mainly discussed six theorists: Luquet (1927), Lowenfeld and Brittain (1947),

Kellogg (1969), Dyson (1993a), and Matthews (1999), Coates and Coates (2011). The former three investigated drawings from a traditional and developmental stage theory stance while the latter three, investigated drawings mainly from a post-modernist position as an intentional representation and a mode for meaning-making. I then deliberated on the content of children's drawings. Consequently, I saw it important to discuss and contradict the notion that drawing is frequently considered as a scribble, void of any intention or purpose. Rather I argued that children's mark-makings are meaningful. Directly linking drawing to social semiotics theory, I claimed that through drawing children communicate their inner designs: feelings, interests, intentions, ideas and knowledge. I then contended that while children's drawings are meaningful, yet, meaning is not fixed but rather fluid and changes constantly according to the social and cultural situations and contexts in which they occur. I considered it as important to also discuss the significance and influence of talk in children's drawings. I developed my discussion on Coates and Coates (2006) identification of the three ways children use talk when drawing: talk about the subject matter; talk as a platform to maintain social relationships; and talk with an adult to seek help and share ideas about the content of the drawings. Subsequently, I identified several drawing patterns and styles which children adopt as their preferred way to create and represent content and meaning on paper. I then moved to discuss drawing as a way for children to construct their moral, ethical and possible selves within their real world and pretend identities. In the final section I discussed the main influences that effect and inspire the children's drawings, mainly those of the home and school contexts, where I considered the influence of significant others, rules, routines, practices and events as well as the impact of popular culture on children's meaning-making.

In the next chapter I discuss the methodological approach to the study.

A whale at the beach – by Bertly

"Children's perspectives become the focus for an exchange of meanings
between children, practitioners, families and researchers"

- Alison Clark (2007, p.76)

Chapter 4

Research Design and Methodology

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explain the research design and methodology I used in my study to answer my research questions outlined in Chapter One. I begin with a brief rationale where I discuss my reasons for opting for a qualitative methodology. Subsequently, I elaborate on the multiple case study approach I used. I then describe and justify my position for adopting a children's rights perspective and how I included children's voices in research. I confer why drawing is considered as an appropriate and a participatory tool to do research with children. I also explain why I took the role of a participant observer where I examine my interpretive position. I then outline the research design where I describe the research context and the way I went about selecting the participants. This is followed by a description of my main tools of data collection, which include the children's drawings and narratives, conversations with their parents and video-recorded observations. I conclude this chapter by discussing the ethical dilemmas that I was faced with in this study such as issues of participation and ownership as opposed to privacy and anonymity.

4.2 Research Design: A Qualitative Methodology

Thomas (2011) describes the research design as a "plan of action" (p. 27), which, according to Crotty (2005) and Silverman (2010), has the purpose of shaping the choice and use of particular tools and methods to answer a set of research questions and subsequently, achieve a specific goal. This notion of "fitness for purpose" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2013, p. 203), shaped my preference to opt for a qualitative paradigm. Cresswell (2013) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe a qualitative approach as a process of inquiry that aims to interpret a human phenomenon in their "natural context" (Dockrell, Lewis and Lindsay, 2000, p. 50), based on the participants' subjective interpretation and ways of creating meaning. Applying this notion to my study, my aim was to analyse "the situated, relational, and textual structures" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 26) of the three children's drawing processes with "depth and specification" (Clough and Nutbrown 2012, p. 176), as "the product of a process of interpretation" (Denscombe, 2003, p. 268). This is another

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characteristic of a qualitative paradigm, that helps to acquire deeper understandings of how children create meaning. Using Dawson's (2009) words, I deem my study as "highly qualitative" (p. 119), since I consider the data collection as an on-going process of reflection, adaptation and change in the evolving methods as required. Even if one could argue that I had elements of content analysis and coding and therefore, the study could be interpreted as a "combination … of reflexivity and counting" (Dawson, 2009, p. 119), I only used this seemingly quantitative aspect, to reflect the richness of my qualitative data. Throughout the study, my focus was away from obtaining quantity or figures, but I continuously evaluated, interpreted and reflected on the qualitative aspects of the emerging themes and meanings.

A qualitative methodological framework has the basic qualities, orientation and methods of ethnographic research, which involves interaction between the researcher and participants through the use of observation and interviews (Goldbart and Hustler, 2005; Stark and Torrance, 2005): such a methodology helped me address my research questions. Adopting a qualitative methodology, which Denzin and Lincoln (2005) claim that complements an interpretive stance, seemed the logical approach to opt for, as it afforded me with the possibility to analyse the children's drawings and the meanings they created in depth, in ways which a quantitative study would have not permitted me. Conversely, I considered the children's drawings as "the product of a process of interpretation" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 301); as data to be construed, negotiated and interpreted between the children and myself. This approach helped me understand the benefits of qualitative methodology as appraised by several scholars (Aubrey, David, Godfrey and Thompson, 2000; Goldbart and Hustler, 2005; Kincheloe and McLaren 2005; Leavitt, 1995) to actively made sense of how children interprete their worlds through their drawings, and how their socially-constructed interactions, experiences and understandings influence them and their subjective meaning-making. This approach also provided me with the space to ascertain my commitment and interweave my positionality within this study, where I found new ways of accessing, listening and representing the children's perspectives and their voices. Moreover, the open-ended, intensive and participative nature of qualitative methodology and its ability to capture the richness of the experiences and understandings of a small number of individuals, through "thick descriptions"

(Geertz, 1973, p. 3) or "detailed observational evidence" (Yin, 2014, p. 19) that specify conceptual structures and meanings in words and images, is, in the opinion of several writers (Dawson, 2009; Denscombe, 2010; Greene and Hill, 2005; Greig, et al., 2007), a suitable way to research young children's personal experiences.

4.2.1 A multiple case study approach

For the purpose of my study, I opted for a "multiple case study" (Yin, 2014, p. 184), or what Stake (2005) calls a "collective case study" (p. 445) that consists of "two or more cases in the same study" (Yin, 1993, p. 4). My aim for choosing a collective case design was two-fold: to illustrate the range, uniqueness and multifaceted findings of how the three children made meaning as affected by the influences that surrounded them; and to include elements of cross-comparing so as to bring out the commonalities and idiosyncrasies between the different cases. This, as is pointed out by Cohen et al. (2013) led me to acquire a wider and better comprehension of the phenomenon and helped me obtain a fuller picture. Yin (2014) would probably define my research as an "exploratory case study" (p. 10) while Stake (2005) would describe it as an "instrumental case study", (p. 445) as my focus was to provide insights into a particular issue or "external interest" (Stake, 2005, p.445). My cases, that is, the children, were chosen as "an example" (Edwards, 2001, p. 126) to investigate a phenomenon more widely, that, of exploring how they create and communicate meaning through their drawings, rather than chosen for an "intrinsic interest" (Stake, 2005, p. 445), that is, on the basis of a distinctive personal interest or a particular quality each child possessed.

A case study approach, according to Yin (2014), involves, "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in-depth and within its real-world context" (p. 16). As with other qualitative approaches, in a case study, the researcher is the primary tool of data collection and analysis, where the provision of detailed and unique accounts of personal experiences, real situations, knowledge and relationships (Denscombe, 2010; Merriam, 2009; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2014) in search for "in situ" (Stark and Torrance, 2005, p. 33) understanding of "units of analysis" (Edwards, 2001, p. 126), allows him/her to "retain a holistic and real-world perspective" (p. 4). Working alone as the only researcher who did all the data

collection and analysis of this study, I was able to achieve this by getting to know my participants in a personal way and acquire first-hand experience about their contexts, social dynamics and their ways of drawing.

For the aim of this study, I am going to present only one case study in full, that of Luke, in Chapter Six, to serve as an archetype of how I analysed the other two cases. To develop my cases I used detailed descriptions of the children's drawings, their narratives and the context in which they occurred. The reason for this was because I wanted to present a comprehensive interpretation as possible, without compromising the richness of the drawings or the quality of the analysis, due to limitation in word count. My decision rested on Luke, because as I explain in Chapter Seven, his drawing preferences and styles were in some ways, analogous to both Bertly's and Thea's, albeit, I must stress, with differences of a unique drawing pattern. In Chapter Seven, I also draw on the other two cases, those of Bertly and Thea, to present the commonalities and idiosyncrasies between the three children's drawings.

4.3 A Study *with* Children

As I have discussed in Chapter One, in this study I adopted a participatory approach, which implies that children should be given 'a voice' to participate in the research process (Alderson, 2005; Dahlberg et al., 2007; Morrow, 2005; James and Prout, 1997). In the following sections, I explain the rationale for the approaches and methods I used to support this position, where I discuss the way I perceive children's voices and explain the process of doing research with them.

4.3.1 Perceiving children's voices

My view of children's 'voice' is based on Gallacher and Gallagher's (2008), definition that voice is "the most authentic source of knowledge about themselves [the children's] and their lives" (p. 502). Throughout the study, I followed the children's cues, where I listened to what they had to say and tried to understand their ways of thinking and making sense of their drawings. Following Coppock's (2010) advice, I frequently let the children's multiple voices dominate the discussion and the process, where I gave them the space to decide what to say and what to leave unsaid, while they fluidly unfolded their everyday experiences and understandings.

Simultaneously, I prompted and questioned the children to extend their views, make connections between their thoughts and their drawings and allow their ideas to emerge. As a result of this co-constructive process of shared meaning-making, the children emerged as "powerful contributors with unique expertise" (Tay-Lim and Lim, 2013, p. 70). This was not an easy process especially as neither the children nor myself were used to such power sharing, due to the traditional approach that is so strong in local schools. At times I had to take a step back, silence myself and restrain from intervening with what they were doing, saying or thinking. On other occasions, I took a more active role and through my questioning and prompting I helped them articulate their ideas and construct their meanings. There were occasions when I doubted the children, questioned their abilities and suspected I was encumbering them with too much responsibility. By time the children gained confidence in what they were doing and saying and became more articulate in their interpretations.

4.3.2 Adopting a participatory approach

My interpretation of a participatory framework draws on O'Kane's (2000) notion which goes beyond the implementation of participatory tools to also involve a process of dialogue, reflection and change. As advised by Clough and Nutbrown (2012) and Veale (2005), I involved both the participants and myself, as the researcher, at different levels of the study. This included the sharing of information, the production of knowledge and evaluations of everyday events, and in being responsible for the data collection process. My commitment to involve children as much as possible came from my genuine belief and "personal value" (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012, p. 64), that children have the right to be considered, especially when, as was the case in my study, they were essential contributors to the research process.

A factor which I considered was, that the research methodology not only had to fit the aims of the study but, as Jones and Somekh (2005) propose, it also had to suit the needs, ability and interests of children. This, as is recommended by different scholars (Kjørholt, Moss and Clark, 2005; Moss, Clark and Kjørholt, 2005; Nyland, 2009; Stamatoglou, 2004), included adopting a suitable methodology that provided children with ways to be involved in the data collection process and with a space to voice their unique understandings and interpretations. This challenged me to find

what Clough and Nutbrown (2012) define as "new ways of listening, and new interpretations of what counts as 'voice'" (p. 69), where I had to revalue, relearn and understand the languages children use to create and communicate meaning. Recognising and trusting children as important collaborators and partners (Nyland, 2009), I offered them "participation as a choice" (Bucknall, 2014, p. 72), which also provided them with the opportunity to "be part of recording their own data" (MacNaughton and Smith, 2005, p. 116). In line with this, I opted to use child-centred, visual tools such as video-cameras and the children's drawings, which transformed the research methodology into a tangible and meaningful process for them.

Clough and Nutbrown's (2012) concept of "radical listening – as opposed to merely hearing" (p. 26), that is, to consider "all the voices which may be heard within and around any given topic" (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012, p. 26) is relevant here as it informed my positionality and my way of doing research with children. Throughout the study, I was careful not to lose the children's voice but to truly listen to their choices, interpretations and narrations, without tainting or thwarting their messages. I did this in an aura of respect towards their feelings, moods and wishes, where I allowed them the possibility to decide the form, content and duration of the drawings. I also encouraged them to act as data collectors by collating the drawings, video-record themselves, even if with the help of adults, to analyse their drawings and to take decisions about ethical issues, consent and ownership. This meant that, for example, sometimes children decided to depict a number of drawings at one go while at other times, they simply refused to draw at all. Likewise, their interpretations were sometimes very detailed and long while on other occasions they were dry and short. Such tools and spaces for participation and decision-making not only facilitated the data collection process through methods that suited the children's ways of doing things, but also helped them with articulating their perspectives and representing their voices in genuine, truthful and unfiltered ways (Clark and Moss, 2001; Mukherji and Albon, 2010). As is suggested by Smith (2011), this transformed my relationship with them into a joint partnership, where I respected them as key contributors who provided authentic data about themselves, their meanings and their lives.

4.4 Drawing as a Child-appropriate Mode

While as I exemplified in Chapter Three, some scholars (Kellogg, 1969; Lowenfeld and Brittain 1947/1987; Luquet 1927/2001) perceive children's drawings as a representation tool through which they illustrate the world they live in, others (Angelides and Michaelidou, 2009; Brooker, 2001; Hearne and Thomson, 2014; Mukherji and Albon, 2010; Malchiodi, 1998; Roberts-Holmes, 2005) consider it as an appropriate qualitative tool for data collection: "a non-invasive, non-confrontational" (Morrow and Richards, 1996, p. 100), participatory tool that facilitates listening to children. Both these views, as well as the fact that most children feel confident to draw as it is a mode with which they are familiar and use on a daily basis (Prosser, and Burke, 2008), prompted me to use drawings as my main tool of data collection. Another reason for using children's drawings in research is justified by arguments as postulated by other researchers (Coates and Coates, 2011, 2006; Cox, 2005; Haney, Russell and Bebell, 2004; Kendrick and McKay, 2004; Zweifel, and Wezemael, 2012) who claim that drawing is a powerful and symbolic tool that provides deep insights into children's everyday experiences, perceptions and thought processes. In fact, drawing is defined by Hall (2010b) as a "facilitative method for communication" (p. 420), which acts as a prompter for elicitation and discussion, while affording children with ways to convey their understandings in a different way from other modes (Marion and Cowder, 2013). Perceiving drawing as a tool for data collection, Mitchell, Theron, Smith and Stuart (2011) claim, that drawing permits children to represent and perceive data in a simple, tangible and purposeful way, which according to Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin and Robinson (2010) and Loizos (2000), make it an inclusive and obvious tool to use in research with children. More importantly, drawing is unlike other tools of data collection such as interviews, as it does not request a right or wrong answer and children do not have to be quick in providing immediate replies (Punch, 2005). Thus, I consider the use of drawing as a non-threating tool for young children as it gives them the possibility to review their ideas at their own pace and re-think what they wish to illustrate. As a result, drawing allows children the possibility to add, modify and change their representaiton, which improves contextual accuracy, relevance and validity of data (Liebenberg, 2009).

Fargas-Malet et al. (2010), however, caution about one of the main shortcomings of using drawing as a tool for data collection where they argue that children might opt to illustrate what they find easy to portray or what they think might please the researcher. To overcome this limitation, I immediately made it clear to the three children that I was not after their ability to draw or in them generating realistic, creative and flawless drawings of high quality that could be defined as "'right' or 'wrong'" (Christensen and James, 2000b, p. 168). Instead, I emphasised that my interest was in the significance the drawings had for them, the meaning they conveyed and their explanation of what the drawing was about. Providing children with the opportunity to draw what was relevant to them without quality or time pressures, put the children at ease and even Bertly, who had some inhibitions, and Luke who did not really consider drawing as fun, regularly demonstrated eagerness to use this mode by depicting complex and multiple drawings on the same day.

4.5 My Approach as the Researcher

Qualitative and flexible methods call for flexible researchers: a stance which I adopted in this study. Taking the role of a qualitative and interpretive "bricoleur" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 4), who like a film-maker "assembles images into montages" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 4) I used the children's drawings, their narratives and video-recordings of their drawing processes, to understand their meanings. To achieve this, I used the knowledge, communication and research skills I acquired in previous studies, as well as the tools, methods and techniques I made available, to fit the specificities of the context, the participants, the research questions and the data collection methods. While I framed a design to guide me through my data collection process, yet, this was not finalised in advance but, as I argued above in Section 4.2, I considered it as a developing construction where I remained open to changes and adapted my research practices and procedures to meet the evolving needs of the study. As is suggested by various researchers (Dawson, 2009; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Patton, 2015; Weinstein and Weinstein, 1991), I combined and developed new techniques and modes of interpretation accordingly. Subsequently, the adaptation and collation of methods and representations translated itself into a montage where I mounted and interpreted the multi-layers of data that emerged from the children's drawings, and collated them to construct an emergent and complex,

construed meaning. A point in case is the development of the *Data cross-grid* I invented and used as an instrument to organise, represent, and analyse children's drawings as well as to identify their drawing profiles. I shall explain the design and use of this *Data Cross-grid* in Section 5.2.1 in Chapter Five.

Acknowledging children's voice in research necessitates a commitment on the researcher's part to adopt a co-constructed, interpretive and reflexive process that involves interaction between the researcher and the researched (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012). In my opinion, this calls for the cultivation of a close and harmonious bond between the two, that is based on mutual trust and reciprocal "honesty and openness" (Bucknall, 2014, p.82) as well as on authentic participation and engagement (Coates and Coates, 2006; Waller and Bitou, 2011). Otherwise, as Mannion (2007) warns, if such a relationship is not valued, there might be the risk of producing a narrow view of the children's perspectives and interpretations. Subsequently, I adopted a flexible, informal and unstructured approach where I went with the flow of the children's drawing processes and all that was happening within the context, and moved in and out of several roles as suited the children and myself at that particular moment. I made time to "simply be with children" (Lahman, 2008, p. 295), where for most of the time I tried to develop meaningful relationships and blend with them by sitting on their small chairs next to them, giggling and engaging in small talk about their everyday lives. However, I never attempted to "assume the status of a 'child'" (Christensen, 2004, p.174), by for example, drawing alongside them.

On the other hand, I acknowledge that such a relationship can be problematic due to what Montgomery (2014) and O'Kane (2000) define as obvious disparities of age, size, and power or what Fawcett and Hearn (2004) call as "epistemological otherness" (p.214), where children can be considered as 'others' from the researcher's perspective. Aware of this unavoidable gap, I was careful not to "objectify" (Nutbrown, 2011, p.7) the children, their words or their drawings, and, as argued above, tried to find ways of bridging this power imbalance by using a participatory approach to address forms of "otherness" (Fawcett and Hearn, 2004, p. 214). I therefore, adopted Nutbrown's (2011), acuity of seeing children as "other-wise," (p.

11), as having a different way of knowing, of seeing, of doing and of interpreting, rather than as "othered" (Lahman, 2008, p. 281).   I considered them as the protagonists of the research process, who valued and brought their "genuine participation" (Christensen, 2004, p. 166) interpretations and meanings to the study. Simultaneously, taking Montegomery's (2014) suggestion, I played down my adult status and presented myself as a friendly adult; "an unusual type of adult" (Christensen, 2004, p. 174), who was interested and wanted to understand the children's worlds through their drawings. While I do not really know how the children perceived my role, they probably considered me as an "atypical adult" (Corsaro, 2005b, p. 52), an adult, with a different role from a typical teacher they were used to in school.

Mid-way in my preliminary visits, which had the aim to prepare the children and myself for the study, I realised that the children began to show interest in me, looked more comfortable in my presence and began asking me questions about my personal life. I regarded this as an indication that the children have accepted me as one of the group, albeit as an adult with a particular role. By time I realised that the more I immersed myself in the children's lives, the more I spent time with them, and the more I strengthened my rapport with them, the more they were willing to draw and talk about their drawings. As indicated by Coates and Coates (2006), this relationship transformed the research into a more genuine one; therefore, validating it.

Embracing the role of a qualitative and interpretive researcher brings with it other challenges. As claimed by Clough and Nutbrown (2012), the research and the researcher become inseparable; thus, personal values and subjectivity form an integral part of the study. As a "human instrument" (Goldbart and Hustler, 2005, p.16), I brought a "variety of selves" (Reinharz, 1997, p.5) to the research, which together with my experiences and values, personal history and identity as well as my perspectives, shaped my visions and interpretations and hence, had an impact on the research (Coffey, 1999; Cohen, et al., 2013; Denscombe, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). In turn, as Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggest, these created a dynamic and a fluid state of self, that changed me during the research process and made me more sensitive towards the children's ways of communication.

4.6 The Research Context and Participants

My research focused on three, four-year old children who attended the same kindergarten class. I opted to investigate the children's drawings in both the home and school settings as these are two naturalistic settings the children are familiar with. While inevitably I am aware that my presence and the introduction of drawing materials together with the use of digital equipment must have impacted on both the home and classroom dynamics, yet, I consider the resulting data as very reflective of the children's daily experiences and interactions.

4.6.1 The school

With a population of around five-hundred children aged between three and eight years, the school of my study, is considered by local standards, as a large one. The school opens between Monday to Friday from 8.30a.m. to 2.30p.m. with two short lunch breaks of half an hour each. Three and four year-olds attend what are known as Kindergarten I (for 3-year olds) and Kindergarten II (for 4-year olds) classes respectively, where, as I concluded in a previous study (Deguara, 2009), a school-readiness approach is practiced.

The classroom context and participants.

Seventeen children, six girls and eleven boys with an average age of 4 years to 4 years 6 months attended the Kindergarten II class of my study. The majority of the children came from middle-class families and represented homogenous cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds: all children were Caucasian, had Maltese as their native language, lived in the same town or the surrounding areas and practiced the same religion. Most of the children knew each other from the previous year except for three children, including Luke, who used to attend other schools.

The classroom was a typical, local, state, kindergarten class, situated within the primary school building. It was a one-room, relatively small class with different play areas organised by the walls and three children's tables placed in the middle. With most of the objects in the class, furniture, books, and toys looking old, tattered and out of condition, the environment could be generally described as poor and

demotivating. Children's documentation was limited and showed structured and identical activities that lacked creativity, innovation and inquiry. Learning was based on a predicted thematic approach, which centred around typical themes such as animals and Christmas, that were exclusively planned and led by the KGA. The school day was dominated by adult-structured activities where the teaching of letters and numbers was given utmost importance. A small group of children was usually called at a table at a time to follow either a numeracy, literacy or a painting activity that was closely managed by the KGA while the other children were encouraged to play at different play areas, including the drawing table. Other whole-class daily activities included circle time, outdoor play and story time.

With only a stack of re-used paper and some pencil colours and crayons, the drawing table (Figure 4.1) mirrored the non-functioning and sterile environment of the class. This was stifling the children's motivation and desire to draw. As from my first visit to the class, I was immediately concerned about this and came to the conclusion that if I wanted the children to be motivated to draw out of their free will, then I had to develop a drawing area that intrigued them.

Figure 4.1
The drawing table as presented by the KGA.

Following Kress' (1997) and Pahl's (2002, 2001a) recommendations that a variety of materials facilitate multi-modal representations, and in agreement with the classroom KGA, I decided that on each visit I would introduce new material, to provide children with a modest choice of media; a practice which I also used whenever I visited the homes. The drawing media I introduced varied from different writing material, to craft, recycled and natural materials. I also added different types of paper as well as some tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and cello-tape (Figure 4.2). Although I regularly introduced new materials, at the same time I was very respectful towards the KGA's conventions and practice, where, for example, I did not introduce any materials which she did not approve of. I always consulted her and requested her permission every time I brought in new material.

Figure 4.2
The drawing table as developed during the study.

The kindergarten assistant.

I describe Ms Anna[3], the KGA, as motivated, enthusiastic and energetic, but traditional in her teaching approach and lacking in organisation. Adopting a teacher-centred pedagogy, she perceived the kindergarten class as a preparation year for formal teaching where she considered literacy and numeracy skills as the crux of all teaching, and play and the creative arts as secondary activities. She had twenty-five years of experience as a kindergarten assistant, with only short, in-training courses as qualifications. My initial plan was to involve the KGA as a participant and a data collector in the study, where I asked her to video-record the children in my absence and give me feedback about their drawings. While she gave her written consent and

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[3] Pseudonym is used to protect the Kindergarten Assistant's identity as per her ethical consent.

verbally agreed to do so, it soon became apparent that she found it difficult to manage the class while simultaneously get involved in the study.   This meant that I had to change my data collection plans and collect all data myself at school, a process which I explain in detail in Section 4.7.2.

4.6.2 The three participant children

The three participant children Luke, Thea, and Bertly were aged between four years two months and four years six months when I first met them in January, 2012. They shared many commonalities: they came from similar home backgrounds that enjoyed economic and emotional stability, they lived with both their parents in the same village, and all three had an older sibling. In the following sections, I include a very short profile about each child. A more detailed profile can be found in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

To get to know the children better and their home-school backgrounds and interactions, I asked both the parents and the KGA to fill-in a *Personal Data Sheet* (Appendix 4) with basic contact details, as well as a *Project Information Sheet* with information about each child, his/her friends and past-times (Appendix 5).

Luke.

Luke was four years, six months at the beginning of the study. He had an older brother, Matthias aged nine and a younger sibling, Jacob, aged three. Jacob attended the same school as Luke. They lived with their parents, in a relatively large terraced house.

Luke was very outspoken and displayed an assertive and extrovert character; attributes which were abetted by his fluency in both Maltese and English languages. He seemed to be very caring and sensitive towards others, which made him quite popular with his friends. He liked to play Wii Nintendo games with his family and watch superhero films, mainly those of *Iron Man*[4] (Marvel Comics, 2015) and *Ben*

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[4] *Iron Man* (Marvel Comics, 2015) is a fictional, superhero character with a powered suit of armour to fight the evil and make the world a safer place.

Ten[5] (TV Tropes Foundation, n.d.), which instilled in him a love for play fighting. His passion for adventure, action, destruction, power and victory, was reflected in his dramatic play, as well as in his drawings.

Thea.

At the age of four years, three months, Thea was the youngest child of the study. She had an older sister, Erica, who was six years old at the time. The sisters attended the same school. They lived with their parents in an apartment situated in a very quiet area outside the main town. The family appeared to have a close relationship with the paternal grandparents who visited them regularly during the week. In fact, they also participated in the study by sometimes helping Thea with video-recording as well as by prompting her and linking the drawings to common past-experiences.

Thea seemed very caring, affectionate and sensitive, with a good sense of humour. She was very independent and determined in following her ideas. She was also very creative and drawing was one of her past-times. She appeared to have mastery in using craft materials and spent a long time doing a drawing and decorating it to the last detail. She also had an apparent interest in how things worked, a pursuit which she shared with her father. At school she seemed very confident and liked to take the role of a leader, where she guided and shared what she knew with her friends, who often followed her suggestions.

Bertly.

Bertly was four years, five months old at the beginning of the study. He lived with his parents and his sister, Jael, who was six years old at the time. They lived in a comparatively modest apartment, situated outside the old city-centre, and within a walking distance from the school. Bertly had a very close bond with his sister and mother, with whom he spent a lot of time.

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[5] *Ben Ten* (TV Tropes Foundation, n.d.), is an animated television series, about a ten year old boy who got a watch device with superpowers, that allowed him to transform in ten different alien heroes and bestowed on him the strength and power to fight evil aliens.

Bertly was a very sensitive, introvert and reserved child. As a result, he did not seem to have many friends at school. Bertly did not like to draw. Initially, his drawings were dominated by mark-making, but during the study, he began to experiment with different media, which made him enjoy drawing. Bertly's favourite past-times included playing computer games and watching cartoons. Contrastingly, during the week-end he liked to go to his father's field to play. He loved the outdoors and he had a particular interest in natural things: he loved animals, flowers and was very knowledgeable and keen about the weather, which influenced his mood considerably.

The selection criteria for choosing the three children.

I asked the school management team to help me identify the three children, as they knew them better. For this purpose, I established selection criteria, which was mainly guided by practical measures. One of the first criteria I established was the age of the children, where I specifically asked to conduct the study with four-year olds. The reason for this choice emanated from the fact that I did not deem it appropriate to involve three-year old or five year-old children in the study, as the former group would be experiencing their first transition from home to school while the latter would be experiencing their second transition, that from an informal to a formal school setting. In both instances, being asked to participate in a study and having a stranger, myself, as the researcher, in class, in addition to all the transition processes they would be experiencing, could have proved to be overwhelming for the children. I also asked to have children attending the same class for logistical reasons, so that, during a school visit I would be able to observe all three children simultaneously. I also asked for a balance in gender. Taking into consideration the nature of the study, another important criterion I levied on the school included selecting children who liked to draw and who were outspoken and communicated effectively. The latter was an important criterion for me at that time as I was concerned that language could prove to be a barrier, where I thought I could find it difficult to understand the children and their ways of articulating themselves.

Bearing in mind that the research process incurred commitment from parents, which in turn could ensue pressure, another criterion I put forth was the consideration of the children's family background, and to choose children who came from stable families and who were willing and had the time to participate in the study. It was also a priority for me to enter homes where I felt safe and welcomed, and where the study would be understood and valued. The ultimate decision rested on the children's and the parents' willingness to take part in the study. Even if I made the aim of my study and the criteria clear to the school's management team, they were guided by their own principles. While they tried to choose children who they perceived as communicatively confident and competent, they narrowed their choice based on the good rapport the school had with the parents, and identified children of parents who were actively involved in the school's Parents Teachers Association.

The parents.

All parents spent quality time with their children and were very patient and caring. They were all very keen and committed to the study. They trusted me, were very honest and open, and collaborated in a remarkable way. They helped the children with their video-recording, spent time with them while drawing (although this was not necessary), prompted them, gave them suggestions and asked them questions to help them describe their drawings. They also helped the children with collating their drawings and provided me with additional information about family routines and episodes that they considered as relevant to the meaning connoted in the drawings.

4.7 The Data Collection Process

Denscombe (2010) states, that a good case study allows for the use of multiple "tools for data collection" (p.4) and relies on many different sources of evidence depending on the specific needs of the project. Inspired by the methodologies incorporated by Hopperstad (2008b) and Ring (2006), in my data collection process, I made use of the children's drawings from both the school and home settings, the video-recordings of the process of drawing, together with the informal conversations I had with the children and their parents about the content of the drawings. As a result of this hybrid approach each episode, each drawing and each case turned out to be "entirely unique, personal and incapable of replication" (Coates and Coates, 2006, p.226).

4.7.1 Image-based research

Image-based or visual research research involves the production, organisation and interpretation of still images such as photographs and drawings, moving pictures as well as hypermedia (Haw and Hadfield, 2011; Prosser, 2004; Prosser and Loxley, 2010; Pink, 2007). Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff (2010) claim that image-based research provides a "multidimensional" (p. xvi) way of capturing action, words and processes simultaneously, by generating unprecedented accessibility, flexibility, detailed information and "new qualities and quantities of data" (Schnettler and Raab, 2008, p. 7) more than any other medium can provide. It is a preferred methodology to use with young children as images are central to their culture and appeal to their ways of communication (Ring, 2006). Moreover, it is a method which evokes stories or questions and calls for less prompting and restrictions from the researcher; thus facilitating expression and communication of meaning. Image-based research is claimed to be empowering for participants as they are the ones who have the knowledge of the images and have the control to choose what to discuss and what to withhold (Einarsdottir, 2005; Kaplan and Howes, 2004). Furthermore, the children's ability to visualise makes them confident and subtle experts to use and communicate their thoughts through drawings, sketches and doodles.

Children are also proficient with using digital equipment (Thomson, 2008). Weber (2008) claims that image-based data is palpable and visible as it captures the "ineffable … [and] can help us access those elusive hard-to-put-into-words aspects of knowledge that might otherwise remain hidden or ignored" (Weber, 2008, p. 44). This is supported by Flewitt (2006) who suggests, that visual methods provide new insights into the children's communicative ways which have previously been disregarded. Concurring with Prosser and Burke (2008) I argue that, visual methods not only combine participatory research with children's visual cultures but they are considered as "expressions and representations of childhood" (p. 408), that help children share their experiences and convey their meaning-making in an illustrative and enjoyable way (Galman, 2009). However, I do coincide with Banks' (2001), Buckingham's (2009), and Pink's, (2004), arguments, that image-based methods cannot and should not be used independently of other methods but should be interlinked with other tools such as observations and narratives. In my view, the

combination of a multiplicity of methods creates a "mosaic of data" (Flewitt, 2006, p. 29), that interrelates with, strengthens and validates the emerging findings, that allow for "multilevel analysis" (p. 30).

During this study, I made use of digital technology which is considered by Pink (2007), as a medium that effectively captures subjects, actions and reactions. I used a digital camera and scanner to photograph or scan the children's drawings accordingly. I also made use of stationary Flip Ultra HD cameras to video-record the process of each drawing and the accompanying narratives and conversations. Thus, I used visual images in two ways in my research. On one hand I used the children's drawings and the respective video-recordings, as a means of recording, documenting and representing data; on the other, I followed Barbour's (2008) suggestions, and used the content of the children's drawings to conjure data elicitation and analysis, and to evaluate their production, interpretation and meanings.

4.7.2 Design of the study: Organising the home and school visits

I conducted the fieldwork between January and April, 2012, where I regularly visited the school and the children's homes. As a qualitative and interpretive researcher I wanted to ensure that I get to know my participants, the contexts and hence my data well, which I achieved, by collecting, classifying and analysing all the data myself. In the first month, that is, between mid-January and mid-February, I began my research process by holding a set of seven preliminary visits at school and a preliminary visit to each child's home. Table 4.1 includes a list of the preliminary visits.

Table 4.1
A list of the preliminary visits conducted at home and at school.

Date	School Visits	Duration	Home Visits	Duration
Thursday, 12th Jan, 2012	Pre visit 1	4 hours	-	-
Thursday, 19th Jan, 2012	Pre visit 2	4 hours	-	-
Thursday, 26th Jan, 2012	Pre visit 3	5 hours	-	-
Thursday, 2nd Feb, 2012	Pre visit 4	3 hours 30 mins	-	-
Friday, 3rd Feb, 2012	Pre visit 5	4 hours	-	-
Tuesday, 7th Feb, 2012	Pre visit 6	3 hours	Thea's Pre Visit	1 hours 15 mins
Wednesday, 8th Feb, 2012	Pre visit 7	3 hours	Luke's Pre Visit	2 hours
Thursday, 9th Feb, 2012	-	-	Bertly's Pre Visit	1 hour
Total number of visits and hours	7 visits	26 hours 30 mins	3 visits (one at each home)	4 hours 15 mins

My aim to conduct these preliminary visits was based on McKechnie's (2006) and Norris and Walker's (2005) idea, where they argue that all involved participants as well as the researcher need time to get accustomed to each other and to prepare for the actual study. The preliminary visits helped the children to gradually get to know me and for me to get to know and befriend them and acquire their trust. I also used these preliminary visits to familiarse myself with the children's cultures, their social conventions and uses of language, as well as their home and school contexts and situations. On my third preliminary visit at school, when I considered that the children felt comfortable in my presence and I was ascertained that they felt knowledgeable and empowered enough to make an informed decision about the study, I formally asked them for their assent – a process which I explain in detail in Section 4.9. Subsequently, this allowed me to test my methodology and tools, by for example, experimenting with different camera positions, observing and video-recording the children while drawing and holding post-drawing conversations with them during the remaining preliminary visits. To help the children feel confident about the use of the video-cameras I also explained their technical aspects (such as how to start and stop recording, how to charge the batteries, and how to recognise when the memory is full), and answered any concerns they had. While initially the

cameras stirred some excitement, soon the children became accustomed to them and they became part of the classroom and home contexts; an experience also noted by Hopperstad (2008b) in her study.

On my sixth preliminary visit at school, I held a preliminary visit at each child's home, where I reviewed the study with the children and their parents, provided them with a bag of drawing materials and the recording equipment needed, communicated the frequency of my visits, discussed the duration of the study, and reconsidered their responsibilities and commitment towards the study. Hence, this period of preliminary visits, helped me to set the scene for the actual study by reducing the initial excitement, that of being part of a study and video-recording might induce, and to discuss any concerns. This led to fewer flaws and more authentic, compelling and valid data during the main data collection process.

The school visits.

After I conducted the preliminary visits, in mid-February I embarked on the data collection process where I spent nine weeks conducting intensive observations. My initial plan was to visit the class twice a week, and involve the KGA by video-recording the three children drawing on the other days I was absent. However, the KGA seemed unable to record the children while concurrently manage the whole class on her own. Understanding this limitation, I changed my plans to visit the school as much as possible. This turned out to be between three or four times a week, depending on my work commitments[6], the school's extra-curricular activities and holidays. During the same period I visited each child's home once a week. Table 4.2 provides a detailed list of both the home and school visits.

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[6] At the time I was also a lecturer at the University of Malta.

Table 4.2
A schedule of the home and school visits.

Date	School Visits	Duration	Home Visits	Duration
Week 1				
Monday, 13th February, 2012	Visit 1	3 hours	-	-
Wednesday, 15th February, 2012	Visit 2	3 hours	Thea Home (TH) Visit 1	1 hour 45 mins
Thursday 16th February, 2012	Visit 3	3 hours	Bertly Home (BH) Visit 1	1 hour
Friday 17th February, 2012	-	-	Luke Home (LH) Visit 1	1 hour 15 mins
Week 2				
Monday, 20th February, 2012	-	-	TH Visit 2	1 hour 15 mins
Tuesday, 21st February, 2012	Visit 4	3 hours	-	-
Wednesday, 22nd February, 2012	Visit 5	3 hours 15 mins	-	-
Thursday, 23rd February, 2012	Visit 6	3 hours 30 mins	LH Visit 2	1 hour 10 mins
Friday, 24th February, 2012	-	-	BH Visit 2	1 hour
Week 3				
Monday, 27th February, 2012	Visit 7	3 hours		
Wednesday, 29th February, 2012	Visit 8	4 hours	TH Visit 3	1 hour 30 mins
Thursday, 1st March, 2012	Visit 9	3 hours	BH Visit 3	1 hour
Friday, 2nd March, 2012	Visit 10	3 hours	-	-
Week 4				
Monday, 5th March, 2012	Visit 11	3 hours	-	-
Wednesday, 7th March, 2012	Visit 12	3 hours	LH Visit 3	1 hour
Thursday, 8th March, 2012	Visit 13	3 hours	BH Visit 4	1 hour
			TH Visit 4	1 hour 30 mins
Friday, 9th March, 2012	Visit 14	3 hours	-	-
Week 5				
Monday, 12th March, 2012	Visit 15	3 hours	-	-
Tuesday, 13th March, 2012	-	-	LH visit 4	1 hour 15 mins
Wednesday, 14th March, 2012	-	-	TH Visit 5	1 hour 20 mins
Thursday, 15th March, 2012	Visit 16	3 hours	BH Visit 5	1 hour
Friday, 16th March, 2012	Visit 17	3 hours	-	-
Week 6				
Tuesday, 20th March, 2012	-	-	LH Visit 5	1 hour 15 mins
Thursday, 22nd March, 2012	Visit 18	3 hours	-	-
Friday, 23rd March, 2012	Visit 19	3 hours	-	-
Week 7				
Monday, 26th March, 2012	Visit 20	3 hours	-	-
Wednesday, 28th March, 2012	Visit 21	1 hour 30 mins	Thea Concl Visit	1 hour 30 mins
Thursday, 29th March, 2012	-	-	Bertly Concl Visit	1 hour 15 mins
Friday, 30th March, 2012	Visit 22	3 hours 30 mins	Luke Concl Visit	1 hour 30 mins
Week 8 (After Easter Holidays)				
Monday, 16th April, 2012	Visit 23	3 hours 30 mins	-	-
Friday, 20th April, 2012	Visit 24	2 hours	-	-
Week 9				
Monday, 23rd April, 2012	Visit 25	3 hours 30 mins	-	-
Thursday, 26th April, 2012	Visit 26	4 hours	-	-
Monday, 30th April, 2012	Concluding	1 hour 15 mins	-	-
Total number of visits and hours	26 visits and concl visit	79 hours 45 minutes	15 visits and 3 concl visits)	18 hours 15 minutes

Each of my school visits began with preparing the drawing table and adding new material. Once the class children were settled for the small group activities with the KGA, I was allowed to invite the children to the drawing table. My invitation was open to all seventeen children in the class but I only video-recorded the three children who were participants in my study. Sometimes, none of the children of the study felt like drawing while at other times I had two or the three of them drawing simultaneously.

Afraid of having too many or too few depictions, I initially imposed a limitation of between 2 to 5 drawings for each child to do in each setting per week. This turned out to be impractical on several counts. First, it was difficult for both the KGA and the parents to keep note of the number of drawings. Secondly, the children drew whenever they felt like it. They could not be forced to draw more or be dissuaded to draw less. While at times, they drew in response to my invitation, they still had the right to either refuse to draw or to draw more than one drawing in the same sitting. Thirdly, enforcing a limitation on the number of drawings, turned out to be against the participatory approach I was implementing. Wanting the children to be active participants and decision-makers, I entrusted them with the control to decide when to draw, the modes and media to use, as well as the subject and the duration of the drawings; and this could not be limited by a specified number of drawings. As a result, the majority of the drawings became "self-directed" (Coates and Coates, 2006, p. 226) voluntary drawings where the children turned the process into an "open ended" (p. 225) one.

The home visits.

The home visits were conducted in-parallel with the school visits (Table 4.2 above). A priori I determined to conduct a maximum number of five visits per child: a visit once a week for five weeks, together with an additional preliminary and concluding visit to each home. The visits were co-ordinated with the parents by appointment according to their availabilities. I usually began the visits with the child talking about the school drawings so as to see whether the parents could provide more insights about their contents. Subsequently, I introduced new material for the child to draw with, followed by the child doing his drawing/s. My initial aim was to limit the

drawing sessions to an hour so as not to overstay and impinge on the parents' time; however, this was not always possible as sometimes, the children took longer to draw. Once a drawing was ready, I asked the child to elaborate where frequently parents joined in with their interpretations. I also asked the parents to help their children video-record themselves in-between my visits, something which they executed very diligently and proficiently.

Concluding the study was not easy. After months of building a relationship of trust and mutual respect with the children, and of seeing them almost on a daily basis, I was aware that, as pointed out by Montgomery (2014), I had to negotiate my exit from the field in a sensitive way. In mid-March, 2012 I began the weaning off process by verbally explaining to the children that the study was coming to an end. I also sought the help of the parents to talk to the children about my eventual departure. Towards the last week of March, I concluded the home visits while I continued with my school visits, which I gradually spaced out until the last week of April. The aim of the concluding visit in each setting was to celebrate the study, where I shared my initial findings with the children and families, and provided them as well as the school administration, the KGA and all the children in class, with tokens of appreciation.

4.7.3 Observations

At the beginning of the study, I was uncertain whether I should adopt a non-participant or "unobtrusive" (Robson, 2002, p. 310) approach, where I would have acted as a "detached observer" (Coates and Coates, 2006, p. 225) who sat in a separate area from the children, observing without interacting with them, so as to have a naturalistic observation as possible. However, I immediately understood that this was not going to work on several levels. First, it is against my nature to be surrounded by children and not communicate with them; besides, I consider it as unethical to ignore the children's queries and their need to disclose their experiences with others. Secondly, the KGA conveyed to me that, for the duration of the study, the drawing area was my responsibility. This meant that I had to keep a close eye on the area and make sure that it was enjoyed fairly by all children. Thirdly and more importantly, I wanted to closely follow all that the children were doing and saying. It

was therefore, vital for me to be active and prompt, encourage or ask for the immediate elaboration from the children as otherwise the meaning would be lost. Using non-participant observation would have probably hampered the data collection process and the validation of the data.

Consequently, I considered participant observation, as the most appropriate strategy to use for my study where I took the role of what Emond (2005) defines as an "overt participant observer" (p. 125). Considering myself more of a participant rather than an observer, my emphasis during the data collection process was to elicit the children's views, explore and problematise their drawings, listen to their ways of communication and simply grasp all that was occurring; an approach recommended by Montgomery (2014) and Warming (2005). In the process I also took Leitch's (2008) advice, and worked to create a non-threating space, by developing a respectful and collaborative atmosphere, share informal conversations with the children and negotiate and develop my relationship with them. As MacNaughton, Hughes and Smith (2007) claim, the onus rested on me as the researcher to be considerate and in-sync with the children's interests and to respectfully follow their cues, encourage related narratives and understand what they were communicating. Tay-Lim and Lim (2013) and Jones and Somekh (2005) suggest, that this can be quite a challenging process as it entails finding a balance between engaging with the children, supporting their views, and understanding and interpreting their perspectives while simultaneously taking note of everything that is occurring. I noticed that the more I interacted with the children, the more comfortable they felt in my company, and the more they were themselves. So while I recognise that my presence could be considered as an intrusion in the children's daily lives, and I do not deny that at times they could have reacted differently if I was not present, yet, I argue that for most of the times, the children acted naturally as if I was their KGA or a family friend. The ground work I did in the preliminary visits in getting to know them, and the duration of the study, served their purpose for me to build a trusting relationship with them.

Conducting observations at school was easier for me, mainly because I was used to doing research in such a setting while it was the first time for me to enter children's homes. Being a public domain, the school context allowed me more freedom of

movement and therefore, I could focus on different children simultaneously. Contrastingly, I considered the home context as a sanctuary of private family affairs, where, in wanting to respect the families' privacy I avoided unnecessary intrusion into their personal matters; thus, I was more conscious of the effect of my role on the children and the family. However, the families appeared comfortable with me in their homes. My visits allowed me access to the site and thus provided me with unique insights about the children and their experiences, conventions and ways of doing things, as well as with enough contextual information that abetted my analysis of the children's drawings.

I adopted an involved "open-ended" (Jones and Somekh, 2005, p. 139) method of note-taking for my observations, where I did not take any formal or written records, but I took mental notes of as many details as possible. Meanwhile, I also used a Flip Ultra HD camera as part of my "multi-approach strategy" (Warming, 2005, p. 65) of data collection that helped me capture the children's activity and document their voices. Once I returned home after each visit, I became more of an observer and I immediately reviewed the video-recordings, which served as an "aide-memoire" (Bryman, 2012, p. 457) of the children's drawing processes. The permanence and flexibility of the video-footage as highlighted by Heath et al. (2010), enabled me to repeatedly watch, uncover and analyse the multi-layered production of the drawing experiences with more scrutiny. Subsequently, I developed a set of notes of my observations sessions which I kept on a Word-processing file in the form of a research diary (discussed in more detail in Section 4.7.7), where I regularly reflected on particular drawings and episodes that caught my attention.

Video recording the observations.

Aware that taking notes while collecting data in research can become problematic as one can miss on observation and participation (Jones and Somekh, 2005), I used videographing as a form of "indirect observation" (Haw and Hadfield, 2011, p. 9) where, as was noticed by Heath et al. (2010), the camera acted as a research assistant that captured the children's complex interactions and processes as they unfolded. I considered the videos as my "visual field notes" (Marion and Crowder, 2013, p. 28) where, like any other field notes, they generated information which, I could go back

to consult, review and analyse as needed. With a capacity to "capture, document or note-take a scene" (Prosser and Burke, 2008, p. 412), with a high level of detail and in a permanent and multi-layered way, I considered the video-camera as a "research instrument par excellence" (Lomax, and Casey, 1998, p. 5).

I opted to use Flip Ultra HD cameras for their light-weight, small size and manageability, as well as for their affordability, and their easy-to-use and reliable technology. The image generated on a Flip Ultra HD camera is in high-definition and sound is captured clearly. This also proved to be very useful as I could immediately upload the clips on my computer. However, while digital technology can be flexible and practical, it can also be problematic. Sometimes, it happened that either the battery went flat or the camera stopped recording due to a full memory, which meant that sometimes I lost precious minutes of recording until I got the camera running again. Moreover, after each home or school visit I had to download all the videos from the camera onto an external hard-disk, archiving them in separate folders accordingly, while securing an extra copy, and re-charging the battery to be ready-to-use. This process was very time-consuming. At the onset of each observation session, I stabilised the camera on a tripod and set it up on the side to ensure a non-invasive procedure for the children as possible, while directing it at the children's drawings. Although this provided a focus on the drawing, it was also limiting as it left out a significant amount of activity that was occurring beyond the camera, a limitation also pointed out by Jones and Somekh (2005). Moreover, I did not have a fixed place where to put the camera but I changed it accordingly depending on the position of the child. This was difficult at school as the drawing area was small, and sometimes finding a space to set the camera from an adequate distance proved to be challenging. This meant that at times the video-camera was within the children's easy reach who sometimes moved it around and consequently changed its angle, making me miss some of the data. Another problem that sometimes arose in the class was the fact that additional noise was captured by the camera, at times making it difficult for me to understand what the child was saying.

To provide the reader with authentic exemplars of the observations, the children's sociocultural situatedness and the drawing processes they engaged in, I included an edited video excerpt of a drawing from each of the home and school settings of each child. The six videos were edited and reduced to a manageable, viewable length, where I ommitted small talk, other non-related action or long episodes of the child silently drawing, to bring out the essence of how children created their drawings. In each video excerpt, the sound level was lowered as the conversations were mostly in Maltese even if English was regularly used by the children. I then included sub-headings with direct translations in English. I saved these videos as Windows Media Video (.wmv), which can be accessed from the SD (memory) card attached at the back of this thesis, in a folder under the name of each child ex. *Luke's Video-Recordings,* which can be located in the folder *Children's Video Recordings*. Obvious storage space inhibited me from presenting all videos recorded. Each video varied in length and hence in size, depending on the duration of the drawing and the post-drawing conversations. Table 4.3 provides an indication of the digital storage space needed to save all the videos.

Table 4.3
The digital storage space of all videos.

Name of child	Home drawing videos		School drawing videos		Total of home and school drawing videos	
	Number of videos	Total digital storage	Number of videos	Total digital storage	Total number of videos	Disc space used in total
Luke	55	22.8 GB	25	32.6 GB	80	55.4 GB
Thea	40	41.8 GB	44	69.1 GB	84	110.9 GB
Bertly	39	10.1 GB	20	15.1 GB	59	25.2 GB
Totals	134	74.7 GB	89	116.8 GB	223	191.5 GB

4.7.4 The home and school drawings

I collated all the home and school drawings and filed them in chronological order in each child's respective home and school display files. At the back of each drawing, I took note of the child's name, the date of the drawing and its title as suggested by the children. At home, it was mainly the children and their parents who acted as the data collectors and recorded and collated most of the drawings.

Keeping a record of the drawings.

Once I got back home after each school and home session, I scanned all the drawings of the day. When scanning was not possible, due to, for example, having 3D objects glued to the drawings, or when they were too sticky with glitter glue, I photographed the drawings. Rose (2012) talks about reference, format and reproduction of images to enable eventual use. I indexed each drawing with the child's name initial, followed by the initial of the location in which it was conducted, where the letters H or S denoted that the drawing was done either at home or at school respectively. Each drawing was then given a chronological serial number. Thus, for example, LS1 denotes that it was Luke's school drawing, number 1. I then saved the scanned copies or photographed images of the children's drawings under the respective folders on an external hard-disk. The photos or scans replaced, preserved and acted as a tangible representation of the children's drawings. They provided the flexibility and benefits of digital technology to organise, display, retrieve, revisit and enlarge on a screen, while aided me with capturing significant detail and supporting my arguments visually; a benefit also noted by Ebersöhn and Eloff (2007) and Kernan (2005). This permitted me to keep a digital copy of the drawings while rightfully returning the original drawings to the children on the following home visit. I saved all the 223 drawings in Joint Photographic Experts Group (.jpeg) format, which can be accessed on the SD (memory) card presented at the back of this thesis for ease of reference. These can be located in a Folder with each child's name and the site in which the drawings were made. To access Luke's home drawings, for example, one has to click on the folder named *Children's drawings,* which includes three folders; one for each child. Clicking on the folder named *Luke's drawings,* acquires acvess to *Luke's Home Drawings* folder which includes all of Luke's home drawings in chronological order. Thus, as is suggested by Achterberg (2007) and Schwartz (1989), I used the scanned copy of each drawing, both as a methodological tool of observation and analysis as well as a means to generate, compare and represent data for analytical purposes.

4.7.5 Conducting informal conversations with the children

Throughout my study, I recognised drawings as "polysemic" (Christmann, 2008, p. 3), as signs that have multiple related meanings, which can be interpreted, perceived and understood in different ways by different people according to their subjective knowledge. In line with this, Alderson (2008) argues that meanings from drawings alone can be ambiguous and vague, stressing the need to interpret them in conjunction with spoken or written words. In view of this and drawing on Pink's (2007) "reflexive approach" (p. 33), where she considers visual images as a collaborative endeavour between the participants and the researcher, I engaged in during and post-drawing conversations with the children to bring out their perspectives rather than use only my partial interpretations. Our conversations were informal, unsystematic, unstructured and sometimes improvised, where I used the drawings to provoke discussion, facilitate conversation and prompt elaboration about the children's interpretation of their drawings in a non-threating way. These took form of a "conversational approach" (Cousins, 1999, p. 7) where I talked and listened to the children and their parents to construct shared meanings and understandings. As Birbeck and Drummond (2007) suggest, such informal conversations, which formed a significant part of my data collection process, provided me with the opportunity to talk to the children about their drawings, while, affording them with the space to voice their thoughts, to control the pace and direction of the conversations, and alter, re-shape and evolve the intended meaning to consequently provide a deeper, more analytic and coherent understanding. I must admit that initially, I was very sceptical whether the children would be able to communicate their ideas verbally or whether I would be able to understand what they were saying. During my first visits, they frequently replied with one-word answers or descriptions, but as from the preliminary sessions the children became more verbal and very able at articulating their thoughts in a detailed way.

A dilemma I repeatedly encountered in this process was whether I should discuss and engage in conversations with the children during or after the drawing was completed, as I did not want to interrupt, influence or halt the progression of their drawings in any way. Experience showed me that discussing a drawing with the children as they draw can be invaluable, mainly because as Roberts-Holmes (2005) argues, the central

meaning-making occurs during the actual process of drawing. Similarly, as Coates (2002) highlights, what the children want to do during the process of the drawing is to talk to themselves and to weave stories around their depictions. It happened frequently that, once the picture was completed, the meaning was lost or changed. Undecided when it would be the most appropriate time to ask questions, I chose to go by intuition, which was based on my knowledge and experience of working with young children. I began by observing the children while drawing and listening to their self-talk or conversations with others, where I joined in as I saw opportune, without being too intrusive or inquisitive. Evaluating the children's willingness and need to talk by their level of enthusiasm, the quality of their replies, and by being sensitive to their non-verbal cues, I then went with the flow and prompted or asked questions as required, enabling them to "story, narrate or dialogue with the image(s), thus allowing layers of meanings and significance to emerge" (Leitch, 2008, p.54). Immediately, after the children finished the drawing, I asked open-ended questions, permitting them to elaborate on their drawing accordingly, thus ensuring that their perspectives were prompted sensitively. Drawing on Wright's (2010b) open-ended elaborations which I discussed in Chapter Three (p. 75), typical questions I asked included, "What did you draw here? What did you mean when you said …? What is happening in this picture? What were you thinking when you drew this?" It also happened that when I was conversing with a particular child at school, other children (participants and non-participants), stayed close by offering support, sharing their interpretations and connections accordingly. It could be argued that I used the children's drawings for elicitation and as the basis of our conversations, prompting what Buckingham (2009) defines as emotional and contextual responses, where the children's talk and explanations during and after the drawings facilitated the recognition and interpretation of their drawings.

4.7.6 Conversations with parents and siblings

Initially, I intended to hold informal conversations both with the parents and the classroom KGA. My aim to involve the adults was manifold: I wanted them to help me with comprehending the children's verbal ways of communication, which initially I considered as a challenge, I also wanted to provide both the parents and the KGA with insights of the children's drawings, and I wanted them to provide me with their

interpretations and connections between the drawings and episodes that occurred within the home or the school contexts. However, things did not go as anticipated. Whenever I approached the KGA so as to give her the opportunity to share her perspectives about the drawings, she appeared busy or at a loss what to say, prompting me to eventually stop my conversations altogether. Contrastingly, when I visited the children in their homes, it ensued that as the drawings and conversations almost always occurred in the kitchen where other family members (siblings and grandparents) were also present, they too made their *ad hoc* contributions. This reflects the dynamic, fluid and authentic situation in which the conversations were held. During my conversations, I adapted what Clough and Nutbrown (2012) call "focused conversations" (p.91), where I allowed all family members to engage in an interactive dialogue to voice and share their collective experiences. The children's perspectives, in combination with the insights from their family members, provided a wealth of data which, as indicated by Dyson (1990) and Flewitt (2006), manifested that the children's drawings were interwoven by different elements, sources and experiences that make them challenging to explain and interpret.

Recording the conversations.

All the research conversations were video-recorded. The camera was focused on the drawing while the child pointed at the image accordingly. Sometimes I repeated after the child or the adult to make sure that all conversation was audible on the recording. As argued above, it would have been interesting to have also captured the children's facial expressions and other gestures simultaneously, as these would have added a different element to the study; an argument also put forward by Dyson (2002, 1995), and Wright (2007b). However, as is indicated by Heath et al. (2010), at that time I thought that having a camera directly focused on the children's or adults' faces when talking, could have proven to be intimidating and could have possibly affected the flow and genuineness of the conversations. Back at home, I downloaded and reviewed the recorded conversations, taking notes about particular episodes worthy of reflection in my research diary.

4.7.7 Keeping a research diary

A qualitative and interpretive stance, demands a level of reflexivity from the researcher. To achieve this, I made use of a research diary. I considered the research diary as an "actual material of the ethnographic text" (Baszanger and Dodier, 2004, p. 17) that helped me create a "montage" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 4) of blended findings to form a comprehensive understanding of the children's drawings which I used as "a written record" (Bloor and Wood, 2006, p. 50) of my "impressions, questions, problems and ideas" (Ryan and Campbell, 2001, p. 62) as well as of my thoughts, feelings, conversations, actions and reactions (Emond, 2005; Thomas, 2011), before, during and after the observations. Keeping my diary as a Word-document on a computer, I regularly took note of particular episodes, examined critical events and reflected on my understandings that appeared significant at that time. As indicated by Emond (2005) and Edwards (2001), the Research Diary also served as a tool for me to explore the ways in which my presence could have impacted the participants, and as an examination of my positionality, interpretations, biases, adaptations and emerging notions. Appendix 6 provides an excerpt from my Research Diary.

4.8 The Pilot Study

Before embarking on the main research project, I felt the need to conduct a small-scale pilot study. I held the pilot study with one child, in a different school and class from that of the main study. Keeping to the same design, I replicated the same data collection process on a smaller scale, where I (or in my absence, the parents or the KGA) video-recorded the child drawing both at home and at school. I conducted a preliminary visit, two observation visits and one concluding visit in each of the home and school settings during November and December, 2011. The aim of the pilot study was manifold. As indicated by Yin (2014), it helped me develop, check and refine my research questions; try different ways of conducting research with very young children; familiarise myself with children's drawings and test whether my methodological approaches were specific enough. It also helped me to prepare myself better for the study. For instance, the pilot study was a good opportunity for me to know what to look for when observing a child drawing. I also practiced holding informal conversations with the child and parents where I learned how to approach the child in a more subtle way, and to ask simple, open-ended questions,

without interrupting him. This helped me consider my approach and think more carefully about the importance of how I was going to develop a relationship with the children. It also helped me be more sensitive towards them, their parents and the KGA, while in the process become more confident and more focused in the type of questions I needed to ask.

Piloting the study also provided me with the possibility to evaluate the appropriateness, practicality and flexibility of the research tools as well as identify an analytical framework for the data analysis process. It not only allowed me the possibility to identify strengths, shortcomings and logistical problems that might occur during the main data collection process, but it also helped me evaluate the viability, validity and effectiveness of asking adults (parents and KGA) to act as data collectors. For example, it was evident during the pilot study that the Flip Ultra HD camera is a flexible, reliable, easy and fun tool to use, that allows for reviewing and analysis. Another thing I evaluated during the pilot study was the use of display books, which evidently was a good way to keep the children's drawings. Initially, I managed these, where after either the parents or the KGA collected the drawings of the week, they forwarded them to me to file them in two separate display books respectively. However, a particular incident, where, in-between the visits, the parents misplaced the child's drawings of the week, made me re-think the way I was using the display book. With the aim to decrease the possibility of losing a drawing, I decided that for the main study it would be wise to provide both the parents and the KGA with a display file each to store, collate the drawings in and forward them to me on my subsequent visit.

On the other hand, some things did not work well during the pilot, which persuaded me to make changes to my tools of data collection. Such an exemplar was my consideration to take field notes in both settings as an additional record of the observations. I immediately realised that taking field notes impinged on my observations, where as I took notes, I missed on some important actions, verbalisations and anecdotes. By taking notes I also assigned myself the formal role of a researcher, where I had to observe the child from a distance, which kept me aloof from him: a role which did not fulfil the needs of my study. Moreover, the field

notes appeared obsolete when the video-camera captured most of the incidents in a permanent way. As a result I decided against taking field notes during the observations of my main study. Instead, I opted to take reflective notes of the most significant events in a Research Diary, as explained above.

Another thing that changed as a result of the pilot study was the use of a *Record Sheet* (Appendix 7), which had to be filled by the KGA and parents in a bid to provide me with a written record of the drawing. Both the KGA and the parents communicated that keeping a written record of each drawing was very time-consuming, impractical, and even pointless, as it involved a lot of unnecessary and repetitive work, when the most significant aspects were captured on the video-camera. Another procedure that I changed because of the pilot study was the way I recorded the children and parents for the post-drawing conversations. Initially, I had planned to audio-record my conversations to appear less intimidating; but this did not work on several levels. To begin with, I was introducing an additional tool which meant that after the child stopped drawing, I had to switch off the video-camera and switch on the audio-recorder which created an unnecessary disturbance. Besides, once I went home to analyse my first post-drawing conversation I found it challenging to follow the discussions as I could not see the image, and hence, what the child was referring to. Moreover, as is claimed by Flewitt (2006), audio recordings provide misleading and limited perceptions of the way children communicate and create meaning. As a result, I considered it more viable to use the video-camera both for the drawing sessions as well as for the post-drawing conversations.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in line with the research ethics guidelines provided by The University of Sheffield Research Ethics (The University of Sheffield, 2014), the British Educational Research Association, Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2011), as well as other literature to ensure conformity with ethical standards. The ethical process helped me consolidate my positionality, reflect and refine my research plan and its logistics, and examine possible challenging, and contestable ethical issues. Once I finalised my research design, I completed the University of Sheffield, School of Education Research Ethics Application Form,

which I sent to the Ethics Review Panel for approval. The review application outlined my research aims and methodology and included information about access, consent, and my aims for meeting the ethical guidelines, including issues of confidentiality and the assurance that children will be respected and protected. Soon after, I received a letter of confirmation from the University of Sheffield that my application was approved (Appendix 8). While protocols can offer some guidance, they do not solve complex ethical dilemmas. It is the researcher who, according to Schulz, Schroeder and Brody (1997) has to engage in an "ethic of care" (p. 475), and struggle with ethical predicaments to ensure the protection of participants. In the discussion below I explain how I went about the ethical process as indicated in the ethical review application, where I share the dilemmas I encountered and justify the decisions I had to take.

4.9.1 Access and consent

Alderson and Morrow (2011) define informed consent as "the invisible activity of evaluating information and making a decision, and the visible act of signifying the decision" (p.101). It is the process where research participants are presented with the needed unambiguous information about the purpose, nature, commitment and implications of the study in an understandable way, to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study (Coady, 2001; Smith, 2005). As several scholars (Alderson, 2004; Christians, 2005; National Children's Bureau, 2003) claim, informed consent is driven by the notion of freedom and autonomy, where the participants agree to voluntarily participate without any physical or psychological coercion, threat or pressure. Flewitt (2005a) and Thomas and O'Kane (1998) argue that conducting research with young children is a complex and salient process. This is because children are vulnerable and their understanding, experience and ways of communication are different from those of adults, and hence, might find it challenging to fully comprehend all the purposes, procedures, inferences and risks implied in a study that is designed by adults.

According to the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (World Health Organisation, 2001), although a child can be considered as legally incompetent to give consent, he can still be "able to give assent to decisions about participation in

research" (p. 374). This is in line with the participatory approach, I embraced, where, I hold the belief that young children are capable to make an informed-decision about what is being proposed and to participate in research if, as is suggested by Danby and Farrell (2005), and Heath, Charles, Crow and Wiles (2007), apposite methods that facilitate their ways of communication are used. However, Greig et al. (2007), advise, that whenever child assent is sought this should be done in addition to parental consent.

Issues of access.

Access to conduct research involves an emergent process of gaining entry to research participants and sites over a sustained period (Carey, McKechnie and McKenzie, 2001). This normally requires approaching the gatekeepers, whose role is to protect the interest of others, and to give their permission for the research to proceed (Gray and Winter, 2011, Greig, et al., 2007). All gatekeepers collaborated fully and while all asked questions for clarification to ensure that no unnecessary risks would be taken and the protection of their dependents would be safeguarded, overall they did not present any serious access impediments. Table 4.4 below summarises the access process I went through, and which I describe in detail hereunder.

Table 4.4
Gaining access.

Gaining access from the respective gatekeepers		
15th April, 2011	Meeting the Head of school	• Met the head of school to explain the study. • Provided information letter. • Obtained his verbal consent but he requested time to go over the information letter. • Asked the Head of School to identify three children according to my criteria of selection.
20th May, 2011	Second meeting with Head of School	• Obtained the written consent of the Head of School. • The Head of School provided a list with information about the three identified children. • Discussed my subsequent meeting with the parents and KGA.
17th June, 2011	Meeting the parents at school	• Explained the study and what it entailed to parents. • Provided information letter. • Obtained the parents' written consent.
19th June, 2011	Meeting the KGA at school	• Explained the study. • Provided information letter. • Obtained her written consent.
30th June, 2011	Meeting the College Principal (the school falls under his remit)	• Explained the study. • Provided information letter. • Submitted all signed consent forms. • Obtained his written consent.
30th June, 2011	Meeting the Director for Research in Schools at the Directorate of Education, Malta	• Explained the study. • Submitted the "Request for Research in State Schools" Form. • Submitted all information letters and signed consent forms.
7th July, 2011	Mail correspondence	• Approval to do research in school granted by the Directorate of Education.

4.9.2 Seeking informed consent and assent prior to the study

Choosing and gaining access to the school.

My choice of school, which was the first step in identifying the research participants, rested on issues of proximity to my home, familiarity with the school environment and having established a prior good relationship with the senior management team through my work, where I supervise student-teachers on their teaching practice placements. Nine months before the commencement of the study in April, 2011, I held my first meeting with the Head of School to gain his consent. During the consultative meeting I presented him with the *Research Project Information Letter* (Appendix 9) where I explained the scope of the research, timeframe and logistical

implications. Verbal consent was immediately granted and full collaboration promised. I also asked the Head of School to identify three children as per the criteria estaiblished and as explained above. In a subsequent meeting, the Head of School confirmed his consent in writing, and provided me with a list of the three identified children.

Getting the KGA's approval.

The choice of the KGA rested on the Head of School. Communicating his decision he explained that he chose Ms Anna for her willingness to participate and her enthusiasm towards teaching. I first met Ms Anna in her class in May, 2011. I explained the study and presented her with a *Research Project Information Letter* and consent form (Appendix 10) which she signed and handed back immediately.

Acquiring parental consent.

Parents are important gatekeepers, especially when research is conducted with very young children and involves visiting the home environment (Greig et al., 2007). Nutbrown (2011) considers the need to establish a good relationship with parents as of utmost importance. A meeting with the three parents was set up by the Head of School in June, 2011 (Table 4.4), where I met the mothers on the school premises. The fathers could not attend due to work commitments. This meeting provided an excellent opportunity for me to establish the necessary trust for the parents to let me into their homes and their children's lives. I found it crucial to meet them face to face as I wanted to get to know them, explain the study, answer their questions and confirm for myself that they fitted my criteria. I described the implications of the study and the parents' responsibility and commitment; an obligation which I pledged also from my side. I tried to come across as authentic, honest and open as possible, emphasising that I considered these as fundamental for the success of the study. I presented the three mothers with a *Research Project Information Letter* (Appendix 11), in both Maltese and English languages, which I explained thoroughly. The use of both languages in request forms is a normal local researchers abide with when doing research. The aim is to suit the needs of parents, who in such a bilingual country, might prefer to read and write in any one of the languages. Asking the parents for their written consent, I clarified that the ultimate consent by which I

would abide would be the children's, implying that the children had the prerogative to deny participation even if the parents had given their consent.

As mentioned above, the design of the study also involved the use of a video-camera as an observational tool to record the children while drawing. As is suggested by Heath, et al. (2010), it was extremely important for me to acquire the parents' consent prior to specifically video-record their children. The parents showed their approval by signing the *Video-Recording Consent Form-Data Subjects-Minors* (Appendix 12), provided and requested by the Directorate of Education, Malta.

4.9.3 Obtaining final institutional approval

I met the College Principal, whose remit included inspecting the school of this study, towards the end of June, 2011 (Table 4.4). After explaining the study and providing him with a R*esearch Project Information Letter* (Appendix 13) and all the respective signed consent forms, he provided his approval. Subsequently, I met the Director for Research in Schools at the Directorate of Education, where I presented him with all the consent forms and a *Request for Research in State Schools Form* (Directorate of Education, Research and Planning, 2003) Appendix 14). This was signed and returned via mail, confirming that I was granted consent to conduct research in the identified school, which meant that I had met all the Directorate of Education's ethical criteria.

4.9.4 Getting the children's assent

Balen, Blyth, Calabretto, Fraser, Horrocks and Manby (2006) and Morrow and Richards (1996), state that current research gatekeeping systems are principally adult-centred and tend to only seek parental consent. However, because I chose to adopt a participative approach as I believe that children are able to take decisions in research, I opted to seek the children's "active agreement" (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998, p. 339) besides the parents' "passive agreement" (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998, p. 339). In practice this meant that while I approached the parents first to seek their consent as requested by the University of Sheffield Ethics Review Panel and the Directorate of Education, Research and Planning, and because I needed their secured approval to conduct research with the children and gain access to their homes, I then approached

the children, to negotiate their personal and free, unprejudiced, "informed assent" (Harcourt and Conroy, 2005, p. 569).

Informed assent is defined by Cocks (2006) as "the sensitizing concept in gaining the children's agreement" (p. 257), their "acquiescence" (McIntosh, et al., 2000, p. 180) to participate in research. For the purpose of this study, I adopted the general principle as established by Gillick and West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority (1985), which indicates that where children have the ability to understand what is being proposed, it is them and not their parents who should give their consent. Thus, as Alderson and Morrow, (2011) and Nutbrown (2011) claim, while the parents' consent provides an assurance that the children's interests are safeguarded as they can better anticipate any possibilities of undue risks, distress or embarrassment, I considered the children's assent as more important as, in my view, they were the ones who were going to be mostly involved in the research process. The three children were very eager to participate and share their work and ideas; thus obtaining their assent was unproblematic. As Coyne (2010) and Harcourt and Conroy (2011) advise, by asking for the children's assent I also wanted to ensure that their approval was genuine rather than an act of compliance towards an authority figure. Had a child refused to give his assent, I was ready to approach another child from the same class.

The process of gaining the children's assent is representative of a synchronised relationship of trust that develops between the researcher and the researched (Flewitt, 2005a; Williams, Dicks, Coffey, and Mason, n.d.); a rapport which I began to develop as from the preliminary visits. Aware that it could be problematic for children to understand the complex notions, procedures and responsibilities of data collection, also pointed out by Dockett and Perry, (2007) and Skånfors, (2009), I created a purposely-made image-based booklet (Table 4.5) that illustrated the research process in a child-friendly and accessible way. A copy of the booklet can also be viewed in a larger version in Appendix 15. Literature (David, Edwards and Aldred, 2001; Fargas-Malet, et al., 2010) indicates that different methods such as texts, informative leaflets, oral presentations and DVDs are employed by researchers to introduce research to children in a simplified way. The creation of this booklet was inspired by Hall's (2010b) storyboard which she used to explain her research process to very young

children. I made two different versions of the booklet; one showing a girl which I used with Thea, and the other illustrating a boy which I used with Luke and Bertly. I sat down with each child separately and leafing through each picture slowly, and using very simple and child-friendly words to explain each drawing, I underlined their role in the research process.

Table 4.5
The children's consent booklet

Page number	Description of the illustration	Illustration	Page number	Description of the illustration	Illustration
Cover page	Picture of a display book with children's drawings				
Page 1	I introduced myself and the scope of the study.		Page 2	Explained that I will be video-recording the child while drawing at school.	
Page 3	Explained that the child will also be video-recorded at home.		Page 4	Explained that with their parents' help, the children will be collating their drawings in a display book.	
Page 5	Explained that I will observe the child while drawing.		Page 6	Described that I will take photographs of the drawings.	
Page 7	Explained that I will be talking to him/her about the drawings.		Page 8	Described that I will be also talking to the parents or KGA about their drawings.	
Page 9	The drawings will be given to the child to keep.		Back page	Consent page.	

Once I embarked on the data collection process, I did not rely only on having acquired the children's "one-off" (David et al., 2001, p. 348) written consent at the onset of the study, assuming it as "*ipso facto* an ethical piece of research" (Morrow and Richards, 1996, p. 95), but I was aware that ethical tensions are continuous and can rise at any stage of the research process (Dockett, Einarsdottir and Perry, 2009; Heath et al., 2007; Morrow, 1996). That is why from time to time, I sought the children's "provisional consent" (Flewitt, 2005a, p. 556), as I considered their approval as conditional and negotiable. Using what Skånfors (2009) calls as the "ethical radar" (p. 11), I attuned to the children's ways of communication where, as Cocks (2006) suggests, I remained vigilant to the children's responses throughout. I constantly observed their verbal and non-verbal cues where I interpreted, renegotiated and verified that the children's ongoing assent was genuine and they had a positive disposition to participate at all times. Throughout the research process, I informally but constantly, asked the children whether they were still interested to participate and requested their verbal permission to video-record them and to ask them questions.

A non-verbal way the children used to manifest their willingness to participate was by crowding around the drawing table where they were inquisitive about the new added drawing material, and asked to draw. In other instances they simply stood beside me, waiting for their turn (as the drawing area could not take more than four children simultaneously) even at the expense of missing on play. Other forms of confirmed ongoing assent included pulling at my clothes to get my attention to remind me that they wanted to draw, talking incessantly about their drawings, or hugging me and passing on compliments about how much they were enjoying drawing. I interpreted their smiles, happiness and good mood as a confirmation of their willingness to take part.

On rare occasions, the children showed signs of "dissent" (Morrow and Richards, 1996, p.95), where they refused to participate momentarily; a situation also experienced by Cocks (2006) and Yamada-Rice (2013) in their respective studies. Such instances occurred, when, for example, on inviting the three children to the drawing table they refused to draw because at that moment in time they preferred to play with their friends or simply because they did not feel like it. During such episodes, which were always temporary and could not be interpreted as traits of

disenchantment or disinterest in the research process, the children acted as gatekeepers of their involvement; occurrences, which were also observed by Corsaro (2005a). They communicated their transient refutation to participate either through the use of specific words, or through non-verbal negative reactions and signs of discomfort such as shaking their heads, waving me off, frowning at me or simply ignoring me. My responsibility as the researcher, as identified by Cocks (2006) was to attune myself to the children's wishes and remain watchful for changes in their levels of engagement. I considered such temporarily refusal as evidence of the children's ability to understand the research process and their right to refuse to participate, and of having the agency to convey their thoughts. Such episodes not only reflected my "ethic of care" (Schulz, et al., 1997, p.475), but as Skånfors, (2009) claims, they also showed the ongoing moral responsibilities and ethical dilemmas I, as the researcher, was faced with even after the initial assent was granted. It also illustrates the importance of the researcher's ability to understand and be sensitive towards the children's feelings and reactions throughout the data collection process (Davis, 1998; Nutbrown, 2011).

Seeking the children's ongoing assent was also based on the ethical principle of the right to withdraw from the study. I specified both verbally to the children and in writing to the parents through the *Research Project Information Letter*, that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time, where, as Harcourt and Conroy (2011) claim, such a decision should be respected without any ramifications. However, this never became an issue. While, as I explained above, there were fleeting episodes when a particular child did not feel like drawing on a particular day, yet, this was a transient sentiment, and typically, the three children were willing to participate and draw.

4.10 Transpiring Ethical Issues: Publication, Privacy and Authorship

Issues of confidentiality are regarded as main concerns in any research (David, Tonkin, Powell and Anderson, 2005), even more so, when conducting research with young children. In this study I was faced with two main privacy dilemmas. The first regarded the use of the children's real names and the second, the showing of their faces in photographs and video-footage. At the beginning of the study and in line with the research guidelines mentioned above, which demand respect towards the

children's right to privacy and confidentiality, I had decided to take a traditional stand and make use of pseudonyms instead of the children's real names and to blur their faces captured in any photographs or videos to be used as part of the data representation; a position which I had to change as the study progressed.

4.10.1 Using the children's names: Anonymity or ownership?

Towards the end of the data collection process, and as a way to involve the children as much as possible in the research process, I discussed with them the use of fictitious names where I asked them to choose an assumed name of their liking so that they would not be identifiable. However, when I deliberated this issue first with Thea and then separately with Bertly and Luke, they were all adamant that I use their real names: a singularity amongst children also recognised by Harcourt (2011) and Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles (2008a). All the three children wanted to be recognised for their work, with Thea pointing out that that was the reason she wrote her name on most of her drawings, "so that the people who see this picture, would know that I did the drawing … that Thea drew this picture" (8th February, 2012). If I changed or covered her name to protect her identity, then, according to her, her sense of authorship would be lost. Likewise, Luke retorted that he wanted me to use his real name, "because I drew all the pictures. It is all my work and I am proud of my work. I want people to know that that it is my work" (13th March, 2012). Likewise, Bertly, asserted that, "I only like Bertly as my name. I do not want any other name. I am Bertly" (15th March, 2012). Allen (2005) and Harcourt and Sargeant (2011) argue, that such a stance to include real children's names is very much opposed by conservative positions who have accepted absolute anonymity through the use of pseudonyms in research, assuming that participants would not want their identity to be detectable. I question this *status quo* and contend that such a position might contradict the basic concept of a rights-based approach, which aims to recognise and give voice to children, and value and access their views. In my opinion, it also goes against the spirit of a qualitative design which aims to understand the case in its real-world scenario that values the authenticity of the experiences of individuals, which can be distorted if their distinctiveness is lost.

I hold the view that, genuinely listening to children, entails accepting, acknowledging and respecting the ways they want to represent their voice, in this case by making use of their real names. In line with the BERA (2011) guidelines, I claim that, the researcher cannot decide to use pseudonyms for the participants without first consulting them, but should, "recognise participants' rights to be identified with any publication of their original works or other inputs, if they so wish" (p. 7). I deliberated with the children and their parents any potential risks that might result from being identifiable when using their real names. I also involved the parents in this discussion as they are the ones who were legally responsible for their children and who are more able to see the implications of using their children's real names. We agreed that while I was going to use the children's and their siblings' real names (because even they wanted to be acknowledged for their contribution), all the other names would be fictitious. Besides, I was not to use the families' surnames, or disclose any other precise information about the location they lived or the name and location of the school. Thus, some element of confidentiality and privacy was maintained.

4.10.2 The ethical dilemmas of using visual methods

More challenging and distinct ethical dilemmas ensued with the use of visual methods. The photographs and scans which I exclusively sourced to document children's drawings did not pose any ethical quandary. What was obviously problematic was the use of still and running images represented on video data which at times showed the children's faces. At the beginning of the study, my intention was to use the video-recordings only as an observation tool to be solely watched by me. For these motives I intentionally positioned the video-camera towards the drawing, frequently, albeit not always, leaving the children's faces out. However, when I began analysing my work, I recognised that, as Banks (2001) and Wiles et al. (2008b) claim, visual images convey unique and crucial information. This implored me to make use of still pictures and include excerpts from video-footage in my thesis, as they provided my study with powerful visual data that supported my arguments. Besides, they offered a full, authentic and thorough representation of the process of drawing, and hence of the emerging narratives, thinking processes and meanings. Using still and running images, where children are identifiable, as Rose (2012) points out, posed new challenges and ethical and moral dilemmas in relation to anonymity.

In line with ethical guidance, it is frequently expected of the researcher to ensure that identifiable data are anonymised so as to protect the identity of the participants from judgement and criticism (Alderson, 2014, 2004; Pink, 2007). It is therefore suggested, that if photos or videos which include children's faces are used, then these should be either blurred, "fuzzed" (Flewitt, 2006, p. 44), obscured, pixilated, distorted, digitalised or converted into line drawings beyond recognition where specialist software can be used (Carson, Pearson, Johnston, Mangat, Tupper and Warburton, 2005; Nutbrown, 2011). Such measures which were taken by several researchers (see for example, Dant and Bowles, 2003; Flewitt, 2006; Lomax and Casey, 1998) have been unquestionably accepted as good ethical practice. However, the children of my study were against such a stance and wanted to be identified; a phenomenon also reported by other literature (BERA, 2011; Nutbrown, 2011), where it is claimed that it not uncommon to have children approving the use of visual images that show their faces in research. Luke, Thea and Bertly were resolute to have their faces showing, as they considered the obscuring, pixilation or blurring of their faces as disrespectful, degrading and dehumanising, a contention also proposed by Wiles et al. (2008b). Subsequently, the three children claimed that having images which show them engaged in the drawing process, where they could be identified and "faithfully portrayed" (Nutbrown, 2011, p. 7), aided the representation of a real and truthful account of their characters, contexts, views and experiences. As Rose (2012) and Holliday (2004) imply, having their faces showing also allowed the children the potential to communicate aspects of their identity, which provided a more complete representation of themselves. This was an important matter for the children of my study who wanted to be valued for who they were and for what they did. Within this milieu, authenticity and truthfulness became imperative for them, a standpoint, which Rose (2012) confirms can be critical for some participants.

Describing pixilation as a "distortion – a dishonesty" (Nutbrown, 2011, p. 9), a technique that "masks what is real and changes it to something more distant, mov[ing] it from the original "truth" (p. 8), Nutbrown claims that blurring or pixilating an image turns authentic portrayals of life into a lie, that manipulates the research and the researched. If children's faces are hidden, pixilated or distorted in an unrecognisable way, crucial information deriving from the children's non-verbal

communication is lost and its absence might misrepresent the data and its interpretation. Similarly, Flewitt (2006) recognises the obscuring of images as an unsatisfactory way for representing facial expressions, yet she did not offer a solution to that. Here I argue, that whereas my main modes of interpreting meaning were the children's drawings and their accompanied narratives, like Dyson (2002, 1995), Kress and Jewitt (2003) and Lancaster (2013), I still considered the children's bodily modes such as, facial expressions, gaze, gestures and actions as well as sounds and vocalisations as crucial part of the data that helped to uncover unique and different meaning-making practices. Such modes personalised and contextualised what was happening and communicated even further, the meaning that was enfolding. This is one of the reasons why I could not pixilate the children's faces, whenever they were visible in the video-recordings. I argue that while protecting the children's anonymity in research is important when and as necessary, however, if I had to pixilate or blur the children's faces, without the real need to do so, then I would be silencing their "voices-in-image" (Nutbrown, 2011, p.9). As Schulz et al. (1997) would argue the children's integrity captured in the image would be curtailed while the multifaceted meanings their faces communicated and my interpretation of those meanings would be compromised. Thus, I agree with Holliday (2004) who claims that using visual methods that identify the participants is more ethical and respectful towards the participants' dignity than anonymising them. This is in line with Nutbrown's (2011) standpoint, who argues that, "hiding children's faces seems wrong somehow… not showing a photo could be equally problematic and may, in itself, be unethical - in that it omits part of a research story given by a participant" (p. 10).

To support my argument I refer to a number of still images from a video footage of Luke. Luke was very expressive in his drawings where he frequently engaged in play fights between good guys and bad guys. Figure 4.3 shows him during one of his home drawings where he is in the process of "cutting out the bad guy" (Luke, 23rd February, 2012), to signify his death. The video-camera was placed in front of Luke and was focused directly on the drawing. Because Luke tended to move a lot, the video did not always capture his face. In this omission to show the face in Figure 4.3, which is a still image from the video footage, Luke is anonymised. The image does not show Luke but a faceless body of a boy, who could be any boy, cutting a picture.

Subsequently, I also lost all the facial expressions and hence, part of the meaning-making and interpretation that emerged, which reduced the data to a "sanitised" (Wiles et al., 2008b, p. 24) version of the findings. Rather than solving ethical problems, omission "add(ed) to the layers of obscurity that inevitably increase in the process of interpreting meaningful data" (Nutbrown, 2011, p. 9). Besides, in its anonymity, the focus rests on the cutting action rather than on the child, where Luke was ripped out of his image, making it highly disconnected and impersonal.

Figure 4.3
A faceless image of Luke.
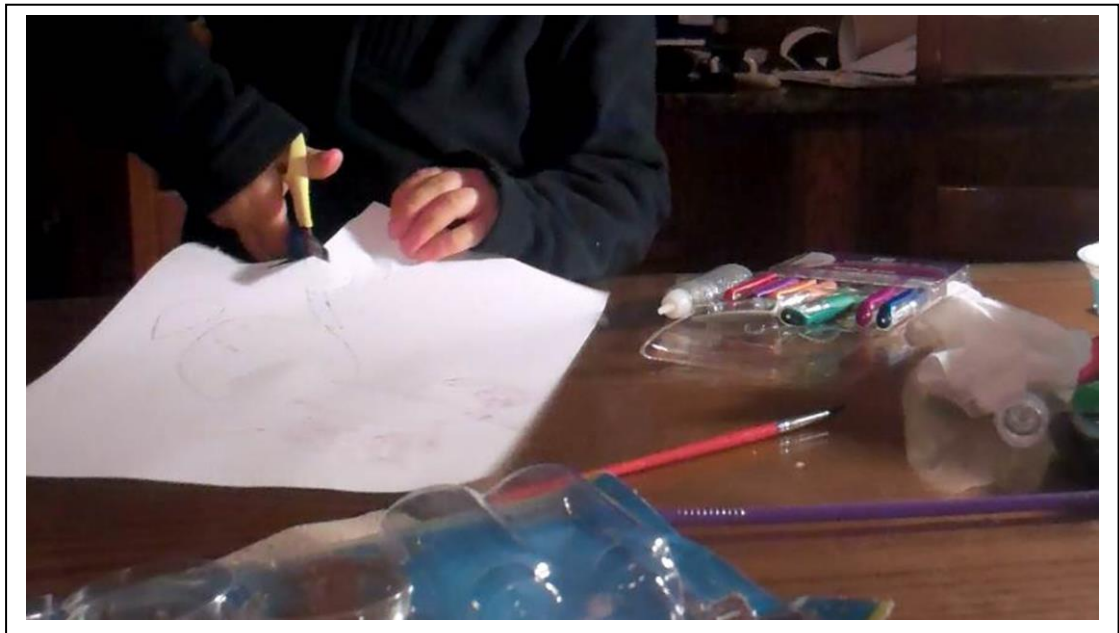
Contrastingly, the images represented in Figure 4.4, which occurred a few seconds from each other and just before the image in Figure 4.3, fully show Luke's face, which not only give an identity to the child, but also illustrate his level of concentration (Photo 1; Photo 4), and his degree of engagement in thinking over his narrative (Photo 2; Photo 4), where his shift in feelings as a reaction to what he was creating (his frown in Photo 2 versus his smile in Photo 3) could be inferred. Lancaster (2013) would argue that his facial expressions and gaze, considered as a mode of communication and interpretation, evidently provided key indication of his engagement and interest at each particular moment.

Figure 4.4
Images showing Luke's facial expressions, his engagement and reactions to what he was drawing.
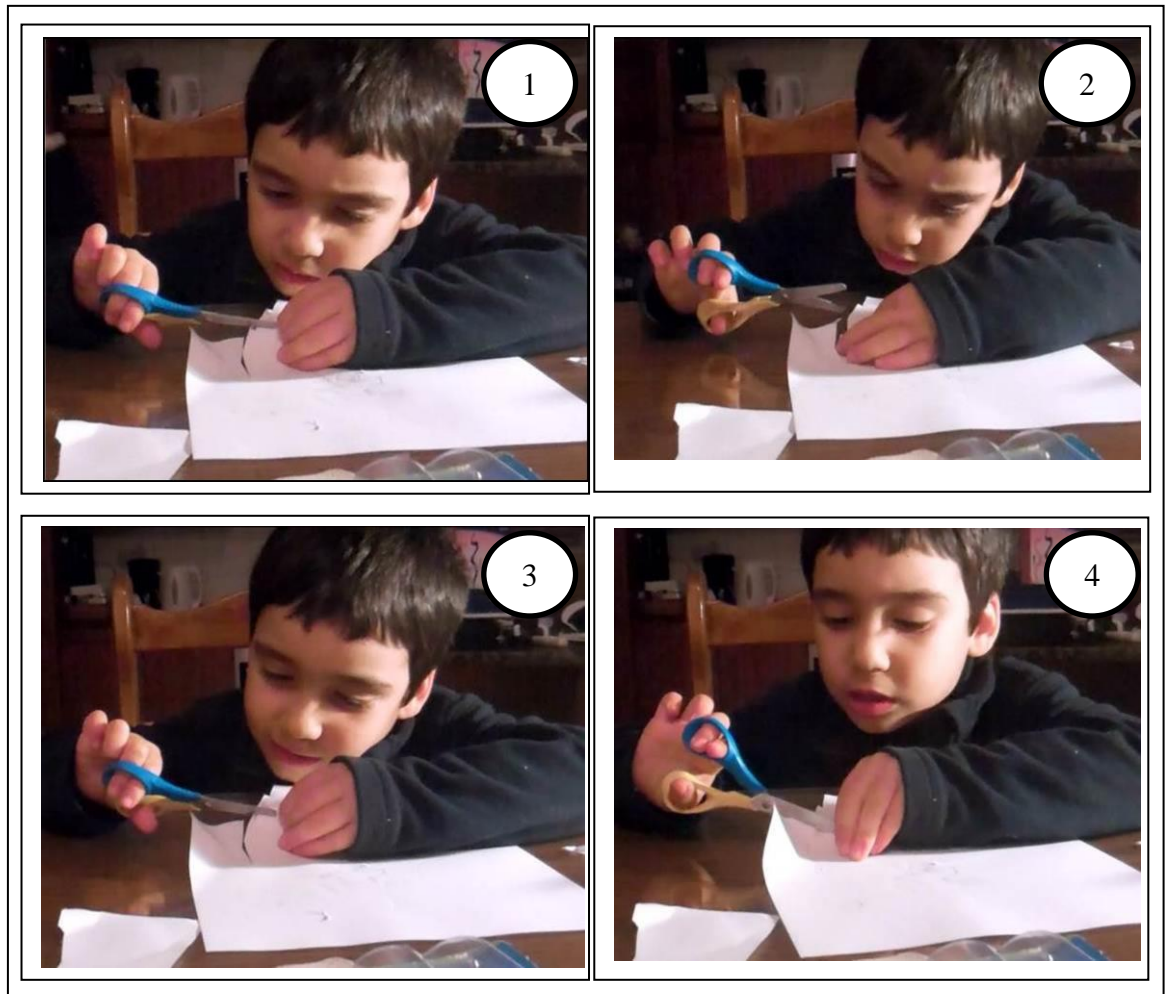
Even if I believed that the children, together with their parents, were able to weigh the risks and benefits of identification, the onus rested on me, as the more knowledgeable researcher, who had the moral obligation to safeguard their protection. As Morrow (2005) and Wiles et al. (2008b) imply, I had the responsibility to ensure that my study was ethically correct. Once again, I consulted several literature and protocols, which although do not provide straighforward answers, shed light on the ethical procedures that could be followed in such situations. Rose (2012) suggests that anonymity is not necessarily obligatory when using visual research methods especially when there is minimal risk. This position is supported by the International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA, 2009) which advices that "various research methods do not require anonymity. Among these are… individual case studies involving individuals who consent to using identifying information (for example, own names and visual representations)" (p. 254). Likewise, the BERA (2011) states that, while ethical

guidelines require of researchers to protect the participants' rights for privacy and anonymity, this right can be waived by the participants or their guardians. Conversely, the BERA (2011) claims that the researcher "must also recognize participants' rights to be identified with any publication of their original works or other inputs, if they so wish" (p. 7). This was the case with the children of my study. They expected and considered it as their right to be identified and recognised for their contribution and as authors of their drawings, an occurrence also transpired by the children in a study by Alderson and Morrow (2011). Faced with this dilemma, I held delicate conversations with the children and their parents where I explained any potential risks, including the possibility pointed out by Alderson and Morrow (2011) and Flewitt (2006), that in due course, when children are older, they might disapprove of disclosing their identity. After weighing several scenarios, all parents were in agreement with their children and approved the showing of their faces, mainly because they considered the study as risk-free where the children did not reveal any information that could be considered as sensitive or personal. They also concluded that showing the children's identity would not put them under particular criticism or in any particular harm. I therefore asked for the additional, specific and exclusive consent in writing (Appendix 16) from both the children and their parents to show the children's faces in photographs and video footage.

My justification for using identifiable images of the children is based on my view that images give voice and identity to the participants, allowing them to be seen, heard and listened to. This position guided me throughout my analysis where I found it disturbing to come to terms with the realisation that if I chose to blur, obscure or omit the children's faces, I would not only be ripping them off their identity and denying their autonomy, but I would also be excluding them from research while contributing to turning them into "voiceless" (Nutbrown, 2011, p. 8) objects, ending the possibility of influencing reports, policies and practices that might be limiting children (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). This meant that what I aimed to strive for during the study, that is, foregrounding children's voices by engaging them as active participants in research, could be lost. Conversely, if I had to hide their faces, then I would almost be doing a disservice to their contribution and denying their role as active participants. Showing their faces in a respectful way ensured that their voices and perspectives would be recognised, valued and "faithfully portrayed" (Nutbrown,

2011, p.7). Discussing the issue with the children and their parents, I realised that, if I truly wanted to benefit the children by making them visible in the research process, if I wanted them to be recognised as competent participants, if I wanted their voices to be heard and their drawings valued, and if I wanted to engage in a truthful representation of their drawings, then showing their faces and acknowledging their commitment, contribution, authorship and ownership were necessary. Thus, I am in agreement with Alderson and Morrow (2011), and Danby and Farrell (2004) who suggest that the researcher should be responsible to balance protection rights with the right of voice by ensuring "that the laudable effort to protect potentially vulnerable participants avoids overprotection" (Balen, et al., 2006, p. 29). Consequently, whereas, I do not question the fact that researchers should exert caution and sensitivity in the ways images of children are used, and as Nutbrown (2011) and Williams et al. (n.d). propose, adequate measures of protection should always be taken, at the same time, they should do so in a way that does "rich justice" (Clough, 1999, p.445) to children and their narratives. Nutbrown (2011) argues that this can only be achieved if images of children are presented in an unadulterated way.

4.11 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter I discussed the research methodology adopted for this study. I defined my multiple case studies as instrumental, where the children, as the cases, were selected to create and convey meaning through their drawings. Adopting a children's rights perspective I then explained the methods I used that facilitated the involvement of children as participants. After discussing my role as a participant-observer I moved to discuss the data collection process where I explained how I used visual data to record the children's drawing processes. My main sources of data collection were the children's drawings from both the home and school settings, which I combined with the informal research conversations I held with them and their parents. Ethical considerations formed an important section in this chapter where after I conferred about issues of access and informed consent, I discussed the ethical dilemmas I was faced with when using visual methods. I developed my justifications for opting to show the children's faces as requested by them where they chose ownership over anonymity.

In the next chapter, I present the analytical approaches I used to analyse the data.

Inside my tummy – by Thea
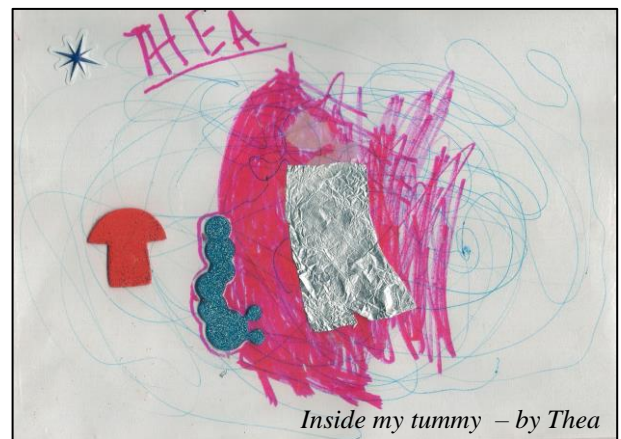
"What I like about drawings, as method, is their simplicity. … But if there is simplicity in collecting data, there is complexity in the interpretive process"
- Claudia Mitchell, Linda Theron, Ann Smith and Jean Stuart (2011, p. 2)

Chapter 5

Analytical

Approaches

CHAPTER 5
ANALYTICAL APPROACHES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the analytical approaches I used to investigate the data. I metaphorically compare the multi-processes of data analysis to the weaving process, which I portray with the help of photos[7]. I begin by describing how I used semiological analysis to sort, organise, explore, examine and interpret children's drawings. This section also includes a description of how I developed the *Data Cross-grid*, which is my contribution to the field. Throughout this process I perceive the data analysis as ongoing, where as Dawson (2009) and Pink (2007) suggest, I constantly reflected about the emerging themes and adapted and changed my methods as necessary. I conclude with a discussion about research reliability and validity which I claim was achieved through genuine, consistent and authentic representation of the field.

5.2 Data Analysis: Weaving my Way Through the Data

Throughout the data collection process, I repeatedly asked myself, how I could, from what appeared to be a tangle of threads of disorganised data (Figure 5.1, Image 1), move to create a cohesive masterpiece (Image 2) that makes sense, is fascinating, beautiful, authentic and original.

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[7] The photos, which were taken by myself, show the work of Antoine Vella, a weaver by trade. Permissions to take and use the photos were granted by Mr Vella.

Figure 5.1
Using weaving as a metaphor: Moving from a tangle of threads [1] to create a cohesive masterpiece that makes sense [2].

As illustrated in Figure 5.2[8] below, I visualised the data analysis as interweave between data sets, which included the children's *drawings*[9], the research *observations* and *conversations* which I held with them and their parents; the use of research tools such as *video-recording* and *photographing* to document the data; and coding procedures that included the compilation of *transcripts* and self-designed *data logs* which I did both manually and with the use of *NVivo*[10] software. Using "progressive focusing" (Hammersley, 2006, p. 240) that involves gradual clarification and transformation of the research problem, I interlaced these data sets and methods together to help me answer the four research questions about *modes, themes, meanings* and *influences*. Moving across the data from the first two categories helped me to develop a comprehensive set of thirteen themes that were represented in the children's drawings and to create a *Data cross-grid* that provided a way to understand the children's drawer identity. Just like a weaver intertwines the yarn threads through the warp to eventually weave a mat, I organised the data "into more abstract units of information" (Cresswell, 2013, p. 45) to inductively interlace four categories that formed part of my findings. These included the types of *drawings, patterns, styles*

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[8] Image used with permission of Hawley, J. (2007), Lazy Girl Designs, Available from
   http://www.lazygirldesigns.com/pdf-files/weave-a-new-fabric-for-your-purse-project
[9] The words in italics in this section indicate the words used in Figure 5.2.
[10] NVivo is a computer-assisted, qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).

and *configuration* children use. Subsequently, I used deductive thinking to constantly check and confirm the themes, meanings and influences that permeated the children's drawings.

Figure 5.2
Weaving the data sets: Using different research tools and coding procedures to 'weave' the data.

5.2.1 Structuring the data using semiological analysis

To analyse the children's drawings, I related to Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996), tri-partite meta-function theory which is based on Halliday's (1978) notion of text-as-discourse, that of producing a text with the ideational, interpersonal and textual components; a concept which I discussed in Chapter Two. Thus, I considered that children represented their meanings through the images of people, places and objects (the *ideational* component / subject matter) where they used their drawings as a vehicle to convey their experiences and ideas to others (the *interpersonal* component / use of social interaction). Another element which I considered was the compositional aspect of the drawing (the *textual* component / creation of coherence), which focuses on the interplay between modes and how they interact and complement each other to

create a coherent meaning. As Mavers (2011) claims, such a framework of semiotic evaluation demands a flexible, open and reflexive stance that recognises that meanings are fluid, interpretive and can change.

To make sense of the data, I went through a process of structuring which is based on Penn's (2000) five steps of semiological analysis. These include:

- choosing the material;
- compiling a denotation inventory;
- examining higher levels of connotation;
- deciding when to stop;
- selecting reporting formats.

While Penn used this framework to analyse advertisements, I adopted this outline to interpret children's drawings. However, I also added two other stages as I explain below, to suit the need of my analytic process, where I moved back and forth between each stage as necessary. Table 5.1 outlines each step I took in my process of data analysis and illustrates how I moved from sorting, categorising and labelling raw data sets to develop concise conclusions about the meaning of the drawings.

Table 5.1

Components of my data analysis process based on Penn's (2000) model of semiological analysis.

Investigating the data using semiological analysis		
Steps	Description	
Step 1: Configuration of data	Sorting, organising, labelling and logging of data.	Data Analysis
Step 2: Exploration of data	Exploration of form and content of the drawing: the modes children used and themes they drew.	
Step 3: Choosing the images	Selecting four drawings from each section of the *Data Cross-grid*.	
Step 4: Compiling a denotation inventory	Creating an Inventory of Content that reflected the emerging themes in children's drawings.	
Step 5: Examining higher levels of signification (connotation)	Interpreting the children's symbolic messages.	
Step 6: Decide when to stop	Deciding when to conclude the analysis for each drawing.	
Step 7: Select reporting formats	Using text, tables and illustrations as my reporting structure.	

Step 1: Configuration of data: The sorting begins.

I define the first step in my data analysis process, as configuration of raw data, a phase not included in Penn's (2000) list. This stage, involved the organisation, labelling and logging of the children's drawings to create a database for my case studies, which I liken to the sorting of the tangle of thread into separate yarns ready to be to be spun (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3
Sorting and coding the drawings: Comparable to the sorting of a tangle into separate and organised yarns.

Having the children's home and school drawings already filed in separate folders, I then developed a simple classification system where I letter-coded and number-coded each drawing accordingly as explained in Section 4.7.4 above. Once, the indexing for all the 223 drawings was completed, I then created a *Data Log* for each drawing which included all the information I considered as relevant to help me answer my research questions. A sample of a *Data Log* of a drawing of each of the three children can be found in Appendix 17. The *Data Log* included basic information such as the date, duration, title, a copy of the drawing and my comments about any other contextual information. It also included more salient information, such as the modes

the children used, the themes and meanings that emerged, and influences that affected the drawing. This entailed elements of categorisation and analysis of the drawing. The *Data Log* also included a transcription of the children's narratives, time codes, and an indication of the speaker (ex. L=Luke, T=Thea, B=Bertly, M=mother, J=Josephine, myself). I fully transcribed the video-recorded conversations I held with the children and the parents. Considering the transcription as a "representation" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008, p. 74) of the data in an interpretive way, and the video-recording as a "reproduction" (Hutchby and Woofitt, 2008, p. 74) of the drawing episodes, I fully transcribed the recordings ad verbatim except for small talk which was unrelated to the drawing. As the conversations included a mixture of both English and Maltese, I made the conscious decision to translate and transcribe all the conversations into English where I tried to be as faithful as possible to the original meaning. This meant that there were instances where, as Heritage and Atkinson (1984) suggest, I had to be selective and capture the sequential features of talk. Using my contextual and observational knowledge, as well as the video-recording to make informed and faithful transcriptions, I highlighted relevant features of "talk-in-interaction" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008, p.83), where my knowledge of both languages allowed me to limit mistakes in translations as far as possible. Taking Davidson's (2010), Dawson's (2009) and Schnettler and Raab's (2008), suggestion, I considered the transcriptions as an integral part of my analysis and a means that helped me get to know the data.

Sequential and detailed transcripts that might include in-situ interactions, still images, diagrams and descriptions of the participants' positioning, movements and interaction as well as the researcher's comments, were used in other studies by Flewitt, (2006), Mavers (2009b), and Norris (2004). In my video-analysis I constantly kept at the forefront the two main components of the data, that is, the children's drawings and their accompanying narratives. Keeping in mind Goodwin's (2000) suggestion that an analyst cannot consider all the semiotic resources available as this can be overwhelmingly impractical and can translate in losing sight of the original aim, I did not engage in what Lancaster (2013) calls "micro multimodal transcripts" (p. 417). Thus, I was careful not to cogitate in depth all the multimodal semiotic modes illustrated on the video (such as, facial expressions, movement, gestures, gaze and

actions), which were all very valid and which all helped to provide a complete picture. Nonetheless, even if I did not transcribe the videos in what Flewitt (2006) defines as a multimodal "dynamic text … [that] reflects the temporal, spatial and kinaesthetic nature of visually recorded interaction" (p. 35), occasionally and when it was relevant, I chose a portion of the video footage for in-depth analysis and "engaged with recorded materials in an incremental process of refinement" (Bezemer and Mavers, 2011, p. 195). On such occasions and as recommended by Jewitt (2008), I drew on the children's multimodal expressions and interactions, to use them as supporting data. As Payne and Payne (2004) point out, this process also helped me to create, test and improve on the data that arose from the observations and make adaptations to my data instruments and procedures accordingly. In light of this, and as is remarked by Robson (2002), I realised that in participant observation, the data collection and analysis processes, work in tandem and are in constant interplay with each other, where data analysis occurs also in the middle of the data collection process, effecting and shaping its design.

Once all the *Data Logs* for each drawing were compiled and categorised, I imported most of the information from the *Data Logs* to NVivo. I coded and categorised the data through its system of "nodes" (Bryman, 2012, p.596), which is a collection of references and links to the different elements of the data, where I identified the modes, themes, meanings and influences that emerged in the cildren's drawings. A print screen sample of NVivo's data sheets of the three children's logs as well as of the nodes identified can be found in Appendix 18. Figure 5.4 shows a flowchart which I created, to illustrate the steps involved in the data collection process; from when I took a still image or video-footage of the process of drawing, to the organisation of the data on NVivo.

Figure 5.4
The data collection process.

Figure 5.4. The data collection process flowchart:

Scan or photograph a drawing or video-record the child
Scanned/photographed images or video-footage from camera.

↓

Upload and Save
Images and videos are saved on a computer in separate databases and clearly coded (Eg. LH1)

↓

Representation
Images saved as .jpeg and 6 videos edited and saved as .wmv

↓

Copy
Copy images and videos to external hardisk

↓

Data Organisation & Analysis
Created Data Logs on Word Document with images and transcriptions of video conversations

↓

Transfer of data to NVivo
Data from logs transferred to NVivo

Once I entered the data in NVivo, I began to make sense of the data in relation to the research questions, where through a "thematic analysis" (Bryman, 2012, p.13), I identified recurring patterns, links, commonalities and idiosyncrasies, across the three cases. To do this, I not only referred to the data generated by NVivo, but I concurrently returned to the children's drawings, the video-recordings and the manual *Data Logs* to re-examine their content, and validate my analysis. Comparing the process of organising and coding the data to the weaving process, at this stage, it appeared to me, that the threads of data were not single anymore but were thickening and spun into reels, ready to be woven (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5
The thickened threads are then spun into reels; all sorted and ready to 'weave' the findings.

Step 2: Exploration of data: Initiating the weaving process.

The next steps involve the exploration of the *form* and *content* of the drawings, or in other words, the *how* (modes) and *what* (objects) children drew. In Step 2, I start by examining how I analysed the *form* of the drawing, that is, the modes children used and the first level of *content* analysis, that is, the quantity of the objects they drew. In Step 3 I discuss how I chose the images while in Steps 4 and 5, I explain how I analysed the second level of content by using Barthes' (1977) two levels of interpretation, that is the denotation and connotation levels. While I provide a linear description of these three steps, they overlap and are in constant interplay with each other.

The *Data Logs* which I compiled for each drawing of every child, were an asset to analyse the data, but they did not provide me with a clear and instant picture of each child's modal preferences. In order to help me organise, categorise and analyse the *form* and *content* of the drawings, I came up with a *Data Cross-grid*, where I propose that children's drawings can be interpreted at a physical level "as a component of intersemiotic meaning making" (Ormerod and Ivanic, 2002, p. 67). This *Data Cross-grid*, which is my contribution to the field of inquiry, is a methodological tool presented in form of a grid that can provide a different way of looking at and interpreting young children's drawings. By analysing the modes used and the inferred themes represented on a simple-complex gradient, the grid provides an instantaneous graphical impression of each child's preferred *semiotic* and *configuration* styles respectively. The data is represented on a cross-grid with a vertical axis intersecting a horizontal axis, dividing it into four equal parts. The vertical line represents the 'Mode' while the horizontal line represents the 'Theme'. Both lines signify a gradient from *Simple* (S) to *Complex* (C). Thus the top half (shaded in blue in Figure 5.6) of the cross grid signifies the use of a *simple mode* while the bottom half (shaded in orange) signifies a complex mode.

Figure 5.6

The horizontal axis on the Data cross-grid indicates simple (top) and complex (bottom) modes.
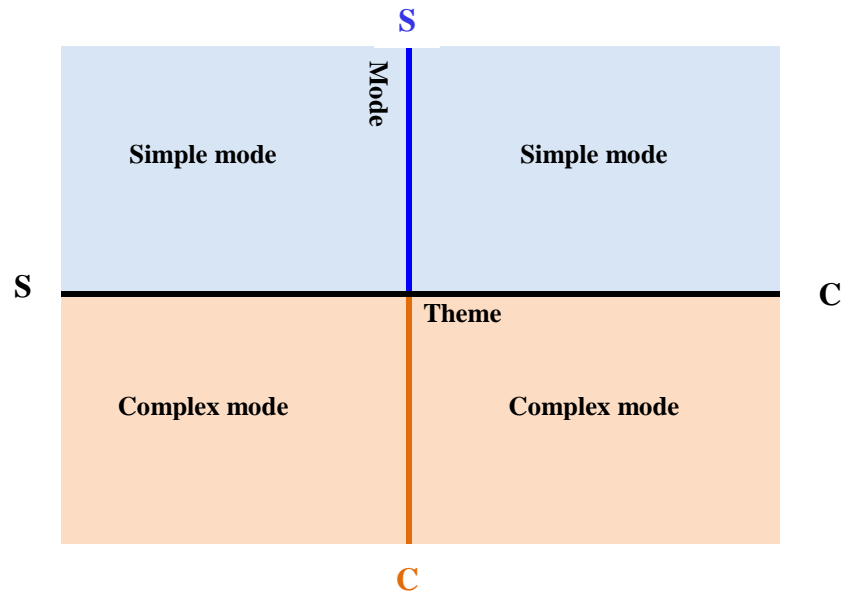
Comparably, the left half of the cross-grid (shaded in red in Figure 5.7) signifies a *simple theme* and the right half (shaded in green) signifying a *complex theme*.

Figure 5.7

The vertical axis on the Data-grid indicates simple themes (left) and complex themes (right).
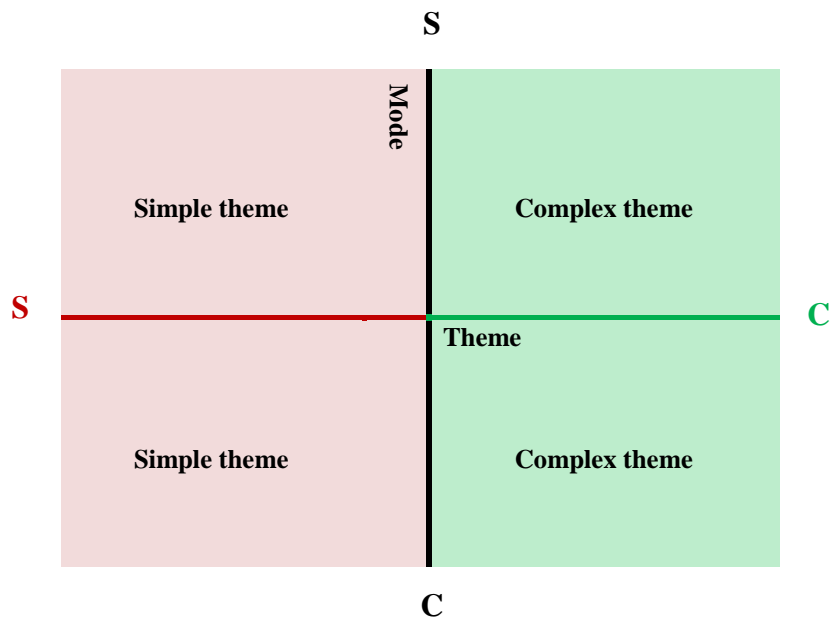
Once all the drawings of a child are plotted across the grid, an instantaneous graphical representation of the child's preferences in his choice of *simple-complex modes* and *themes* is provided. The representation of modes and themes as merged together is represented in Figure 5.8.

Figure 5.8

The Data cross-grid indicates the integration of simple and complex modes and themes.
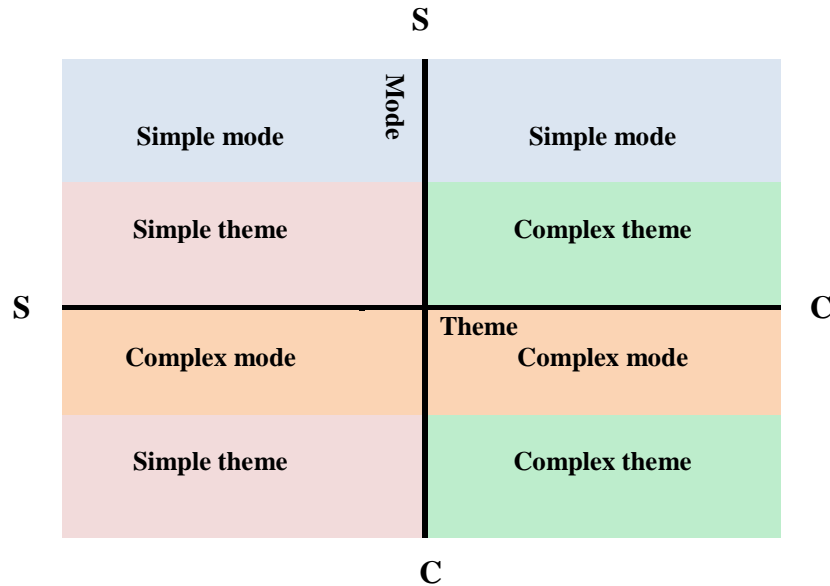
Ultimately, each drawing could be plotted under one of the following categories and areas in the grid (Figure 5.8):

- simple mode, simple theme (top left corner of the grid)
- simple mode, complex theme (top right corner of the grid)
- complex mode, complex theme (bottom right corner of the grid)
- complex mode, simple theme (bottom left corner of the grid)

I now describe the criteria that define my understanding of a *simple-complex mode* and *simple-complex theme* (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2
Data grid criteria

Criterion	Description
Mode	
Simple mode	When *one or two related modes* (ex. drawing and mark-making; drawing and writing; cutting and gluing) are used to create a drawing.
Complex mode	When *a multiple of related or unrelated modes* (more than two) are used to create a drawing.
Theme	
Simple theme	A drawing of *one or two objects* (things, animals or people) related or unrelated to each other, but which do not involve a narration or a complex description.
Complex theme	A drawing of *more than two objects* that involve the composition or drawing of a scene or a narration.

Simple-complex mode.

My notion of *simple-to-complex mode* as implemented in this study, is based on the semiotic concept, that children make and communicate their meanings through a combination of a range of modes, means and media (Flewitt, 2008; Kress, 2010, 2004, 2003a, 2000a, 1997; Stein, 2008), as I discussed extensively in Chapter Two. Jewitt (2008), and Kress and Jewitt, (2003) argue that modes rarely occur in isolation but are used by the signifier in constant interplay with each other. Consequently, I regard that children seldom use one single mode to draw. As a result, I designed a criterion that differentiated between drawings where children used a *simple mode* from those where they used a *complex* one. As indicated in Table 4.7 above, I define *simple mode* as the use of one or two related modes to create a drawing, such as drawing and mark making, or the combination of drawing with writing, or cutting with gluing. On the other hand, I define a *complex mode* as the use of a variety of related or unrelated modes; from drawing, to gluing, tracing, colouring, writing and cutting.

Simple – Complex theme.

My notion of *simple-to-complex theme* is based on the number of objects children illustrate in a drawing. Children rarely draw one object but they frequently draw a series of objects to denote one meaning. Thus, as indicated in Table 5.2 above, I define a *simple theme* as the drawing of one or two related or unrelated objects in a picture to denote one meaning other than a narration or a complex description. A main criterion that helped me with my definition of a *simple theme* is that the drawing

is dominated by one main idea or concept (for example, an animal or a person). A drawing in a *complex theme* implies that the child drew more than two objects to create an elaborate scene or visual narrative.

To help the reader understand the way I analysed the drawings through the use of *simple-complex modes* and *themes*, I refer to one of Luke's drawing *LS 18: Ben Ten Fight* (Figure 5.9) as an exemplar. Examining the form of the drawing, it is evident that Luke used only the mode of drawing and mark-making (which I consider as related to each other), classifying the image as *simple in mode*. Turning my analysis to the content of the drawing, it is also easily noticeable that Luke drew a *complex theme*, made up of various characters and objects. Through his during and post-drawing talk, Luke confirmed this by conveying that his drawing represented a narrative scene where two video-cameras fought two *Ben Ten* characters. The drawing also includes a monster, guns and gunshots. This classifies the drawing as *simple in mode* and *complex in theme*, which I plotted at the top, right corner of his *Data Cross-Grid*.

Figure 5.9
Ben Ten Fight: A drawing in simple mode, complex theme.

LS18: Ben Ten Fight
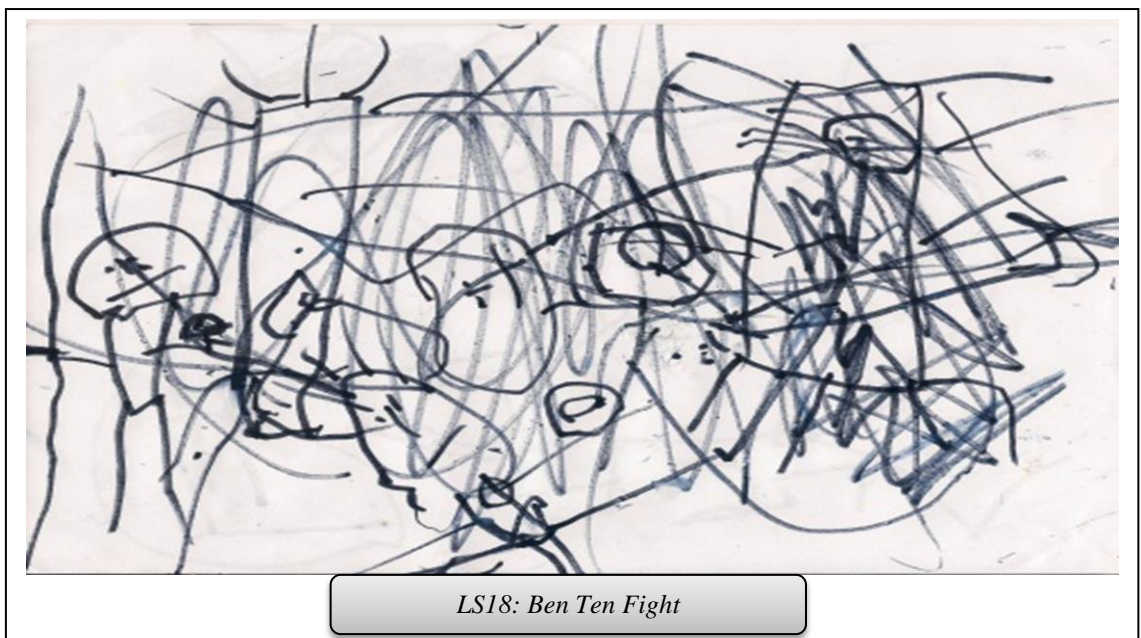
Linking this process of classifying the *form* and *content* of the drawing to the weaving process, to me is comparable to preparing the sturdy thickened yarn stemming from

the reels, which is then used to create the warp threads that are threaded in the heddle on the loom; all is set for the weaving to begin. The ground work is done: the form of the drawings is analysed and the data is organised, ready for in-depth analysis to begin (Figures 5.10 and 5.11).

Figure 5.10
Like threads stemming from the reels, the data sets are ready to be classified.

Figure 5.11
Comparable to threads on the loom ready for the weaving to begin, the data is organised for in-depth analysis.

Plotting data on the cross-grids.
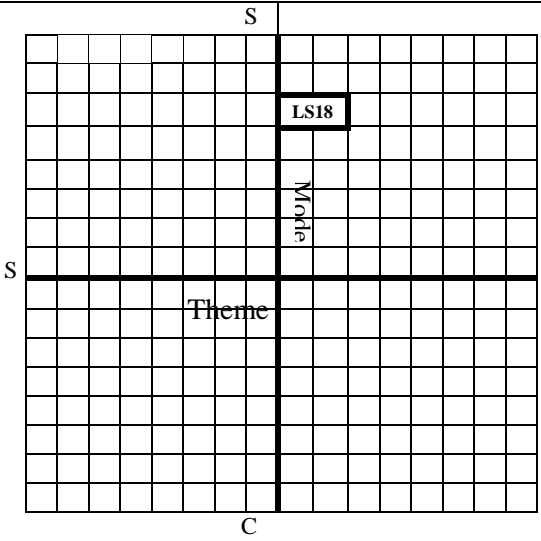
Once I established the criteria, I was able to plot each drawing of every child on a separate *Data Cross-grid*. To help distinguish between the home and school drawings more easily, I used a colour-coded system with each child's favourite colours. Table 5.3 hereunder, explains the letter and colour-coding indexing I used for each child's set of drawings.

Table 5.3
Letter and colour coding of the children's drawings.

Name of child	Home drawings code	School drawings code
Bertly	BH - red	BS – green
Luke	LH - blue	LS – black
Thea	TH - orange	TS – purple

I developed the *Data Cross-grids* in two steps. I began by creating a Word Document with a grid for each drawing that included the code and title, the *Data Cross-grid* and a copy of each drawing in sequence. Based on the criteria discussed above, I identified the complexity of the modes and themes for each drawing by plotting the index (colour, letter and number coded) on the corresponding area of the grid. The grid below (Figure 5.12) shows a sample of one of Luke's school drawings as plotted on the separate drawing grid while Appendix 19 includes a sample of six of each of the three children's *Data Cross-grid*s; three home and three school drawings respectively.

Figure 5.12
One of Luke's Data cross-grids of a school drawing.

Drawing Code	Drawing Name	Drawing picture
LS18: Ben Ten fight Simple mode, Complex theme		

In the second step, I transferred and merged all the plotted indexes of all the drawings into one grid for each child. I chose not to differentiate within the same section of the grid. This meant that, if for example, a drawing was in *simple mode* and *simple theme*, I could plot it anywhere in the top left section of the grid; however, I opted for a sequential and linear system, where I plotted each drawing's index in chronological succession, where (through the colour-coding system used), I created a distinct separation between the home and school drawings. Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 in Chapter Seven (p. 277 – 279), illustrate the three children's *Data cross-grid*, with all their drawings plotted on one grid respectively. This one-page graphical impression of each child's unique preferences, patterns and style facilitated the analysis process and provided a quick way to compare commonalities and idiosyncrasies between the three children. I must point out that while the grid might appear to provide some sort of summative data, my aim was not to develop a kind of quantitative measure for the drawings. Rather, the aim of generating the *Data cross-grids* was to assist me in bringing out the individuality and distinctiveness of each child, their particular uniqueness and dominant drawing patterns in a more specific way.

I compare this second stage of the data exploration, and hence, the grid plotting, to the commencement of the weaving process. The first level of analysis is completed and the first patterns of the weave are emerging, but as yet, nothing is clear and the progress is minimal (Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.13
The 'weaving' begins and the first patterns are emerging although not very visible; likewise the data is taking shape.

Step 3: Choosing the images: Selecting and complementing the colours

Penn (2000) considers the choosing of the images as the first stage of the semiological analysis process. However, in my case, I wanted to include all the children's drawings in my study, mainly to have a comprehensive picture as possible and also, out of respect towards their commitment in creating the drawings. However, I could only include all the drawings at the exploration level where I plotted them in the respective grids to define the extent of the modes and themes children used, as explained in Step 2 above. Needless to say, I could not analyse all

the 223 drawings in-depth. That is why, I considered it opportune, to "condensate" (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014, p. 12) my data and select and focus on a smaller number of drawings from the full corpus of drawings to analyse the data at the denotation and connotation levels.

I based my choice of drawings as grouped in the *Data Cross-grids*, where for each child, and whenever available, I selected four drawings from each section of the grid where I analysed three of these drawings with some detail and the fourth drawing with more depth. My choice rested on four to provide a range of drawings that exemplified each section of the grid. I opted to choose those sixteen drawings per child, which, in my view, could be considered as good exemplars from each section, irrespective of whether they were done at home or at school. Having said this, I still tried to balance my choice of drawings between the two settings as much as possible. While this system provided me with the possibility to discuss drawings from each section of the grid, it also proved to be limiting. Sometimes, there were not enough drawings in a particular section which left me without choice, but to analyse the ones portrayed. This happened on two occasions: once with Luke's drawings and once with Bertly's. Luke only drew three drawings in *complex mode, simple theme,* (Figure 7.1, Chapter Seven, p. 277, bottom left-corner of the grid), limiting me to discuss those three drawings from that section; likewise, Bertly drew only three drawings in *complex mode, complex theme* (Figure 7.3, Chapter Seven, p. 279, bottom right-corner of the grid), constraining my analysis to the three drawings from that section. This limited me to analyse in detail only fifteen drawings for Luke and Bertly rather than the predetermined number of sixteen which I analysed in Thea's case. Contrastingly, it also happened that in other occurrences, I had plenty of drawings from the other sections of the grid, which were good exemplars of the children's meaning-making but which however, I had to leave out from analysing in depth due to my predetermined limit, which was also induced by the word limit of this thesis.

Comparing this process of data condensation and choice of drawings to the weaving process, it is analogous to the decisions a weaver has to make after he finishes the first segment of the weave and has to choose the next thread of colours that

complements the initial colour-scale. Similar to the limited choice I sometimes experienced in the selection of the drawings from each segment of the grid, a weaver can be limited in his choice of colours, depending on the quantity of the reeled threads he has available (Figure 5.14); as yet, irrespective of any limitations, the end product is always a cohesive, synchronised and unique.

Figure 5.14
Choosing the colours that complement the first segment of the weave: The data is condensed and the drawings chosen.

Step 4: Compiling a denotation inventory: The weaving resumes.

The fourth step of my semiological analysis is based on Penn's (2000) second step, that of compiling a denotation content. I develop my investigation using Barthes' (1977) exposition that an image has two levels of meanings: the denotation level and the connotation level, as discussed in Chapter Two. This goes beyond the initial analysis of the *form* (*simple* and *complex* modes) and *content* (*simple* and *complex* themes) explained in Step 2, to uncover the meanings the children ascribed to the content of their drawings, which, I consider as the second part of content analysis. I

now describe how I used Barthes' (1977) framework of analysing advertisement images through the levels of denotation (Step 4) and connotation (Step 5) to interpret children's drawings.

As I have already discussed above, an interpretive design entails an evolving methodology, where approaches, categories and themes are not predefined but emerge during the data collection process and analysis (Dawson, 2009; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Patton, 2015; Weinstein and Weinstein, 1991). This is the procedure I adopted where, engaging in a process of semiosis, I began by scrutinising closely the physical elements of the texts to uncover the first layer of denoted meanings in the three children's drawings. Listening to the children's talk and interpretations of their drawings as a key strategy in giving voice to their meanings, helped me to uncover and identify the objects the children drew in each drawing, which I then grouped to form emerging and common content themes. I used these themes to interrogate the process of articulating meaning into what Ahn and Filipenko (2007) define as the "collective narrative form" (p. 282). I generated the data on NVivo where I catalogued the literal elements of each of the 223 drawings, to create a list of thirteen content themes, which I called the *Inventory of Content.* Analysing the drawings gave way to the emergence of various sub-categories under each content theme. This was where Nvivo proved to be a very good tool for data analysis where, using its categorising system, I was able to classify each object the children drew under a content theme heading while keeping track of the emerging different sub-categories and the frequencies with which each category and theme were exemplified. The aim of this process was to bring out the richness and specificities of the content illustrated in the three children's drawings.

While this might appear to be a simplistic analysis of the pictures, it was indeed a complex endeavour as at times it was difficult to classify the drawings under simplified content themes and sub-categories. This was because while some pictures had one dominant *(simple)* theme, others were a combination of overlapping themes merged together to create a scene or a narrative (*complex theme*). This meant that the same drawing, particularly those in *complex themes*, could be classified under different thematic headings and sub-categories according to the variety of objects

depicted.   Classification turned out to be even more complex when meanings changed. When this happened, I classified the drawing according to the child's latest version. Table 5.4 illustrates the thirteen broad themes identified and which form the *Inventory of Content.* It also includes a list of the sub-categories that exemplified each content strand, which emerged from the children's drawings. I identified these thirteen content themes from the drawings of the three children of my study. Analysing the drawings of other children of different ages, with different experiences and coming from different contexts, could result in identifying a different list of emerging themes and hence to compiling a different *Inventory of Content.* When I analysed the children's drawings by considering separate aspects in isolation, I experienced the risk of losing on the meaningful characteristics. To overcome this fragmentation I made a conscious effort to consider each child's drawing as a whole, while zooming on different aspects accordingly.

Table 5.4
Inventory of Content.

Content Themes	Sub-categories identified from each theme
People	Self; family; friends; fantasy; unknown; named others;
Animals and other creatures	Mini-beasts; farm; pets; wild; sea creatures; sky creatures; fantasy;
Weather and sky features	Sky; stars; sun; rainbow; rain;
Natural environmental features	Flowers, grass, leaves, trees and mushrooms; Pond, river, lake; Sea and beach; Stones, rocks, mountain;
Natural elements	Fire; water;
Food	Fruits; Sweets, ice-cream, candy, cake, Easter egg; Sausage roll, bread; Pasta;
Toys and play equipment	Balls, Wii, trampoline, pink goo;
Vehicles	Aeroplanes; boats/ships; cars; cranes; motorbikes; rockets; trains;
Man-made objects	Pool, well; Road; roundabout, tunnel;
Buildings	Houses; castle, church; farm; apertures;
Abstract	Shapes; symbols;
Writing	Letters; names; numbers; words;
Miscellenous objects	Digital equipment; Warfare equipment and trophies; Everyday objects and other oddities;

Correlating this process to the weaving process, I perceive it as being at a more advanced stage where the identification of themes can be compared to the different patterns of the weave which are now defined even if at times, they appear as still a bit blurry (Figure 5.15); likewise the themes are defined even if still emerging.

Figure 5.15
The patterns are visible, even if blurry at times; likewise the themes are defined even if unclear at times.
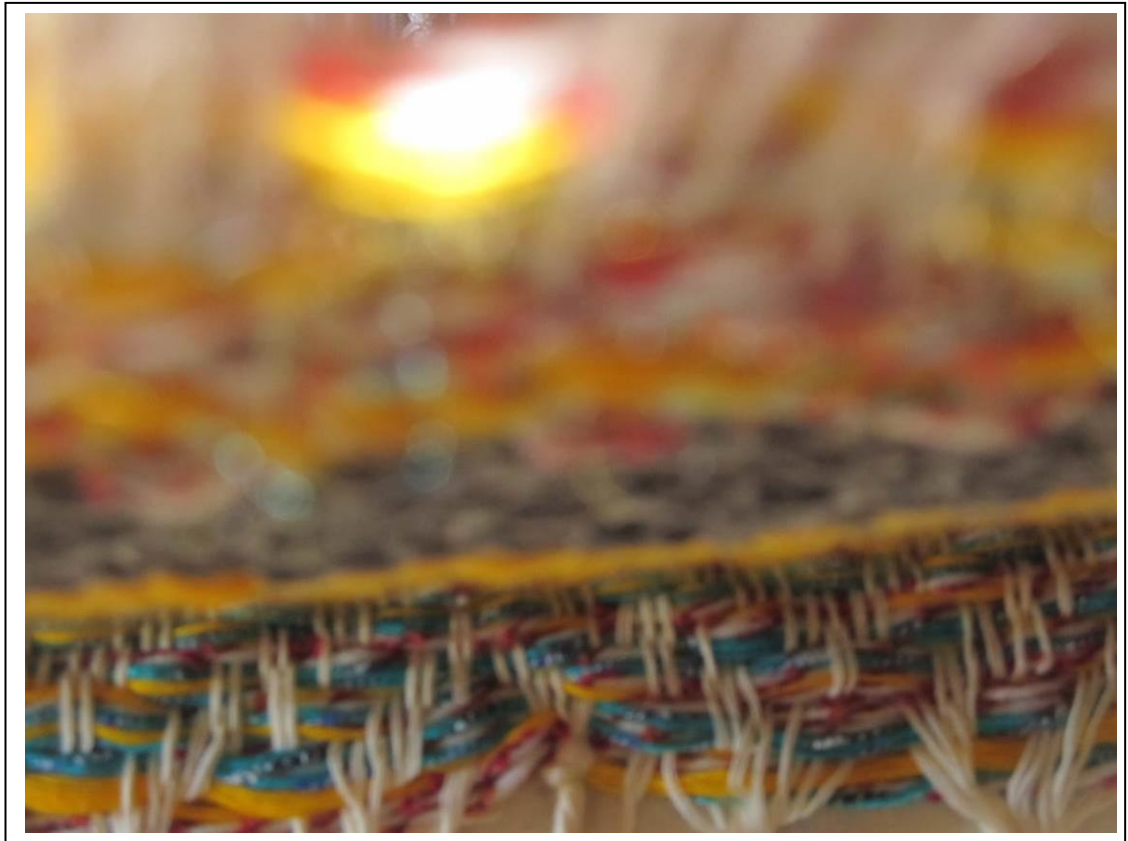
Step 5: Examining higher levels of signification: 'The weaving' progresses steadily.

My fifth step of data analysis is based on Penn's (2000) third step of semiological inquiry, that of interpreting the children's drawings at the connotation level. This stage, which builds on the denotation inventory, involves the subjective interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the drawing. It is based on Barthes (1977) connotation level of analysis, that children's drawings connote multiple meanings and interpretations to include abstract concepts of ideas, values, knowledge and emotions. Decoding the multiple "structures of meaning" (Nicolopoulou et al., 1994, p. 106),

that are represented in the drawings, make them very challenging to interpret. Fully considering the children's descriptions and related talk, together with their parents' insights about possible influences, I examined each drawing as a whole, where I engaged in a comprehensive, in-depth and interpretive analysis, to prioritise the meanings children conferred. Following Nicolopoulou et al.'s (1994) and Toren's (2007) suggestions, I integrated, assimilated and accommodated the children's interpretations with my own. Thus, my analysis was an amalgamation of the children's, their parents' and my interpretations of the drawings to try to bring out what the drawings meant to them. Connotation is "context-dependent" (Chandler, 2007, p. 246); therefore, as Cox (2005) and Penn (2000) argue, one needs to be situated and know the specific context and cultural background to be able to understand what the children are communicating. The fact that I was present observing the children closely during most of the drawings over an intensive period, provided me with additional insights into the meanings conveyed.

Figure 5.16
Comparable to the connoted meanings of a drawing, the mat is in its final weaving stages.

Locating this stage of connotative analysis in relation to the weaving process, I compare it to the shaping of a woven mat in its final stages (Figure 5.16), where a unique and valuable production is evident; likewise, most of the data has been analysed where distinct, personal and inimitable meanings that reflected the children's unique thoughts, knowledge and experiences emerged.

To help the reader understand the way I analysed the drawings at the two levels, I am going to use once again, Luke's drawing *LS18: Ben Ten Fight* (Figure 5.9, p. 157). Examining the drawing both at the denotation and connotation levels, without considering Luke's narratives during and after the drawing, would have made it very difficult to interpret. At the denotation level, the drawing portrayed a *complex theme*: a fight scene between two video-cameras, two *Ben Ten* (fantasy) characters and a monster, where knives, guns and gun shots were used. I classified these objects under different themes in the *Inventory of Content*: the two video-cameras, the knives, guns and gun shots under *Miscellaneous Objects,* the two *Ben Ten* as fantasy characters under the theme of *People,* and the monster as a fantasy creature, under the theme of *Animals.* At the second level of connotation, Luke's drawing conveyed a narrative, a tale where the good guys (the two *Ben Ten*) fought the bad guys (the video-cameras), reflecting the endemic struggle between good and evil. The drawing also shows the influences that affected Luke's thought processes: popular culture through the *Ben Ten* TV series (TV Tropes Foundation, n.d.), and the resource that was available, that is, the video-cameras. Table 5.5 offers an abridged summary of my analysis of the drawing at both the denotation and connotation levels. In Chapter Six, where I discuss Luke's case, I analyse this same drawing with more depth and elaboration.

Table 5.5
An abridged summary of how I analysed the drawings at the denotation and connotation levels.

Analysing the meaning attributed to the drawing LS18: *Ben Ten* Fight			
Layer 1: Denotation			Sources
Objective	What or who is depicted?	Fantasy people: *Ben Ten*. Fantasy animals: Monster Objects: Two video cameras, knives, guns, gunshots.	Drawing
Layer 2: Connotation			
Subjective	What ideas and values are communicated?	Narrative: Fight between good guys and bad guys; communicating values of morality, justice, fairness.	Conversations
		Influences: Popular culture: *Ben Ten* series. Resources available: Video-cameras.	Observations / Video-recordings

Step 6: Deciding when to stop: Cutting off the threads.

The next step in Penn's (2000) semiological analysis involves deciding when to stop examining each drawing. This was challenging at times, as the children's drawings were frequently pregnant with meanings that interweaved and were interconnected. Moreover, as Mavers (2011) points out, the process of analysis is never really exhaustive: there are always other meanings to uncover or new ways of reading an image. To keep me in check, I established a set of principles which guided me throughout this process. One of the most important measures which I adhered to was to check that all the denotation elements in each drawing were included and their relationship considered. When it came to analysing the children's drawings at the connotation level, I allowed the children's talk, utterances, perceptions and interpretations to guide me when I explored those meanings which they emphasised and seemed important to them. Once I considered that I had enough data from a particular drawing to answer the research questions, I wrapped up my analysis and moved on to another drawing.

Comparing this phase of analysis to the weaving process, I associate it to the cutting off process where, deciding to stop, the weaver cuts off the finished mats (Figure

5.17).   Likewise, limited also by the word count of this thesis, I had to decide when to conclude each analysis and move on to another drawing.

Figure 5.17
Deciding it is time to stop, the weaver separates the mats.

Step 7: Selecting reporting formats: Finalising the weave.

The last step, according to Penn (2000) involves the presentation of results, which should include an analysis of each level of signification (denotation and connotation). I made use of a variety of formats to represent my findings. These included the *Data cross-grids* that signified the *modes* and *themes* identified in the children's drawings; the *Inventory of Content* that included a description of the themes that emerged; and the children's drawings, which together with detailed descriptions helped me analyse and make links of how the different elements and meanings of each drawing interconnected.

I link this last stage of my data analysis to the completion of the weaving process. Like me, the weaver has to decide the format of his work. Using the same material,

patterns and style, albeit with some variations, he could decide to represent his weave in different dimensions and for different purposes, to make, for example a table mat, a carpet or elaborate it as a throw-over   (Figure 5.18, Image 1 and Image 2).

Figure 5.18
Deciding on the format of representation: Making use of different formats [1] & [2].
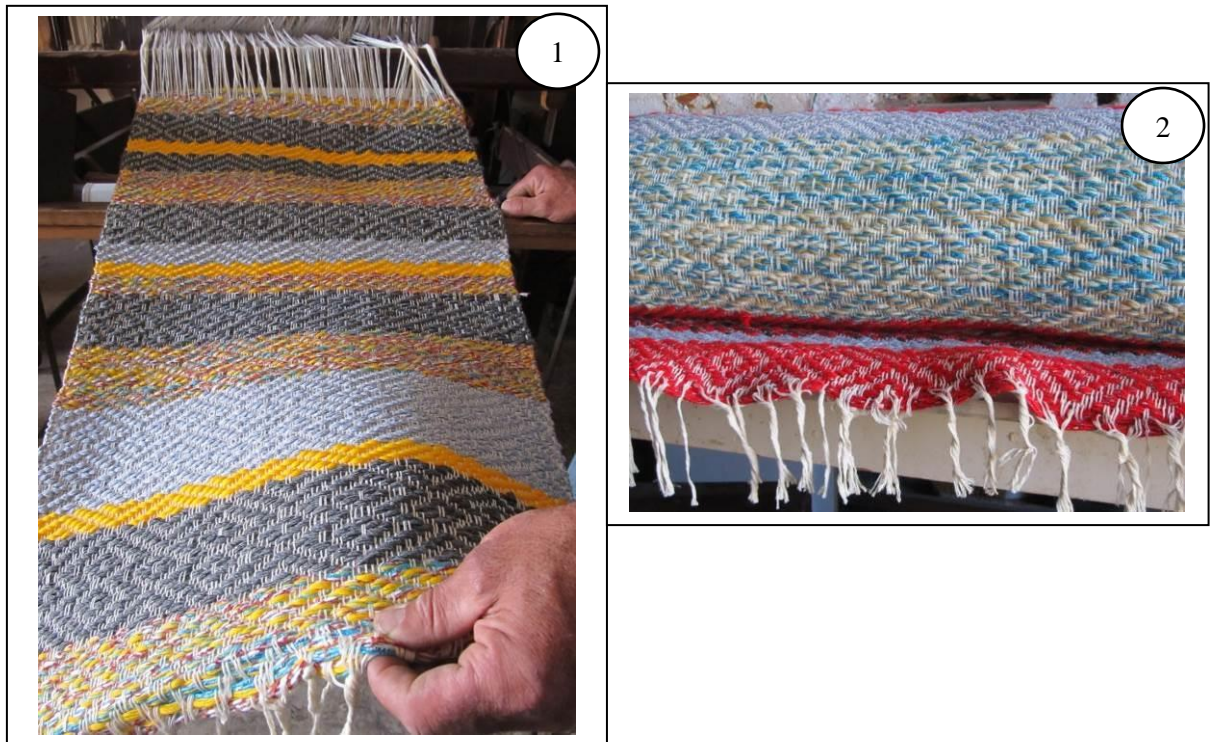
5.3 Research Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity in qualitative research methods are achieved by providing "field-sensitive evidence" (Edwards, 2001, p.123), authentic accounts and multiple interpretations that are analysed with responsibility and integrity that show consistency over time (Hughes, 2001; Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford, 2001; Silverman, 2010). According to Edwards (2001) in qualitative research, validity is "a matter of being able to offer a sound representation of the field of study as the research methods allow" (p.124) where authenticity is of utmost importance.   Similarly, reliability implies "fidelity to real life, context and situation specificity, authenticity, comprehensiveness, detail, honesty, depth of response and meaningfulness to the respondents" (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 203). I assert that throughout the study, I was loyal to the children's interpretations and their perceptions where I tried to bring out "the authentic and true voice of the

participants" (Hughes, 2001, p.36). My analyses were based on a truthful description and consistent conclusions of what I observed and interpreted.

An acknowledged way of representing authentic findings in qualitative research is to triangulate the data by looking at it from different vantage points. Drawing on the notion of "crystallisation" (Richardson and St Pierre, 2005, p.963), which calls for complex and deep understanding of the topic, I sought to crystallise data by obtaining information and making sense of the children's drawings from different sources and perspectives. I merged and cross-checked the data from their depictions, and the deep, descriptive narrative conversations I held with them and their parents, to provide the study with valid evidence to meet reliability criteria. Additionally, the contextual evidence gained from my video-recorded observations which provide a detailed account of the drawing process, the contexts and the interactions that ensued, also increased data validity. My research diary where I kept note of my observations and methodology, provided a reflexive account of my role and position in the data collection process, which proved to be another way to cross-reference my findings. Moreover, the way I used the drawings as a tool of communication and meaning-making, according to Liebenberg (2009), increases participant control which improves contextual accuracy and relevance of data.

5.4 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter I explained the analytical approaches I used to sort, classify and examine the data. I compared the data analysis process which involved the organisation, categorisation and exploration of data to weaving as metaphor. I also described how I developed the *Data Cross-grid* as a new tool for analysing children's drawings to represent simple-complex modes and themes. I also discussed how I compiled the denotation inventory, and how I analysed the children's drawings at the connotation level. I also considered it important to discuss issues of reliability and validity which in this study are based on comprehensiveness, truthfulness, integrity and depth of response.

In the next chapter, I present one case study, that of Luke, in depth. In Chapter Seven, I discuss the findings, where I also draw on Bertly's and Thea's cases to bring out the uniqueness of each child's drawings and their distinctive way of meaning-making

My family and I shooting the bad guys – by Luke
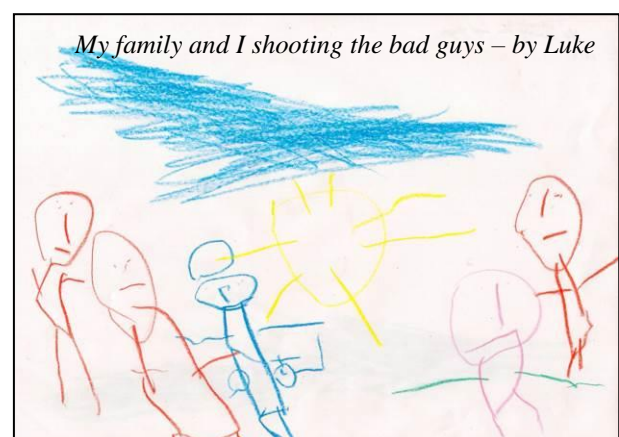
"When drawing we take our thoughts, along with our pencil, on a journey and produce 'a drawing' which is a container for those ideas"

- Gill Hope (2008, p.7)

Chapter 6

Case

Study

CHAPTER 6
CASE STUDY

6.1 Introduction

This case study provides a detailed portrait of Luke as a drawer and tells a unique story about his drawing styles, patterns and prevailing meanings. I begin this chapter by analysing the *Data Cross-grid* I developed for Luke to examine his ways of drawing, in what I defined as *simple-complex modes* and *themes*. I then discuss four drawings from each section of his grid where I explore the theoretical connotations behind his home and school drawings to unravel the layers of meaning-making he conveyed, as well as identify possible influences that affected his drawings. Subsequently, I consider one drawing from each section with more depth starting with a vignette to provide a contextualised, detailed description of the process of drawing. In the following section, I discuss the *Inventory of Content* where I highlight the emerging themes identified in Luke's drawings. I use Luke's case as an exemplar to show how I analysed the drawings and grids of the three children.

6.2 The Data Cross-grid: Analysing Simple-complex Modes and Themes

Luke drew eighty drawings in all: fifty-five at home and twenty-five at school. Table 6.1 provides a summary of the number of drawings Luke drew in each setting and their duration. For ease of reference, I included a copy of all of Luke's drawings on the SD (memory card) presented at the back of this thesis, under the Folder name, *Luke's Drawings.* Evidently, Luke drew considerably more at home than at school. This discrepancy between the number of drawings in the two settings could have ensued from the fact that while at school he sometimes preferred to play with his peers, at home he felt more compelled to draw because of his mother's support and my presence. He spent from twenty-five seconds to over thirty minutes to finish a drawing.

Table 6.1
A summary of Luke's drawing by context and duration.

Name of child	Home Drawings		School drawings		Total of home and school drawings	
	Number of drawings	Duration	Number of drawings	Duration	Total number of drawings	Total duration
Luke	55	5hrs 23 mins	25	4hrs 15mins	80	9hrs 38mins

Luke's *Data Cross-grid* (Figure 6.1), illustrates his eighty drawings plotted accordingly. The school drawings, letter-coded LS (Luke School) and colour-coded in black, are plotted at the upper part of each section of the grid, while the home drawings, letter-coded LH (Luke Home) and colour-coded in blue, are plotted in the lower parts of each section. Luke's *Data Cross-grid* and its summary (Figure 6.2), illustrate that in the main, with forty drawings (thirty done at home and ten at school), plotted at the top, right corner of the grid, his drawings were *simple in mode* and *complex in theme*. His second favoured style was to use a *simple mode* and *simple theme* (top, left corner). He drew twenty-three drawings within this category (six at school and seventeen at home). The use of *complex modes* featured in only seventeen of Luke's drawings, with nine done at school and eight done at home. Fourteen of these drawings, involved the use of *complex mode* and *complex theme* (bottom, right corner). Luke only drew three pictures that were *complex in mode* and *simple in theme* (bottom, left corner): these were all conducted at school. I now discuss exemplars from Luke's drawings to support my interpretation of his use of *simple complex modes* and *themes*.

Figure 6.1
Luke's Data Cross-grid that represents all his home and school drawings.
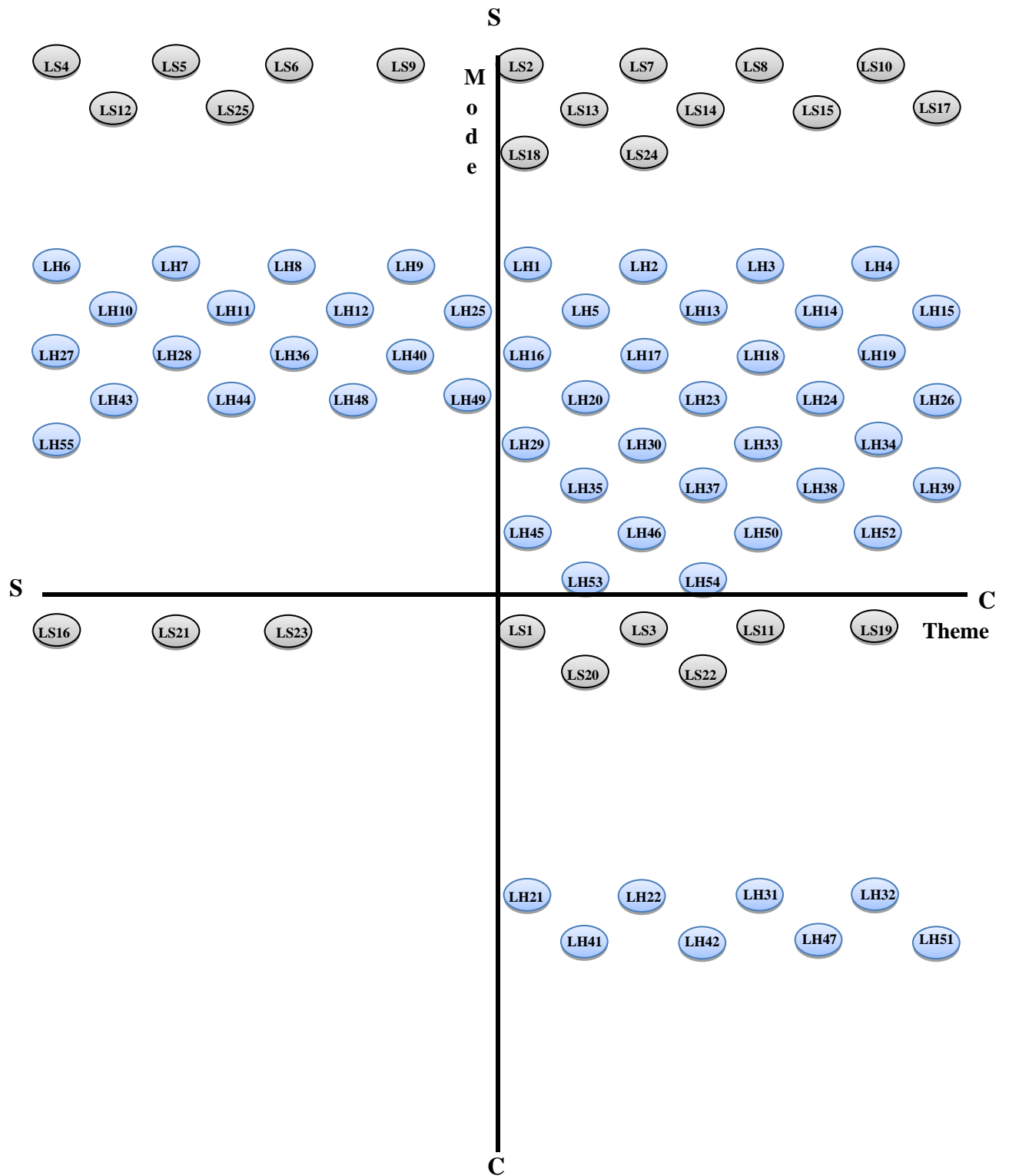
Figure 6.2
A summary of Luke's Data Cross-grid with his preferred drawing pattern marked with a red circle.
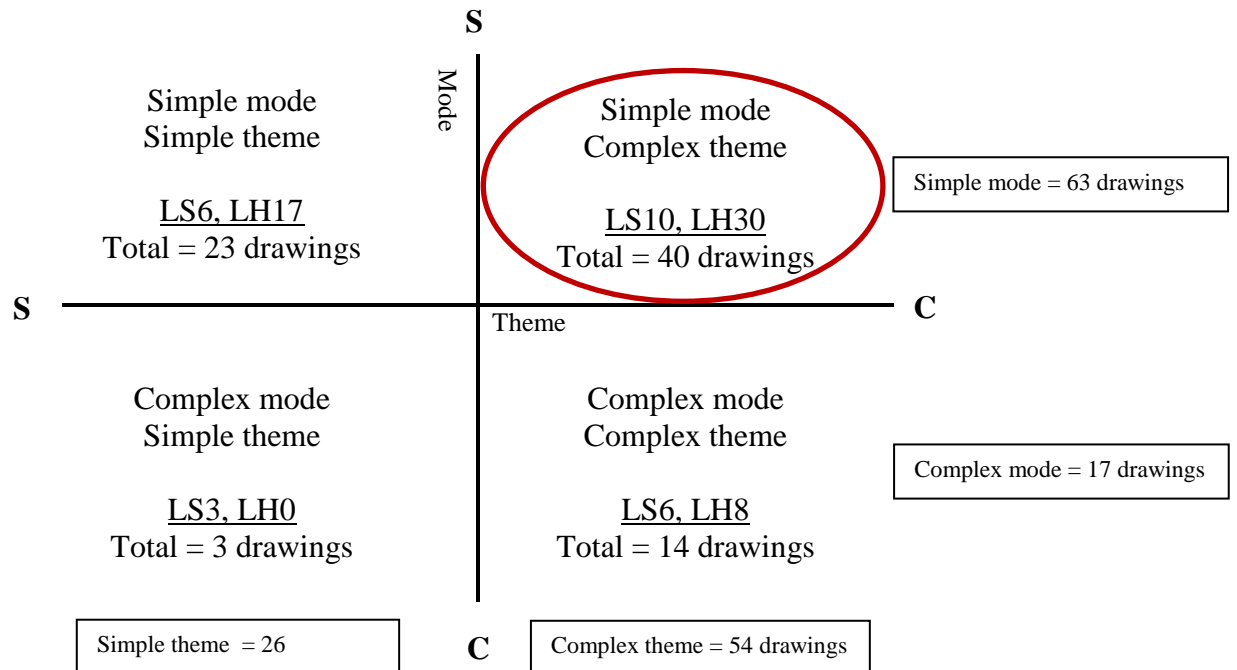
Luke's use of modes.

Sixty-three out of Luke's eighty drawings were created through the use of *a simple mode,* (Figures 6.1 and 6.2, top half), strongly illustrating that this was his favoured "semiotic style" (Dyson, 1986, p.382). This means that he preferred to use only one or two related modes to create his drawings. Twenty-seven of Luke's graphic representations were exclusively done using the mode of drawing, where he frequently opted to use either the medium of crayons or gem-markers (Figure 6.3) or a combination of both. Occasionally he also experimented with other simple modes such as cutting and gluing.

Figure 6.3
Luke using his preferred simple mode of drawing, with one of his favourite media.

The bottom half of the *Data Cross-grid* (Figures 6.1 and 6.2) shows that Luke drew seventeen drawings (nine at school and eight at home), where he used a *complex mode*, implying that the use of multiple related or unrelated modes to create a drawing was not Luke's preferred style. However, when he employed *complex modes* to draw, Luke made use of a variety of media, such as cello-tape, glitter glue, pens, corrugated and wrapping paper, lollipop sticks, ribbons and pipe cleaners, amongst others (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4
Luke using different media to draw in complex mode.

At school he frequently acted on his own initiative by using different modes "as resources" (Stein and Slonimsky, 2006, p.119), where he also considered what his peers did or were making. Such a phenomenon was also observed by Thompson (1999), who claimed that it was customary for children to spend time watching others use a multiplicity of modes and copying them. Sometimes, the visual similarity between Luke's drawing and his peers' was quite noticeable. I elaborate on these influences, use of similar modalities and techniques, as well as copied ideas from others, further down. At home, Luke adopted a more dependent attitude and frequently asked his mother to show, model and help him with the use of the various material and the semiotic modes available.

Prior to the study, at school, the children were limited in their use of media and were only allowed to use their pencil colours or a set of crayons made available at the drawing table. Other media, such as glue or glitter glue, were regarded as too messy while others, such as sequins or scissors, as too dangerous to be used by the children on their own, and hence, inappropriate. A lack of exposure to a variety of media limits the children's experiences and attitude towards drawing, impinges on their level of skill in using a variety of resources, as well as on their ability to decide which mode to opt for (Frisch, 2006; Hull and Nelson, 2005; Kress, 2004; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007); thus, constraining the meaning-making potential children could construe within a text. This limitation in exposure to different modalities, could explain Luke's avoidance to experiment with different modes and media, even if I provided him with ample material and resources in both settings. It was not uncommon to hear Luke complain that he does not know how to draw or how to use a particular medium, such as when he stated "I do not know what I am going to do with the glitters" (21st February, 2012). Having said this, I hold the percept that, while his overly use of a simple "modal choice" (Stein, 2008, p. 75) could have been a reflection of his lack of exposure or a matter of convenience, routine or lack of confidence in experimenting with different modes, it was plausible that it could also be a reflection of what Pahl (2007b), defines as the "producer's identities" (p. 388). This is supported by Hall (2008), who similarly states that although children might have a broad choice of resources at their disposal, yet they show particular modal preferences.

Luke's choice of themes.

Luke had twenty-six drawings (left column of Figures 6.1 and 6.2) with *simple theme*. Contrastingly, he had fifty-four drawings in *complex theme*, (right column of Figures 6.1 and 6.2),   which most frequently illustrated a combination of scenes or events that he experienced in his daily life merged with action narratives based on fantasy characters and storylines. The *Data Cross-grid* evidently shows that Luke preferred to draw using a *complex theme configuration style*.   In the *Inventory of Content* (Section 5.4) below, I analyse in more detail the most prominent themes that emerged in Luke's drawings.

Luke's preferred drawing pattern: Simple mode, complex theme.

With forty out of a total of eighty drawings plotted at the top, right corner of the *Data Cross-grid* (Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2, marked with a red circle), it is apparent that Luke's preferred drawing pattern was that of *simple mode* and *complex theme*. Luke did ten of these drawings at school and thirty at home. From my observations, I concluded that Luke seemed to attribute more thought to the *content* rather than to the *form* of his drawing. In my view, it seemed that he preferred to focus his energy and attention on creating a *complex theme* where he had the opportunity to orchestrate his inner thoughts and ideas into meanings, rather than to experiment with the various modalities available. Thus, as Pahl (2007b), Hall (2008), and Gardner (1980) exemplify, Luke probably embodied the style that mattered to him.

I now describe each of the four sections of Luke's *Data Cross-grid* (Figure 6.1) where I discuss three drawings from each of the section of the grid with some detail. Subsequently, I focus on one drawing from each section, which I characterise with a short vignette and a corresponding in-depth analysis. Referring to the different modes that Luke used as well as the themes that emerged from his drawing, I also explore the meanings layered in his drawings as well as identify possible influences. Figure 6.5 below, illustrates a collage of the four drawings that correspond and typify each section of the grid, except for the *complex mode, complex theme* section at the bottom left corner of the grid, which shows only three drawings that epitomise this pattern.

Figure 6.5
A collage grid: A sample of Luke's drawings in simple-to-complex modes and themes corresponding to each section of the grid.

S
M
o
d
e

LS4: The mushrooms

LS12: Myself

LH49: Me carrying a bag fully of candy

LH44: Me in a rocket to Australia

LS17: The good guy and the bad guy

LS18: Ben Ten fight

LH30: In the garden 2 – Talking animals

LH24: Tying the Blue Lady

S ———————————————————— **C**

Theme

LS21: Cow eating food

LS16: A worm

LS23: Shooting an aeroplane

LS11: The lobster story

LS19: A party and cake for mummy

LH42: The giant eating bones and bread

LH21: Cutting the bad guy out

C

6.2.1 Simple mode, simple theme drawings

The top left section of the collage grid (Figure 6.5) illustrates four out of the twenty-three drawings which Luke did using a *simple mode* and a *simple theme* (refer also to *Data-Cross Grid*, Figure 6.1). Palpable characteristics across the four drawings included sketchily type of depictions and the restricted use of modes, media and colour. In *LS4* (Figure 6.6) and *LH44* (Figure 6.7, Image 1), Luke used the mode of drawing which he drew with blue and orange pencil-colours respectively. Keeping to the simple mode criterion and using only a black marker, in *LS12* Luke introduced the mode of writing while in *LH49* he glued a lollipop stick to his black crayon sketch. The theme in each drawing was also simple where each picture included a depiction of himself and sometimes also another object or person. I now discuss each of the four drawings.

The mushrooms.

Figure 6.6
Two talking mushrooms drawn in simple mode and simple theme.

LS4: The mushrooms
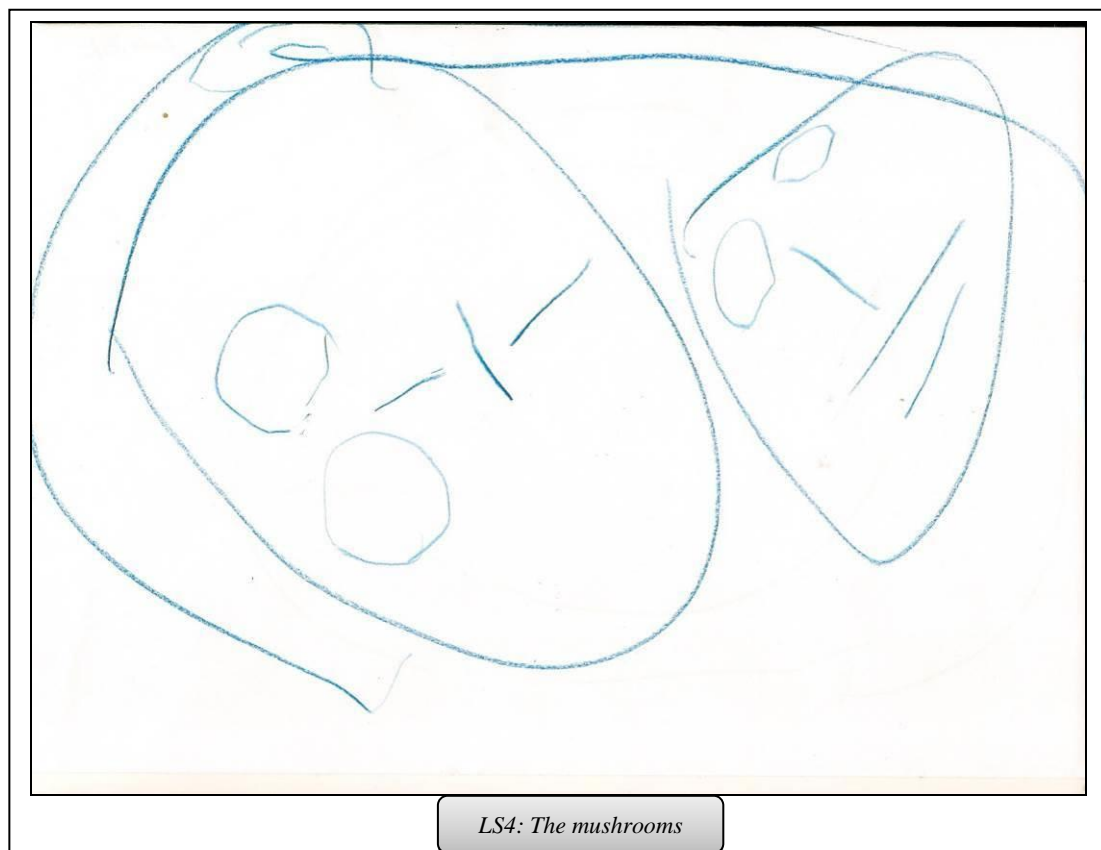
Sitting next to his friends Bertly and Shaun[11] at school, Luke drew *LS4* (Figure 6.6) as a response to the latter's request. Shaun wanted to draw a ball but did not know how. Luke immediately offered to act as a role-model for him by drawing two circular shapes. At that stage, Luke considered the drawing as ready and put it away. Talking about his drawing sometime later, Luke gave it a different meaning. Considering his drawing as "on-going" (Cox, 2005, p. 120) or in Matthews' (1999) words, "episodic" (p. 86), Luke promptly added two eyes, a mouth, a pair of moustaches and a nose to the circles, transforming the balls into, what he defined as, two talking mushrooms. Taking on another of Shaun's proposal, Luke explained that the close proximity of the two mushrooms indicated that they were a married couple. Clarifying his statement, Luke explained that the two mushrooms signified Shaun and himself getting married, with Shaun being the girl while himself as the boy.

Mavers (2011), claims that meanings are not necessarily definitive but can be fluid and dynamic: Luke's meanings changed according to his momentarily interpretation and his friend's suggestions. Findings from other studies (Ahn, 2006; Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Coates, 2002; Coates and Coates, 2006; Thompson, 1995) confirm this, and conclude that children are able to influence each other in creating, describing and changing the content and meaning of the drawings. Through his "inventive" (Pahl, 2009, p. 188) talk, Shaun was influential in making Luke improvise and willingly alter his meaning: from two balls to two talking mushrooms, to a married couple, which in turn, necessitated, a change in the gender of the couple. Luke perceived each new meaning through his construal of the visual form, where each shift in interpretation of the form brought with it a change in meaning, compelling him as Mavers (2011) argues, to consider the sign as new and divergent from the original intended meaning. Juggling with the suggestive graphic result of the drawing and his flow of ideas, Luke progressively transformed and interpreted his marks, where he identified "alternative meanings" (Mavers, 2011, p. 38) for the same sign. When days later I asked Luke to talk about his drawing at home, he interpreted the two faces as his brother Matthias and himself; a construal which was probably influenced by the home context in which he was at that instant. Scholars such as Cox (2005), Jewitt (2009b) and Hopperstad (2008a), observed similar contextual interpretations, where a new influence "permeated the drawing" (p. 86), and the

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[11] Shaun is a classmate of the three children. I used a pseudonym to protect the child's identity.

meaning-making of a sign was negotiated and closely connected to the social context it was interpreted in.

At the connotation level, the drawing communicated the friendship Luke enjoyed with Shaun which was apparent on distinctive levels; from modelling to him how to draw a ball, to including him in the picture and chatting and teasing him about the drawing. Thus, in my view, Luke could have created the text as a way to relate to Shaun, to "inspire and be inspired" (Hopperstad, 2008a, p.94) by him, while defining his relationship with him and ascertaining his place within the social and peer culture of the class; an occurrence also reported by Dyson, (1993b) and Löfdahl, (2006) in their studies.

Me in a rocket to Australia and Myself.

Both *LH44* (Figure 6.7, Image 1) drawn at home and *LS12* (Image 2) which Luke did at school, were self-drawings imbued with his personal wishes and notions of power. At the denotation level, *LH44*, which took Luke less than a minute to finalise, depicted an outlined image of a rocket with a small image of himself in it, explaining that the rocket was taking him to Australia where he would fight the bad guys.

Figure 6.7
A self-drawing which Luke did at home [1] and another which he did at school [2].

LH44: Me in a rocket to Australia

LS12: Myself

Likewise, in *LS12*, which took him fifteen minutes to create, Luke drew an image of himself with a moustache and a gun in his side pockets. Both drawings imply that Luke drew himself in an "ideal identity" (De Ruyter and Conroy, 2002, p.510) as a man with the power to fight the bad guys. This brings into view, Luke's "perception of self-image" (Hall, 2008, p.3), the persona he was portraying of himself: a masculine figure who, Marsh (2000) suggests, boys like to draw, as "strong, powerful, aggressive and almost anti-social" (p. 211); a mythic character whose heroic role, as Edmiston (2010) suggests, consists of defending the good guys. Through his drawing, Luke could also have been illustrating his attraction to notions of "power as ability" (Hall, 2010a, p. 104); as an older and knowledgeable pilot, who had the power to fly a rocket and fight villains.

I now discuss the fourth drawing in this section of the grid with more depth.

Vignette 1: Me carrying a bag full of candy.

Figure 6.8
A drawing in simple mode, simple theme, in which Luke conveyed a wish.

LH49: Me carrying a bag fully of candy
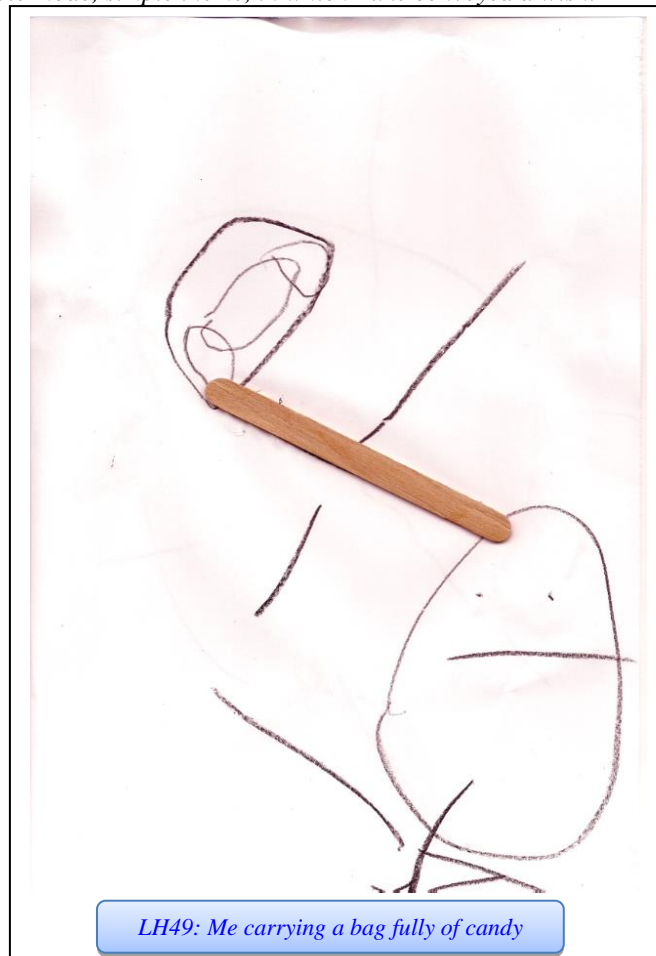
LH49 (Figure 6.8), illustrates Luke carrying a bag of sweets, which he is holding by means of a rod, on his shoulder. Luke drew this drawing, which took him just over four minutes, during one of my home visits. Using a black crayon, he began his drawing by depicting a circular shape with a stem coming out of it, which he interpreted as a lollipop. Conscious of the temporality and fluidity of the visual form (Hopperstad, 2008a), Luke added a line on each side, and postulated the exploration of other "possible meanings" (Hopperstad, 2008b, p. 145). He revoked his initial interpretation by labelling his image as "a bag full of sweets with two handles" (13th March, 2012). Declaring, "now there is going to be me", Luke elaborated his depiction by drawing an outlined image of himself with a huge head and a small stick body. In an episode of "playing *with* drawings" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 277), Luke stood up on the chair and in a pretentious voice exclaimed, "March like this! Ta-ra! Psht! Psht! It goes like this. Bum. Bum" (13th March, 2012), while he rhythmically marched away, down the chair and across the room, miming the holding of an invisible bag on one of his shoulders in a Father-Christmas-like fashion (Refer to Figure 6.9 and the video excerpt on the SD card, under the folder *Luke's video-recordings*, file name *Me carrying a bag full of candy*, at 0.51 minute).

Figure 6.9
Luke standing on a chair, marching and making vocalisations to enact and explain his drawing.

Back at the table, Luke concluded his drawing, by specifically asking for and gluing a lollipop stick, "to hold the bag" (13th March, 2012), ostensibly to imitate the holding of a bag from a rod, or to create a visual and tangible discrimination between the representation of himself and the bag. After some thought, he finished his drawing by remarking, "Let me put the candy in" while drawing three circles in the bag to represent sweets. Figure 6.10 shows Luke's thoughtful expression as he is actively engaged in attaching the lollipop stick, while explaining its meaning (Refer to the video n SD card, *Me carrying a bag full of candy*, at minute 1.48).

Figure 6.10
Luke attaching the lollipop stick, chosen for its affordability.

Analysis.

Mavers (2011) suggests that each step in the process of drawing informs the following, aiding the sign-maker to decide on the meanings to be made and the semiotic resources to be used. Drawing a lollipop inspired Luke to draw a bag of sweets with handles, which informed the drawing of himself marching with a bag. This reminded him of Father Christmas giving out presents, that led to his wish to get a lot of candy. This tracing of ideas showed Luke's "flow of … thought processes" (Pahl, 1999b, p.24) and the dynamic form of the drawing that changed with his plans. Luke probably opted to use the lollipop stick for its affordability to communicate 'hardiness' and 'woodeness', as well as for its visual resemblance to a rod. The choice of mode therefore, was compelled by a combination of past experiences that

is, his knowledge of the use and affordances of the lollipop stick probably acquired from his observation of his peers at school, together with his dramatisation inspired by his Father Christmas role play at school.

Kress (1997) suggests that children recognise that the mode of drawing is limited, and therefore, resort to other modes to support their meaning-making processes; a trend also illustrated in the work of Dyson (1989) and Hopperstad (2010). In Luke's "semiotic efforts" (Mavers, 2011, p. 37), where he used a combination of gestures, actions as well as vocal representations within a framework of dramatisation, I could discern his orchestration and transmission of a cohesive meaning. Through such "action-verbalizations" (Golomb, 2004, p. 11), Luke was exemplifying how his drawing should be interpreted. Observing him playing *with* drawing, I understood that the gestures Luke was using were likely fostered by the Christmas-related dramatic play that was popular at school at that time even if it was out-of-season. I could easily follow Luke's thoughts and understand the influence and relationship between the two contexts of the school and the home, and the process of "intertextuality" (Fairclough, 2000, p. 173) he engaged in. What was once a dramatic role-play based on the imaginary story of Father Christmas, changed when Luke transferred it to the home context to convey a "factual account" (Nicolopoulou, 1997, p. 159), of his personal experiences, where he drew himself carrying a bag full of candy. Through the symbolic and conversational signs he used, Luke engaged in a process of "recontextualisation" (The New London Group, 2000, p. 22), where he "transport[ed] representational resources between home and school" (p. 5) to produce a "hybrid" (Dyson, 2001b, p. 20) text that comprised a discursive content, composition and associations to discover new forms of meaning. Traversing beyond contexts, time and boundaries, Luke rooted his current meaning within and across his micro and macro worlds, where he connected, interweaved and represented the imaginary and playful experiences enlivened at school, with the real and personal experiences he lived at home; similar transference of meaning across sites were also noted by Pahl and Rowsell (2005). Luke's drawing was therefore, an attestation of his connections and classification of experiences, which allowed him to "link objects both internally and externally" (Pahl, 1999b, p. 23). When Luke drew on his experiences, he did not merely reproduce the Father Christmas' dramatic play as experienced at school, but he adapted it, to make it relevant to the new context and the meaning he wanted to

convey. This is congruent with Cox's (2005), Gregory's (2005) and Pahl's (2001a), suggestions that children transform their drawings to make them relevant to the context, time and space they are in, where, "the kind of images a child draws and their association in the child's mind are coloured by the way they are embedded in the society and culture of which the child is a part" (Gentle, 1985, p.35).

It was also likely that Luke used the drawing "as communication" (Adams, 2002, p.222) to signify and communicate a personal request to others. Using the text as a "mediator" (Dyson, 1993a, p.25), a notion also recognised by other scholars (see for example, Dowdall, 2006; Malchiodi, 1998; Matthews, 1999; Ring and Anning, 2004), and arguing that "a little bit [of sweets] will not do any harm", (Luke, 13th March, 2012), Luke used the drawing as a "communicated feeling" (Hoffman Davis, 2005, p. 26), as a "form of personal externalization" (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007, p.280) of his intentions, thoughts and feelings to his parents; that of requesting more sweets. Here I affiliate with Kress (1997), who claims that children's drawings can be regarded as metaphoric means of communication that "embody the self" (Wright, 2010b, p.170); "whereby one object or process is described in terms of another for rhetorical purposes" (Jewitt and Forceville, 2012, para, 1), which children use to express "unique personal statements" (Malchiodi, 1998, p.1), to convey emotional sentiments, personal meanings and "psychological moods" (Wright, 2010a, p.82). Through the drawing and his description, Luke deliberately allowed me the opportunity to look "beyond the immediate text" (Turvey, Brady, Carpenter, and Yandell, 2006, p.55) and into his thinking processes and emotional sentiment, to understand his wishes, complaint and justification for his request to have more sweets.

6.2.2 Simple mode, complex theme drawings

The top right corner of the collage grid (Figure 6.5) represents a collection of four out of the forty of Luke's drawings which he depicted using a *simple mode* and a *complex theme,* reflecting his preferred way of drawing. Three of the four drawings were once again dominated by sketchy, mono-colour drawing made with gem-markers. They also included elements of mark-making which signified the actions that pervaded his drawings. Still within the *simple mode* criteria, *LH30,* included both the mode of drawing, and the gluing of ready-made cut-outs, which, with the use of colourful

crayons had a distinctively different form from the other three. The appealing, colourful and simple-to-use ready-made cut-outs, created an unusual enthusiasm in Luke to draw. Such an occurrence was also identified by Anning (1999) and Pahl (1999b) in the children of their respective studies, where they explained that a resource and related mode could be the source for a reluctant child to relish drawing. What makes these four drawings *complex in theme* is that they illustrate more than two objects, which frequently involved the composition of a scene *(LH30)* or a narration *(LH24, LS17, LS18)*. In fact, the latter three drawings can be described as "graphic-narrative play" (Wright 2007a, p. 2) as they included action, adventure and character and plot development fused with imagination and narration.

In the garden 2 – Talking animals.

LH30: In the garden 2 - Talking animals (Figure 6.11, Image 1), illustrated a garden scene with animals, greenery, flowers, a pond, the sun and rain coming down, which classify it as *complex in theme*. Luke did this drawing at home immediately after he did *LH29: In the garden 1: Animals in the pond* (Figure 6.11, Image 2). The two drawings were very similar in their form and use of modes. At a glance, the former appeared to be a reproduction of the latter, where the only difference seemed to be in the organisation of the animals and objects.

Figure 6.11
Two very similar drawings in simple mode, complex theme, each with a different storyline and meaning.

LH30: In the garden 2 – Talking animals

LH29: In the garden 1 – Animals in a pond
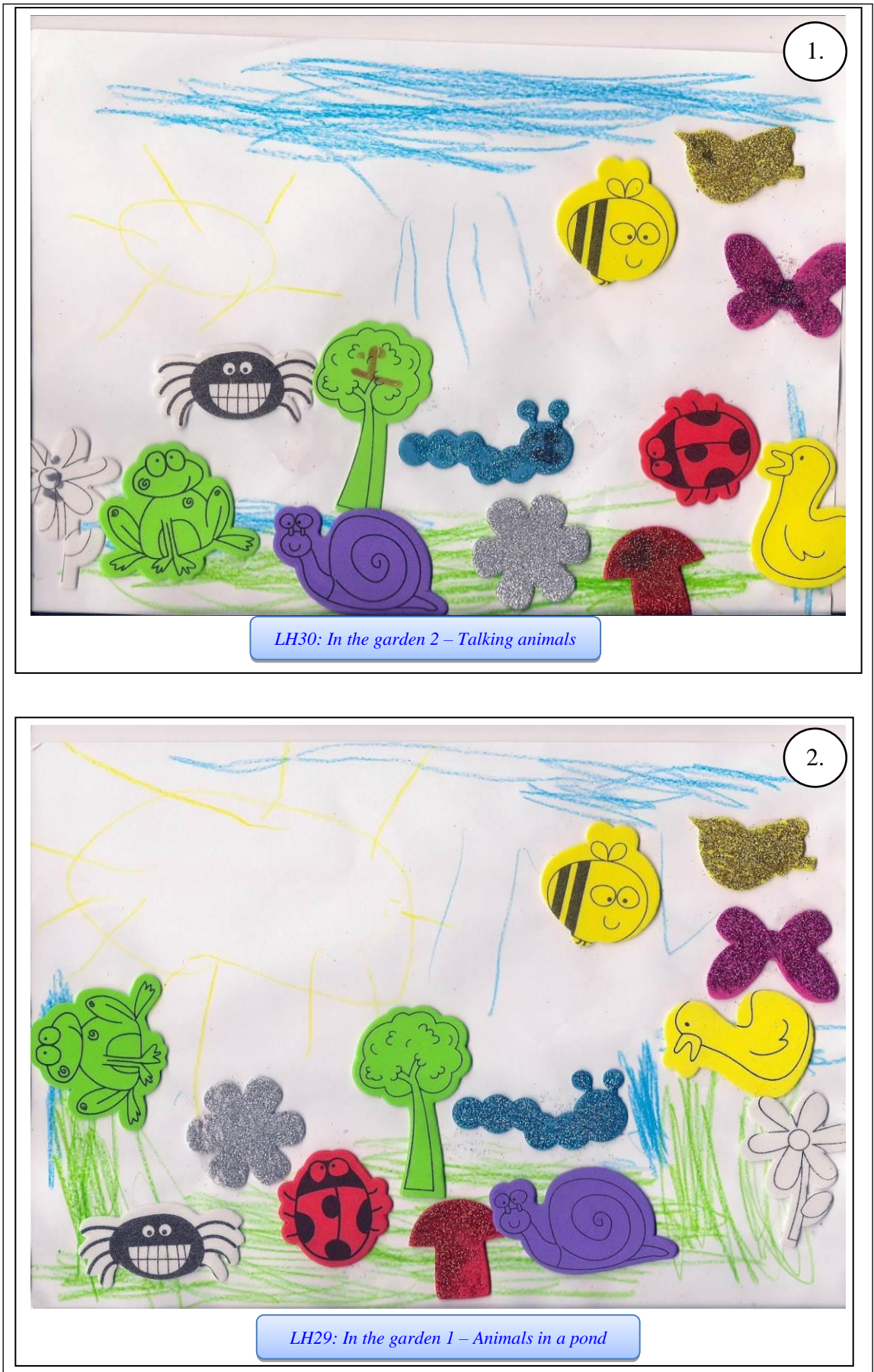
LH29 emerged progressively and in a very unpredictable way. Luke began by gluing the caterpillar and the snail. These were followed by the drawing of the grass, which served as both a means of shelter and food for the animals. He then glued a frog and a pond. This pattern continued until he attached all the objects and developed an organised scene with a habitat for each animal. Luke enjoyed the tactile experience and was really satisfied by the visual appearance of the drawing so much so that he wanted to repeat it by creating a similar drawing. To overcome his mother's objection, that a reproduction would, according to her, result in a waste of the cuttings, a claim, which as Mavers (2011) reports, is widely perceived by adults, Luke gave *LH30* a different interpretation exclaiming, *"Only the animals are the same. It is another story"* (7th March, 2012). Giving attention to the redesign and reproduction of the form and meaning of his text, Luke entered a process of "resemiotization" (Iedema, 2003, p.29), that involved the tracing of how the signs were translated as the process evolved. While Luke made sure that he glued the exact same animals and objects, he did so in a different sequence and position, where he also modified his drawing by adding eyes, a mouth and a nose to some of the animals. This was a crucial variance which, as pointed out by Kress (2000a) and Mavers (2007b), could indicate the implied reinterpretation, recontextualisation and reconfiguration of a new text. The decision of what to disregard, change and comprise between the two drawings, turned *LH30* into an "analytical distillation" (Mavers, 2011, p.33), where Luke chose to retain a significant proportion of the original form and meaning of *LH29*, while simultaneously, ascribing a new design, interpretation and connotation to his new text. By adding facial characteristics and changing the organization of the text, together with creating a new storyline to his "destination" (Mavers, 2011, p.15) text, Luke made sure that his second drawing was not an exact replica of the first but was remade into a different representation with a different meaning. Thus, while, *LH30* could be considered a copy of *LH29*, I draw on Matthews' (2003) views and maintain that children's reproductions are not merely repetitions, but with each new version, they add some new feature, characteristic, understanding or meaning to the image.

As is denoted by the title of *LH30*, the animals in this drawing are *Talking Animals* who said, "'Bla, bla, bla, bla.' to each other, [and], 'Hello, man.'" (Luke, 7th March,

2012). This is distinctively different from the title of *LH29* which Luke named as *Animals in a pond*. To make *LH30* even more distinct than *LH29*, Luke used "inventive talk" (Pahl, 2009, p. 188), where moving between the characters and imagining himself in some of the roles, he used multiple voices to enact, narrate and animate the figures. Dubbed by Wright (2010b) as part of the textual features of children's visual narrative, the use of direct speech, allowed Luke to create a unified and more complex meaning of his text. The following is an excerpt of his narrative accompanying *LH30*:

> Once there was a rubber duck that was walking and she met a worm.
> [*changed intonation*] "Look what a worm! Can I eat you?" said the
> duck.
> [*changed intonation*] "No, otherwise I will throw you up into the sky
> and the wind will eat you up," said the worm.
> [*changed intonation*] "Bzzzzzzzzzz," buzzed the bee.
> [*changed intonation*] "Oh, man" said the snail to this [the bee].
> "Who is this? Is this a buzz bee? Oh man! What
> is your name?"
> [*changed intonation*]   "My name is Bee Bufuvva, Snaily Kevin" said
> the bee. "Bzzzzzz."
>
> (Luke, 7th March, 2012).

The improvised dialogue between the animals, enhanced the meaning and transformed the drawing into what I define as a *narrative scene*, where the narrative was not developed as an integral part of the drawing, but rather it was inspired and stemmed as a result of the drawing.

Tying the Blue Lady.

LH24: Tying the Blue Lady, (Figure 6.12) is a combination of real-life experience, fantasy and myth, based on "immortal story themes such as good-evil and capturing-defending" (Wright, n.d.). It was a drawing inspired by Luke's family visit to one of the local castles a few days prior. As part of the castle tour, the family watched a short video-clip, about a *Blue Lady* who, as the legend went, haunted that same castle. Dressed in blue, and projected very much like a ghost, the *Blue Lady* instilled fear in the three brothers, with Jacob ending up crying relentlessly.

Figure 6.12
A drawing based on fantasy and myth.

LH24: Tying the Blue Lady

Luke initiated the drawing by sketching his younger brother, Jacob, fearful of the *Blue Lady*. Violating any sense of logic, that is only permissible in play, narratives and drawing, Luke then drew two other figures, all representing Jacob. This confirms Wright's (2007a) conclusions who stated that children's drawings have "fluid structures" (p. 2), that are not always linear, sequential or rational, and which take the narratives beyond the confinement of reality. Luke then sketched an image of the *Blue Lady* at the far right with a pink marker (covered with black lines). Using pink was no mistake. It was an intentional and metaphoric choice; a colour which Luke used whenever he wanted to despise someone. The drawing developed into an action story, where, using the pink marker, he drew "iconic links" (Wright, 2011, p.166) to connect the *Blue Lady* to the third figure on the right, who represented his younger brother. These action lines signified the gunshots that the *Blue Lady* fired at Jacob. Playing *at* drawing (Wood and Hall, 2011), Luke accompanied his narrative with "expressive vocalism" (p. 165), that resembled fighting, "Heyah! Heyah! Huyah! Chuck. Chuck. Chuck … Buff. Buff. Buff. Buff. Buff" (23rd February, 2012). Stating that he wanted to catch the *Blue Lady*, Luke then opted for a black marker and

haphazardly drew long, black vertical lines over her to signify tying her with "a rope to trap her" (Luke, 23rd February, 2012). Emulating the characters and actions of *Ben Ten* (TV Tropes Foundation, n.d.), his television superhero, Luke took it as his responsibility to protect and save his brother, from the terrible fate of the scary and evil *Blue Lady*. This action narrative showed Luke's predisposition and competence to graphically organise and compose imaginary and dramatised narratives ad hoc, and transform and recontextualise his drawing by "sampling and remixing" (Dyson, 2003a, p.103) different symbolic material from real-life, popular culture and his play activities, to analytically constitute his reality (Cox, 2005; Dyson, 1989). Observing Luke conceptualising the drawing as an "imagined space of play" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 6), and accompanying it with verbalisations, action, sound and running commentaries, made the characters drawn on paper seem to take a life of their own, where a whole fictive story full of action evolved. Like toys in children's small world play, Luke manipulated the characters depicted on paper to create his story. A similar albeit different comparison of drawing to play, was made by Coates (2002) who pointed out that children use their drawings to "dictate the story's direction so that the whole turns into a fantastical journey, a parallel for active fantasy play" (p. 6).

The good guy and the bad guy.

LS17 (Figure 6.13), which Luke drew at school, was another exemplar of a graphic-narrative, that attested fantasy stories brimming with "action-packed encounters between good guys and bad guys" (Dyson, 1995, p. 36). This drawing was done during and at the back of *LS18* discussed further down. Using a black marker, Luke began *LS17* by drawing a good guy, (the figure on the left) running and shooting the bad guy (the figure drawn horizontally at the top and covered in black lines). The shots, which Luke accompanied with the usual vocalisations and sound effects were signified with action lines and dots. He concluded the drawing with the good guy triumphing over the bad guy whom he put in a cage (signified by the array of black lines at the top right corner), "because he is naughty" (Luke, 1st March, 2014).

Figure 6.13
A graphic-narrative where the good guy fights the bad guy.

LS17: The good guy and the bad guy

Unlike in *LH24,* Luke did not make himself the hero of the narrative, but becoming "a cast of one" (Wright, 2007a, p. 1), and transversing to playing *with* drawing (Wood and Hall, 2011), he fluidly moved between multiple roles acting as the author, illustrator, scripter, narrator and producer, creating imaginary and mythical plots that ensued between fictional characters. Figure 6.14 captures Luke in action, in his role of an illustrator, where his facial expressions mirrored the grimaced face of the good guy he was drawing. As an "omniscient narrator" (Wright, 2010b, p.127), he then distanced himself from the story and described events, actions and characters as if he was a spectator who was seeing the narration enfolding.

Figure 6.14
Luke mirroring the grimaced face of the good guy.

Vignette 2: Ben Ten fight.

I now discuss *LS18* (Figure 6.15) in-depth; a drawing which Luke did at school. The drawing took him just over six minutes to complete and occurred during and at the back of *LS17*. (Refer to the video excerpt on the SD card attached, under the Folder name, *Luke video-recordings*). With black lines drawn all over the paper, the finished representation, which could be easily interpreted by an adult as a scribble, did not reflect the richness of the story, and the action and meaning Luke conveyed through his graphic-narrative. If I had not observed and video-recorded Luke during the process of drawing and listened to his narratives, it would have been very challenging for me to construe its meaning. I am hereby echoing Matthews' (1999) and Wright's (n.d.) observations, that the meaning in children's "action representations" (Matthews, 1999, p. 93) can only be identified during the drawing process, where the interaction between the child's "thought-in-action episodes" (Wright, 2010b, p. 134), words and feelings are represented on paper as they evolve in time. That is why I regarded it as a requisite to include Figure 6.16 below, which illustrates nine still images from the video-recording that capture the drawing process. These images are supported with Luke's account of what was happening, epitomising an archetype of a mise–en–scène that generated action and excitement.

Figure 6.15
A simple mode, complex theme drawing that shows thinking in action.

LS18: Ben Ten Fight
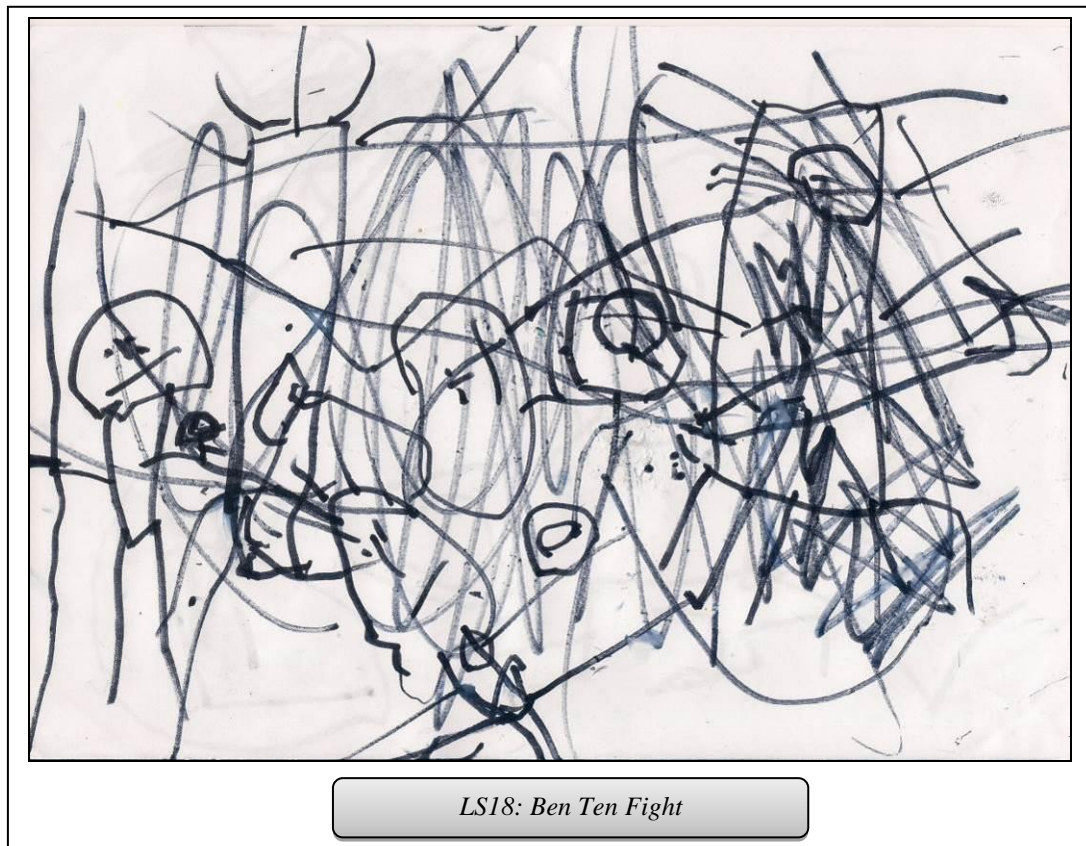
While drawing *LS18*, Luke sometimes drew in complete silence, focusing on the action he was creating, while at other times he was very talkative, either vocalising sound effects or explaining his drawing through his descriptive talk. Relating to findings from Coates and Coates (2006) study, I suggest that evidence from my observations indicate that Luke was more often intent on producing a coherent verbal construct than concerned with creating a drawing that was aesthetically appealing. In the process, the drawing and the developing story interacted, in that, as Egan (1995), explains, the drawing was not merely a visualisation of the story but together with the narrative, formed an integral and dynamic part of Luke's mediated fictional events and actions.

Figure 6.16
Luke during the process of drawing of Ben Ten fight.

"I drew the video-camera. I drew hands on the video-camera." *[Then he drew another flip-camera upside down.]*	"This is *Ben Ten* [vertical *figure on the left]* and this is something else … A monster." *[Referring to the horizontal figure on the right.]*	"I am drawing a second *Ben Ten* because the first one did not come out very well."
"I am making him [*Ben Ten*] fly" *[Referring to the haphazard straight lines on the left.]*	*"Ben Ten* is firing at the video-cameras because they are naughty" *[The dots signify the shots.]*	"Now they are firing. Pcho! Pcho!" *[The lines representing the movement of the shots.]*
"They are firing at each other. This one is shooting at *Ben Ten* and *Ben Ten* is shooting at this one, and to this and this."	*[Vigorously drawing the shots.]* "They are firing at each other. Pum! Pum! Pum! Oooh! Get them. Eeennn. On the motorway. Wragh! Bvummm! Bvummm! Wragh! Bvumm! Bvumm! Dish! Pum! Pum! Pum!"	*[Drawing shots all over the paper…]* "They are all shooting and firing at each other. Dish! Dish! It is ready."

Luke began his drawing by sketching two video-cameras, presumably representing the two Flip Ultra HD cameras that were recording him. On one hand this could indicate that Luke was intrigued by the cameras to the extent that he wanted to draw them; on the other, it could also mean that he did not have any idea what to draw and decided on drawing the object that was in front of him. The subsequent addition of the hands to the video-cameras (Figure 6.16, Image 1), transformed them into exotic and weird characters, which as Egan (1995) suggests, such peculiar additions could allow for the initiation of a fantasy-based narrative, as in fact was the case. Luke continued his picture by drawing *Ben Ten* on the left side (Figure 6.16, Image 2). Playing *with* drawing (Wood and Hall, 2011), he used talk to inform and clarify the "representational function of the visual forms"' (Hopperstad, 2008b, p. 137) to me, his audience. Similar interaction was documented by Coates (2002), who reported that children regularly explain the relationship between the visual graphic and its intended meaning. Moreover, according to various scholars (Coates and Coates, 2011; Kress, 2003a, 1997; Ormerod and Ivanic, 2002; Pahl, 1999b; Pahl and Rowsell, 2010) the combination of graphic and narrative is a way for children to overcome the limitations of a static representation, to illustrate and tell the story of what lies behind their text. The following is an exemplar of Luke's talk as "explanatory function" (Van Oers, 1997, p. 242); where he explained what was happening in his drawing (Figure 6.16, Image 2):

> Luke: This is *Ben Ten* and this is something else.
> J[12]: Is that another *Ben Ten*, then?
> Luke: No, he becomes someone else…A monster.
> J: Wow! A monster. And what are these?
> Luke: Those are the video-cameras.
> J: Why are they taking a video?
> Luke: They are videoing *Ben Ten*.
> J: What good is *Ben Ten* doing to video him?
> Luke: Because *Ben Ten* is fighting the bad guys.

(1st March, 2012)

Introducing more characters to the story, Luke drew another *Ben Ten* at the bottom left of the drawing (Figure 6.16, Image 3), "because the first one did not come out very well" (1st March, 2012). The sequential addition of more characters who enter in confrontations and struggles with each other, according to Nicolopoulou (1997) is usually adhered to by children, to maintain interest and action. Luke continued his

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[12] J: represents me (Josephine) talking.

drawing by adding a number of straight lines across and from the first *Ben Ten*, seemingly typifying the blades of a helicopter, to "make him fly" (Luke, 1ˢᵗ March, 2012), (Figure 6.16, Image 4). Referring to Images 5 – 9, Luke continued his drawing in quick succession, by orally dramatising his narrative adventure:

> Luke: The guns are firing from his [*second Ben Ten's*] pockets. His
>   guns are firing at the video-cameras.
> J: Why is he firing at the video-cameras?
> Luke: Because they are naughty… Now they are firing.
>   Pcho! Pcho! ... They are firing at each other.
>   Pum! Pum! Pum! Oooh! Get them. Eeennn. On the motorway.
>   Wragh! Bvummm! Bvummm!Wragh! Wragh!
>   Bvumm! Bvumm Dish! Pum! Pum! Pum! … Pum! Look …
> J: Who is firing at whom?
> Luke: This one is shooting at *Ben Ten* and *Ben Ten* is shooting at this
>   one, and at this and this. Dish!

(1ˢᵗ March, 2012)

Full of "depersonalized aggression" (Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000, p. 31) communicated through Luke's drawing of a monster, a helicopter and weapons, this excerpt endorses his familiarity and admiration for *Ben Ten* and portrays his passion for "struggles between good and bad, powerful and powerless" (Wright, 2011, p. 112). It also reflects his thinking processes and ways of systemising his media-based experiences into an action storyline that is imbued with personal meaning-making while maintaining its functionality. Becoming the producer of his action presentation, Luke borrowed parts from *Ben Ten*'s animated cartoons and making unrelenting connections to real-life, combined with rules which dominate mythical stories, created a concrete, albeit imagined story with a unique and coherent plot.

Analysis.

Using "narrative thinking as playing" (Kangas, et al., 2011, p. 71), Luke playfully transformed his drawing into a "mode of action" (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007, p. 287). He denoted the firing by vigorously and forcefully drawing dots and lines all over his characters, which augmented the symbolised vigour and ferocity of the struggle between his superheroes and villains (Figure 6.16, Images 8 and 9). Analysing similar children's enacted drawings, Wright (2007a) interpreted such action lines to signify strength, justice and courage; an interpretation which I also apply to Luke's motion lines. However, I also add that, in Luke's case, the quantity, speed and pressure he induced when drawing the lines, denoted ferociousness, powerfulness and

intensity of combat. Hopperstad (2008b), Kress (1997), and Van Oers (1997), acknowledge that even if action can be communicated through a drawing, this is limiting, as a pictorial drawing is static, flat and fixed on the paper. They suggest that children utilise other sensory modes such as, simulated vocalisations, sound effects and bodily sign-making, as employed by Luke, to animate their drawings and postulate them as "worlds in which things are happening" (Hopperstad, 2008a, p. 87). These complementing modes signify the meaning-making of the content and actions illustrated, making them an intricate part of the drawing (Mavers, 2011; Wright, 2011). Totally immersed in his depiction and seamlessly moving between drawing and narrative, Luke made his drawing "come alive" (Hopperstad, 2008a, p. 87), by transforming his pictorial fantasy into the "visual equivalent of dramatic play" (Anning, 1999, p. 164). Somewhat similar but different from Anning's interpretation, and as I have already pointed out above, I perceived Luke's manipulation of his miniature characters and their virtual movement and engagement in action within the defined space of the paper, more like small world play. This helped him create a narrative full of action, demarcating his drawing into what Wood and Hall (2011) would describe as "playing *in* drawings" (p. 274) that progressed into a coherent story of superheroes and villains which enabled him to verbalise his own thoughts, reinforce and signify his meaning-making, and dramatise his narrative.

Danesi (2007) claims that children "need heroic stories to subconsciously 'make things right' in human affairs, at least in the realm of the imagination" (p. 125) so that they will be able to construct a fair world. Working with mythical characters where superheroes fight villains, Luke created an "allegoric fantasy on paper" (Wright, 2007a, p. 22), which allowed him to experience and mediate feelings, concepts, conflicts and tensions, that were transcended to him through the superhero character of *Ben Ten*. Dyson (1997) claims, that children appropriate superheroes' narratives of war and weapons, to create their own good and evil guys as role models whose experiences overcome human nature. Referring also to Marsh's (2000) analysis, that manipulating superhero characters helps children to feel in control of disorder and evil, I claim that by assuming the role of *Ben Ten*, Luke felt empowered to face the challenges in his environment. Such a drawing provided him with mixed experiences of "active violence" (Nicolopoulou et al., 1994, p. 114), that included elements of fighting for power, killing and destruction, while at the same time, provided him with

the pleasure of protecting the vulnerable and of fighting the evil guys to render the world a better place, a notion projected in many superhero cartoons.

Luke's drawings were frequently brimming with violent gun and sword fights, destruction and aggressive scenarios which were of concern to his parents, a trepidation also experienced by parents in Dyson's (2001a) and Jones (n.d.) studies. Luke's parents feared that such "mythical play" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 8) drawings, might possibly turn him into a destructive or violent child, even if research (Golomb, 2004; Marsh, 2000; Pahl, 1999b) indicates that such play is of a common interest among boys. While it was partly true that Luke used his visual narratives as a way to explore negative feelings and scenarios, yet, he always combined these with positive experiences of helping others, where he frequently identified himself with the good superhero, who always won over the villains. Research by Jones and Ponton (2002), seems to validate this view. They suggest that violent superheroes characters and films allow children to assume a mythical persona, which empowers them and makes them feel strong to overcome the dangerous obstacles of the world. This illustrated that as part of his authoring process, Luke embodied "good-and-evil selves" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 117) in a range of identities that went beyond his normal everyday self, and which enabled him to embrace elements of his "fictional self" (Wright, 2011, p. 165). Consistent with suggestions indicated by several scholars (Cox 2005; Dyson, 1997; Hoffman Davis, 2005; Hopperstad 2008b), this allowed Luke to process human action, emotions and social experiences while, organising, articulating and externalising his conflicting inner consciousness, to embody complex "positive and negative ethical identities" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 117). Through his analytically-constructed graphic-narrative, Luke not only depicted an imaginative story influenced by an amalgam of his real-life experiences and fantasy elements rooted in popular media, but created realms of possibilities that helped him shape his identity, realise a sense of personhood, identify with the good or bad actions of others, and develop his social belonging in a shared world; processes which were also identified by Dyson (1997) and Edminston (2010) in their respective studies. Luke was aware that the world of "visual narratives" (Golomb, 2004, p. 160) is different from real life: in his imagined world, anything was permissible and one could imagine himself in any possible roles and scenarios (Edmiston, 2008); a difference which his parents struggled to comprehend.

Marsh (2006) suggests that the "interchange of locally-inflected meanings with global discourses, leads to the production of new and hybrid texts, which informs much of young children's interaction with the media in contemporary society" (p. 21). The content of this drawing confirms the "juxtaposition of media influences" (Dyson, 1988, p. 365) and highlights its centrality and the conventions of popular culture in superheroe texts (Dyson, 2001a, 1993a; Golomb, 2004; Marsh, 2005; Wright, n.d). Throughout the drawing, Luke consciously and unconsciously borrowed ideas from popular media, mostly making use of *Ben Ten*'s (TV Tropes Foundation, n.d.) transformative character and superhero powers which he then reconfigured, to redesign a "hybridised text" (Marsh, 2002, para. 13). Consequently, his drawing reflected a narrative integrated with experience that was flawlessly fused with new and personal interests, purpose and meaning. This abetted me to understand how Luke was interpreting, transforming and subsequently internalising the superhero images and scenarios he watched on TV to reproduce them into personally meaningful drawings. Luke was engaged in a process of "transformation" (Pahl, 1999b, p. 24), where he moved between forms of his reality and imagination, tracking meaning through the graphical images of superhero fight-scenes and relating them to his own notions of power, control and justice. Influenced by his surroundings, Luke engaged in a process of recontextualisation, where the text became a process of "intertextuality" (Wright, 2011, p. 167), of everyday practices from his diverse social worlds of the home, school and popular media (Dyson, 2001b). Wright (2011) notes, that extensive exposure to a range of popular media texts as experienced by Luke, provides children with a context to create texts with their own "internal structures and ideas" (Kress, 1997, p. 58). Eventually, Luke went through a process of "externalisation" (Pahl, 1999b, p. 30) where he put several of his thoughts together to create his own, unique and personalised representation that reflected his own cultural environment. This confirms Wood and Hall's (2011) claim that children's depictions are inundated with socio-cultural processes that link the outside world with the individual aspects of personal thought, meanings and interpretations.

6.2.3 Complex mode, complex theme drawing

The bottom right corner of the collage grid (Figure 6.5) illustrates four out of the fourteen drawings which Luke did using a *complex mode* and *complex theme*. A common characteristic across the four drawings includes the use of a *complex mode,* which was very atypical for Luke, who in the main, preferred to draw sketchy drawings in *simple mode*. This implies that for these drawings, Luke made a shift and migrated into a "new conceptual territory" (Stein, 2008, p. 118), where he ventured and experimented with specific techniques, media and modes. He repeatedly made use of the same "ensemble of modes" (Kress, 2008, p. 92), where he moved and transitioned between cutting, gluing, taping and dabbing glitter glue, which were all relatively new modes to him. The theme in the four drawings was complex too, where *LS19,* illustrates a scene while *LS11, LH42* and *LH21*, represent a story.

A party and cake for mummy.

In *LS19* (Figure 6.17), which took Luke over twenty-six minutes to complete, he selectively moved between the modes of mark-making, and cutting, gluing, dabbing glitter glue and taping different paper, sequins and a leaf. Looking at this drawing, I could immediately recognise similarities between the modes and media he used with those of some of his peers. The application of glitter glue, cello-tape, and the utilisation of different kinds of paper, was a current trend in class. The accessibility of the media and the unconscious modelling of his peers, apparently created an interest in Luke and enticed him to move out of his comfort zone of using a *simple mode.*

Figure 6.17
A drawing in complex mode and complex theme: inside and outside school spaces.

LS19: A party and cake for mummy

The drawing not only represented different objects that signified a birthday party ambience intermingled with a narrative, but through a "cohesive orchestration of meaning" (Mavers, 2011, p. 45), Luke also managed to "collapse boundaries between 'inside' and outside' school spaces" (Stein, 2008, p. 139) and connect different home-school episodes and events that were present at that time in his life.   Drawing his picture at school, Luke was adamant that the birthday cake and party were for his mother, "I made this for my mummy... because she loves it" (5th March, 2012), yet, as his mother explained, the family was in actual fact celebrating his grandmother's birthday. Knowing that his mother was due for surgery the following week, and as an inevitable consequence there was some concern in the family which Luke sensed and understood, I came to the conclusion that he was probably using the "drawing as communication" (Adams, 2004, p. 6) to convey his love, care and compassion towards his mother while at the same time trying to make her happy with his drawing in such a distressing time.   Luke could also have been using the drawing to communicate his wish for his family to actually organise a real party for his mother

prior to or following her admission to hospital. The drawing, thus, served as a platform for Luke to communicate emotions, wishes, and thoughts which otherwise he would have found difficult to say verbally to his mother. "Socially derived, socially framed, socially shaped and socially regulated" (Mavers, 2011, p. 50), Luke's text reflected "traces of social practice", (Rowsell and Pahl, 2007, p. 388), which mirrored his "thoughts and ideas that were specific" (Pahl, 1999b, p. 117) to the family at that particular time. It "open[ed] a window into their realities" (Wright, 2011, p. 11) and partially captured the home's social and cultural context, that is, the events that they were going through and their ways of being and doing things.

The giant eating bones and bread.

Luke drew *LH42* (Figure 6.18) at home, with his mother beside him. It is a drawing made of *complex modes* including, drawing, cutting and gluing, besides the use of supporting talk. The theme of the drawing was also complex as it illustrated three figures, as characters in a narrative.

Figure 6.18
A drawing inspired by the traditional tale of Jack and the beanstalk.

LH42: The giant eating bones and bread
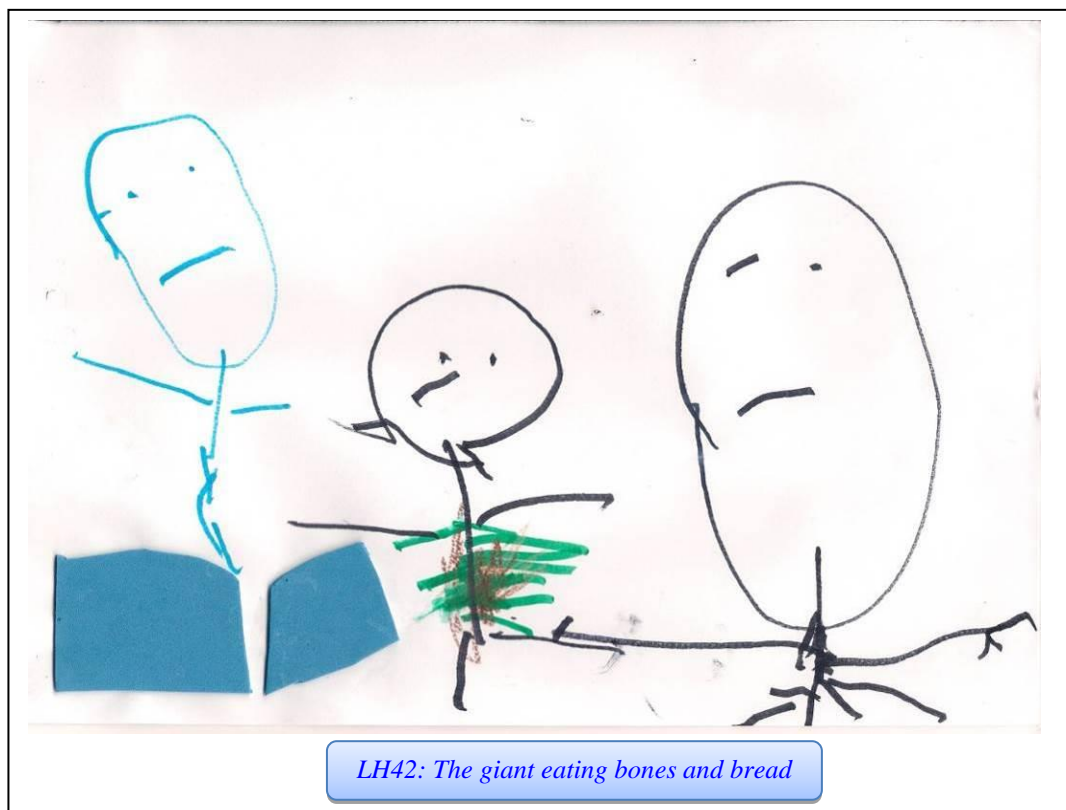
The drawing represented Luke, outlined in black on the far right, his friend Nicholai[13] in the middle and the giant on the left with the "big (blue) shoes" (Luke, 13th March, 2012). The connoted meaning was even more complex. Suffice to say, that in the end, Luke linked the drawing to the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, which he sometimes watched on the television series *Cartoonito Tales* (Cartoon Network, 2013). He intrinsically linked, embodied and verbalised the giant's traditional and well-known rhythmic verse, "Fee- fi-fo-fum. I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be he dead. I'll grind his bones to make my bread" and used it as the basis of his drawing and connoted meaning. Luke explained that the green and brown lines in Nicholai's tummy represented the bones and the bread respectively: "It means that the giant killed him" (Luke, 13th March, 2012). But according to his concocted story, Luke managed to run away from the giant and survived. It appeared that the text as presented on television, provided Luke with "visual stimuli" (Coates and Coates, 2006, p. 237) and apparently served as an impetus to design his drawing.

The development of the drawing and combined narrative were not as straightforward as exemplified above, but could be described as having "a strain toward disorder" (Nicolopoulou et al., 1994, p. 107), developed through a complex "semiotic chain" (Stein, 2008, p. 99) of associations and transformation processes. The meaning behind the drawing had "a fluid quality" (Pahl, 1999b, p. 23), where an idea generated into another that transformed the drawing into a narrative. After initially drawing Nicholai and himself jumping on a trampoline, Luke thought of adding "many feet" (13th March, 2012) to himself, seemingly to be able to jump higher than Nicholai. Subsequently, Luke drew a giant with a pair of blue shoes, where the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, albeit in a modified version from the one represented on television, emerged. Observing the process and "tracking the flow of ideas" (Pahl, 1999b, p. 18) and meanings in an "ongoing stream of semiosis" (Mavers, 2011, p. 102), I could identify how he embodied and merged his real-life experiences and understandings with fictional narratives and characters as presented by children's popular media. By linking, developing and reframing his disparate string of images, internal thoughts and loose associations, Luke brought order to his representation, and was able to externalise them on paper into one coherent text.

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[13] Nicholai is a classmate of the three children. I used a pseudonym to protect the child's identity.

The lobster story.

LS11 (Figure 6.19), was another exemplar of a drawing by Luke, where he made use of a *complex mode* and a *complex theme*. In interplay between modes, Luke moved from drawing, mark-making, cutting and gluing paper to dabbing glitter glue, where each mode provided him with different ways to express and concoct his meaning.

Figure 6.19
A drawing inspired by the video of Mr Bean, with zig-zag lines that represent the shots fired.

LS11: The lobster story

Using a blue crayon, Luke began his *complex theme*, a merge between fact and fiction, by drawing a lobster at the top-left corner of the paper. This progressed into a drawing that was "inspired by a text" (Hopperstad, 2008b, p.135), that of Mr Bean's animated cartoon "Restaurant" (Mr Bean – The animated series, 2002), where as described by Luke, "I saw a man wanting to eat a lobster on Mr Bean's film. Mr Bean caught the lobster from an aquarium, put it in a pot, did this, [a hammering movement] 'Pum! Pum!' on his head, put it in a pot and cooked it" (16th February, 2012). "Playing *at* drawing" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 274), Luke impregnated his picture with "physical play" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 274) where he used different media as "a means of direct metaphorical communication" (Wright, 2011, p. 166). He accompanied his drawing with vocalisations and sound effects including banging

the crayon on paper to animatedly simulate the shooting while chanting repeated sounds and words, "Psht! Psht! Trapped in a boat. Skkk! Trapped. Trapped. Trapped" (Luke, 16th February, 2012). The drawing which evolved into a narration, continued with shots, marked by straight and zig-zag blue lines, being fired at the lobster by the good guys. Luke also dabbed a lot of glitter glue all over the lobster to shoot and kill him stating, "Puff! … I am going to put on some purple glitter glue on it so that he will surely die…He is dying" (Luke, 16th February, 2012). It had to be the good guys, ostensibly fishermen, who trapped the lobster. Luke communicated this by cutting and gluing two images of boats from used wrapping paper. Using his text as "playing *with* drawings" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 277) that refers to describing drawings based on real and imaginary narratives, Luke used storytelling, to explain that, "the ships will catch the lobster and take it to the restaurant and they eat it" (16th February, 2012). He concluded his drawing by cutting and gluing an image of the number one for his brother Matthias to signify poor work, and a number ten, to mark his depiction as good, "Because this is a good work" (Luke, 16th February, 2012). The reference to numbers reflected his "awareness of symbolism" (Wright, 2010b, p. 103) and his understanding of the highest and lowest value of these two numbers.

Texts are "socially and situated traces of practice" (Pahl, 2007a, p. 86), where meaning-making is shaped by cultural and social contexts and experiences (Bourne and Jewitt, 2003; Jewitt, 2009a; Pahl 2007a; 2007b). In order for me to better comprehend Luke's subject and context of his drawing and uncover the meanings behind his text I accessed the mentioned animated cartoon of Mr Bean from You Tube. This helped me establish a link between what Luke drew and the television series he alluded to, which provided me with his "highly complicated and informed knowledge and understanding of contemporary popular visual culture" (Coates and Coates, 2011, p. 86). Luke's text evidently showed that he appropriated and incorporated different elements from the real world around him in parallel to his fictional world (Nicolopoulou et al., 1994; Thompson, 1999). He did not merely reproduce Mr Bean's story in his drawing, but going through a process of recontextualisation (Dyson, 2001a), he transformed and reframed his meaning, where he opted to refer to a selective part of the original Mr Bean story, and drawing on his "funds of knowledge" (Gonzales, et al., p. 3) that lobsters live in the sea and are

caught by fishermen in ships, information which he acquired from other sources, bridged factual and fictional spaces and contexts to weave them into an original narrative that made sense.

Vignette 3: Cutting the bad guy out 1.

I now discuss *LH21,* (Figure 6.20, Image 1); a drawing which Luke did at home in the presence of his father and younger brother, during one of my observation sessions. Both boys were drawing and the father was looking closely. The mother and elder brother were not at home. Using his usual sketchy style, the drawing included the use of *complex mode*: drawing, cutting and dabbing glitter glue.

On initial interpretation, the drawing, which took Luke just over eight minutes to finish, seemed to depict a *simple theme* of two figures; however, on deeper evaluation it emerged that the *theme* was *complex* too, illustrating a graphic-narrative. Like in *LS18:Ben Ten fight*, this drawing was inspired by a mythical character, which at the denotation level showed Luke appropriating the role of a superhero, armed with fighting equipment including a knife, a sword, a gun, and two ropes, "to tie someone with it" (Luke, 23rd February, 2012). He also drew a hat on his head for protection. Luke then sketched a small-sized figure of Matthias and his mother, who he put on either side, in his pockets, justifying their size "so that I would be able to carry them with me" (Luke, 23rd February, 2012). At the top right corner of the paper, Luke drew Jacob, his younger brother, as a bad guy. Casting himself in the role of *Iron Man* (Marvel Comic, 2015) his task was to protect Matthias and his mother from the bad guy. At the connotation level, the drawing incorporated a mythical narration that had several meanings. Borrowing the text from the *Iron Man* series, and as usual integrating related sound effects, Luke enacted a fight between him, as the superhero and Jacob "the killer of the world" (Luke, 23rd February, 2012):

Luke: This is the bad guy… and this one *[pointing at the drawing of*
        himself] is firing at him [*the bad guy*]. Buff!
J: Are you the one who is firing at him?
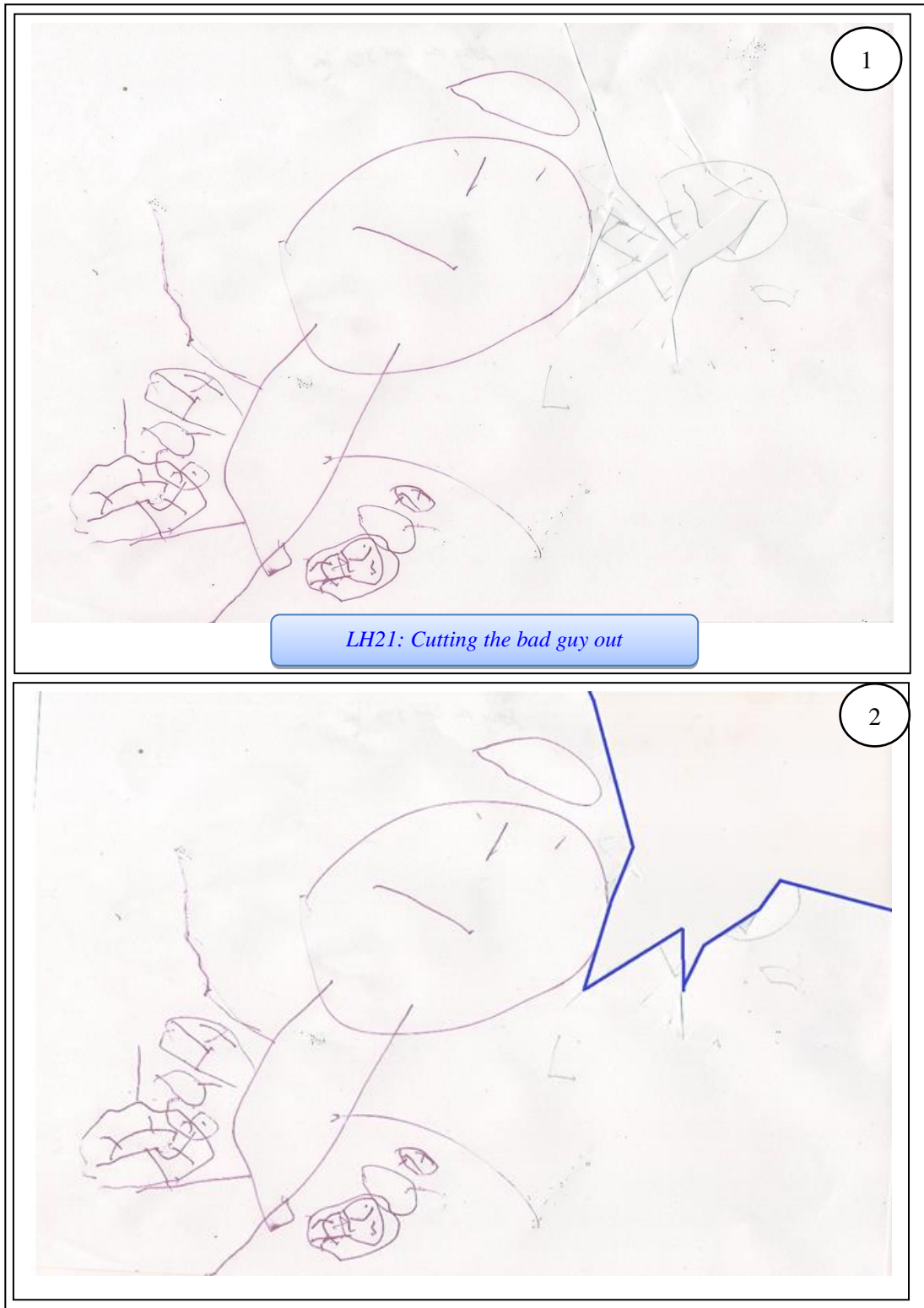Luke: Yes. He is dead.
J: He died already?
Luke: Buff … and he died. Buff again. Buff! … And this will be
        Jacob, the bad guy.

(23rd February, 2012).

Figure 6.20
Luke as the superhero of the narrative. The right corner [1] shows an assembly of the cut-out pieces that make the bad guy, with the cut off marked by myself with a computer-generated, thick blue line[2].

Jacob did not like the teasing and the role of a bad guy bestowed onto him by Luke, complaining, "I am not the bad guy… I do not die" (Jacob, 23rd February, 2012). Explaining his staunch view that, "bad guys always die. They die with a gun. They die even with a sword,", Luke picked a pair of scissors and stating his intention, he literally cut out the bad guy to signify his death (Figure 6.20, Image 2):

> Luke: Then I will cut it out. I will cut his face… I am cutting him out.
> J: Why are you cutting out his face?
> Luke: So that he dies.

> (23rd February, 2012).

Driven by a sense of justice and victory, Luke wanted to reward himself for killing and winning over the bad guy, by drawing a medal on his chest and a trophy in each of his hands, while proudly stating, "I won. I killed him." (Luke, 23rd February, 2012). As highlighted by Paley (1988), the bad guy's fate seemed to be rigidly defined and governed by a specific script, where he is supposed to "always die" (p. 19).   Using such a statement Luke could have been voicing a desire to possess magical powers, and an interest in competition and justice; salient values which were also manifested in other drawings mentioned above. Through a seamless, fluid and dynamic process of semiotic decision-making, Luke became a shape-shifter where he made conscious choices to move "across modalities and positionings" (Siegel, Kontovourki, Schmier and Enriquez, 2008, p. 96), to enter a process of "transduction" (Bezemer and Kress, 2008, p. 175). In "interplay of different ways of meaning-making" (Cox, 2005, p. 122), Luke created meaning by using different modes such as cutting, drawing and dabbing that intertwined and interacted (Kress et al., 2001) as "part of the production of meaning" (Jewitt, 2009a, p. 15). The use of an array of semiotic resources enabled Luke to create what, as is corroborated by various semiotics theorists (Kress, 1997; Mavers, 2007b; Hopperstad, 2010; Ormerod and Ivanic, 2002; Pahl, 2002; 1999b), suited his interest, intention and the emerging meaning at that particular time.

Analysis.

In this "character-based" (Wright, 2010b, p. 147) drawing, Luke entered in and out of the drawing where, he constantly explained what was happening. This fluidity of the unfolding plot, which developed through "authorial agency" (Dyson, 1998, p. 396) involved the composition of characters and possible worlds, that were veered by

Luke's thought-in-action and the spontaneity of his imagination. During the drawing process, Luke's regularly went back to previous aspects of his drawing to elaborate, include more details and to extend and clarify his thoughts accordingly. The revisiting of ideas, provided Luke with ways to develop and add coherence to his composition, a component which according to Wright (2010b), is essential in a good storyline.

Like *LS18*, *LH21* was a play-infused drawing based on cultural themes, which created a "space for intellectual play" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 267); an "imagined space" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 6) that existed only in Luke's pretend, "figured world" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 271). Playing *in* drawings (Wood and Hall, 2011) and referring to ideas from his cultural narratives and inventing or remembering mythical character traits (Coates and Coates, 2011), Luke appropriated "'pretend' identities" (Dyson, 1997, p. 14), emulating *Iron Man* and the bad guy to mediate his identity. Referring to Ahn and Filipenko's (2007) notion of identity formation, I argue that in this drawing I could identify their three facets of "engendering", "reconfiguration" and "reconstruction" (p.287) in interaction with each other, where Luke not only wanted to possess *Iron Man*'s desired character traits, but he was also concerned with how he could reposition himself in relation to his mother and brothers. I now discuss each of these three notions in relation to Luke's drawing in more detail.

Reflecting Wright's (2011) claim that "art plays a part in the constitution of the self" (p.164) in this drawing, Luke created an image of himself through a process of engendering. Using the transformative nature of play (Nicolopoulou, Barbosa de Sà, Ilgaz and Brockmeyer, 2010; Wood and Attfield, 2005), he engaged into "self-transformation" (Hall, 2010a, p. 106), where, he drew himself in an "alternative identity" (p. 108); as a strong, powerful and fearless hero like *Iron Man*, who significantly contrasted with his real compassionate self. He delighted in taking *Iron Man*'s powers, identity and ideology, to be the central character of the story, where he explored the dangers of fighting off the bad guy while protecting his family. Becoming part of the graphic text that was shaped by particular media and cultural influences, enabled Luke to test, experience and embed desired character traits and draw who he liked to be, in a bid to understand and recreate the self.

Subsequently, Luke entered into a process of reconfiguration, where, demonstrating an awareness of social hierarchies, power structures and positions within his family, he negotiated his role in relation to his mother and brothers. Using the drawing as a transformative space to acquire more power, he became a strong and smart superhero who won over the bad guy by killing him to protect his mother and older brother, a concept, which according to Boyatzis and Albertini (2000), is common in boys' drawings. This projection of a superhero could also be interpreted as a yearning for physical strength and the wish to grow, especially taken within the context of his family. Being the second-born, Luke somewhat felt the need to ascertain his position within his family, where his mother and older brother usually considered him as younger, weaker and in need of their protection. He explored and reconstructed his perception by drawing himself as bigger, stronger and in control. Within his narrative he fought Jacob, the bad guy, while asserting a worthy "positional identity" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 125), within his family, that of a respectable and daring man rather than the young boy he actually was.

Drawing on typical episodes of mythical and fictional characters and narratives, Luke also entered into a process of reconstruction, where in his graphic-narrative, he juxtaposed realistic and fantasy-based elements that emanated from his "playful intentions" (Cox, 2005, p. 121). These allowed him to explore specific moral concerns of life's paradoxes relating to good-and-evil, life-and-death, and power-and-powerlessness and "gain control of his feelings about these powerful themes" (Gardner, 1982, p. 134). The experience of using violence to kill the bad guy and protect the weak, even if in an imagined world, incited him to make ethical choices (Edmiston, 2008) that helped him form his "moral identity" (Edmiston, 2010, p. 205) and integrity. In Edmiston's view, such mythic narratives demonstrate how good people should use their powers to act in response to villains. This puts within context Ahn and Filipenko's (2006), and Edmiston's (2008), claim that children's relational identity-making process of imagined, authored and personal selves, interact and overlap with their everyday social spaces and relations.

As various researchers claim (Dyson, 1989; Hope, 2008; Kress, 2000a, 1997; Pahl, 1999a; 1999b), children sometimes transform their drawings into play props by cutting them out to develop their texts. This was, in my view, the remarkable aspect

of this drawing where Luke used the physical cutting-out of the bad guy (Figure 6.21) as an inherent part of the text production (Ormerod and Ivanic, 2002). Case (2006) suggests that cutting out a picture could convey different meanings. In this exemplar, I recognise Luke's cutting out of the bad guy as an "experiential metaphor" (Oksanen, 2008, p. 241), or in Wright's (2010b) words as a "visual metaphor" (p.82) to symbolise the separation, destruction and splitting of the bad guy from the rest of the characters. Luke did this through a direct and literal cutting out of the bad guy with a pair of scissors, where the elimination of the bad guy metaphorically connoted his death, while glorified Luke as the winner and superhero of the story. Edmiston (2008) and Wright (2010a) demarcate the use of such analogies as playful experiences that grant children the possibility to use superhero powers where they can make the impossible possible. Analogously, Nielsen (2009) notes that children use stories as a metaphoric tool to help them translate and convey their meanings and experiences, which otherwise would have gone unexpressed.

Figure 6.21
Luke focused on using the mode of cutting to cut out the bad guy.
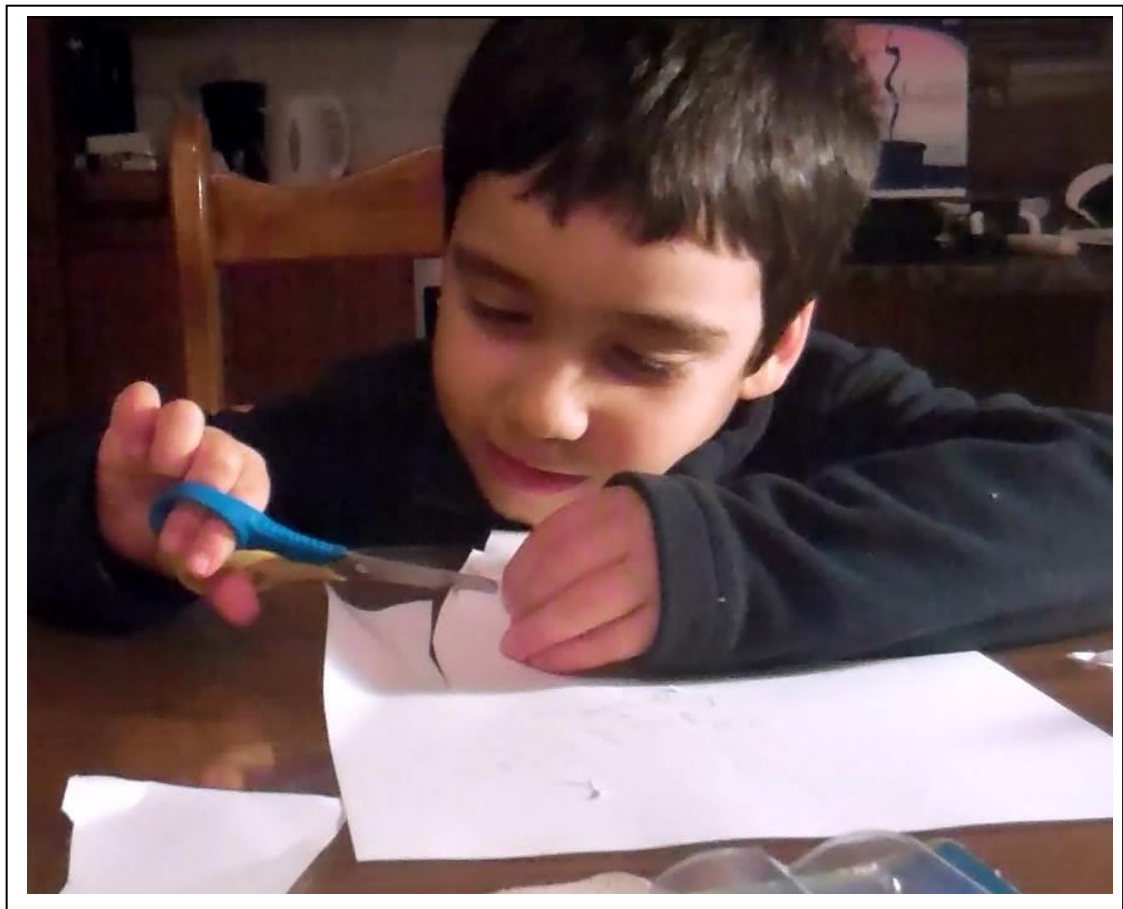
Using "drawing to see" (Hope, 2008, p. 12) Luke brought a different dimension to his text, where he used the cutting out action, as part of the complex sign and its attributed meaning. His obvious enthusiasm and satisfaction that he experienced when cutting the bad guy out which can easily be denoted from the above image (Figure 6.21), did not merely derive from the kinaesthetic enjoyment and his "playing *at* drawing" (Wood and Hall, p. 2011, p. 274) experience, but he was also relishing the fact that he was destroying the unwanted bad guy in a tangible and animated way. Using cutting as a mode to "seeing as understanding" (Hope, 2008, p. 12), Luke brought "meaning into being" (Kress et al., 2001, p. 70) in a visible way for all to see. This provided him with the possibility to "enhance reality" (Pahl, 1999b, p. 45), and "actualise" (Knight, 2009, p. 15) his idea by transforming it into an "external reality" (Pahl, 1999b, p. 39), a "more real" (p. 35) and authentic representation. This was developed through a process of tangible transformation (Pahl, 1999a); from drawing to cutting out, that was linked and reanimated "through the actions of the child" (Kress, 1997, p. 97). Dyson (1998) asserts that these "composing processes" (p. 396) of change, require a "maturation of the child's analogical reasoning" (p. 152) that, of having an ability to lithely convert the representation of a violent bad guy as illustrated on paper, into a dead figure that came "off the page" (Kress, 1997, p. 25). Using his prior knowledge of mythical narratives and his cutting skills, Luke was able to make conscious and unconscious connections between the cartoon film of *Iron Man*, his relationship with his brother and the meaning he wanted to convey. The detailed verbal descriptions, which were inherent to the meaning-making process, enabled me to follow his mental associations and uncover different layers of connotation: the reason behind the elimination of the bad guy, the significance it had for him, and his concepts about it.

6.2.4 Complex mode, simple theme drawings

The bottom left side of the *Data cross-grid* (Figure 6.1), which is the last section to be discussed, shows only three drawings which Luke did using a *complex mode* and a *simple theme.* In each of these drawings Luke used a *complex mode,* such as cutting, taping, dabbing, and mark-making to create drawings with a *simple theme*, that represented one object in each: a cow, an aeroplane and a worm. These drawings, which were all done at school, are illustrated in the collage grid (Figure 6.5).

Using a *complex mode*, Luke considered each of these three texts as a platform for "playing *at* drawing" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 274), where his focus and interest, was on the tactile experience of the resources rather than on creating a cohesive meaning. He particularly enjoyed the stretching, cutting and attaching pieces of transparent cello-tape and feeling its tacky sensation; cutting and gluing paper and wood using liquid glue and dealing with its messiness; and spreading the glitter glue and seeing its effect on paper. The use of each mode was purposeful: each was chosen for their affordance and materiality to abet the orchestration of meaning. For example, the dabbed glitter glue in *LS21* (Figure 6.22) and *LS16* (Figure 6.24) signified food for the cow in the former and for the worm in the latter. The affixed cello-tape on the brown paper in the middle of *LS16* which represented the worm's brain, was specifically used, "so that the brain will not come out" (Luke, 29th February, 2012), while the glued wooden sticks secured with cello-tape in *LS23* (Figure 6.23) symbolised the shooting equipment he attached to the aeroplane.

A cow eating food.

LS21 (Figure 6.22) illustrates a cow eating food. Following his friends' cues who used a wrapping paper with images of animals as part of their drawings, Luke seemed compelled to do the same by opting for an image of a cow, which he cut and glued. To give the drawing his personal meaning, he then dabbed and spread some glitter glue which he interpreted as food.

Figure 6.22
A drawing in complex mode, simple theme, inspired by the media used.

LS21: A cow eating food

Most probaby that the idea of what to draw and what meaning to convey emanated from the wrapping paper; that is, the picture of the cow inspired Luke to create a cow-related drawing. This finding is supported by several scholars (Kress, 2003a; Malchiodi, 1998; Pahl, 1999b; Ring, 2006; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007; Hopperstad, 2008a), who argue that the quality and variety of the material made available, play a significant role and impacts the content, style and meaning in children's drawings.

An aeroplane.

LS23 (Figure 6.23, Image 1) signified an aeroplane. This drawing was one of those representations, which from an adults' viewpoint could illustrate a lack of logical interpretation as it did not look like an aeroplane at all. Rather, to me it looked like an abstract drawing made from shapes. In my attempt to uncover and investigate Luke's meanings, I listened to his "authorial intentions" (Chandler, 2007, p. 210), where I realised that each shape had a specific meaning. This validates Machón's (2013), claim that children use units, such as lines or shapes to represent objects.

According to Luke, the two green rectangles at the centre of the drawing, "held the aeroplane together" (16th March, 2012), while the sticks at the bottom of the page, represented combat equipment.

Luke copied the gluing of rectangular foam papers and wooden sticks from Thea's *TS30:Romina's aeroplane* (Figure 6.23, Image 2), who was sitting next to him. Thea's drawing also included glued rectangular paper and wooden sticks and like Luke, she dabbed and spread glitter glue; similarly, they both interpreted their drawings as an aeroplane. While I do consider Luke as having engaged in some level of copying by retaining some of the semiotic resources, signifying forms and constancy as represented and explored by Thea, I follow Mavers' (2011), Nöth's (1990) and Ring's (2010), argument, that in the process, he also used his agency to selectively reshape and design his drawing with his original combinations and meaning-making processes.

The form of Luke's drawing differed from Thea's in several ways. While, for example, Thea's rectangular shapes were blue and made of paper, Luke's were green and made of foam, and while Thea secured her wooden sticks with glue only, Luke used also cello-tape. The drawings carried other differences. Thea, for example, drew her aeroplane from the inside, interpreting the wooden sticks as the wings of the plane, while Luke drew his from the outside, with the wooden sticks signifying combat equipment. So, as was noted by Coates and Coates (2006), Cox (2005), and Egan (1995), what might appear as similar at the denotation level of the drawing, could be given a different connotation meaning by different children. This appeared to be the case with Luke's drawing, which I define as "drawing as invention" (Adams, 2004, p. 6) where, while his drawing included copied elements from Thea's, Luke produced an emerging representation of a fighter aircraft which differed in its meaning from Thea's passengers' aeroplane, one which, regularly flew her sick cousin Romina for treatment.

Figure 6.23
Luke used rectangular shapes to represent an aeroplane [1], a concept which he 'copied' from Thea's drawing [2].

LS23: An aeroplane

TS30: Romina's aeroplane
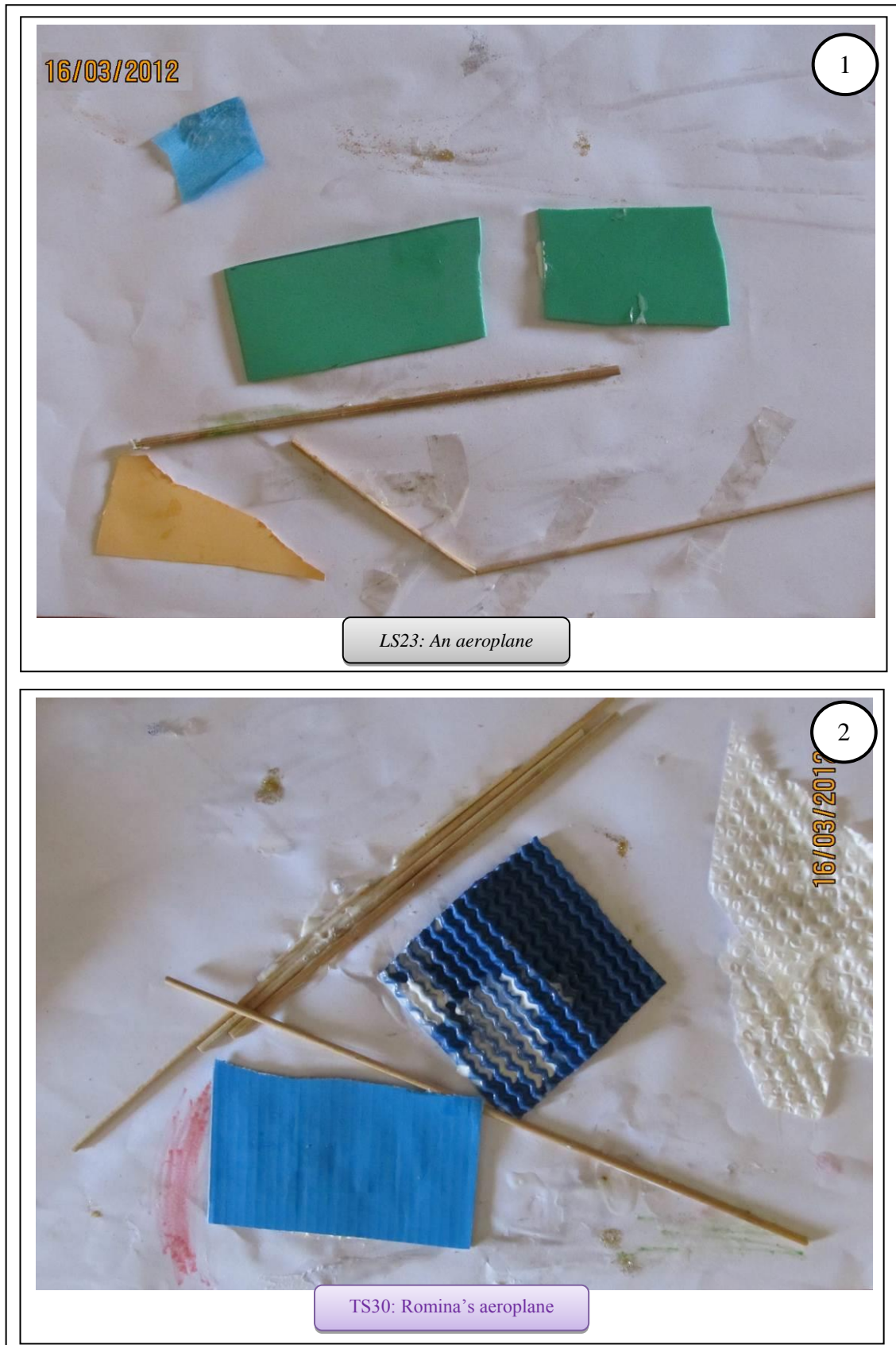
Vignette 4: A worm.

I now focus my discussion on *LS16* (Figure 6.24), which is the last drawing I discuss in-depth. Luke did this drawing at school.

Figure 6.24
A drawing in complex mode, simple theme where Luke communicated his knowledge about worms.

LS16: A worm
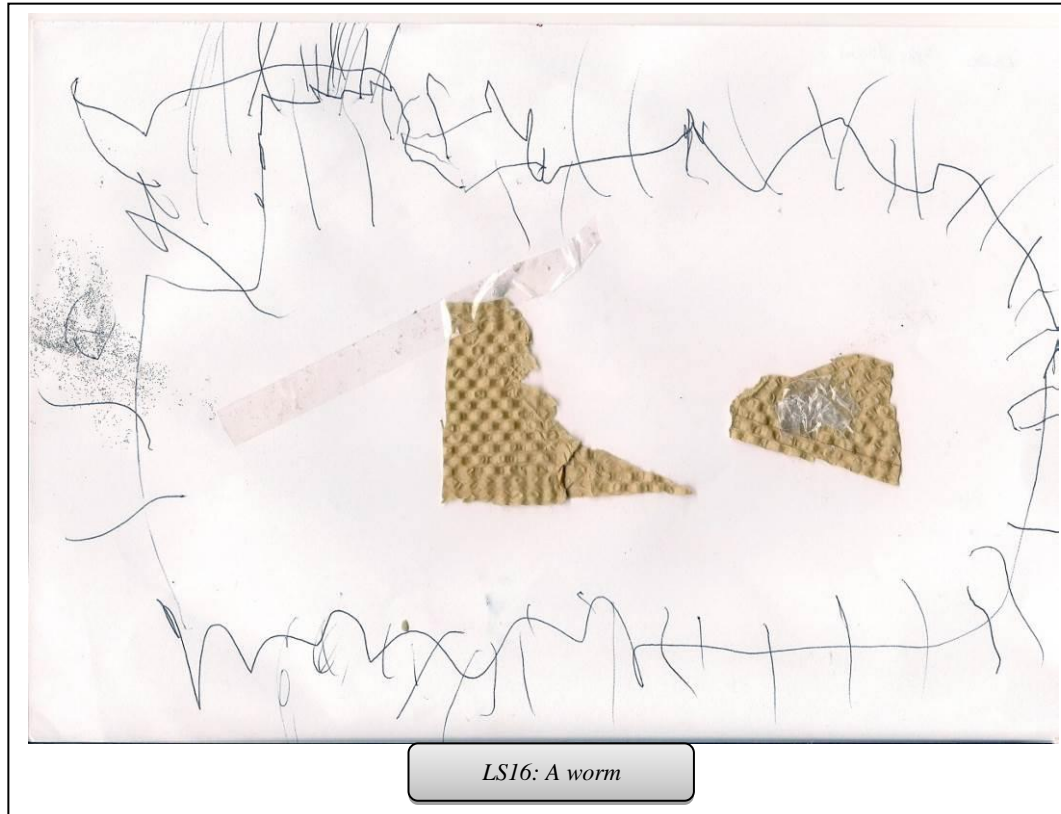
Taking a cue from Martina[14], one of his peers, who was gluing and taping paper to her drawing, Luke reached out for two pieces of corrugated paper, which he cut into smaller portions and glued to the centre of his drawing. Further sketching a line around the paper and ardently drawing many vertical lines across, which contributed to the use of a *complex mode*, he elucidated, that "This is a worm. Those lines at the bottom are his legs, and the lines on top are its hair" (Luke, 29th February, 2012). The worm, which dominated the paper, was the central and only depicted object in the picture, making the drawing *simple* in *theme*.

In this drawing, Luke was once again inspired by a number of his peers, who were making use of cello-tape, a relatively innovative material to him, which I had just

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[14] Martina is a classmate of the three children. I used a pseudonym to protect the child's identity.

added to the drawing table. Copying his friends, Luke used two pieces of cello-tape, where he used one to secure the glued brown paper on the left, and rolled and crumbled the other into a ball shape and attached it to the middle of the brown paper on the right. According to Luke, the two pieces of small brown paper signified the worm's brain. Playing with the cello-tape, Luke investigated its adhesive characteristic and improvised and explored how he could use it to create meaning in his text. Endowing his drawing with a "symbolic significance" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 83), Luke secured the worm's brain with the cello-tape, "so that the brain will never escape" (Luke, 29th February, 2012) (Refer to Figure 6.25). Luke knew that one of the properties and uses of cello-tape included that of affixing things, and he made use of such characteristic both literally and metaphorically.

Figure 6.25
Luke experimenting with cello-tape and exploring how he could use it to secure the 'worm's brain'.

Blending different media, Luke "negotiated complex social worlds by adapting, stretching and transforming his resources" (Dyson, 2001b, p. 29) to create his design. Luke's final product was therefore influenced by his interest, agency and the level of familiarity and flexibility he enjoyed in relation to the representational resource and modes available. From my observations, I concluded that the specific socio-cultural context of the class, that is the resources made available, the peers' influence and the personal attribute Luke ascribed to the tape, were inseparable and determining factors that abetted and influenced him in his development of the drawing and the meaning

he endorsed. This supports MacNaughton's (2004) view who argues that children's meaning-making processes are determined by pre-existing social and cultural discourses.

In this factual drawing, which highly contrasted with Luke's typical fictive and active genre, he delineated his "object-centred" (Matthews, 1994, p. 101) knowledge, by outlining the main physiognomies of the worm. Conversely, his drawing was also compelled by his "viewer-centred" (Matthews, 1994, p. 101) understanding, where he included his own perspective, interpretation and facts of what a worm looked like. Even though in real life, a worm's brain is not visible, and Luke knew that, he still decided to include it in his drawing. Thus, as is argued by Coates and Coates (2011), Cox (2005), Kangas et al. (2011) and Stein (2008), in similar instances that emerged in their studies, the drawing could be interpreted as a reflection of Luke's conceptualisation of prior observational experience combined with his negotiation and integration of fictional and factual knowledge to include aspects which are not necessarily detectable. The blending and construction of his thoughts, together with aspects of reality and imagination as well as his cumulative knowledge, helped him create a plausible and unique version of a worm.

In his elucidation of the drawing, Luke stated that he wanted to give the worm something to eat. This made him realise that he had forgotten to draw a head for the worm. Treating the drawing as unfinished "with no definitive 'end-point'" (Cox, 2005, p. 120), Luke went back to the drawing and, using a pen, he drew the worm's head on the left side. Subsequently, he dabbed and spread some glitter glue, a distinctively different medium from the paper, cello-tape, and pen he used so far, to signify "Some food. I gave him some food" (Luke, 29th February, 2012). While it might appear that the drawing lacked coherence, as the worm's head was added as an afterthought, with the brain seemingly lying on the outside of the head, his drawing, in my view, appeared to be in co-ordination and an enactment of his previously acquired knowledge about worms. As is reiterated by Matthews (1999) and Siegel, et al. (2008) this process indicates that frequently, children, like Luke, develop their drawings in a sporadic way (Refer to Figure 6.26), where, the generation of different decisions, involves a fluid, dynamic and active process that brings change to the content and the transformation of meaning. Thus, children's drawings are not

product-bound, time-bound, or content-bound but are rather ephemeral, emergent and fluid, compelled only by the existing and prevailing interest in a particular moment in time.

Figure 6.26
Drawing in an episodic way: Luke intentionally using glitter glue to metaphorically represent 'food' for the worm.

Analysis.

Voicing Mavers (2011) statement, I concur that adults "cannot possibly track every nuance of children's meaning-making" (p. 127). Analysing this drawing, I experienced first-hand, that it is inevitable to copiously identify and create links between all the significant semiotic connections that contribute to the creation of a text, even more so, as Edmiston (2010) points out, these might occur in complex exchanges, across and in different contexts, time-frames and associations. Talking to Luke about the meaning of his drawing, where it was easy to understand the message conveyed and the meanings layered in his text, I failed to ask adequate questions. When analysing the drawing I realised that I did not have enough information to help me follow most of his "processes of textual production" (Chandler, 2007, p. 210), and trace the attributed meaning-making to enable me to identify all the influences and sources of knowledge that inspired him to draw the worm.

In one of our post-drawing conversations, his mother suggested that, his drawing of the brain could have been inspired by two television series: *Nina and the Neurons*, (Cbeebies, 1996), and *Once upon a Time … Life* (Procidis, 2015), which are animated

television series Luke regularly watched, and which both include an episode about the brain and how it works. These television programmes could have possibly extended Luke's knowledge and understanding of the brain, its characteristics and purposes as well as instil an interest in him to draw a brain in his worm drawing. While I was not sure of the specific sources of Luke's knowledge about worms, it was palpable that he was drawing information from his various funds of knowledge. Using his "innate tools for acquiring knowledge" (Gallas, 1994, p. xv), Luke seemed to have referred to his social and cultural everyday life experiences to make sense of his combined understandings, constructions, sensual memories and conclusions about worms and brains, which he then presented through his drawing. The narrative illustrated that Luke not only showed that he was assimilating and representing such knowledge and concepts of worms, but adopting Wright's (2011) and McDonnell's (1994) assertion, I claim that, he created his realisation of a worm, rather than merely reproduced it. It seemed that the raison d'être of this image, was for Luke to recontextualise, reconfigure and transmit what he learned from different sources to form his meaning, that is, that worms have hair and numerous legs, a brain and they eat food.

6.3 Inventory of Content: Emerging Themes in Luke's drawings

I now discuss the emerging content themes that featured in Luke's drawings. Table 6.2 illustrates the content themes and respective sub-categories, organised in a descending order, starting from his most predominant to the least common. Due to the limitation in word count, it was rather challenging to discuss all the content themes identified, so I opted to discuss the three main dominating strands, those of *People*, *Weather and Sky Features,* and *Miscellaneous Objects*. I must point out that I found it extremely difficult to exclusively focus my discussion on the content themes identified in each drawing and separate them from elements of meaning-making. So while my main focus in this section was to investigate the objects in Luke's drawings, I intermittently make reference and link them to his ways of meaning-making.

Table 6.2

Inventory of Content including the number of occurrences of emerging themes in Luke's drawings.

Themes	Number of occurrences
People (Self; family; friends; fantasy; unknown; named others)	82
Weather and Sky features *(Sky; stars; sun; rainbow; rain)*	52
Miscellaneous Objects (Digital equipment; warfare equipment and trophies; everyday objects and other oddities)	25
Animals and other creatures *(Mini-beasts; farm; pets; wild; sea creatures; sky creatures; fantasy)*	21
Vehicles (Aeroplanes; boats/ships; cars; cranes; motorbikes; rockets; trains;)	15
Natural environmental features (Flowers, grass, leaves, trees and mushrooms; pond, river, lake; sea, and beach; stones, rocks, mountain)	14
Food (Fruits; sweets, ice-cream, candy, cake, Easter egg; sausage roll, bread; Pasta)	12
Man-made objects (Pool, well; road; roundabout, tunnel)	8
Toys and play equipment (Balls, Wii, trampoline, pink goo)	8
Abstract (Shapes; symbols)	7
Writing (Letters; names; numbers; phrases)	4
Natural elements (Fire; water)	2
Buildings (Houses; castle, church; farm; apertures)	1

While the first two content themes of *People*, and *Weather and Sky Features* emerged as also common in Thea's and Bertly's drawings, it came as a revelation to me that the latter theme of *Miscellenous Objects*, featured so strongly in Luke's drawings. Under this heading I included odd objects that, in my view, did not occur frequently in the three children's drawings so much so that I did not see it as apposite to create a specific theme for each, as otherwise the *Inventory of Content* would have turned out to be very lenghty. It was also challenging to represent and discuss all of Luke's drawings that I classified under the three, leading content themes as he had an exceedingly number of occurrences from each strand. Suffice to say, for example, it was logistically impossible to discuss all eighty-two images which I classified under the content theme of *People*. Consequently, I opted to include some of the drawings from each of the three main themes as an examplar. Contrariwise, the content themes of *Writing*, *Natural Elements* and *Buildings* were amongst the least popular in Luke's drawings.

6.3.1 People: family, self, fantasy, unknown, friends, named others.

Depictions of *People* featured eighty-two times in Luke's eighty drawings. This happened because, as I explained in Chapter Four, in the same drawing, Luke could have drawn people that fell under the different sub-categories identified, which I classified accordingly. For example, as discussed above, a number of Luke's drawings included a representation of his family members together with fantasy people. In such instances, I classified the drawing under the two sub-categories respectively. The prevalence of *People* made this content theme by far the most predominant in Luke's drawings, defining him as a "person-centred" (Gardner, 1982, p.118) illustrator. With Thea having forty-five drawings featuring *People*, and Bertly only fifteen, it was Luke who clearly had the largest number of occurrences classified under this content theme. While I must emphasise that I cannot generalise, yet this finding challenges Hall's (2010b) claim that girls are more inclined to draw people than boys. As indicated in Chapter Four, I organised the drawings that fell under the content theme of *People* under six sub-categories *Family, Self, Fantasy*, *Unknown*, *Friends* and *Named people*. Table 6.3 illustrates the number of occurrences Luke drew with respect to each content theme listed, starting from the most to the least common.

Table 6.3
List of sub-categories from the content theme of People.

Sub-categories from the content theme of *People*	Number of occurrences
Family	35
Self	19
Unknown people	9
Friends	8
Fantasy	7
Named people	4
Total number of occurrences	82

In the following sections I discuss some of Luke's drawings that featured under *Family*, *Self*, *Fantasy*, and *Friends*. I considered it as unnecessary to specifically discuss *Unknown People,* which included drawings of a pilot, men playing football, children and good guys and bad guys, as well as *Named People*, which comprised
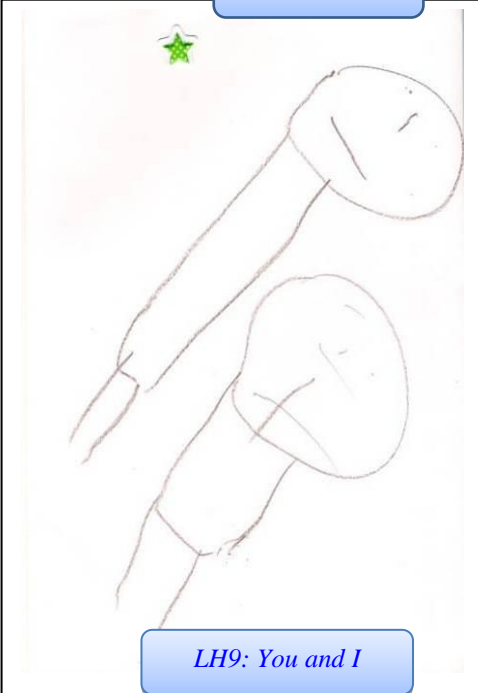
drawings of the KGA and myself, since Luke frequently added such characters as part of other drawings that included *People* from the other sub-categories which I discuss accordingly; hence, a separate analysis would turn out to be repetitive. While at times Luke drew his figures in a static position, most frequently he engaged his characters in some form of action such as playing, eating or fighting. Such a finding corroborates with conclusions from other studies (Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Golomb, 2004; Millard and Marsh, 2001) who state that boys tend to draw figures in action. Figure 6.27 provides a montage of drawings as exemplars from Luke's content theme of *People*.

Figure 6.27
A montage of a sample of Luke's drawings illustrating the theme of 'People'.

People

Self

LH11: Only me

LH9: You and I

LS25: Me

Family

LH35: Luxol outing 2
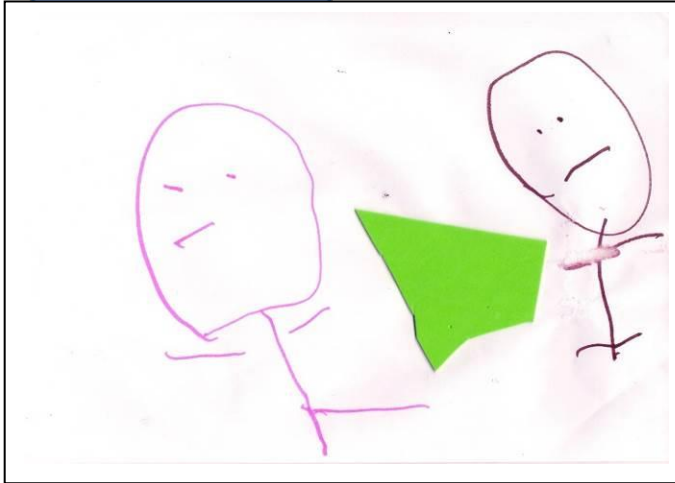
LH52: Playing Wii sword fight with mummy

LH31: Jacob in a volcano

LH41: Fenis and Ferb

Fantasy
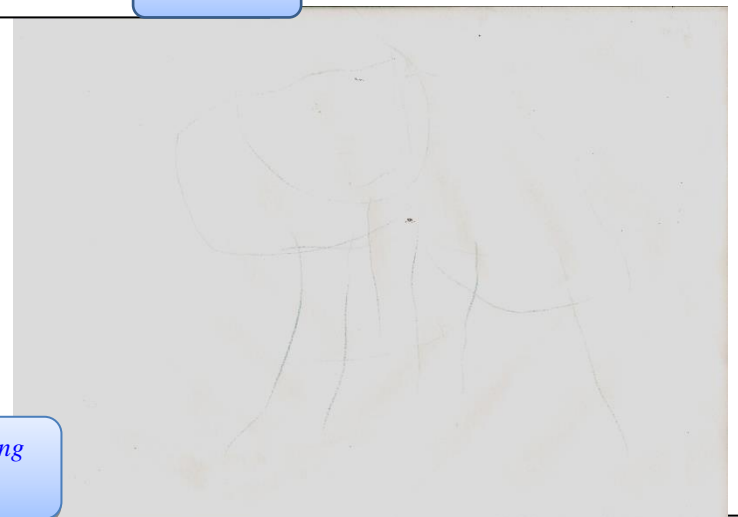
LH3: The space scene

LS2: (Bad people shooting at each other in) The fight

LH33: Mummies and boys (Nicholai and Luke) at school

Friends

LS22: (Unknown people in) Shooting

LH43: Nicolai jumping on a trampoline

Unknown people

Family.

Luke had thirty-five drawings in which he drew family members, distinguishing him as the child with the largest number of occurrences under this category. Once again, such a finding conflicts with results from Hall's (2010b) and Nicolopoulou's (1997) conclusions who stated that the boys of their studies drew fewer pictures of family members than girls. Analysing Luke's drawings of members of his family, I loosely classified them under three groups: drawings that included different members of his nuclear and extended family; drawings where he drew himself with only his mother; and drawings where he featured with either or both of his brothers. These drawings illustrate the close bond Luke enjoyed with his family together with the overwhelming importance family relationships played in his life, confirming Malchiodi's (1998) statement that emotional relationships and dynamics between family members are aspects which young children draw. Luke depicted most of these drawings at home with only three sketched at school, highlighting Brooks' (2005) and Ring and Anning's (2004) claim that frequently, the content of the drawing is a reflection of the context in which the drawing is created.

Some of Luke's family drawings were static in nature, simply illustrating a family member. A good number of these drawings were created during one of my first visits towards the beginning of the study, where it appeared to me that by drawing his family members, it was as if, Luke was introducing them to me. For example, *LH7* shows Luke's dad and mum together, while *LH8,* which was drawn immediately afterwards, is a representation of Luke with his dad and *LH10* is a drawing of his father alone. In *LH14* Luke drew his brother Matthias together with his mother and himself, while in *LH16* he also included his dad, and in *LH19* Luke drew the whole family together (Figure 6.28).

Figure 6.28
A static drawing of Luke's family-members.

LH19: My family
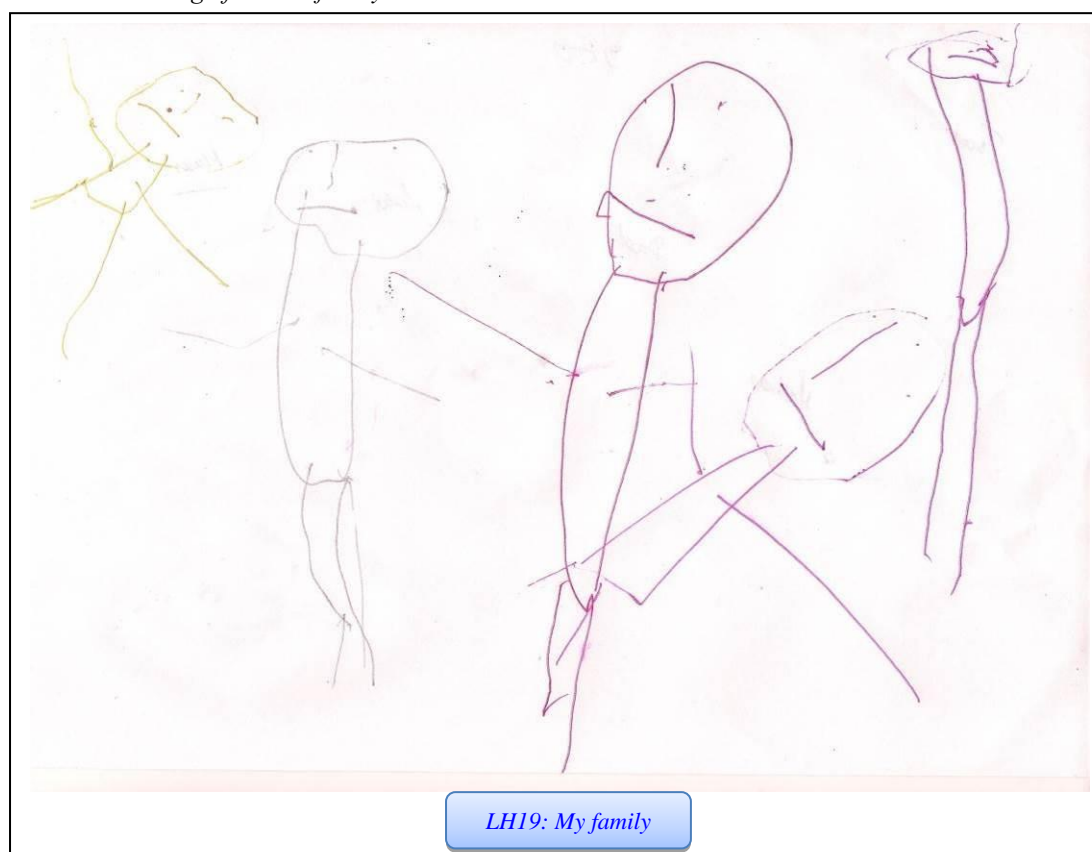
Other drawings included some form of action such as playing, fighting and having a good time with his family, which indicate a sense of collegiality and alliance between family members. For example, in *LH1*, Luke drew his parents with himself in his mother's tummy and Matthias playing football, while in *LH15* (Figure 6.29), he drew himself with his mum and dad eating ice-cream. Animating his narration, by changing his intonation to take the role of others' Luke described what was happening:

> You [*referring to his mother and father*] say,
> "We do not want ice-cream. I do not want ice-cream. I do not want ice-cream."
> But I say, "I want one. I want ice-cream.
> One ice-cream, two ice-creams, three ice-creams.
> Can I have three ice-creams?"
> And you say, "Yes."

<div align="right">(Luke, 22nd February, 2012).</div>

Figure 6.29
A family drawing that includes a narration.

LH15: Mum, dad and I eating ice-cream
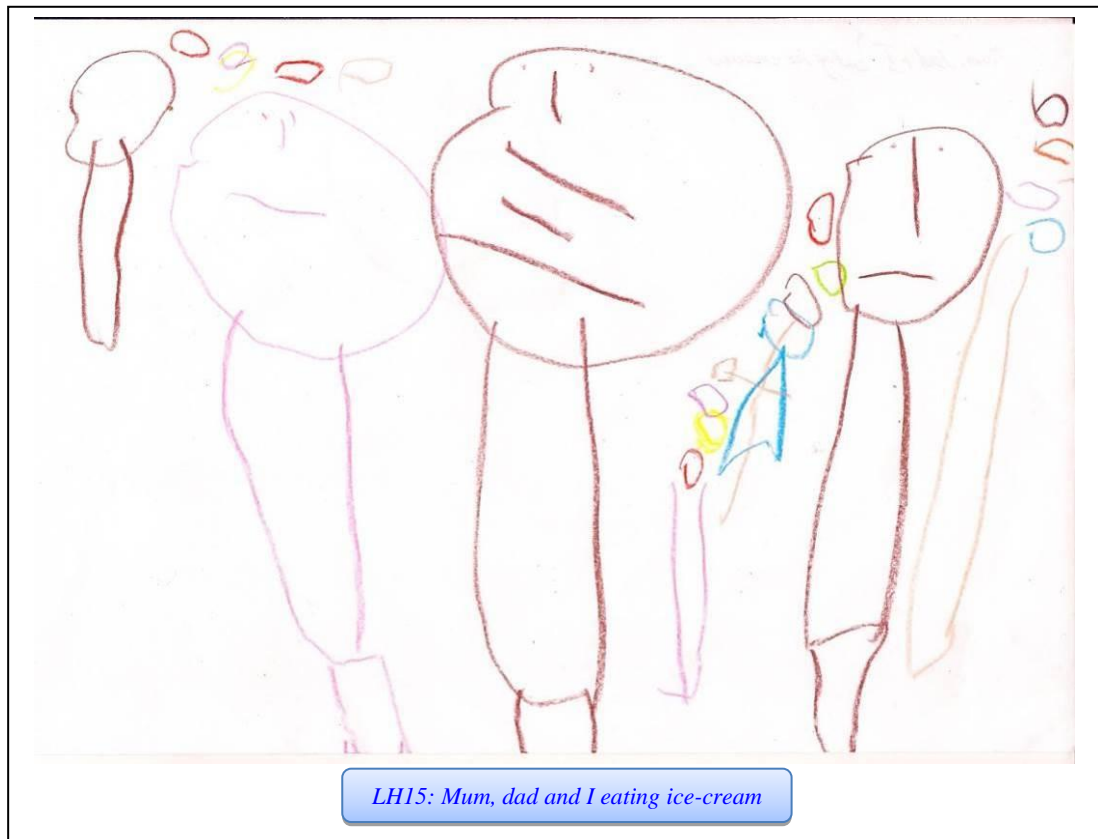
Intentionally omitting Matthias from the drawing, "Because we do not love him" (Luke, 22nd February, 2012), and drawing an unborn Jacob at the top left corner, supposedly in his mother's tummy, the drawing was evocative of Luke's plan to have his brothers out of the way so that he would have his parents' attention, their ice-creams and pampering all for himself. In this drawing, Luke depicted himself (the figure in the middle) with a moustache, as taller than his parents and holding the biggest ice-cream. Skattebol (2006) suggests that when children are constrained by their physical size, they find different ways, including through their drawings, to change their size and gain more power. Thus, in my view, Luke was portraying himself in a competitive position of power in relation to his parents, an interest which according to Boytazis and Albertini (2000), is usually communicated by boys. So, while at the denotation level, the drawing seemed to be a simple family drawing, at the connotation level it addressed issues of power and family hierarchies and dynamics.

Other drawings that included family members featured action, conflict and warfare (some of them discussed above, such as *LH24*:*Tying the Blue Lady*), where Luke equipped himself with swords, guns and knives and turned into the hero who fought and won the bad guys to protect and save his family, "I am the one who killed the bad guys" (Luke, 18th February, 2012). Like in *LH15* discussed above, these drawings uncover part of Luke's processes of conceptualising himself in positions of power and authority in relation to his parents and siblings.

Mother.

Luke had a very close relationship with his mother. This was mirrored through his drawings of his mother, where he frequently depicted her alone or with him doing things together. Most of these drawings were depicted at home, with only two drawn at school. In *LH18,* for example, Luke drew his mother and himself walking together in the dark under a starry night, while in *LH32* Luke drew himself with an Easter egg in his hand and a sausage roll in his mother's, a food item which she regularly baked for him and his siblings. On the other hand, *LH33* represented a daily experience of his mother accompanying him to school. Luke also drew three drawings of his mother playing with him, that were reminiscent of past experiences they shared such as *LH38* (Figure 6.30, Image 1), where he drew his mother and himself playing with a ball. In another drawing (*LH54,* Figure 6.30, Image 2), Luke drew his mother and himself play-fighting whilst out on a picnic; a drawing where he intermingled a real-life experience together with his wish to have his mother partake and enjoy play-fighting with him, something which the mother did not approve of.

Figure 6.30
Luke playing ball with his mother [1] and playing together while on a picnic [2]: both reminiscent of a past experience merged with his wish to engage in play-fight with her.

LH38: My mother and I playing with a ball

LH54: Luke and mum fighting
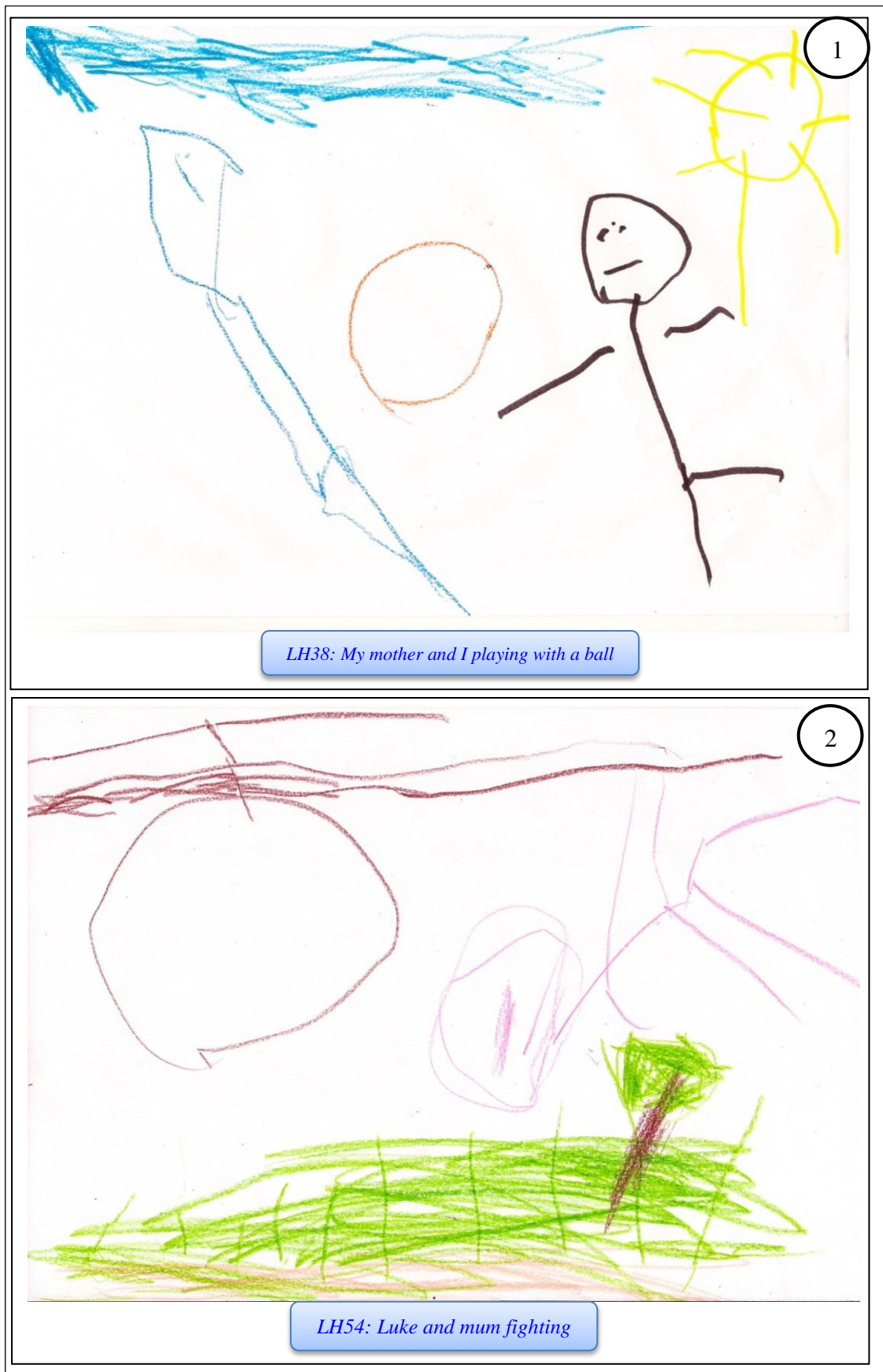
This excerpt, which was taken from the conversation that ensued between the two during the process of the drawing of *LH54*, sheds light on Luke's wish:

Mother:	What else can we draw?
Luke:	A mama monster. Ping. Ping. Ping. Ping. Pong.
Mother:	A mama monster? Ok. What is this mama monster doing?
Luke:	Prrrrr. Playing guns.
Mother:	Playing with guns?
Luke:	Yes. Playing guns. It is you.
Mother:	It is me? Playing with guns …What are you doing?
Luke:	Firing guns. I fire you. You fire me.
Mother:	Is that the story? I fire you and you fire me?
Luke:	Together.
Mother:	Do you think we are having fun?
Luke:	Yes.
Mother:	Do you think I am having fun?
Luke:	Yes.

(20th March, 2012).

This conversation palpably shows that Luke's interpretation of fun was not in accord with his mother's, confirming Coates and Coates' (2006) and Hope's (2008) claim that frequently children's humour differs from that of adults'. In turn, adults might lack appreciation, awareness and the sensitivity to understand young children's complex insightful drawings, their thinking patterns and their perspective of comicality. Matthews (2003) claims that for children, there is a funny side to destruction, violence and death, where humour is developed from chaos and aggression; a kind of humour, which however, Luke's mother could not comprehend. She considered the virtual playing with guns and the firing at each other, as a violent game of bad taste.   Luke, on the other hand, regarded it as fun, ironic and humorous to shoot his mother and see her falling down in a pretend narrative. While he was fully aware that his tale was a product of his imagination that could never happen in real life, he still enjoyed the power the image bestowed on him, that is, to control his mother.

Luke had only two drawings of his mother which he drew at school. He used these to communicate specific feelings and thoughts he was experiencing at that particular moment in time. In *LS8* (Figure 6.31) Luke vented his anger towards his mother by drawing a representation of her tied up with a rope as his way of punishing her, because that morning she had refused his request to give him sweets.

Figure 6.31
One of Luke's drawings where he communicated his feelings towards his mother.

LS8: My mother tied up

Contrastingly, when Luke drew *LS19: A party and cake for mummy* discussed above, he was worried for his mother who was undergoing surgery that week: through his drawing Luke communicated his wish to give a party for her, to celebrate his mother and help ease their worries.

What was outstanding in all the above-mentioned drawings was the overarching, connoted meaning. Luke used each one of the drawings "as communication" (Adams, 2004, p. 6) and as a vehicle to convey his love and tenderness towards his mother. For example, after finishing *LH6,* a drawing that illustrated his mother and

himself together, Luke turned towards her, saying "I will draw myself [*next to you*] because I love you. This is for you. And it is for me. It is yours and mine," (Luke, 17th February, 2012), and affectionately hugged and kissed her. The above-mentioned drawings where a display of some of Luke's much-loved episodes he experienced with his mother, that were a testimony of their emotional bond, and of the sense of togetherness, complicity and well-being they shared. The use of drawings to explore and disclose affections and emotions to significant others emerged also in other studies (Kress, 2010, 1997; Mavers, 2011; Wood and Hall, 2011).

Siblings.

Luke's siblings also played an important role in his life. He considered his older brother Matthias as a role-model and a partner in play, even if at times he complained that he was unfair to him. He also considered Matthias as a competitor, who was older, stronger and taller than him and with whom he had to share the attention. Occasionally, this impelled Luke to purposefully leave his brother out of his drawings. Contrastingly, Luke regarded Jacob, his younger brother, as someone to protect and simultaneously tease. Luke had seven drawings in which he specifically depicted his brothers: three of them featured Jacob, two of them featured Matthias and two featured the three siblings together. Most of the drawings were done at home, most often in the presence of his brothers. Frequently, Luke used the drawings as a springboard to playfully tease or convey a message to his brothers. This finding substantiates Anning and Ring's (2004) assertion that siblings and the home context influence children's drawings.

The brothers detested pink and purple. They gave these two colours their personal "ideational" (Halliday, 1978, p. 112) interpretation, to denote specific meanings. They considered them as girlish, as conveying a sense of frailty, sometimes naughtiness and as degrading for boys. For example, in *LH53* (Figure 6.32) Luke drew Matthias in pink, playing Wii with him. Most probably, the colour pink was used to denote weakness in his sibling, thus giving himself an edge to win by portraying himself as stronger.

Figure 6.32
Pink as a semiotic mode used to denote weakness.

LH53: Luke and Matthias playing swordfight with Wii

However, as the mother explained, the main significance of the colour pink for the brothers was to tease, "Drawing in pink and purple means that we want to spite someone" (Mother, 7th March, 2012). Using the pink colour as a "semiotic mode" (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 225), Luke drew three drawings of Jacob in pink. These were all done on the same day with Jacob present and sitting close to him. In *LH26* (Figure 6.33, Image 1) Luke began his drawing by stating that while he was sleeping, Jacob woke him up, which made him very angry. Luke then took a pink marker and drew haphazard lines all over his brother to denote pink goo thrown all over Jacob. Retaining interpersonal value (Halliday, 1978), and aware that the use and meaning they ascribed to the colour pink would be very effective, Luke used pink to tease Jacob, something which his younger brother understood and did not appreciate to the extent that he began to cry. Next to Jacob, Luke drew his mother, also in pink. However, as the following conversation indicates, the use of pink in this instance conveyed his mother's femininity:

Figure 6.33
Pink as a semiotic mode which Luke used to tease his brothers.

LH26: Throwing pink goo at Jacob

LH27: Jacob the pink dinosaur
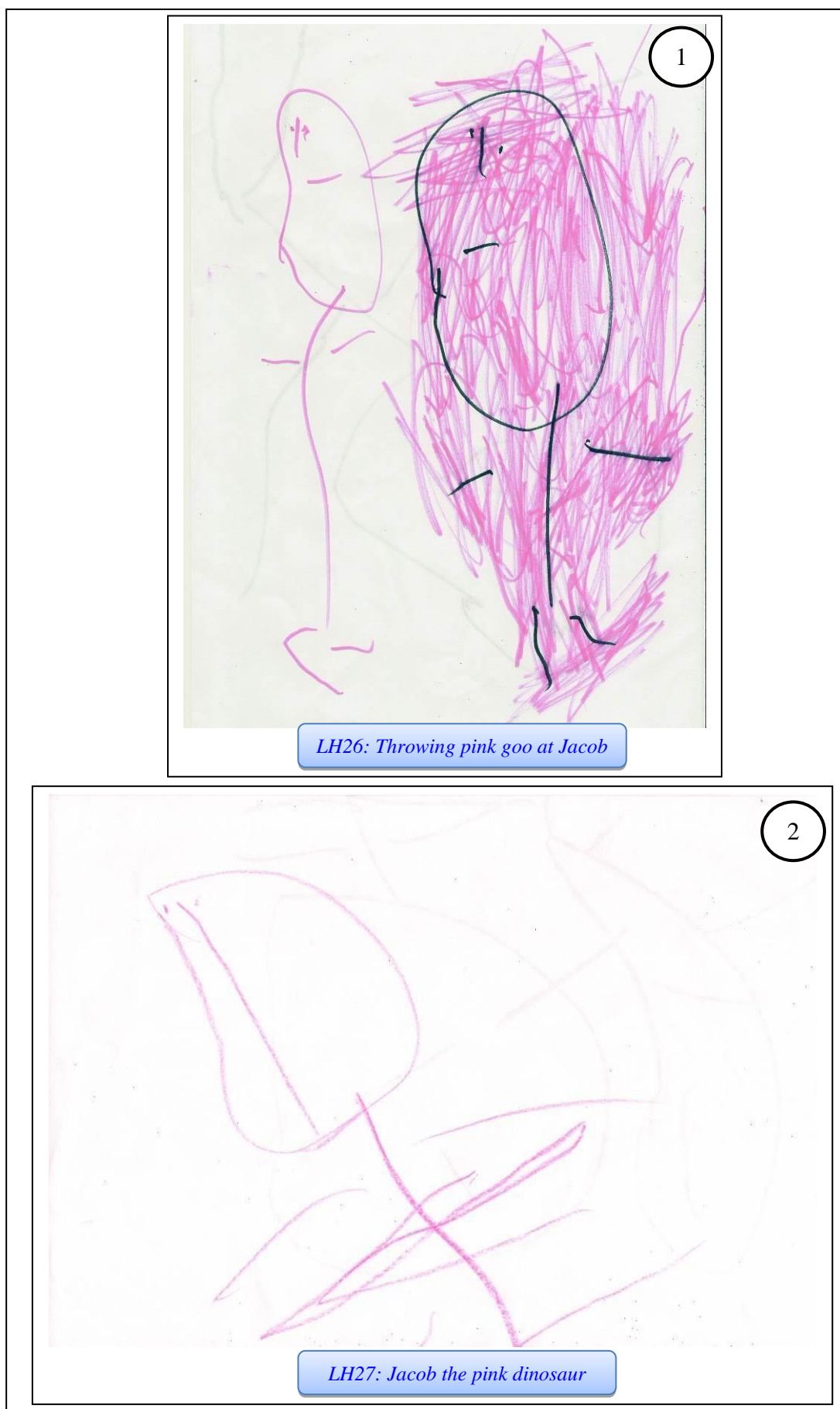
Luke: Now I will make him [*Jacob*] pinky, pinky, with pinky goo.
Mother: You are making pink goo on him?
Luke: Yes. I make pink goo on you, Jacob. So you cannot get out.
           You will be stuck forever and ever.
Jacob: And mummy is going to be a girly …
Luke: She is always a girly. Let me make you *[mummy]*.
Mother: What am I saying there?
Luke: "LUUKE!!" *[In an angry note]*.
Mother: Am I angry at Luke?
Luke: No. Angry at Jacob… because he fired at me and he woke me
          up. And I made some goo on him.
Jacob: Why? *[Jacob started crying]…* I do not want me pink.

(7th March, 2012).

The intentional use of pink and the denoted meaning stipulated by the family, shaped and created ways for Luke to develop his drawing and connect with his brothers at the affective level. Similarly, in both *LH27* (Figure 6.33, Image 2) and *LH31: Jacob in a volcano,* Luke used the drawing to tease Jacob not only by drawing him in pink, but in the first drawing, he drew him as a dinosaur, while in the latter, he drew, "Jacob in the volcano … I like you in the volcano ... 'Ha ha! You are going to stay there for ages in the volcano! Ha ha!' He is saying, 'I do not want to be in the volcano'" (Luke, 7th March, 2012). Going in and out of the drawing, switching between his role as the narrator and actor, and that of his brother, by changing his intonation, Luke was, extending his humour through his animated narration rather than through the drawing itself, a characteristic which Hope (2008) identified as synonymous with children's drawings. Even if Jacob knew that it was only a drawing, he did not like being a dinosaur or stuck in a volcano, complaining, "Make me a boy." and "I am not in the volcano" (Jacob, 7th March, 2012). To ease a bit the tension and calm his brother, Luke stated, "It is just a story, Jacob," however, he continued with his drawing, expecting Jacob to take the joke. Luke's use of the visual text to draw humorous acts aimed to tease, joke and amuse others, might indicate that according to Hope (2008) and Matthews (2003), he had developed intellectual competency and mastered representational language.

Luke drew other pictures of Matthias and Jacob where he focused on sharing his feelings about his brothers. *LS24* (Figure 6.34, Image 1) shows a static image of his elder brother with spikey hair as he wished him to be, while in *LH20*, (Figure 6.34, Image 2) and driven by his sense of fairness Luke drew Matthias in a cage, as a

punishment, "because I always let him play with my toys, but he never lets me." (Luke, 23rd February, 2012).

Figure 6.34
Luke's drawings of Matthias.

LS24: Matthias

LH20: Matthias in a cage

Self-drawings.

Luke had twenty-two drawings of himself: seven were self-portraits where he drew himself alone, and in another fifteen drawings he drew himself with family members or friends. While I definitely cannot draw any generalisations, this finding appears to contest Hall's (2010b) conclusions who claims, that boys do not usually produce a lot of self-portraits. Luke drew himself in various roles and characters: as a child, as a grown-up man in an "ideal identity" (De Rutyer and Conroy, 2002, p. 510) in the future, or in an "imagined identity" (Kendrick and McKay, 2004, p. 120), where he drew himself in the role of a fantasy character.

Both *LH11: Only me* (Figure 6.27) and *LS25: Me stretching* (Figure 6.36) illustrate a static depiction of Luke, where he simply described the latter as, "That is me" (17th February, 2012). Similarly, *LH28* (Figure 6.35) was also exclusively about him, albeit in action, where Luke drew two figures of himself in what appeared to be a conflict with himself. During the process of the drawing, he entered in a dialogue with himself, enhancing his meaning through his narrative, "Me. Hahahaha. Wraaaghh. I am angry to the top. I want to kill you," (Luke, 7th March, 2012) while engaged in shooting and fighting the other self.

Figure 6.35
Luke in conflict with himself.

LH28: Two of me
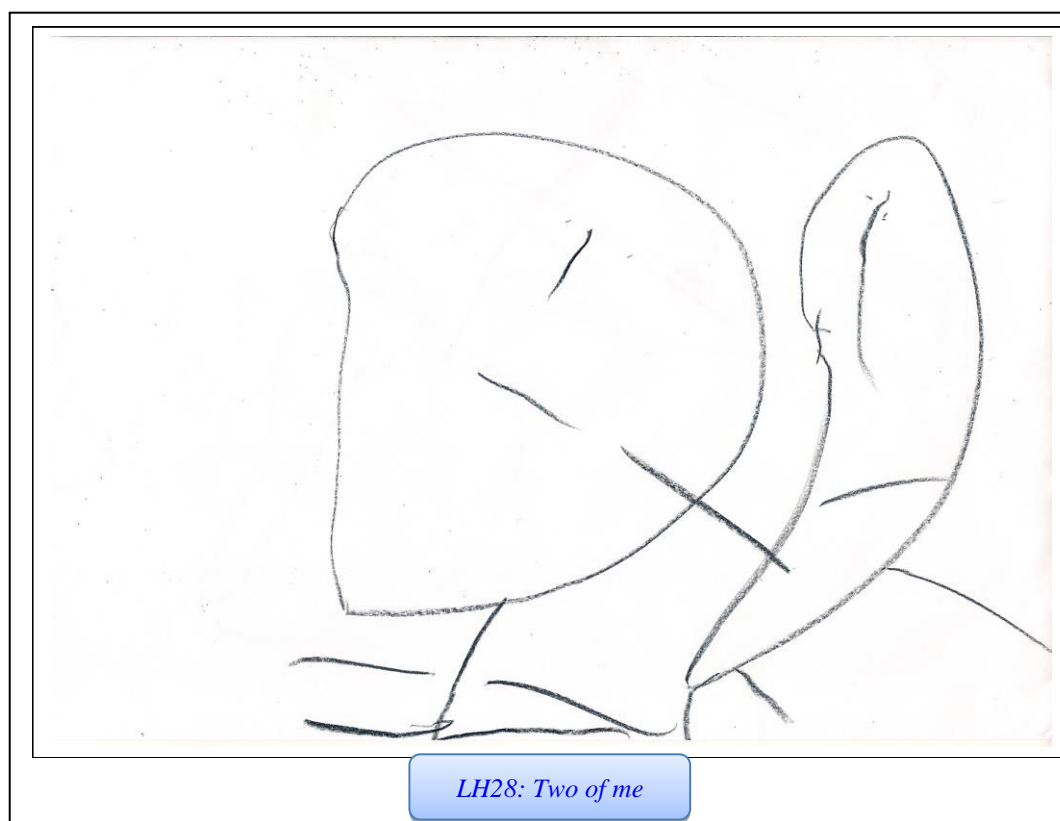
The narrative indicated Luke's complex level of thinking and meaning-making where he communicated his feelings and conflicts he had with himself, into what appeared to be a *simple theme* drawing of two figures. In another self-portrait (*LH25*, Figure 6.36), Luke drew himself in a "real world identity" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 23), a drawing that was indicative of a real-life experience, where he once again drew himself angry: furious at his brother for waking him up. Ascribing a narrative to his drawing, he recounted that, "I am stretching ... Now I woke up and I am angry… Because Jacob woke me up. I shouted and I scared him." (Luke, 7th March, 2012).

Figure 6.36
Self-portrait.

LH25: Me stretching
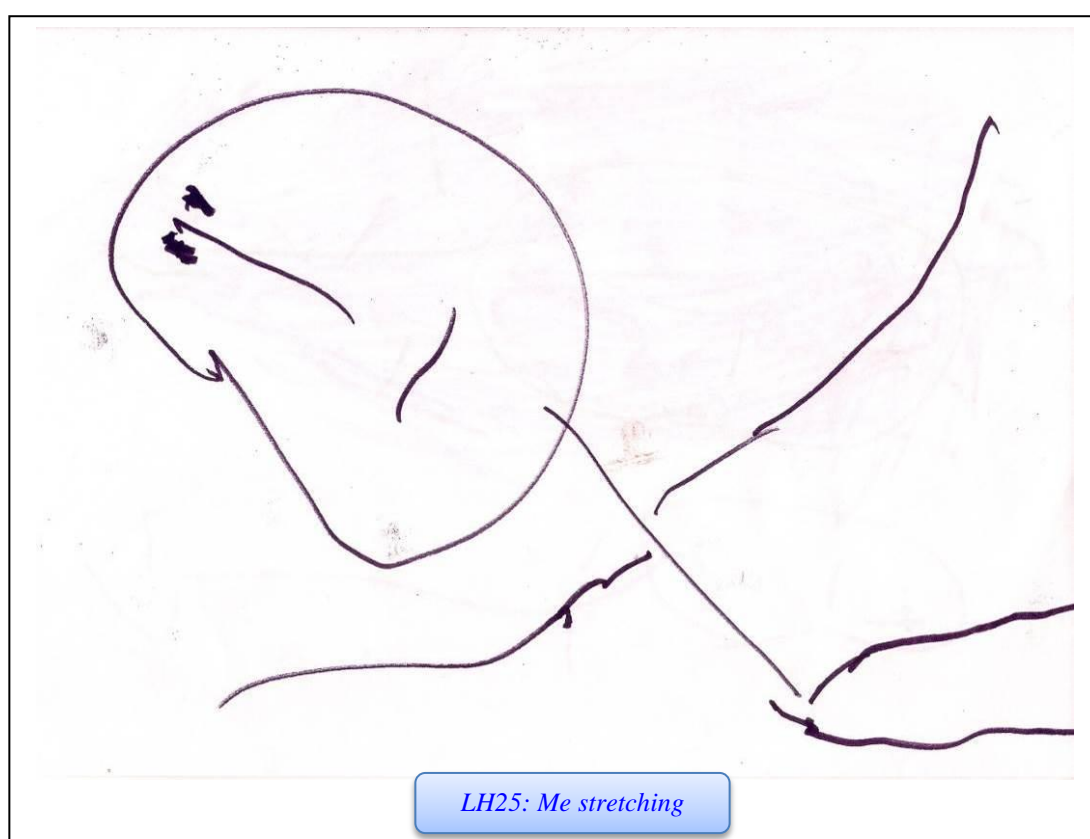
Contrastingly, in *LS12:Myself,* Luke drew himself in an ideal identity, as a grown-up man with a moustache, where he equipped himself with warfare armour including a helmet, a knife and a gun. Similarly, in *LH44:Me in a rocket to Australia,* discussed above, Luke represented himself in an imagined identity, as the captain of a rocket with a mission to "fight the bad guys and … kill them" (13th March, 2012). Most of the other remaining drawings of himself, illustrate Luke in action, where he often portrayed himself in mythical narratives as a strong and invincible superhero.

In my view, Luke's self-drawings communicated his need to feel strong, powerful and in control, that enabled him to deal with the dangerous, scary characters and injustices of the world; physiognomies which Jones and Ponton (2002) identified as needy for young children. Guns and knives, as well as a powerful voice in narratives, signify strength and authority. Luke's continuous focus on drawing action pictures full of violent and dangerous creatures juxtaposed with harmless and frail characters, as Lewis (1998) suggests, could have helped him explore and overcome his own fears of aggression and destruction, to the extent that he wanted to kill all evil personalities, while concurrently demonstrating his courageous and protective traits. The drawings also gave Luke the faculty to move between multiple situations and contexts to negotiate "particular" (Hagood, 2008, p.540) and "alternative identities" (Hall, 2010a, p.108), and explore the possibilities to transform himself into whoever he wanted and desired to be. This provided him with the possibility to "play with possible selves" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 99) and manifest, define and recreate his identity (Bleiker, 1999). Adopting "multiple personalities" (Wright, 2007a, p. 22), Luke effortlessly identified himself and moved between different fantasy and real roles: from being a good guy to being the hero of the story, fighting off the bad guys; and from a pilot of a rocket, to a sibling in his family or as a strong, tall, grown-up man. Such exploration of different selves, according to Ahn (2006), could have helped Luke explore the differences between '"me" and "not me"' (p. 215). He was flexible enough to change his ideal images and experiment with a repertoire of identities in an attempt to define his new, imagined identities, which influenced his ways of being and becoming. This experimentation between real, negotiated and constructed identities (Wright, 2011), which intersected through his social and cultural worlds of his family, the school and the outside world, helped him understand moral issues, demarcate his ethical identity and acquire a better concept of himself, while positioning himself within his social world.

Fantasy people.

Luke had several drawings that included media-mediated fantasy characters. In such drawings, he enmeshed his self-created imaginary characters with fantasy ones, and named and unknown people from real life, to recurrently involve them in fights. *LS1* (Figure 6.37) was Luke's first drawing he did at school. Using reused wrapping paper, he cut out the figures of *Diego* from *Go, Diego, Go*! (Viacom International, 2015), and *Eeyore* from *The New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh Series* (Walt Disney, 2014), together with two cars, where he developed his drawing into his prevalent interest of conflicts between the good guys and the invisible bad guys.

Figure 6.37
A fight between fantasy characters.

LS1: The good and the evil

In this action drawing, which Luke animated with his archetypal vocalisations and sounds that signified the firing, he visually denoted the movement of the shots by making marks in pen, and explaining:

Luke: They will fight …The cars will kill the rocket.
J: Kill him? Why?
Luke: Because that is what I like. Fighting …
J: *[Referring to the mark-makings in pen]* And what are these
          doing?
Luke: They are killing these [*Pointing at Eeyore, Diego and the cars*].
          Puck, picho, puck, picho. With the knife…   I need to draw a
          knife ... I did all the knives … Strings come out of them. Pshu.
          Pshu. Pshu … They are shooting at each other …
          They died. Pumm. Pumm. They shot them … Now I am going
          to do a prison for the bad guys.

(7th February, 2012).

The merging of subjects from different television cartoons with other animated characters, objects and mythical narratives, validate Luke's complex connection and combination between his thoughts, his realms of imagination and the information he acquired from children's media to effortlessly weave a new logical and powerful text, as exemplified by Coates and Coates (2011), and Paley (1986), through their studies. This is supported by Dyson (2001a) and Pahl (1999b) who suggest that the movement and overlapping between cultural texts, spaces and influences in the same drawing, such as, when Luke drew *Diego* and *Eeyore,* who are characters from different cartoon series*,* allowed him with possibilities to construct new meanings from material he was already familiar with.   Luke never drew a story from these cartoons as presented on television, but using their characteristics, and influenced by their related plots and ideas, he intertwined different aspects from different texts, to selectively create his drawing that reflected his "first-hand experiences of the world and the world of imagination" (Coates and Coates, 2011, p. 107).

Friends.

Luke drew eight pictures in which he included his friends, a considerable amount when compared to Bertly's and Thea's, who only drew one drawing each of their respective friends. This probably shows that forming and retaining friendships was of significant importance for Luke. This becomes evident when one considers Luke's school experiences.   Unlike the other children, who knew each other from the previous year, Luke was a new comer. He still had to establish himself, be accepted by his peers and form new friendships.

Luke drew *LS4:Two mushrooms* discussed above, and *LS6* (Figure 6.38), on the same day with only minutes apart. Both drawings were about his friend Shaun, who sat next to Luke while each created their separate drawing. In both drawings, they teased each other and laughed loud, treating their represensations as a playful design. There were times when they made marks on each other's texts.

Figure 6.38
Luke celebrating his friendship with Shaun.

LS6: My friend Shaun
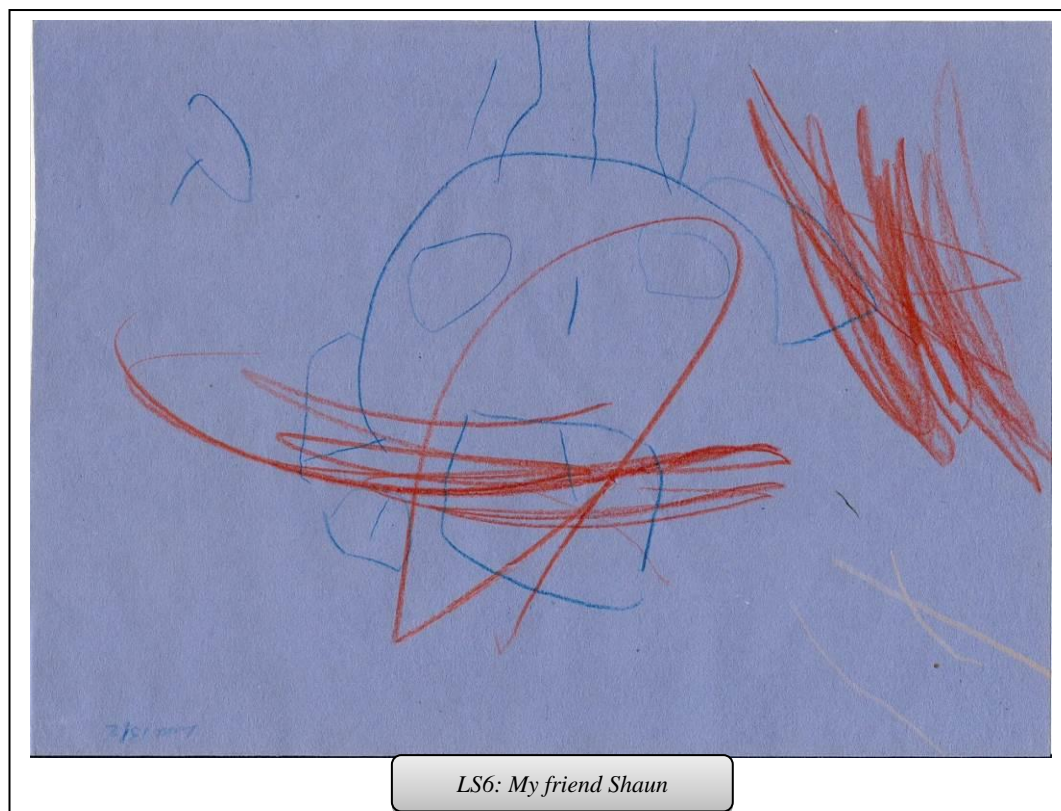
In *LS6* Luke drew Shaun where he emphasised his characteristics and likes: with spikey hair, a pair of headphones, "so that he could listen to the music" (Luke, 13th February, 2012), and a long tongue, epitomising his talkative character. The red lines were done by Shaun himself, which according to him were his representation of himself, "The red is me" (Shaun, 13th February, 2012). I could come to three possible conclusions and interpretations of the red lines. I noticed that when Shaun made the marks on Luke's drawing of him, he was in a teasing mode, to which Luke reacted by making similar marks on Shaun's drawing. Another plausible reason could be that, knowing that Luke's picture was going to be collected for the study, Shaun could have wanted to have his mark on it.   Another reason could be that Shaun made the

mark to show some form of contempt at possibly not liking the drawing as a representation of himself. In fact, Luke commented about this, showing his lack of understanding for Shaun's red marks, "Shaun scribbled on my drawing. He scribbled on a drawing of himself," (Luke, 13th February, 2012).   In this plethora of "interpersonal dialogues" (Brooks, 2005, p. 83), the two friends were "playing *at* drawing" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 274), using the drawing as a way to playfully socialise and develop their friendship (Nicolopoulou, 1997), where they communicated their moods, emotions and interactions within a framework that "defined, confirmed, and perhaps maintained their friendship in the classroom" (Kendrick and McKay, 2004, p. 122).   Conceivably, this interaction reflected their ways of responding, negotiating and contesting each other's drawings in their endeavour to understand and shape their friendship (Mavers, 2011).

By time, Luke enlarged his circle of friends, and befriended Nicholai, a shy and compliant child. Luke drew four drawings of Nicholai, showing the significance of their relationship.

Figure 6.39
Luke celebrating his friendship with Nicholai.

LH39: Mum and I / Nicholai and I

LH39 (Figure 6.39), was initially a drawing of Luke and his mother. Conversely, in the post-drawing conversation I had with Luke a couple of days later, he changed his meaning, and interpreted the two figures as Nicholai and himself jumping at school. It also appeared to me that the close mother-son relationship he initially portrayed through his drawing was relocated to his relationship with Nicholai, confirming the close connection between the two. The other three drawings, in which Luke drew Nicholai, were based on real-life events that were common to the two boys. In *LH33: Mummies and boys at school* Luke drew himself and Nicholai being accompanied by their respective mothers to school, emphasising their common morning ritual. In the other two drawings, *LH34* (Figure 6.40) and *LH35*:*Luxol outing 2*, which are very similar, Luke made a representation of a school outing where the children, accompanied by their KGA, went to a local play area called Luxol to play football. The drawings also included other peers and their mothers.

Figure 6.40
Luke with Nicholai and other friends on a school outing.

LH34: Luxol outing 1
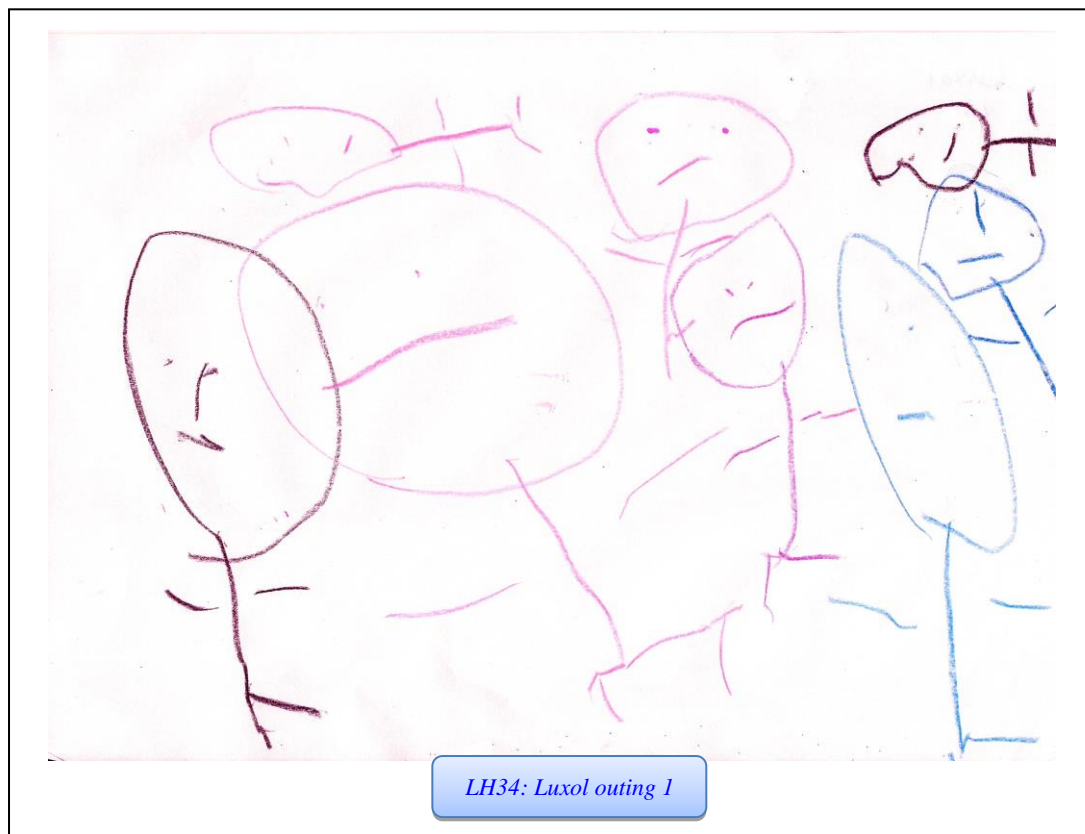
In my view, Luke was using the drawings to explore, define and confirm his new, evolving friendships as well as position himself within the social group of his friends. These peer-related drawings manifested the direct and indirect influence of his friends on the content of his drawings (Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Hall, 2010b).

6.3.2 Weather and Sky Features: Sky and sun, rainbow, rain and stars.

Weather and sky features appeared in fifty-two of Luke's drawings, making it his second common theme. None of these drawings solely and exclusively focused on such features, but they were commonly incorporated as part of the drawings to complement, embellish and include more detail to his static pictures. Luke often used *Weather and Sky Features* metaphorically, to help him express himself better and communicate a particular meaning, as I shall explain below. I classified the drawings that fell under this content theme under three sub-categories: *Sky and sun, rain and rainbow,* and *stars.* Table 6.4 illustrates the number of occurrences Luke drew in respective of each category listed, starting from the most to the least common.

Table 6.4
List of sub-categories from the content theme of Weather and Sky features

Sub-categories from the content theme of *Weather and Sky Features*	Number of occurrences
Sky and sun	35
Stars	13
Rain and rainbow	4
Total number of occurrences	52

Figure 6.41 provides a montage of a sample of Luke's drawings which includes various *Weather and Sky Features*.

Figure 6.41
A montage of a sample of Luke's drawings that illustrates different weather and sky features.

Weather & Sky features

Sky & sun

LH40: An ice-cream in the sun

LH51: Jack jumping in a pool

LH47: Rockets and a wall (stars as part of a space drawing)

LH50: Animals playing

LH31:Jacob in a volcano

Rain & rainbows

Stars

LH36: Two diamonds in the sky

LH46: Rockets fighting the star

LH10: Dad by himself

LH5: Two men playing foot

Sky and sun.

Luke had twenty drawings in which he drew the sky. In fifteen of these, he also included the sun, while in two of them he drew the sky in black to denote a night atmosphere. Considering Luke's drawings within my knowledge of his socio-cultural context, I concluded that whenever Luke drew a light, blue sky and a big, yellow sun, he often wanted to convey a sense of well-being, fun and happiness in his picture. Usually, he included such weather features in drawings that reflected people, things and events that he liked, wished for or were reminiscent of an enjoyable experience. *LH40* (Figure 6.42)*,* for example, shows an ice-cream melting in the sun, which could have easily been representing a real life experience or a wish to have an ice-cream, something which Luke loved and made him feel good.

Figure 6.42
Weather and sky features that reflect Luke's positive feelings.

LH40: An ice-cream in the sun

Luke drew *LH50* (Figure 6.43) during a family picnic. He was excited on that day. It was the week before his mother was due for surgery, and going for a picnic as a family, was an actuation of one of his wishes. He was also eager to make use of the animals' ready-made cut-outs which I added to his bag. Additionally, the outdoor environment provided a good contextual inspiration for his animal text, which

together with the drawing of the bright, cloudless skies, and the big yellow sun, used metaphorically to "suit the situation" (Nielsen, 2009, p.90), created a good backdrop, that reflected the actual experience and his jolly demeanor of the day.

Figure 6.43
Weather and sky features that reflect the actual experience.

LH50: Animals playing

LH51 (Figure 6.44) likewise illustrates a positive experience, which in this case, was imaginary for most part of it. The depiction shows Jack, Luke's African cousin, diving in a pool with his imaginary dog. Luke began by illustrating a bright sun in the sky which set the ambience for his drawing, and created an atmosphere for "drawing to mean" (Hope, 2008, p. 44). As Egan (1998) suggests, Luke was using the depiction of the sunny images as a metaphor to extend his current feelings and emotions on paper. He then drew the water, his African cousin Jack, and a dog, jumping in the pool, head down. The drawing of the dog figure probably communicated Luke's wish to have a dog; a wish which he had also expressed verbally at school. In its totality, the picture conveyed a positive aura established by the drawing of the bright weather features and people, places and animals Luke liked.

Figure 6.44
A drawing of the sun which sets the tone for a positive mood.

LH51: Jack jumping in a pool

Stars.

Luke had thirteen drawings in which he drew stars. His particular interest in stars could have emanated from various sources: from real-life experiences, from animated films he watched which included space scenes, from the space-related stickers which I provided and which included pictures of stars, aliens, rockets and planets, and from a set of golden star-stickers in his phonics book which he used as a reward system. Brooks (2004) states that, "one of the qualities of drawing is its generative and divergent possibilities" (p. 49). In fact, Luke drew stars in three diverse ways, each conveying a different meaning. On four occasions, he made use of the space-themed stickers to draw interplanetary scenes; on two occasions he drew stars on a dark night; and on seven occasions he used stars as a way to reward his hard-work of his drawings.

I now refer to *LH3* (Figure 6.45), as an example of one of Luke's space scenes. Making use of only the ready-made stickers, Luke explained the drawing as thus, "A space rocket … a star … that is a robot … Now I am going to do the world" (Luke, 12th February, 2012). Even if at the denotation level the drawing showed a space scene, the connoted meaning behind the drawing was that of friendship, highlighting the importance of establishing relationships for him, where he continued his description by pairing the objects and explaining:

> He [*the alien*] is going to find his friend … This rocket should have a friend rocket … This [*first rocket*] is going to meet this one [*the second rocket*], this [*the alien*] is going to meet this one [*robot*], this [*the top star*] is going to meet this [*second star*] and this [*world*] is going to meet that one [*planet*] … This is the friend of this one and they will meet each other… They are all his friends.
>
> (Luke, 12th February, 2012).

Figure 6.45
A space scene with stars that conveyed notions of friendship.

LH3: A space scene

Luke had two drawings, *LH36* and *LH18,* in which he drew the skies at night, adorning them with stars. He metaphorically interpreted *LH36* (Figure 6.46) as two diamonds in the sky. His main aim in this drawing was to experiment with glitters and their effects, something which he observed his peers doing at school. The shimmering materiality of the glitters and sequins inspired him to metaphorically typify the stars as diamonds. Following Kress' (1997) notion of "successive transitions" (p. 29) Luke moved between modes, contexts, ideas and meanings: from exploring the modes of dabbing and spreading glitters, which he borrowed from the "original site to the site of recontextualisation" (Bezemer and Kress, 2008, p. 169) that is, from the school context to his drawing at home; and from drawing stars to ascribing them with the symbolic signification of diamonds which he postulated verbally. Using Van Leeuwen's (2005), concept of "experiential metaphors" (p. 29), as a way to express ideas, Luke was probably fusing previous concrete experiences of looking at a night sky where he could have overheard an adult commenting that they looked like diamonds to his physical interaction with the glitters and sequins, where he could have considered their affordances as apt to represent his intention.

Figure 6.46
A drawing of two stars, metaphorically described as "two diamonds in the sky".

LH36: Two diamonds in the sky

LH18 (Figure 6.47), represents Luke and his mother walking together under a dark, starry night. The main elements in this drawing are the stars: the ready-made stickers Luke attached and the stars his mother drew for him.

Figure 6.47
A star drawing based on a real-life episode.

LH18: My mum and I walking in the dark
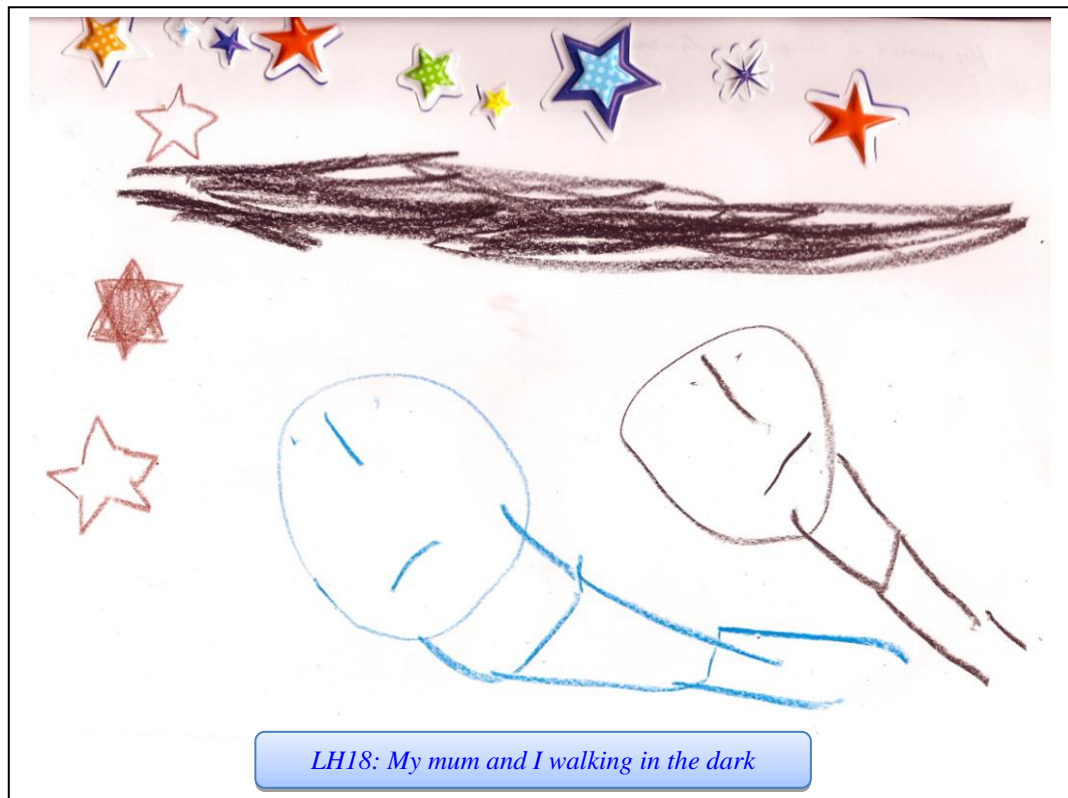
After attaching a number of coloured star stickers at the top of the page, Luke proceeded by drawing a thick black line to signify the night sky. Wanting to draw a star and not knowing how, he asked his mother to model-draw a few stars for him. Not liking the shape of the first, and complaining that the second was way below the night sky, as "It is supposed to be in the sky" (Luke, 23rd February, 2012), Luke asked his mother to re-draw a third one for him. He continued his drawing by depicting, "Mummy and I. We are walking. By night. Because it was dark.". So while at the denotation level the focus was on creating a dark starry sky, at the connotation level, Luke's representation and description of the drawing focused on his relationship with his mother. The drawing instilled a sense of serenity, romanticism and well-being that highlighted the intimate bond between the two. Moreover, the drawing was done in full complicity with his mother, who modelled and drew stars for him, shared

ideas, and prompted suggestions in a close, social space where, as is epitomised by Edmiston (2008), together they co-authored the stars that shaped their ideas, understandings and meanings.

On a particular day at home, Luke drew six drawings of family members in quick succession. On finishing each drawing, he attached one of the star stickers from the space-themed sheets, claiming, "Let me stick a congratulation" (Luke, 9th February, 2012). In this case, the star stickers were not actually related to the image but Luke was using them as a way to reward himself for his work. One such example of a drawing is *LH10* (Figure 6.48). As his mother explained, Luke probably, "got the idea of using stickers on every page as a sign of *Congratulations*, from a phonics book that we have, where for every completed page he awards himself with a star." (Mother, 17th February, 2012).

Figure 6.48
Attaching a star-sticker as a reward for good work.

LH10: Dad by himself

Luke gave a different interpretation to the stars he drew, depending on the intentional meaning he wanted to convey and the possibilities offered by the modes used and the drawing itself. This brings to mind Oksanen's (2008) notion that children's use of experiential metaphors reflects an amalgam of influences from popular media, their personal experiences and knowledge they obtained from real-world sources that make part of their "endless chain of production, filtration and recycling of signs" (p. 241). In line with Jolley's (2010) and Wright's (2011, 2010b) view, in these drawings, Luke used and re-used a combination of star signifiers which he drew from his social and cultural contexts, to meet the interests and meanings he wanted to convey, both real and imagined.

Rain and rainbows.

Luke had four drawings in which he depicted the rain. Sometimes he also drew clouds, a rainbow and the sun. Prompted by his mother, Luke used these drawings as a means of combining and transforming his knowledge and understanding in a personal and meaningful way of what sometimes happens after a rain shower. Referring to *LH5* (Figure 6.49) as an exemplar, Luke explained "I drew a rainbow because there was the rain and the sun. These are the clouds and then the rainbow" (16th February, 2012).

Figure 6.49
Luke combining, transforming and conveying his knowledge about the weather.

LH5: Two men playing football

Luke particularly liked rainbows, a phenomenon also observed in Coates and Coates'
(2006) study, who claim that rainbows are a common element in children's drawings.
Luke could still recall the times when he saw a real one. Moreover, at school he
frequently sang *The Rainbow Colours Song* (Jenkins, 2010) with his peers, where he
liked to order the colours accordingly; an observation also made by Coates and
Coates (2011) in relation to the children in their study. As indicated by Luke,
drawing rainbows also put him in a cheerful mood, "Give me all the colours so that I
will draw a rainbow. Singing a rainbow song. It is a rainbow. It is a rainbow. It is a
beautiful, beautiful, rainbow" (16th February, 2012).

6.3.3 Miscellaneous objects: Digital equipment, warfare equipment and trophies, everyday objects and other oddities

My initial aim for creating a miscellaneous content theme was to group together all those odd objects which emerged in the three children's drawings, but did not fall in any of the other twelve themes identified. The twenty-five, one-off objects that I categorised under this category were very different from child to child, and even within one child's drawings. When I came up with this theme, I never thought that it could end up being one of the dominating themes for any one of the children. Identifying *Miscellaneous Objects* as one of Luke's leading themes compelled me to partially change my method of analysis and adapt accordingly. Like with all the other twelve content areas, I had to find the best way to group the twenty-five unfitting *Miscellaneous Objects* into sub-categories. I came up with three sub-categories which, unlike the other content themes, were unrelated to each other. These included *Everyday Objects and other Oddities, Warfare Equipment and Trophies* and *Digital Equipment.* Table 6.5 illustrates the number of occurrences in Luke's drawings with respect to each category listed, starting from the most to the least common.

Table 6.5
List of sub-categories from the content theme of Miscellaneous objects.

Miscellaneous Objects Sub-categories	Number of occurrences
Everyday objects and other oddities	13
Warfare equipment and trophies	8
Digital equipment	5
Total number of occurrences	25

Considering all objects depicted, I came to the conclusion that probably Luke saw it as necessary to include so many odd objects in his drawings because he had a "concern for detail and factual accuracy" (Coates and Coates, 2011, p. 102). In my opinion, this was an important factor for Luke that abetted him to provide a comprehensive picture of his representations to communicate his specific and intended meaning. In their sporadic occurrences and idiosyncratic features, these objects were frequently a crucial part of the drawing; at other times, Luke simply included them as an accessory to the picture, albeit an important one. Figure 6.50 is a

montage of Luke's drawings that provides some acuity in the range of the *Miscellaneous Objects*.

Figure 6.50
A montage of a sample of Luke's drawings illustrating Miscellaneous Objects

Miscellaneous Objects

Digital equipment

LS12: Myself (wearing headphones)

LS7: The fallen aeroplane

LS9: Eyeballs

Everyday objects and other oddities

LS3: The rescue (concrete seat)

LS20: (ladder in) Luxol outing

Warfare equipment & trophies

LH22: Cutting the bad guy out 2 (with a good guy holding a knife, a sword and a gun and honoured with a medal and a trophy)

*LH16: (heels on) Mum, dad Matthias and I*

LH4: Fruits in a bowl

Everyday objects and other oddities.

The first sub-category I came up with under the Luke's *Miscellaneous Objects* content theme was that of *Everyday Objects and other Oddities,* which as the title denotes incorporates mundane objects. These were so heterogeneous and wide-ranging that I could not categorise them under other sub-categories.   From the outset, the objects might look peculiar, without any significant meaning; however, on closer analysis, I came to the conclusion that most of these objects carried a noteworthy association and connotation to Luke's concerns and values. The heels Luke drew on his mother's shoes in *LH16: Mum, dad, Matthias and I,* for example, was probably his way to concede his mother's wish to wear heels again, something which, due to a medical condition she had, she could not do. This was partially the reason for her undergoing surgery. The nappy Luke drew on Jacob, in *LH31: Jacob in a volcano,* was done with the intent to tease his younger brother, "I will make Jacob a nappy... Ha! Ha! …That is Jacob's nappy" (23rd February, 2014), probably, to emphasise the fact that his brother was younger than him, which was an important issue for Luke.

Figure 6.51
Mundane objects: fruits in a bowl.
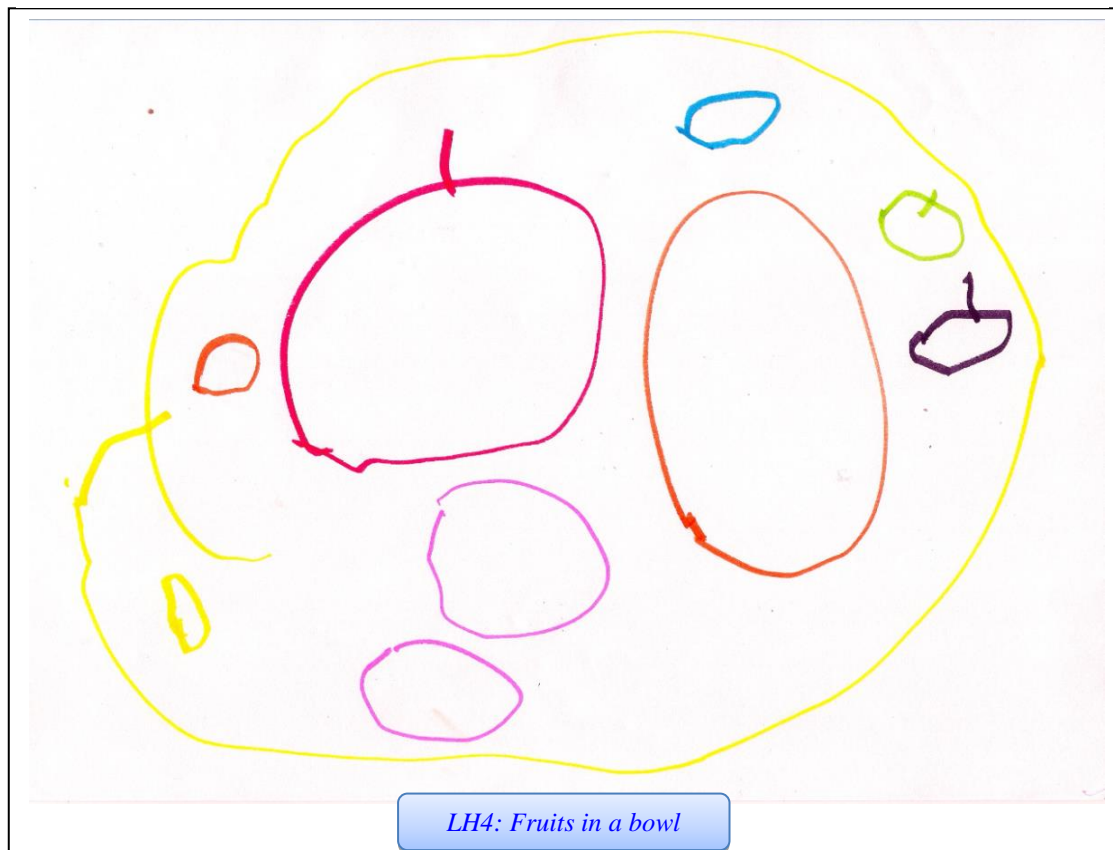
LH4: Fruits in a bowl

Other odd objects which Luke drew, included a fruit bowl in *LH4* (Figure 6.51), a ladder in *LS20: Luxol outing* where he drew himself climbing it to reach the stars, a piano in *LS7: The fallen aeroplane*, boxes to hold the aeroplane together in *LS23: An aeroplane*, eyeballs that fire at the bad guys in *LS9: Eyeballs* and a seat made of concrete in *LS3: The rescue* which could have been inspired by a set of benches he saw in Gozo. While I could not come to specific conclusions about the meaning of these last objects, mainly because Luke did not elaborate on them, yet, they mirrored some of his everyday experiences and his version of meaning-making as influenced by his socio-cultural context. In this way, Luke shifted from communicating his own world of thoughts, to communicating perceptions of his own society and culture, an occurrence also indicated by Hodge and Kress (1988). This also echoes MacNaughton's (2004) claim, that children's drawings are conditioned by pre-existing social and cultural discourses, circumstances and influences. The amalgamation of interest, detail and concepts, once again unveils that children's drawings reflect complex thinking processes, associations and connections between a child's internal and external worlds (Pahl, 1999b).

Warfare equipment and trophies.

Another sub-category was that of *Warfare Equipment and Trophies,* which Luke drew in thirteen of his pictures. These included combat accessories such as ropes to tie the bad guys, cages to imprison them, and knives, guns and swords to shoot and kill them. *LH22* (Figure 6.52) shows Luke as the good guy holding a knife, a sword and a gun to fight and kill the bad guy. The drawing also shows a medal on his chest and a trophy in his hand, as a reward for his achievement. While I regard it that I have amply discussed similar drawings, I find it opportune to accentuate the fact, that the depiction of these objects, not only echoed Luke's articulate thoughts and highlighted his emphasis for detail which, in the main, he resolutely included to provide a comprehensive warfare narrative, but it also showed his passion, insights and exposure to combat objects and vocabulary.

Figure 6.52
Warfare equipment: A good guy holding a knife, a sword and a gun.

LH22: Cutting the bad guy out 2

Digital equipment.

Luke had five drawings where he drew *Digital Equipment.* These included Wii controls, a set of headphones and video-cameras, which reflected Luke's interest in technology as play paraphernalia. The Wii controls featured in two of Luke's drawings. Referring to *LH52* (Figure 6.53) as an exemplar, Luke drew his mother and himself with a remote control in their hands playing virtual swordfights. The passage of conversation that ensued between the two provides a window into Luke's thinking process, his relationship with his mother as well as his socio-cultural environment:

Mother:	What are we doing there?
Luke:	Fighting…We are playing Wii swordfight … I want to draw the tv. Let me draw the remotes.
Mother:	With the remotes in our hands.
Luke:	The orange ones… Yesterday, we were eating popcorn and playing.

(20th March, 2012).

This comment not only showed that Luke was replicating an everyday experience, but he also illustrated his emphasised constancy to reality.

Figure 6.53
Digital equipment: Luke and his mother with a remote control each, playing sword fight on Wii.

LH52:Playing Wii swordfight with mum

In two other drawings, Luke drew a set of headphones: one for his friend Shaun and a second one for himself, presumably communicating his wish to have one. It seemed that Luke was not only fascinated by the digital equipment he drew and enjoyed making use of, but including specific detail was crucial for the enunciation of his meaning. This combination of objects, could be an indication of his "collinearity" (Matthews, 1999, p. 25), that could reflect the permutation of his intentionality, merged with his cognitive and affective processes as well as the influence of the contextual and social environment.

6.4 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter I have discussed Luke's drawings from a semiotic perspective. Examining his representations at both the denotation and connotation levels, the findings show that:

- Out of a total of eighty drawings, Luke drew fifty-five at home and twenty-five at school; evidently showing his preference to draw in the former setting.

- Luke preferred drawing pattern was that of *simple mode* (sixty-three drawings) and *complex theme* (fifty-four drawings), where he appeared to give more thought to the content rather than to the form of his drawings.

- The three dominating thematic strands in Luke's drawings were those of *People, Weather and Sky Features* and *Miscellaneous Objects.*

- Drawings of his family, siblings and friends showed Luke's position within his family and the importance relationships had for him.

- Luke drew twenty-two self-portraits in past, present or future identities, real and imagined; this is significant, especially when, as Hall (2010b) claims, this is not a favoured theme of boys.

- Luke's focus on drawing *People* defined him as a person-centred.

- Most frequently, the drawing of *Weather and Sky Features* such as the depiction of a bright sun and blue skies set the tone for his representations: fun, happiness and a sense of well-being.

- *Miscellaneous Objects* which included the drawing of *Digital Equipment, Warfare and Trophies* and *Everyday Objects and Other Oddities* emerged as a strong theme in Luke's drawings, most probably because they helped him articulate his thoughts, provide a comprehensive narrative and communicate his passion for technological equipment and warfare objects.

- *Graphic narratives* were amongst Luke's preferred types of representations, where using the drawing as an arena for play, he accompanied his representations with detailed narratives, vocalisation and sound effect. In his narratives he juggled with moral values of good and evil, powerful and powerless and life and death.

- Luke also used his drawings to externalise his wishes, moods, thoughts and emotions, and convey them to his parents and others.

- His mother and friends were very influential in various ways: in the choice of the subject of his drawings, in the use of different modes and media, by taking up their suggestions and by copying them.

In the next chapter, I discuss Thea's and Bertly's case studies albeit with less depth than Luke's, where I bring out the commonalities and idiosyncrasies between the three. Examining the three children's respective *semiotic* and *configuration* styles, and how the availability of modes can be an influential factor for creating meaning, I create and present a summary of the children's use of *simple-complex modes* and *themes* to suggest that these help form what I called the *drawer profile*. I suggest that the interrelation of the *drawer profile* together with the children's *types of drawing* (as autobiographical, graphic-narrative, person-centred or subject-matter generalists) and their *drawer patterns* as verbalisers or visualisers, can help define their *identity as drawers*. Like in Luke's case, I also discuss the preferred thematic strands of each child to come up with an *Inventory of Content* that lists the three children's emergent themes from the most to the least common. Drawing parallelisms between the three children's drawings and analysing them at the connotation level, I shall also come up with common meaning strands. The different influences which affected the children's drawings will also be discussed.