MEANING-MAKING

IN

YOUNG CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

VOLUME 2

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Meaning-making

in

Young Children's Drawings

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Rings and hearts for Darren – by Thea

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"Text making is social action."

- Diane Mavers (2011, p.50)

Chapter 7

Analysis, Findings and Discussion

CHAPTER 7
ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter Six, I discussed in-depth Luke's case study. I analysed the other two cases in a similar way, and in this chapter I bring together the data and findings of the three children. Structuring this chapter around my four research questions, I begin by briefly discussing Thea's and Bertly's use of *simple-complex modes* and *themes* while associating them with Luke's. I review the *modes* the three children used as a way to identify their respective *semiotic styles*. Discussing the children's *configuration styles*, or in other words, their choice of *simple-complex themes*, which I combine with their *drawer patterns* and *types of drawing*, I argue that these help define what I termed as the children's *drawer identity*. I then examine and analyse the prevailing *themes* and *meaning-making* strands that emerged across all the three children's graphic representations. I also identify possible *influences* that could have affected the children's drawings. Subsequently, I critically discuss and evaluate commonalities and idiosyncrasies within and across the three cases.

In this chapter, I shall mainly portray drawings from Thea's and Bertly's case studies, as many of Luke's drawings were included in Chapter Six. For ease of reference, I included a copy of all of the three children's drawings, which can be accessed from the SD (memory card) presented at the back of this thesis, under each child's respective folder.

7.2 The Form and Content of the Children's Drawings

This study shall demonstrate that each child had a unique and personal "drawing style" (Watson and Schwartz, 2000, p. 50), by which I mean having specific choices for the use of preferable modes and media, distinctive *semiotic* and *configuration styles*, *patterns of drawing*, and recurring connotations for meaning-making. These personal preferences, choices and styles of *what* and *how* to draw, can define what Pahl (2007b) calls, "producer's identities" (p. 388). I propose that by analysing the children's use *of simple-complex modes* and the inferred *simple-complex themes,* the children's drawings can be interpreted "as a component of intersemiotic meaning

making" (Ormerod and Ivanic, 2002, p. 67). The subsequent plotting of the drawings on the respective *Data Cross-grids* provides an instantaneous graphic impression and distinctive portrait of the children's *semiotic* and *configuration* styles. In view of this, in Section 6.3, I discuss the three children's use of *simple-complex modes* while in Section 6.4, I analyse the *simple-complex themes* the three children represented in their drawings.

To bring out and cross-compare the particular drawing patterns of each child, I included a copy of each of the three children's *Data cross-grids* on acetate in Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 respectively. The transparency of the acetate allows the immediate comparison of the drawing styles between the three children. The top grid represents Luke's eighty drawings, the second represents Thea's eighty-four drawings, and the third represents Bertly's fifty-nine drawings. As I explained in Chapters Four and Five, the linear split in each grid infers at a glance the commonalities and idiosyncrasies in the three children's drawings and hence, the uniqueness in each of their drawing styles. It also shows the frequency and sequence of the home and school drawings identified through the colour, number and letter-coded system adopted. Table 7.1 below provides a summary of the duration and number of drawings each child created in the respective setting.

Table 7.1
Total number of home and school drawings and their duration by child.

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
Thea	40	15hrs 1mins	44	16hrs 8mins	84	31hrs 9 mins
Bertly	39	2hrs 46mins	20	3hrs 56mins	59	6hrs 42mins
Total of drawings	134	23hrs10mins	89	24hrs19mins	223	47hrs 29mins

Figure 7.1
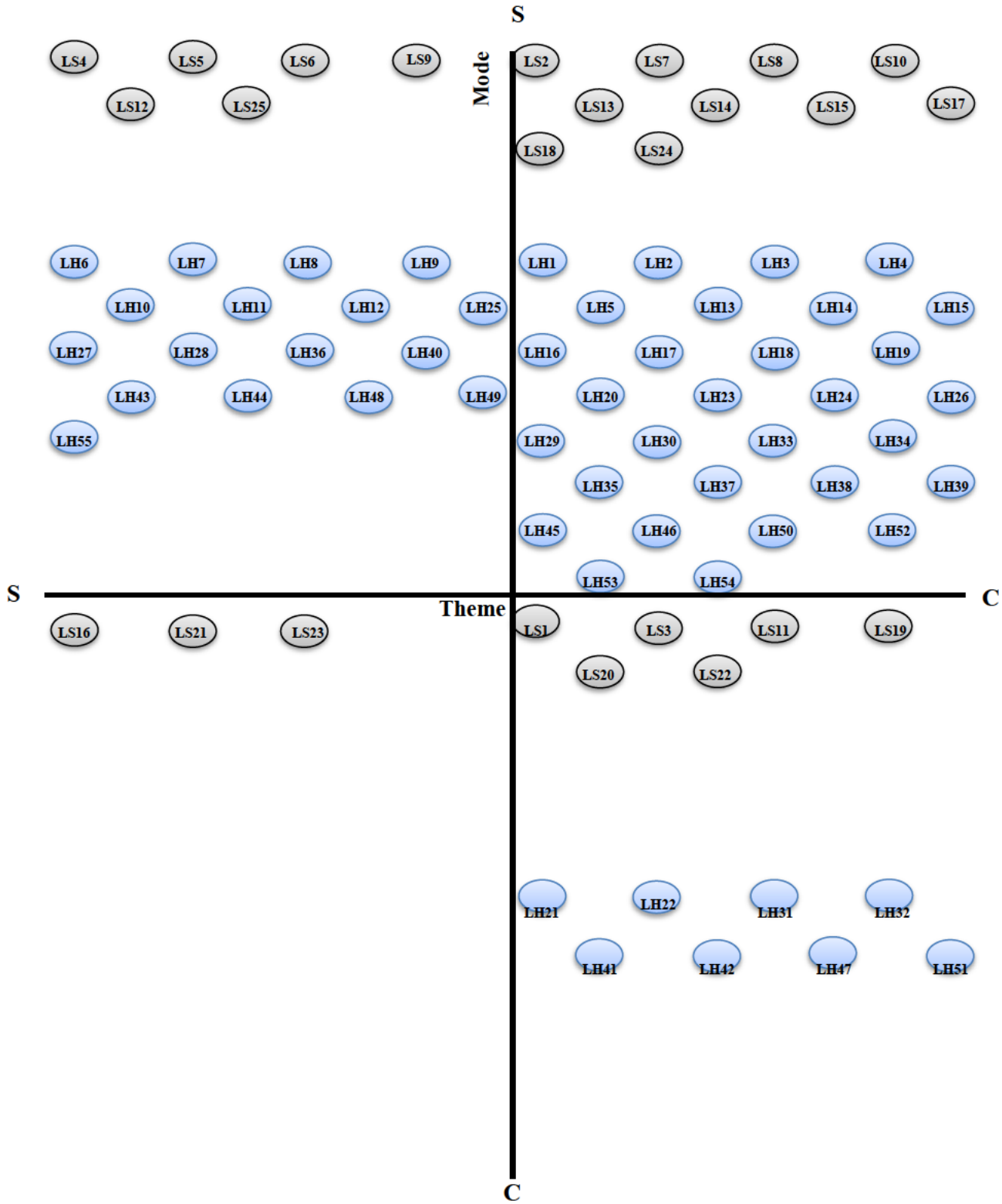*Luke's Data cross-grid that illustrates his drawing preferences.*

Figure 7.2
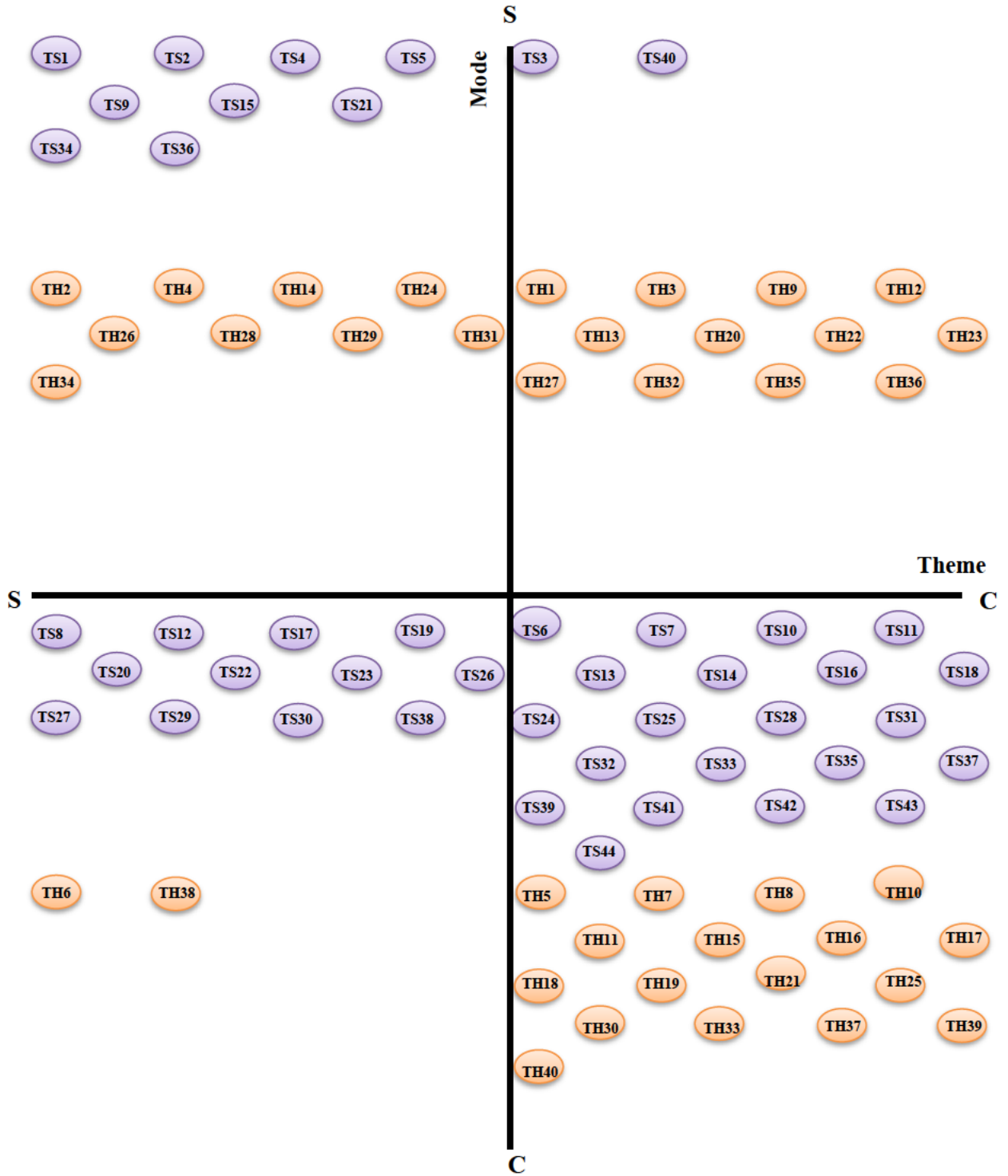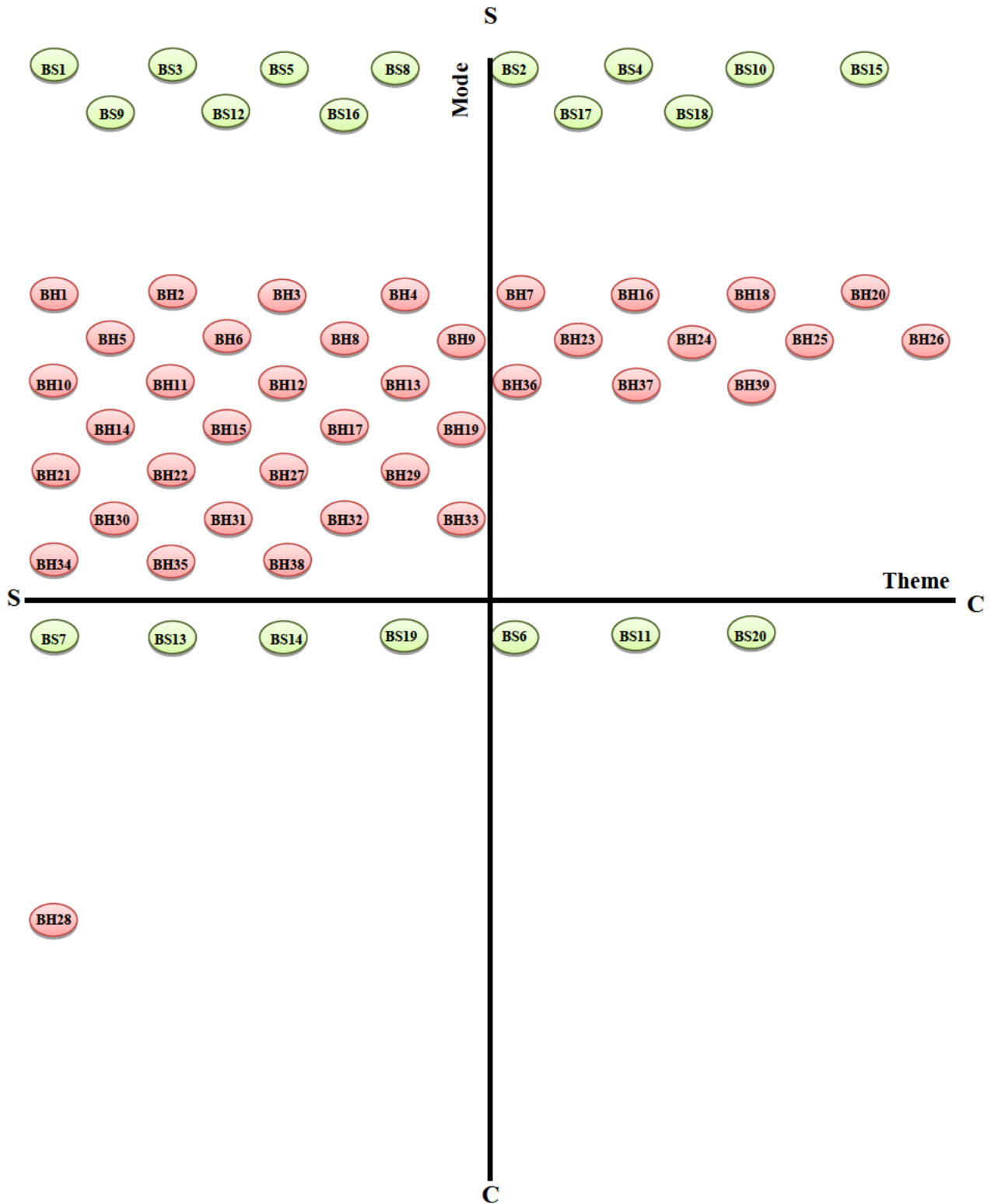*Thea's Data Cross-grid that illustrates her drawing preferences.*

Figure 7.3
Bertly's Data Cross-grid that illustrates his drawing preferences.

7.2.1 Thea's use of simple-complex modes and themes

Thea's *Data Cross-grid* (Figure 7.2) shows that she drew a total of eighty-four drawings; forty, done at home and forty-four done at school. The school drawings, letter-coded *TS (Thea School)* and colour-coded in purple, are plotted at the upper part of each section of the grid, while the home drawings letter-coded *TH (Thea Home)* and colour coded in orange, are plotted in the lower part of each section. The duration of her drawings varied from thirty-three seconds to over fifty-eight minutes. The bottom, right corner of Thea's *Data Cross-grid* and its summary (Figure 7.4), clearly show that, with thirty-eight drawings (seventeen done at home and twenty-one done at school), Thea's preferred style of drawing was of using a *complex-mode* and a *complex-theme* (marked with a purple circle). She used the remaining styles relatively equally, where she drew eighteen drawings in her second favoured style, that of *simple mode* and *simple theme* (top, left corner), fourteen drawings in a *simple mode* and a *complex theme* (top, right corner), and fourteen drawings where she used a *complex mode* and a *simple theme* (bottom, left corner).

Figure 7.4
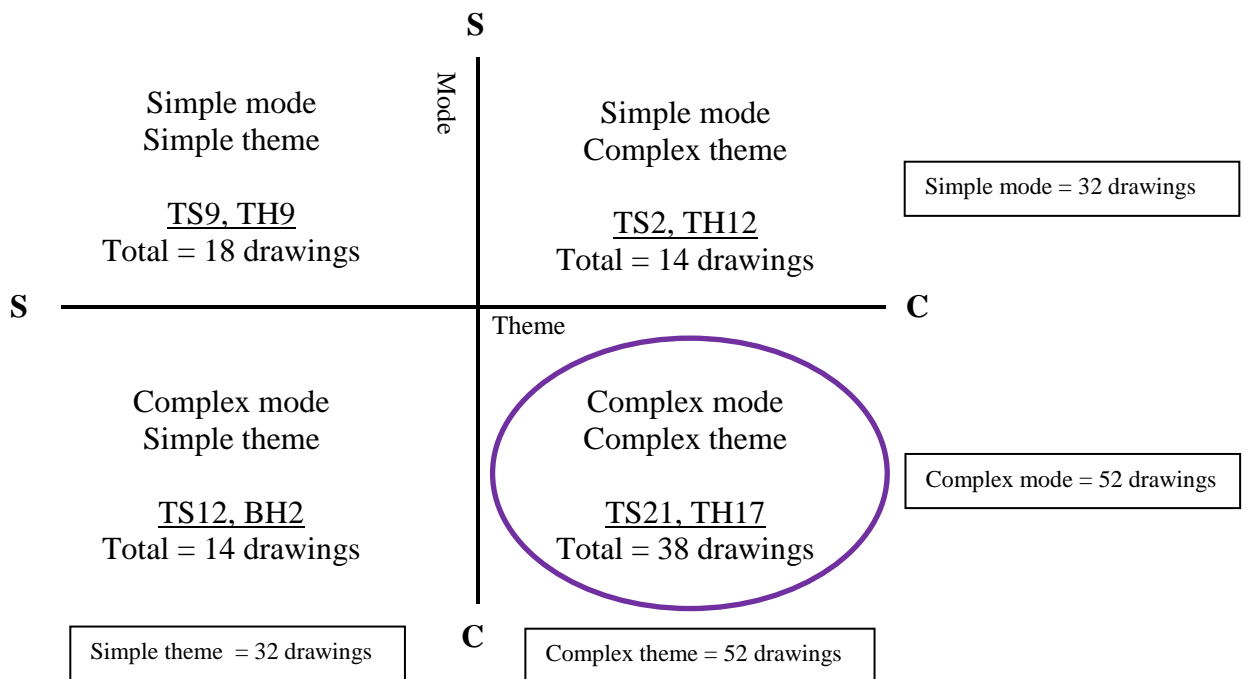*A summary of Thea's Data Cross-grid.*

Figure 7.5 below illustrates a montage of a sample of Thea's drawings that correspond to and exemplify each section of her grid.

Figure 7.5

A sample of drawings Thea's drawings in simple complex modes and themes that correspond to each section of the grid.

Mode

S

TS4: *A woman wearing many clothes*

TS1: *A man dressed in a koala bear shirt*

TS21: *The wicked witch*

TH2: *The Holy Mary*

TH22: *My family*

TS40: *Travelling in a car and aeroplane*

TH27: *Animals playing hide and seek*

TH20: *Dad coming home*

S

TS23: *An aeroplane that flies*

TS27: *The strongest man*

TH37: *Animals not allowed*

Theme

TS31: *The interactive whiteboard activity*

C

TS30: *Romina's aeroplane*

TS38: *A ship*

TH8: *Erica and mum before I was born*

TH10: *The reindeer*

C

7.2.2 Bertly's use of simple-complex modes and themes

Bertly's *Data Cross-grid* (Figure 7.3) shows that he drew a total of fifty-nine drawings: thirty-nine at home and twenty at school. The school drawings, which I letter-coded *BS* (*Bertly School)* and colour-coded in green, are plotted at the upper part of each section of the grid, while the home drawings, letter-coded *BH (Bertly Home)* and colour coded in red, are plotted in the lower parts of each section. Comparing the thirty-nine drawings Bertly did at home with the twenty he did at school, it appeared that he felt more at ease to draw in the former setting. The duration of Bertly's drawings varied from less than a minute to over thirty-three minutes each.

The *Data Cross-grid* and its summary (Figure 7.6), exemplify that, in the main, with thirty-four graphic representations (marked with a red circle), Bertly's drawings were, *simple in mode* and *simple in theme*. His second favoured style was to use a *simple mode* and *complex theme* (Figure 7.6, top, right corner). Bertly drew seventeen drawings within this category; eleven at home and six at school. The use of *complex modes* featured in only eight drawings, with seven of them done at school. Five of these drawings, which he did one at home and four at school, involved the representation of *simple themes* (bottom, left corner), while three of his drawings (bottom, right corner), which were all done at school, were a representation of *complex themes*.
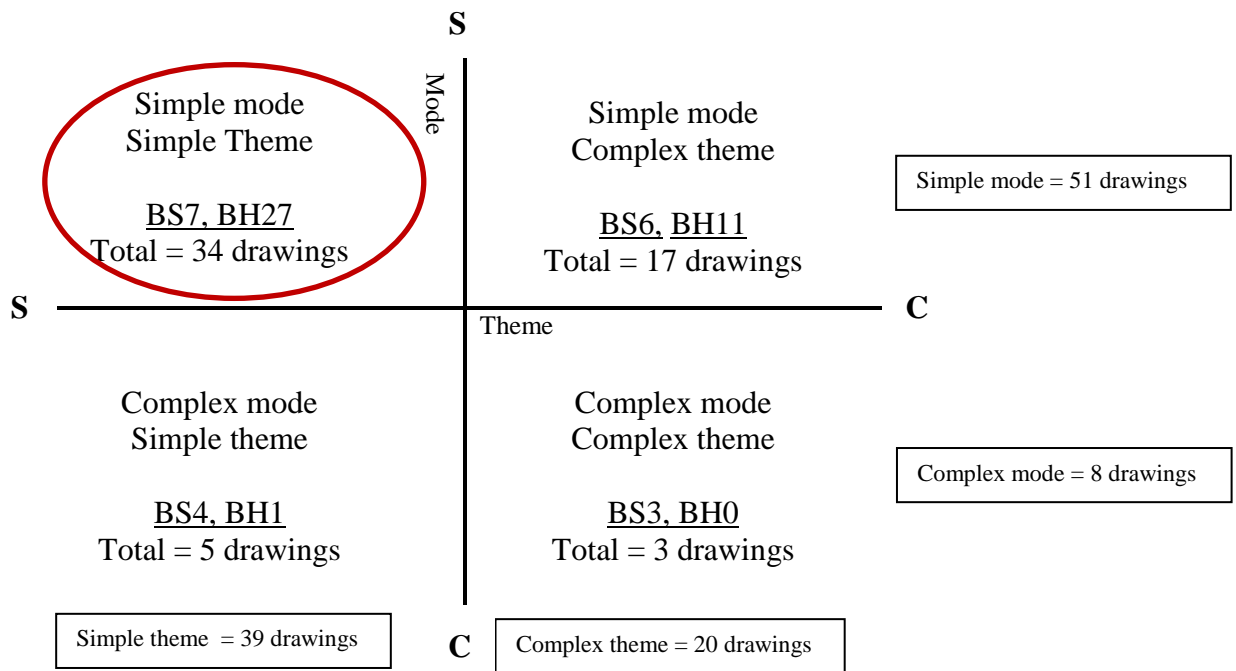
Figure 7.6
A summary of Bertly's Data Cross-grid.

	S	
Simple mode Simple Theme — BS7, BH27 Total = 34 drawings	Mode	Simple mode Complex theme — BS6, BH11 Total = 17 drawings
		Simple mode = 51 drawings
S ———	Theme	——— **C**
Complex mode Simple theme — BS4, BH1 Total = 5 drawings		Complex mode Complex theme — BS3, BH0 Total = 3 drawings
		Complex mode = 8 drawings
Simple theme = 39 drawings	**C**	Complex theme = 20 drawings

Figure 7.7 below, illustrates a montage of a sample of Bertly's drawings that correspond and exemplify each section of his *Data Cross-grid.*

Figure 7.7

A sample of Bertly's drawings in simple- complex modes and themes that correspond to each section of the grid.

BS9: Leaves

BS16: Fireworks

S

BS10: An apple and a mandarine in a box

BS4: Killing a dragon

BH35:Balloons

BH30:Grass in our field

BH23:The choo-choo train

BH7: Jack and the beanstalk

S

C

BS13: A portrait of myself with a moustache

BS19: A gate

BS20: Cooking chicken in the oven

BS7: An octopus

BH28:An octopus

C

BS6: Animals on a plane

BS11: A party at sea

7.2.3 Summary of the three children's use of simple-complex modes and themes

I find it appropriate here to refer to Luke's case study again and recapitulate that, with forty drawings plotted at the top, right corner of the *Data Cross-grid* (Figure 7.1), in the main, Luke preferred to draw in *simple mode* and *complex theme*. Drawing on the three children's respective *Data Cross-grids*, Table 7.2 provides a summary of the number of drawings each child did and their preferred use of *simple-complex modes* and *themes* (marked in bold), to define what I called, each child's drawer profile.

Table 7.2
Summary of the children's Data cross-grids that define their semiotic and configuration style.

Name of Child	Number of drawings				Drawer profile
	Semiotic style		Configuration style		
	Mode		Theme		
	Simple	Complex	Simple	Complex	
Luke	**63**	17	26	**54**	simple mode, complex theme
Thea	32	**52**	32	**52**	complex mode, complex theme
Bertly	**51**	8	**39**	20	simple mode, simple theme

Figure 7.8 provides a representation of each child's drawer profile. It shows that each child had a distinctive drawing preference and a unique *semiotic* and *configuration style* of drawing. The figure also helps the reader to understand why I opted to present Luke's case study in-depth as opposed to Bertly's or Thea's. Like Bertly, Luke preferred to draw in *simple-mode*, while like Thea, he preferred to draw *complex themes*. Thus, while Luke's drawing profile was unique in relation to the other two children, simultaneously it offered some similarities with each one.

Figure 7.8
A *representation of the three children's drawing preferences.*
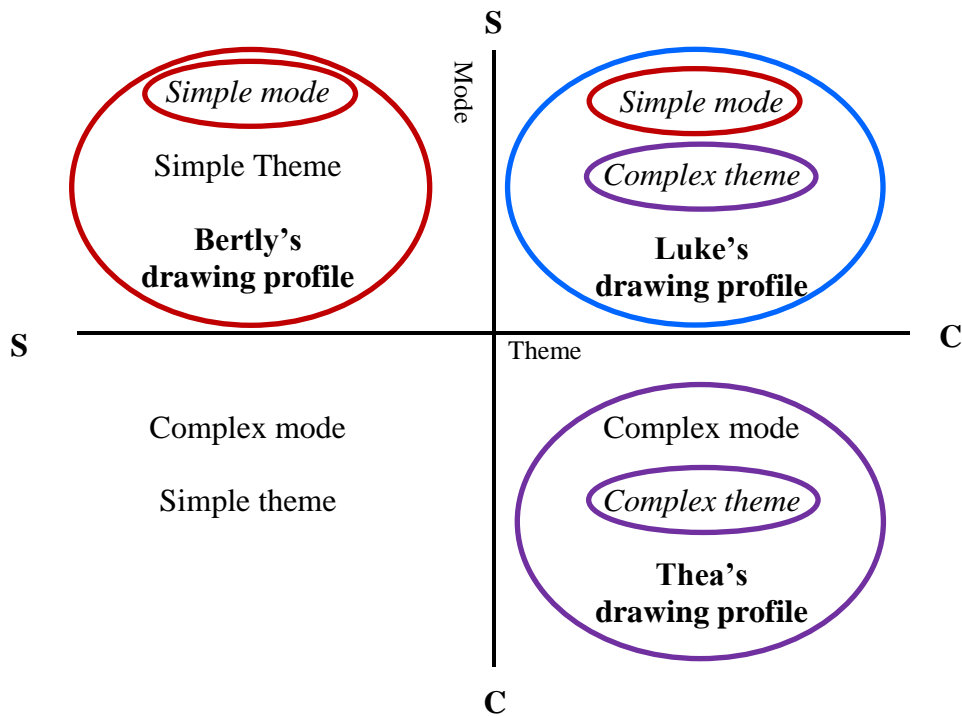
7.3 The Children's Semiotic Styles: The Use of Modes to Draw

To answer my first research question, that of evaluating the modes the three children used, I analysed Luke's, Thea's and Bertly's drawings and the data as represented on their respective *Data Logs* and *Data Cross-grids*. These findings show that each child had a personalised pattern of using *simple-complex modes* to create their drawings. It was apparent that with the majority of the drawings plotted at the top part of the *Data Cross-grid,* both Luke (Figure 7.1) and Bertly (Figure 7.3), preferred to use a *simple mode*. Contrastingly, with the preponderance of drawings plotted in the lower part of the grid, Thea's *Data Cross-grid* (Figure 7.2), signified that she preferred to use a *complex mode*.

As this study focused on drawing, it was palpable that the most prominent mode to feature in all the three children's graphic representations would be that of drawing. Both Luke and Bertly relied heavily on this mode. Bertly's preferred medium to draw was pencil-colours (Figure 7.9): he did forty of his drawings using exclusively this medium. It was also a relatively common occurrence for him to use only one or a limited number of colours to draw.

Figure 7.9
Bertly using the simple mode of drawing with his favourite medium, pencil colours.

Like Bertly, Luke's dominant mode was drawing, which he exclusively used in twenty-seven of his depictions. He preferred to draw either using crayons or gem-markers or a combination of both. While he regularly restricted his sketchy, *simple mode* drawings to the use of one medium and one colour, occasionally, he experimented with using multiple media within the same *simple mode* text. Over time, and after considerable exposure and observation of their peers, especially girls, who constantly made use of *complex modes*, it appeared that both boys began to show interest in trying relatively innovative semiotic resources. Figure 7.10 shows Bertly observing Thea (who does not show in the photograph) drawing and subsequently using the same media to create his drawing; a phenomenon also observed by Thompson (1999) with the children in her study. On those occasions when they opted to use multiple modes, both Bertly and Luke employed a significant amount of time exploring the related material at hand. This engaged them in a process where they moved from simply "doing" (p.159) a drawing to "making" (Thompson, 1999, p. 159) a representation.

Figure 7.10
Bertly observing Thea [not showing in the picture] drawing and imitating her use of media.

In contrast to the boys, Thea's *semiotic style* was dominated by a *complex mode*. With her dexterous and "mastery-oriented" (Dweck, 1986, p. 1040), attitude, and an innate motivation to draw and experiment with new material, she could be considered as an "experienced maker of signs in any medium that is to hand" (Kress, 1997, p. 8). While the mode of drawing featured highly in her graphic representations, so did other modes. For most of the time she acted multimodally, frequently moving within the same and across modes and signs: from drawing to writing, to talking, cutting and pasting, tracing and colouring, in "interplay of the different ways of meaning-making" (Cox, 2005, p. 122) (Figure 7.11). In a process of "transduction" (Kress, 1997, p. 29) she effectually made use of the aptness of the media available and through "successive transitions" (Kress, 1997, p. 29), she fluidly shifted across a multiplicity of modes and semiotic resources to "increase the meaning-making potential of [her] text" (Hull and Nelson, 2005, p. 225) while maintaining "constancy of meaning" (Mavers and Newfield, 2012).

Figure 7.11
Thea at school using multiple modes to create a complex drawing.

Repeating Dyson's (1986) claim, that children's *semiotic style*s and preferences emanate from personal and social reasons, I suggest that Thea's innate love for drawing, together with her familiarity with a diversity of media she acquired at home, coupled up with her inquisitiveness to try new ones, together with the kinaesthetic enjoyment she experienced when she used the semiotic resources available and the inspiration that sometimes the material evoked, drove her to overbearingly adopt a *complex mode*. Even when she kept to the use of one mode, such as, when she used the mode of drawing, she frequently changed the medium from crayons, to pencil-colours, to markers, gel pens or coloured pens, while constantly changing colours.

While I cannot make generalisations due to the small number of participants, I question whether the choice of a *simple mode* by Bertly and Luke, and a *complex mode* by Thea, could have been gender related. Blaise and Taylor (2012) and Millard and Marsh (2001), contend that the *form* and aesthetic appearance of a text can be gender specific. Anning and Ring (2004) and Hall (2008), suggest that boys, tend to resort to quick and sketchily drawing, as adopted by both Bertly and Luke. They also

argued that boys tend to be inclined, although not exclusively, to develop action representations and scenarios that are often actuated through an over-reliance of dark colours, a drawing preference illustrated in Luke's drawings. Millard and Marsh (2001) also assert that, in disparity, girls tend to spend considerable time in embellishing and decorating their text through the use of various media and modes, such as drawing with a broad array of colours, and gluing and attaching glitters, stickers and sequins. This statement purports that girls are inclined to use *complex modes*, as preferred by Thea.

7.3.1 The availability of modes as an influential factor

Basing her studies on socio-cultural theory, Pahl (2001b) states that, "text-making is shaped by the environment" (p.1), where the availability and suitability of the semiotic resources is influential for meaning-making (Bezemer and Kress, 2008; Halliday, 1978). The lack of a variety of semiotic resources and experiences at school prior to the study, could have delineated the boys' aptitude towards drawing, generated a sense of hesitancy in experimenting with new media, hindered the attainment of drawing skills, and limited them to use a *simple mode*, a conclusion also supported by findings from other studies (Frisch, 2006; Hull and Nelson, 2005; Kress, 2004; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007). While I endorse the influence of the environment in shaping meaning, I also argue that even if children are exposed to a variety of resources, they might choose not to use them, simply because, using *complex modes* does not meet their distinctive modal preferences or their current modal need.

During the study I provided the children with a variety of drawing material, and observed some new interest and experimentation on Bertly's and Luke's side; however, both boys' preferred *semiotic style* remained that of drawing in a *simple mode*. This was not the case with Thea, who immediately shifted to draw mainly in *complex mode*. While drawing in *complex mode* could have been Thea's preferred *semiotic style*, it is important to note that at home she regularly used a variety of drawing resources. Even if Thea preferred to use a *complex mode*, and she had ample material available to do so, she still occasionally designed drawings in *simple mode*. Thus, my findings support conclusions by Hall (2008), and Gardner (1980), which similarly reveal that even when children have a broad choice of resources at their

disposal, they show particular modal preferences and embrace the style that is relevant to them, as directed by their interests, the content of the text, the aptness of the modes available and the attributed meaning they want to convey at that particular moment. In my view and agreeing with Pahl (2007b), the children's choice of *semiotic style* reflected their personal drawing preferences as well as their character, disposition, social positioning and various aspects of identity formation. In conclusion I suggest that irrespective of their prevailing *semiotic style*, the children still shifted between *simple-complex* modal forms. While, in the main, Luke and Bertly seemed to prefer drawing in a *simple mode*, occasionally they still made use of *complex modes* while Thea, who seemed to prefer drawing in *complex modes*, at times opted to use *simple* forms.

My findings also show that, using a *simple mode* did not hamper the children from creating *complex themes* and meanings. In fact, using a *simple mode* and *complex theme*, was Luke's dominant drawing pattern and style. The use of a *simple mode* represented in his sketchy, monochrome drawings, possibly allowed him more flexibility and opportunity to focus his attention on the complexity of the theme and the creation of intricate "graphic-narratives" (Wright, 2007, p.1). Rather than diversifying his attention in orchestrating and synchronising the interplay between modes, in such instances, Luke seemed more focused in "bring[ing] meaning into being" (Kress, et al., 2001, p.70), where the *simple mode* of drawing served as an appropriate and efficient channel to create his particular *complex theme* graphic representations. While, as Kress et al. (2001) and Mavers (2011) suggest, the lack of interaction with different resources could result in limited acuity in the use of modes, simultaneously and as argued by other scholars (Halliday and Hasan, 1985; Kress, 2010, 2004; Kress and Jewitt, 2003) it can also create unique opportunities for meaning-making; in this case, it allowed Luke the possibility to develop *complex themes* in his texts.

7.3.2 The potential of modes in creating meaning

The three children seemed open to use a variety of modes which, in interplay between media and meaning, they manipulated, juxtaposed and translated in both their *simple* and *complex* forms. Sometimes, it seemed that specific modes were chosen for their potentialities to design the intended meaning, while on other occasions the choice of

mode and medium preceded, channelled and shaped the meaning. This was done in mainly two epitomes (Figure 7.12):

- Intention of meaning preceded and determined choice of mode:

  Children specifically chose a mode for its aptness and semiotic potentialities to design the intended meaning;

- Meaning-making as the result of modal functioning:

  Choice and materiality of the semiotic mode generated intention in the developing meaning-making;

Figure 7.12
The intended meaning can direct the choice of mode, while the choice of mode can generate meaning.
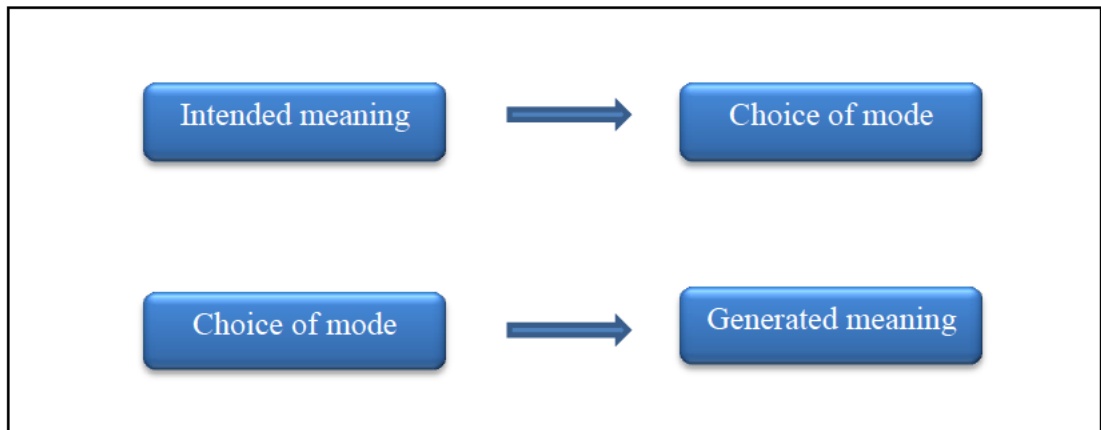
Intention of meaning determined the choice of mode.

At times, the children seemed to have clear, preconceived intentions of what they wanted to draw, and as Cox (2005), Heydon (2007), Jewitt (2009b), Kress and Jewitt (2003) and Mavers (2011) suggest, they meticulously chose the mode with purpose, according to its suitability, appropriateness and semiotic potentialities for the meaning they wanted to convey and the way they wanted to communicate it. When Thea wanted to draw a reindeer (*TH10,* Figure 7.13, Image 2), for example, she could have done so through the mode of drawing, but directed by her specific design, she opted for the materiality and dimensionality of the yellow pipe-cleaner available which she cut and taped to signify the antlers (Image 1).

Figure7.13

Intention of meaning determined the choice of mode: Thea cutting the pipe-cleaner to form the antlers, chosen for their materiality and dimensionality.

TH10: The reindeer

In *LH49:Me carrying a bag full of candy*, (discussed in Chapter Six, Figure 6.8, p. 187) Luke probably opted to use a lollipop stick to represent a rod from which to hold the bag, for its affordance. Its wooden texture and resemblance made it the most apt

modality to use for the meaning he wanted to convey, that is, of a wooden rod. This is clearly understood from Luke's comments which he made during the process of drawing, "I want to make a piece of sticks. Where are they? [*referring to the lollipop sticks*]… See what I am doing? … A stick to hold it… A stick to hold the bag" (Luke, 13th March, 2012). Similarly, wanting to communicate a sense of flying, in *BS6* (Figure 7.14), Bertly probably made a specific decision to use glitters to denote a sense of flying and perhaps even one of magic; an idea he borrowed from the girls in his class who frequently used glitters in lieu of pixie dust that fairies in animated cartoons, use to make things fly.

Figure 7.14
The intention of meaning determined the choice of mode: Bertly's use of glitters to denote a sense of flying.

BS6: Animals on a plane

This puts into perspective findings from several scholars (Hopperstad, 2008a; Kress, 2004, 1997; Kress and Van Leewen, 2001; Pahl, 2006b; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007), who claim that during their meaning-making process, children play and experiment with the form and materiality of the media to choose the mode that best suits their intended meaning. In the three instances described above, the choice of mode was guided by the affordance and meaning potential of the semiotic resource, which in

form of "semiotic regime" (Van Leeuwen 2005, p.61), reflected the children's interests, intended meanings and ways of configuring the world.

Meaning-making as a result of modal functioning.

The attractiveness, materiality and originality of the relatively novel media I provided during the study, often stimulated enthusiasm and inspiration in the three children to draw. As also observed by Jewitt et al. (2000), this enticement was then blended with a sense of curiosity in how to manipulate the new semiotic resource as the starting point for meaning-making. The use of tape, glitters, lollipop sticks, ribbon and pipe-cleaners, for example, provided the children with kinaesthetic pleasure and were often, a source of what Price et al. (2012) would describe as a sensual connection and experimentation of "what each mode can do for them" (Hopperstad, 2008a, p.193). Maintaing that text-making is intentional (Kress, 1997), in such instances, the process of meaning-making developed as a result of modal functioning. When, for example, I presented the children with a set of black pipe-cleaners at school, Bertly immediately whispered, "moustache" (7th March, 2012), which inspired him to draw a self-portrait of himself with a moustache (*BS13*, Figure 7.15).

Figure 7.15
Meaning-making as a result of modal functioning: The pipe-cleaners inspired Bertly to draw himself with a moustache.

BS13: A portrait of myself with a moustache

Similarly, when I gave Thea a set of ribbons, she related to it as hair, "This is like hair … I am going to use them for hair… Then I am going to make you [to mother] with that hair" (8th February, 2012). This materialised into a graphic representation where she drew her mother and sister with fancy hairdos by opting and using the most suitable type of ribbon that matched their respective hairstyle and colour (*TH8,* Figure 7.16) (Refer to SD card for a video-clip of the drawing under the Folder name *Thea's Video-recordings*).

Figure 7.16
Meaning-making as a result of modal functioning: The ribbons inspired Thea to draw her mother and sister with fancy hairdos.

TH8: Erica and mum before I was born

In another episode, a set of colourful, ready-made cut-outs of animals and greenery attracted Luke's attention, inpsiring him to draw a garden scene (*LH29,* Figure 6.11) discussed in Chapter Six). On these occasions, the semiotic resource, in tandem with the mode, acted as the starting point of the text which postulated the development and transformation of meaning. As noted by Kress (2004), "the choice of mode has profound effects on meaning" (p.1), as it may deeply influence the content and style, and therefore, the meaning of the drawings; a notion closely supported by Price, et al. (2012). The drawings mentioned above, show how the "culturally provided material

resources" (Kress, 2010, p.74) acted as an inspiring factor; the catalyst media that were used as an integral part of the process of sign-making.

7.4 The Children's Thematic Preferences: Forming a Drawer Identity

Referring once again to the *Data Cross-grids*, I now discuss the three children's drawings, from what I termed as *configuration style*, that is, their choice of drawing in *simple* or *complex themes*. I then combine these *configuration styles* with their *semiotic styles* or in other words, with their choice of modes as discussed above, which together with what I called their *types of drawings* and their *drawer patterns,* help define their *drawer identity.* While the data about the children's *semiotic styles* and *configurations* were obtained from the *Data Cross-grid,* it was not possible to identify and interpret the *types* and *patterns* of drawings from the same grid; such information was collated from the direct observation and analysis of the product and process of drawing.

7.4.1 Luke's drawer identity

Luke did fifty-four out of his eighty-one drawings in *complex themes configuration*, which shows that he preferred to draw multiple objects to create scenes and narratives. I define his *complex theme* drawings as a tableau of fact and fiction that drew on "imaginative themes" (Thompson, 1999, p. 155), where he was highly influenced by elements from popular media conveyed through active mythical characters. The *Data Cross-grid* represents a visual representation of part of Luke's drawer identity which portrayed a drawer who, in the main used *simple modes* to draw his *complex theme* drawings.

Luke's *types of drawings* differed considerably. With eighty-two drawings illustrating people, I define him as a "person-centred" (Gardner, 1982, p.118) type of drawer, where predominantly, his drawings underscored the importance of relationships for him. Other drawings, mainly those pursued at home, tended to be "autobiographical" (Thompson, 1999, p.155), in content that frequently revolved around past events he experienced with his immediate family members. A good number of other of Luke's drawings were of the graphic-narrative type, where he frequently, although not exclusively, used a *simple mode* to draw complex action

stories. Primarily influenced by superhero characters, these person-centred drawings were fuelled with "personal fantasy-based" (Wright, 2007, p. 1) storylines, that were impregnated with imagination and character and plot development which he borrowed from popular media. Often, such narratives were full of adventure and tension which he embellished with mythical and fictional chronicles. Referring to Adams' (2004) key functions of drawing, I regard, that Luke mainly used his drawings "as perception" (p. 6), or in other words, as "a tool for thought and action" (p. 221), to process a miscellany of abstract, moral and ethical values of power, justice and mortality, which according to Boyatzis and Albertini (2000) and Golomb (2004), are commonly evidenced in boys' drawings.

When drawing, Luke often disassociated himself from others and engaged into a "continual dialogue" (Coates and Coates, 2006, p. 223) with himself, whereby, "cross(ing) channels of communication" (Wright, 2008, p. 1), he endowed his images with a strong sense of narrative. Through his dynamic descriptions, Luke explained the actions, told the enfolding stories or acted out a scene while bringing out moral and life enigmatic dilemmas. Taking on the role of an "inveterate verbaliser" (Gardner, 1982, p. 117), he frequently went in and out of the drawing, oscillating between the real and pretend components, while working fluidly and intensely to provide extensive narratives. Such one example is the animated narration that accompanied *LS11: The lobster story* (Figure 6.19, Chapter Six, p. 211):

> Psht! Psht! Psht! … The bad guys are shooting at the lobster.
> No, the good guys are… Then they eat the lobster…I am
> shooting the lobster…. Puff! They will put it in the pot and
> cook it. I am going to put on some purple glitter glue on it so
> that he will surely die…It is killing him. He is dying.
>
> (Luke, 16th February, 2012).

Thus, as he frequently accompanied his drawings with dramatic elaborations, I consider Luke's *drawer pattern* as a "dramatist" (Gardner, 1980, p. 47) or verbaliser. Although, Luke often seemed compelled to draw, he seldom manifested intrinsic enthusiasm to get started on a drawing. Especially at school, Luke habitually exhibited reluctance, but like a "completer" (Gardner, 1980, p. 117), once he started a drawing, he got totally immersed in it, and transformed himself into a producer, scripter, actor and audience of his own graphic representation, which he adorned with energy, verbalisations and inventive plots.

7.4.2 Thea's drawer identity

With fifty-two of her eighty-four drawings largely plotted on the right side of her *Data Cross-grid* (Figure 7.2)*,* it was easy to deduce that Thea predominantly drew in *complex themes configuration*. The *Data Cross-grid*, portrayed a visual representation of Thea's drawer identity, which effectively showed a child who principally chose to use *complex modes* to draw her *complex theme* drawings. The drawings frequently included home and outdoor scenes with images of animals, people or objects. She also drew narratives which appeared to be an amalgamation of real-life episodes and imaginary stories of fairies, princesses as well as monsters, giants and witches.

Thea's *complex theme* drawings mainly distinguished her as a "subject matter generalist" (Thompson, 1999, p. 155) as she often dominated her drawings with objects or persons; hence, I considered her *types of drawings* as both "person-centred" (Gardner, 1982, p. 118) and "object-centred" (Gardner, 1982, p. 118). Her person-centred drawings were dominated by drawings of different members of her family; however, in such drawings she frequently also included other objects to create a home or an outdoor scene. Her consistency in object-centred drawings emerged in a number of her graphic representations, where, for example, she repeatedly drew the same type of vehicle, such as aeroplanes, with a variance in complexity. Using all her related knowledge, she improved, added new elements and elaborated on the details in her drawing, while simultaneously retaining the "initial, visual schemas and distinctive qualities" (Watson and Schwartz, 2000, p. 50). Examples of repeated drawings of objects by Thea include, *TH7* (Figure 7.17, Image 1) and *TH20* (Image 2) where Thea drew her house, first from the outside emphasising the skylight, illustrated by the brown triangle, and then on the inside where, on drawing her dad returning from work, she depicted the two doors of her house: the front door and the apartment door together with the connecting staircase in pink.

Figure 7.17

Thea's drawings of her house.

TH7: *Our house*

TH20: *My dad*
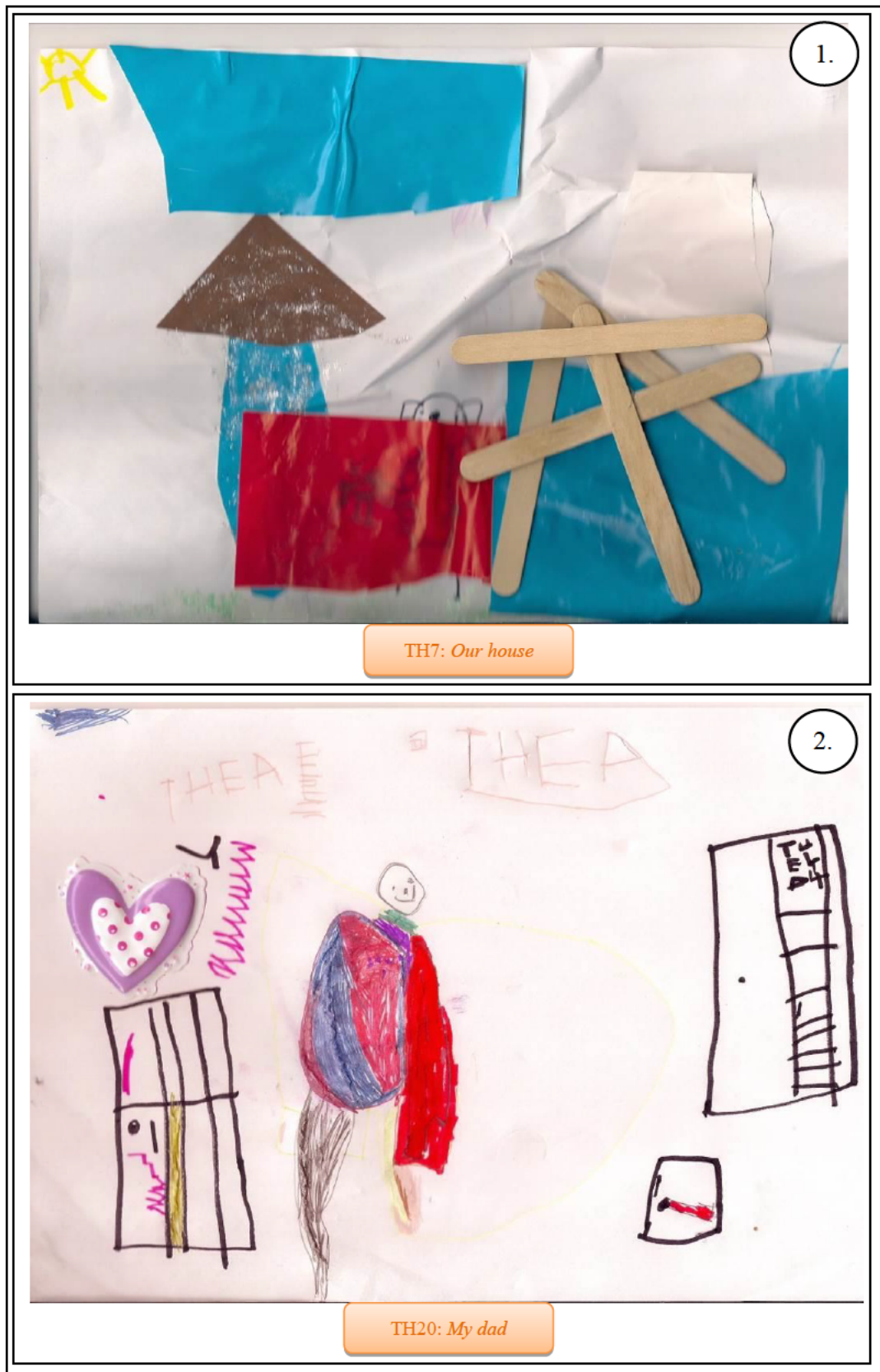
In *TH22* and *TH32* (Figure 7.18, Images 1 and 2), which are examples of people-centred drawings, Thea focused her attention on drawing her family repeatedly while emphasising personal characteristics, including their distinctive hair features, while evaluating family dynamics and hierarchies.

Figure 7.18
Thea's drawings of her family.

TH22: *My family*

TH32: *My family*
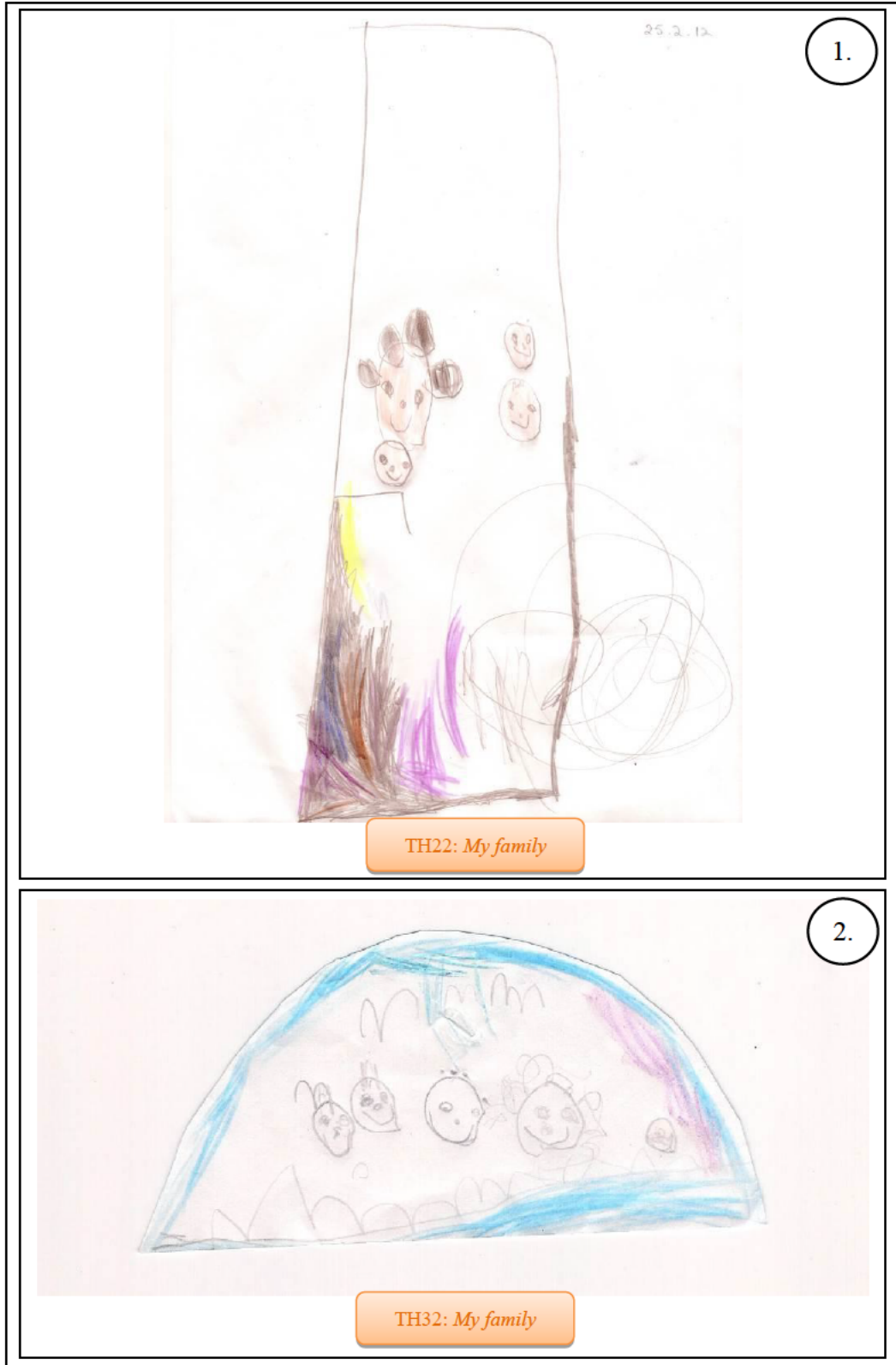
Thea seemed almost always motivated to draw. She was full of contrasts and did not follow a particular pattern, where her *drawer patterns* appeared to be fluid. At times she drew in complete silence, and entranced by her creation, she focused on creating drawings full of patterns, decorations, sequins and detail; usually a characteristic of "patterners" (Gardner, 1982, p. 118) and "visualisers" (p. 117). At other times, she took a dramatist stance, where she enthusiastically accompanied her drawings with fantasy narrations that frequently took her on a journey of imagination. Occasionally, she began her drawings with a definite and clear idea of what to draw, which she seemed to meticulously plan beforehand. At other times she began drawing with no apparent idea of the topic. Conversely, she was never rigid in her approach but went with the flow of thoughts and changed her ideas to construct new meanings accordingly. She could have been described by Gardner (1982) as a "self-starter" (p. 117) as she rarely, needed any prompting to draw, and once she began a drawing she spent considerable time, carefully developing, elaborating and decorating it, in a fluent, flexible and engrossed way, while giving attention to particular details. At the same time, she demonstrated ephemeral interest in what she drew, frequently shifting her attention from one section of her drawing to another to express different thoughts. Some of her drawings lost their permanence after a few days and she did not always remember what she drew; once the drawing was finished and talked about, it frequently lost its significance to her. What seemed to matter most to Thea was the pleasure she derived in creating an aesthetically appeasing picture at that particular moment.

Referring to Adams' (2002) identification of children's ways of using drawings, Thea often seemed to use her graphic representations, "as manipulation … [or] invention" (p. 222) where she played with ideas and made connections to invent new ways of how things worked, a keen interest of hers. One such example is *TS23* (Figure 7.19 and the SD card for a video-clip of the drawing under the Folder *Thea's Video-recordings*), where Thea, drew a complex drawing of an aeroplane, with its main components such as passengers' seats, wings, a fuel tank and a start and stop switch, symbolised by the orange and blue paper balls in the middle of the drawing. Other examples of Thea's drawing as invention will be discussed later.

Figure 7.19
Communicating knowledge of aeroplanes.

TS23: An aeroplane that flies

Thea also used drawing "as perception" (Adams, 2004, p. 6), to internally organise her thoughts, feelings and imagination as well as her understanding of the world around her and her position in it. Figure 7.16 (discussed above) shows one of Thea's drawings, where she drew herself in relation to her mother and sister, negotiating her role and identity. The title she gave to the picture *TH8:Erica and mum before I was born,* together with drawing herself in a separate circle, away from her mother and sister, hints that Thea understood that there was a time when she was not yet part of her family. The drawing was a representation of an imagined past; an enactment of how life could have been before she was born and her image of herself in that world. Drawing herself in a separate circle, physically separating herself from her mother and sister, Thea seemed to be conveying her understanding that as an unborn baby, she was, for a time, alone in her mother's tummy and isolated from them. In my view, this drawing was an example of a drawing as perception as it epitomised the ordering of Thea's thoughts, feelings and ideas, which helped her understand "the

external world of people, objects and events as well as the inner world feelings … and imaginings" (Adams, 2004, p. 6).

Thea also used drawing "as communciation" (Adams, 2004, p. 6), where she intentionally used her drawings to communicate her feelings and ideas to others in a coherent way. In my view, *TH37* (Figure 7.20), represents such an example. Thea drew a zebra-king and his bug-wife who lived in a castle, with animals standing on the outside as they were not allowed in, because they would dirty the castle. This drawing, which at the denotation level appears to be a fantasy drawing, carried a metaphoric resemblance for Thea. At home, Thea and her sister had been unsuccessful in their request for a cat as a pet, with their mother justifying that they could not keep it as "its fur will fall off and it will dirty everywhere" (14th March, 2012).

Figure 7.20
Communicating the wish to have a pet.

TH37: Animals not allowed

Using the castle analogy to represent her house, the zebra-king and his bug-wife perhaps signifiying her parents, and the animals to represent the cat she wished for, Thea attached a lollipop stick to represent a catapult that launches animals to enter the castle through a window, explaining:

> When you press here [*the left end of the lollipop stick*], he [*one of the animals*] goes up in the castle. .. He presses this with his legs and keeps on going [*in a downward arch movement*] and enters the castle from the window. He breaks the window to enter… They [*the other animals*] will still go in … from the window instead from the door.
>
> (Thea, 14th March, 2012)

Thus, Thea used the drawing as a "visual metaphor for ideas in the head" (Hope, 2008, p. 11), and exploited it to represent her denied wish, by finding a way for the animals to access the castle. This drawing builds on Wright's (2010b) perception that children's representations are innocuous places where, through their agency, they shape the story in any way that enables them to come to terms with their hopes, wishes, and disappointments.

7.4.3 Bertly's drawer identity.

With a preponderance of thirty-nine drawings out of a total of fifty-nine that were plotted on the left side of the grid, Bertly's *Data Cross-grid* (Figure 7.3), revealed a child who preferred to draw *simple theme*s; the only participant with such a *configuration style.* In the main he often adopted a *simple mode semiotic style*. Bertly mainly drew single objects, such as animals, people or weather-related drawings. These celebrated a collation of autobiographical drawings that represented a snapshot of his everyday experiences. They epitomised a bricolage of real world imagery that derived from a tableau of "memories of events experienced at first hand" (Coates and Coates, 2011, p. 100), which at times, intertwined with elements of his imagination. An example of such a drawing in *simple theme configuration* and in *simple mode semiotic style* is *BS16* (Figure 7.21). This drawing which was dominated by mark-making that represented fireworks, reflected a past episode of Bertly, when one summer evening, he went to an open-air restaurant with his family and saw fireworks in the sky. The drawing also represented his insider's view of fireworks, where he made connections between his father's avid interest of detonating fireworks and his similar hobby of shooting target plates with a gun as indicated by this conversation

between us:

> Bertly: That is the sky… Psh! Those are fireworks.
> J: It is true! These are fireworks, right? Where else do you have fireworks?
> Bertly: Here and here and here and here. [*pointing towards different areas on the paper*]
> Psh! Psshhhhhh!
> J: Wow! Where did you see fireworks?
> Bertly: In the sky …Once I was in a restaurant and saw fireworks in the sky … Fireworks shoot up in the sky. They are shot with a gun.
> J: Does your father detonate fireworks or does he shoot with a gun?
> Bertly: He detonates fireworks. He also shoots with a gun.
>
> (23rd March, 2012)

Figure 7.21

Insights into Bertly's reality and context.
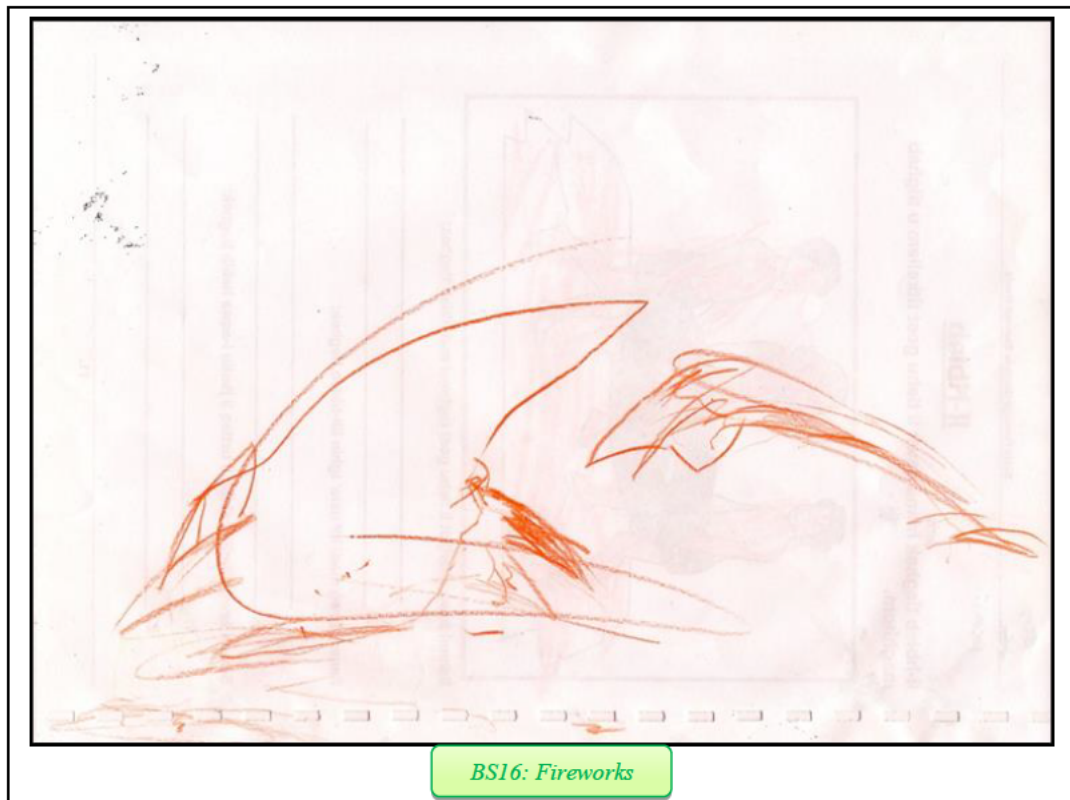
BS16: Fireworks

The conversation showed the complex connections Bertly made, which provided me with "evidence" (Jewitt et al., 2001, p.27) of his mental associations and knowledge about fireworks. Using the underlying concept of 'fire' ('fireworks' in Maltese are called 'murtali', but are interchangeably and commonly referred to also as 'nar', that is 'fire'), Bertly linked fireworks to gunshots, and subsequently, linked his drawing to

chimneys and the story of *The three little pigs,* where he continued:

> Bertly: But we do not have a chimney.
> J: Why would you want a chimney?
> Bertly: To go in it.
> J: Oh my! Would you like to go in a chimney? It will be hot!
> Bertly: It will have fire in it.
> J: Yes, it will have fire in it. And then what?
> Bertly: But the wolf went in the chimney.
> J: And what happened to the wolf when he went down the chimney?
> Bertly: He went up.
> J: Right. Why did he go up? What happened to the wolf?
> Shaun: He burned his bottom.
> J: Exactly so. He burnt his bottom. And he ran out of the chimney because it was hurting him a lot.
> Bertly: Even if he falls in the pot, he will still get burned …His tail gets burned.
>
> (23rd March, 2012)

Bertly's interconnections and "inferential processes" (Danesi, 2007, p.133) blended with his experiences and social conventions, which materialised in his drawing, provided a glimpse into his mental connections, as well as reflected his reality, knowledge, socio-cultural context and family background.

BS7 (Figure 7.22) (Refer to SD card for an edited video-clip of the drawing under the Folder *Bertly's Video-recordings*) which Bertly drew at school, was another autobiographic memoire of his, which was drawn in *complex mode,* but within the same *simple theme configuration.* While at the denotation level the drawing simply illustrated an octopus, at the connotation level it carried complex meanings and connections: it was a representation of a summer day when Bertly was at the beach and saw a man coming ashore with an octopus in hand − an experience which triggered a lot of interest in Bertly to learn more about octopuses. This drawing reflects that Bertly was "attuned" (Dyson, 1993, p. 109) to and was flexible in constructing links between past and present experiences, events and knowledge, as well as move across the home-school boundaries, which according to Wright (2011) is a concrete way through which I could observe Bertly's quality thinking.

Figure 7.22
Reflecting a real-life episode.

BS7: An octopus

Drawing on the work of Coates and Coates (2011), Ormerod and Ivanic (2002), Pahl (2007a; 2007b; 1999b) and Pahl and Rowsell (2010) I regard Bertly's drawings as a "window into his realities" (Wright, 2010b, p.11) that provide traces of his context and his ways of making sense of his experiences that reflect the "mesh of different cultural influences" (Pahl, 1999b, p. 83), with which Bertly interacted and linked. Thus, such drawings were examples of how, Bertly, purposefully brought shape and order to his experiences, and "actively defined[ing] reality, rather than passively reflected[ing] a "given" reality" (Cox, 2005, p. 124).

Drawing his *simple theme* pictures, Bertly frequently appeared to detach himself from his surroundings and immerse in his representation, drawing silently, while giving particular attention to the physical attributes of the drawing. In such situations, talk was minimal. Children who, like Bertly, find difficulties to explain themselves verbally might find solace in engaging in drawing activities, that allows them to find their "voice through colour and line" (Leigh and Heid, 2008, p.8). Thus, using

Gardner's (1980) dichotomous descriptors, in the main, I considered Bertly as a patterner or a visualiser. Contrastingly, on those rare and atypical occasions when he drew *complex themes* of "visual narratives" (Wright, 2010b, p.45), experienced events, actions and fantasy tales, he appeared to be a dramatist, and an inveterate verbaliser, where using a lot of energy and enthusiasm in describing his drawings, he engaged in "joint involvement episodes" (Schaffer, 1992, p.101), mainly with his mother, where together they reconstructed narrations based on shared experiences (Anning, 2002; Flewitt, 2005b).

Bertly could be described as an unpredictable and episodic drawer. When there were interesting things happening in his life, he was eager to transfer his experiences to the text and draw what came to mind, producing more than one drawing at a time. On other days he seemed unmotivated, uninspired, or indifferent towards drawing. This likely occurred when there was nothing interesting happening that instilled enough excitement to want to share his experience and meriting representation. Thompson (1999) argued that children, who like Bertly rely on real life experiences as a source of inspiration to draw, tend to experience uncreative and apathetic moments. On such occurrences, most frequently it was the materials, an artefact or his interaction with his peers or his mother and sister, which stimulated him to draw.

7.4.4 The three drawers

Summarising the information obtained from the *Data Cross-grids* coupled with my observations, it seemed that Luke's drawings preferences were reflected in his choice of a *simple mode semiotic style* and *complex theme configuration style*, where his main focus was more on the content than on the form and complexity of the theme. Thea largely opted to draw in a *complex mode* and *complex theme* where she highly experimented with the form of the drawing while at the same time valued the content and meaning she wanted to convey. On the other hand, Bertly mainly chose to draw in *simple mode* and *simple theme* where his aim was to be able to have the content of his drawing understood by others where complexity at either form or content was not a priority for him. Influenced by past and present experiences, their gender and personal characteristics, as well as the need of the moment in time, I argue that opting for *simple or complex modes* and *themes* worked in different ways for the children.

I also analysed the children's *types of drawings,* by which I mean the cataloguing of the drawings according to the content depicted, as autobiographical, subject matter generalists or the graphic-narrative type. Bertly's drawings and many of Luke's home depictions were autobiographical in content, reflecting their everyday experiences. On the other hand, Luke's school drawings were, in the main, of the graphic-narrative type that centred on persons and their actions, while Thea's drawings were mainly object or person-centred, classifying her as a subject matter generalist. Observing the three children, it appeared that on most occasions, Bertly and Thea took the role of a patterner or a visualiser where they generally preferred to draw in silence and talk only when necessary or where spoken to by significant others. Contrastingly, in the main, Luke seemed to fall under Gardner's (1982, 1980) category of a dramatist or inveterate verbaliser, where he often accompanied his drawings with abundant amounts of language and elaborate narratives. Table 7.3 below illustrates a summary of the four components of each child's preferred *semiotic style, drawing configuration, types of drawing* and *drawer patterns*, which in their entirety albeit not exclusively, form the respective drawer identity.

Table 7.3
A representation of the three children's identity as drawers.

Name of Child	Drawer identity			
	Drawer profile			
	Semiotic style	Drawing configuration	Types of drawing Thompson (1999) Wright (2007)	Drawer patterns (Gardner, 1980; 1982)
Luke	simple mode	complex theme	autobiographical, graphic narrative, person-centred	dramatist/ verbaliser
Thea	complex mode	complex theme	subject-matter generalist	patterner / visualiser
Bertly	simple mode	simple theme	autobiographical	patterner / visualiser

Figure 7.23 is a graphic representation of how these four components of *semiotic style, drawing configuration, types of drawing* and *drawer patterns*, interrelate at the denotation and connotation levels. The figure also shows how I used the information from the *Data Cross-grids* and my observations to analyse and inform each child's *drawer identity*, which was applicable at that moment in time. It could be that by time, the children change their drawing preferences which in turn, would transform their drawer identity.

Figure 7.23

The interplay between semiotic style, configuration, types of drawing and drawer patterns to form the drawer identity.
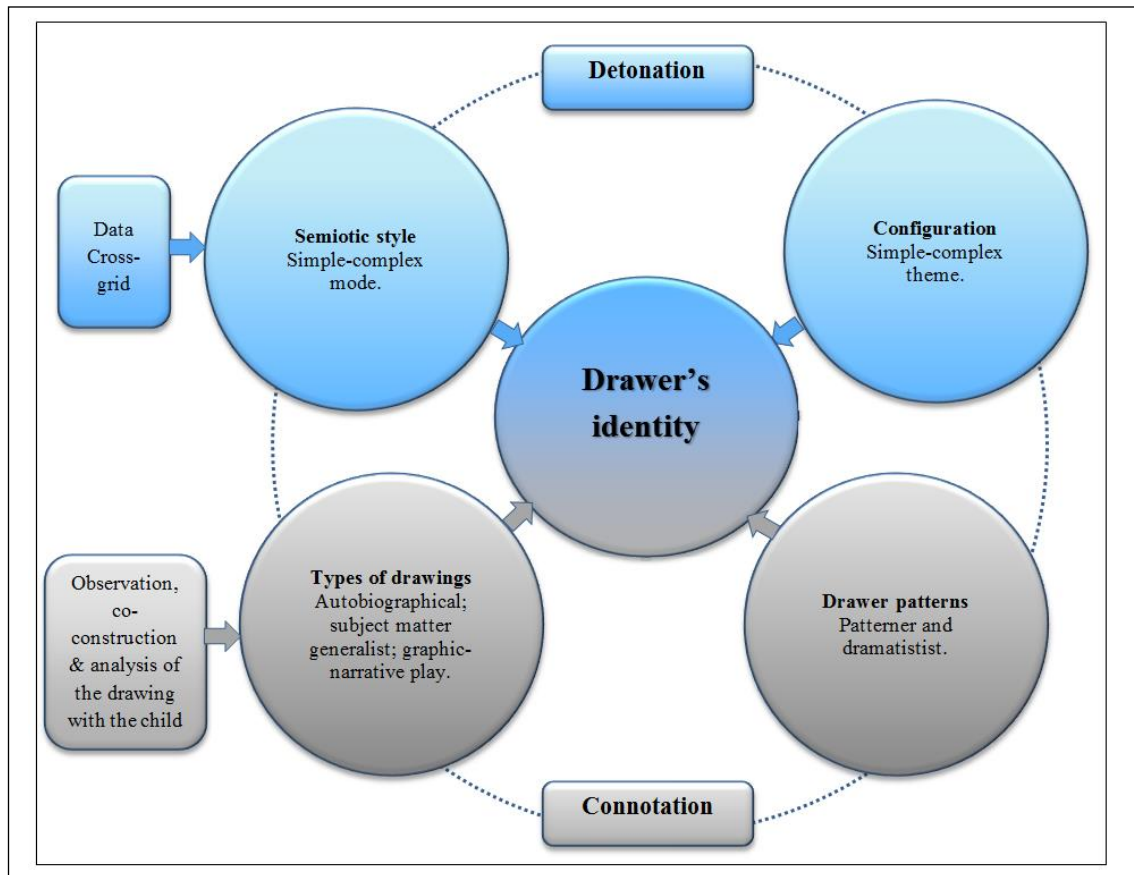
It must be noted, that my classification of the children's *types* and *patterns* of drawings, is simplistic as I am only considering them in relation to the children's preferred styles. All three children experienced shifts from patterners to dramatists, sometimes in different drawings and sometimes even within the same drawing, depending on the purpose, mood, time and context. I am therefore, reluctant to classify a child under one distinct pattern, as in my view, children tend to move between patterns, even if they frequently favour one pattern over the other. Consequently, I hold the tenet that while such categorisations can be useful for the development of a *drawer identity*, yet they should only be used as guidelines, as otherwise, they can be considered as too rigid, limiting and insufficient, eschewing the whole aim of this study, that is, to bring out the intricate complexities, uniqueness and distinctiveness of each child's drawer identity.

7.5 Content Themes Arising from the Data

To address the second research question about the themes represented in young children's texts, I created an *Inventory of Content* which, based on Barthes (1977) level of denotation, and as I explained in Chapter Four, itemised the three children's drawings into thirteen, most common, content themes. My intention to highlight a quantifiable aspect of the drawings was to show the richness of the data and to establish a link between form and meaning, while providing a supporting analysis to the case studies. However, as I explicated in Chapter Five, classifying the drawings under specific headings proved to be challenging and problematic as frequently children drew drawings with multiple objects, scenes or stories that corresponded to different themes. Here, I join Coates and Coates (2006) and Hall (2010b), who state that a process of categorisation underscores the shortcomings and limitations of organising children's drawings under neat classifications and titles. I also emphasise that children's drawings are extremely complex, carefully composed and rich with a sense of visual acuity. As I clarified in Chapter Four, to overcome this limitation, sometimes I classified the same drawing under different thematic headings and sub-categories according to the variety in the objects depicted.

The theme most commonly depicted by all three children, was that of *People* (142 out of 624 occurrences; 22.8%), mainly drawn by Luke. The preference of such a theme in children's drawings is also identified in Cox's (1993) Hall's (2010b) and Machón's (2013) studies. Family-members featured prominently in this category, thus corroborating data from other studies (Machón, 2013; Coates and Coates, 2011). The second most popular theme was that of *Animals*, (90 occurrences; 14.4%) were children mainly drew pets, wild and farm animals, as well as fantasy creatures. The third most depicted theme was that of *Weather and Sky Features* (85 occurrences; 13.6%), mainly drawn by Bertly and Luke, where rainbows and rain, featured significantly; this is a common theme also identified in children's drawings by Coates and Coates (2006) and Hall (2010b). The themes of *Manufactured Objects* (17 occurrences; 2.7%), *Buildings* (10 occurrences; 1.6%) and *Elements* (6 occurrence; 0.9%) were the least depicted. This conclusion differs from Machón (2013), who claims that the themes of houses and natural elements were the second and third preferred subjects drawn by children in his study. Depictions of objects from these last three themes, together with drawings which I categorised under *Miscellaneous*

objects (64 occurrences; 10.3%), *Natural features* (60 occurrences; 9.6%), *Writing* (35 occurrences; 5.6%), *Abstract symbols* (30 occurrences; 4.8%), *Food* (29 occurrences; 4.7%) and *Toys and Play Equipment* (20 occurrences; 3.2%) were usually included by the children as part of a complex scenery with the aim to add detail and enrich meaning in their graphic representations. The theme of *Vehicles* (36 occurrences; 5.8%), was mainly illustrated in Thea's drawings: an idiosyncrasy I discuss later. The *Inventory of Content* shows that the children had their own individual preferences for drawing particular themes. In the main, Luke drew people, while Thea and Bertly preferred to draw animals, although the latter also liked to draw people and weather and sky features with almost the same frequency.

Table 7.4 provides a summary of the emerging themes in order of popularity together with the frequency and percentage of their occurrence across the three children's drawings. Figure 7.24 represents a pie-chart that visually represents the different categories and the respective percentages of each occurring theme.

Table 7.4
Inventory of Content: Classification of themes in order of popularity.

Themes Sub-categories	Number of occurrences of the themes				
	Bertly's	Thea's	Luke's	Total	%
People (family, self, fantasy, unknown, friends, named others)	15	45	82	142	22.8%
Animals and other creatures (mini-beasts, farm, pets, wild, sea and sky creatures and fantasy)	16	53	21	90	14.4%
Weather and sky features (sky, stars, sun, rainbow, rain)	15	18	52	85	13.6%
Miscellaneous objects (digital equipment, warfare equipment and trophies, everyday objects and other oddities)	4	35	25	64	10.3%
Natural features (flowers, pond, river, lake, water, sea, beach, trees, leaves, grass, mushrooms, stones, rocks, mountain)	10	36	14	60	9.6%
Vehicles (aeroplane, boat/ship, car, van, crane, motorbike, rocket, train)	4	17	15	36	5.8%
Writing (letters, names, numbers, phrases and sentences)	7	24	4	35	5.6%
Abstract symbols (shapes and Symbols)	7	16	7	30	4.8%
Food (fruits, ice-cream, Easter egg, sausage roll, bread, candy, ravioli, cake, food)	6	11	12	29	4.7%
Toys and play equipment (balls, Wii, Trampoline, pink goo)	5	7	8	20	3.2%
Manufactured objects (pool, road, roundabout, tunnel, well)	3	6	8	17	2.7%
Buildings (apertures, houses, castle, church, farm)	0	9	1	10	1.6%
Elements (fire, water)	4	0	2	6	0.9%
Total number of occurrences	96	277	251	624	100%

Figure 7.24
A pie-chart that visually represents the percentage of each occurring theme.

Percentage of theme occurrence

- Abstract symbols 4.8%
- Toys and play equipment 3.2%
- Manufactured objects 2.7%
- Buildings 1.6%
- Elements 0.9%
- Writing 5.6%
- Food 4.7%
- People 22.8%
- Vehicles 5.8%
- Natural features 9.6%
- Miscelleneous objects 10.3%
- Weather and sky features 13.6%
- Animals and other creatures 14.4%
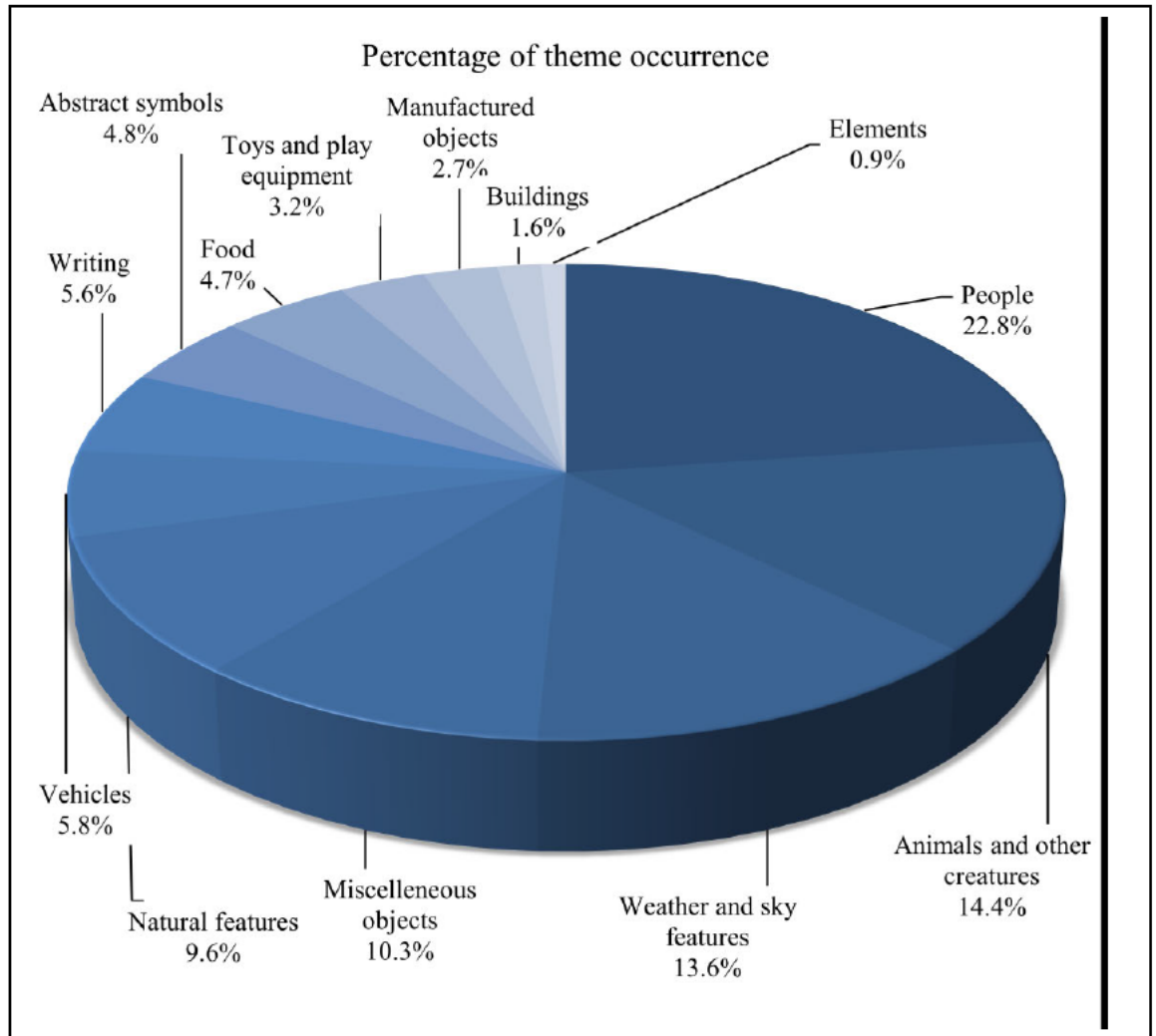
Coates and Coates (2006) claim, that the recurrence of generic thematic strands is quite common in children's drawings across cultures. Several scholars (Albers, 2007; Anning and Ring, 2004; Hall, 2010b; Hopperstad, 2008b; Kellogg, 1969; Machón, 2013; Mavers, 2011; Matthews, 1998; Thompson, 1999; Wright, 2011, 2010a, 2007), validate this and offer insights into the broad subject matter of young children's drawings. They claim that these frequently include people, mainly family members, fantasy characters, objects and vehicles, or living things such as animals and vegetation, as well as places children visit. However, these scholars also acknowledge that the specific content of children's drawings is also influenced by their immediate socio-cultural contexts, personal events, experiences, traits and interest. As is argued by Coates and Coates (2006) and Cox (1993), while the children's drawings include some generic subject matter that are similar for all

children worldwide, they also represent cultural variations with specific content that is unique to each child and his context.

7.5.1 Commonalities, idiosyncrasies and the gender factor

Analysing the corpus of the 223 drawings, it became apparent that the content could have been influenced by gender, a finding which is confirmed by other studies (Dyson, 1986; Kendrick and McKay, 2002; Nicolopoulou, et al., 1994). It appeared that some themes, patterns and ways of drawings were favoured by Thea, while others were preferred by the two boys. However, while I could denote apposite gender-related differences, I do not deem them as absolute, because the children's drawings could be driven by individual traits, preferences and interests as well as influenced by the surrounding social interactions and the environment. I also consider the gender differences highlighted, as rather specific to the three participant children, as the sample is too small to allow me to draw specific conclusions in relation to gender.

Consistent with findings from other studies, (see for example, Anning and Ring, 2004; Cherney, Seiwert, Dickey and Flichtbeil, 2006; Golomb, 2004; Hall, 2008; Millard and Marsh, 2001; Nicolopoulou, 1997; Wright, 2010b), in general, the themes in Thea's drawings epitomised girls' stereotypical preferences that evolved around stable family scenes, social relationships and fairy tales of kings and queens. They also included soft adornments such as hearts that conveyed elements of romance, and flowers and butterflies that show the soft side of nature (Figure 7.25, Image 1). While both Bertly and Luke drew kisses and hearts, these were sporadic and limited in quantity. Moreover, none of them drew flowers as a mode of decoration. Thea's interests in flowers probably emanated from two main components: the material she had available, such as the self-adhesive flower shapes, flower stickers, and flower wrapping paper; as well as the stereotypical flowers she was exposed to through children's television programmes and internet sites. Several studies suggest that social and cultural texts that emanate from mass media and popular culture products transmit strong stereotyped gendered messages about girls' and boys' identities and positions in society, which is reflected in the apparent influence in the dichotomous content of their drawings and their choices of what and how they draw (Albers, 2007; Coates and Coates, 2006; Dyson, 1986; Kendrick and

McKay, 2002; Marsh and Millard, 2000; Thompson, 1999). This does not mean that Thea's drawings were completely void of action, heroes and bravery. The heroes in her drawings, however, were fairies who used magical pixie dust to "help people fly", "make the aeroplane fly" (24th February, 2012) and "to save the animals" (26th March, 2012) rather than superheroes who fought villains like in Luke's drawings.

Figure 7.25
Drawings that indicate gender-related traits.

TH16: Rings and hearts for Domenic

LS22: Shooting

BH18: A whale at the beach

On the other hand, most of Luke's drawings in particular, were of the "heroic-agonistic genre" (Nicolopoulou, 1997, p.166), based on depictions full of action that were inspired by the "superhero myths and mediation of popular culture" (Thompson, 1999, p.160). Figure 7.25, (Image 2), represents such an example, where Luke drew good guys shooting bad guys; a phenomenon in boys' drawings also identified in other studies (Anning and Ring, 2004; Dyson, 1986; Golomb, 2004; Hall, 2010b, 2008; Thompson, 1999). This is also in line with Barrs' (1988) observations, who

suggested that boys, more than girls, tend to use drawing as a means of superhero storytelling. Conversely, while both boys drew action representational drawings, there were differences between them. Luke's drawings seemed to be more archetypal of boys' drawings than Bertly's, and tended to be more dominated by warfare scenes of conflict, violence and destruction; characteristics in boys' drawings that were also observed in other studies (Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Millard and Marsh, 2001; Nicolopoulou, 1997; Nicolopoulou, et al., 1994). On the other hand, Bertly's drawings rarely depicted violence and combat, and focused on action as inspired by powerful imagined animals and positive cartoon characters such as *Fireman Sam*, who, as illustrated in Figure 7.25, (Image 3), and as indicated in the episode, "Fireman Sam: Stranded baby whale" (Prism Art and Design Limited, 2014) [15], saved a stranded whale on the beach.

In accord with Nicolopoulou et al.'s (1994) conclusions, I suggest that while all three children copied and incorporated images from popular culture, they did so selectively, in ways that met their character and gender inclinations. At the same time, I challenge suggestions from the same study and, as argued above claim that, whereas in the main, Thea's drawings included girls' stereotypical preferences such as the drawing of family scenes and soft adornments, she also drew graphic-narratives, which Nicolopoulou et al. (1994), identified as stereotypical of boys'. However, such drawings, which included fairies, princesses, kings and queens who fought monsters, giants and witches with pixie dust, differed from the boys', who drew superheroes fighting bad guys with weapons, knives and guns. Likewise, both Bertly's and Luke's drawings included family-related drawings that revolved on placid kinship relations, with Luke having the largest number of drawings of family members amongst all three children. My finding contrasts with conclusions from other studies (Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Golomb, 2004; Hall, 2010b; Nicolopoulou, 1997; Nicolopoulou et al., 1994), who proposed that boys do not usually draw family members and relations, which are more archetypal of girls. However, although most of Luke's drawings were based on stable family relationships, many of these also portrayed his typical fascination with violence and disorder, where, for example he

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[15] This episode can be accessed from Yourcartoons.net (http://www.yourcartoons.net/fireman-sam-stranded-whale).

negaged in a fight with his family fought *The Blue Lady (LH24)*, discussed in Chapter Six (p.196).

A particular gender-related idiosyncrasy was that in connection to the drawing of vehicles. Out of the total of thirty-six drawings of vehicles which the three children drew, seventeen were drawn by Thea, fifteen by Luke and only four by Bertly. I considered this as highly unconventional, especially when studies (see for example, Anning and Ring, 2004; Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Dyson, 1986; Hall, 2010b; Thompson, 1999) indicate that vehicles are predominantly drawn by boys. My findings, as well as those by Wright (2010b), contradict this, though I acknowledge that it is not possible to draw a conclusion on this, due to the small sample size.

7.6 The Meanings Communicated

In addressing the third research question, based on Barthes (1977) connotation level of representation, I uncovered the layers of symbolic meaning that the three children conveyed through their drawings. This was problematic not only because meanings are complex, unpredictable and ambiguous, but also because of the "spontaneous imagework" (Edgar, 2004, p.7) that characterises children's drawings. Children modified, elaborated or adapted their narratives according to their understanding and interpretations, which at times, were dynamic and fluid, and thus, changing instantaneously; an observation also noted by other researchers (see for example, Cox, 2005; Flewitt, 2006, 2005b; Jewitt, 2009b, 2008; Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Kress et al., 2001; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Wright, 2008). In this section, I discuss the main conclusions and connotative associations I drew from the findings of the three case studies.

Findings from this study support conclusions from others (Kress, 1997; Lancaster, 2007) and indicate that children use semiotic signs with intention, reasoned purposes and meaning. Analysing the three children's drawings and uncovering the meanings that lay beneath them, I identified four main "functional use of drawing" (Atkinson, 2009, p.41), which include, drawing as:

- a constructor of identity;

- a communicator of the self;

- a processor of knowledge;

- a play process;

Although I describe these four functions separately, it was challenging to keep them distinct from each other. As Hall (2010b) and Mavers (2011) claim, the construction and interpretation of meanings is not a straightforward or transparent process; rather, it a complex transaction where "meanings are not necessarily definitive" (p. 47) and connotations intertwine, overlap and intersect incessantly with each other through the drawing process, while simultaneously supporting the development of the same functions of the drawing. For example, the children's drawings that focused on *drawing as a play process* or *as a processor of knowledge* simultaneously aided and helped them in their *construction of identity* and to *communicate the self*. I acknowledge that although there are commonalities with the views, categories and purposes of drawings as identified by other researchers (see for example, Adams, 2004, 2002; Hall, 2010b; Wright, 2010b), I developed this conceptual framework based on my subjective perceptions, analysis and summaries of the three children's drawings.

7.6.1 Drawing as a constructor of identity

Borrowing Brockmeier's (2001) intertextual notion, that identity is developed through continuous cultural construction, where texts act as symbolic and semiotic spaces, I argue that the children's layering of meaning which hybridised across their multimodal drawings, were a way of convening, interpreting, reinterpreting and mediating their voices and their "identity construction" (Hall, 2010b, p. 359). Therefore, my study relates to those of Edmiston (2008), Hall (2010b), and Hawkins (2002), where I similarly argue in favour of perceiving children's drawings as "tools of identity" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 43) that they use to reveal their ways of being, doing and becoming (Miller, Potts, Fung, Hoogstra, and Mintz, 1990). Analysing the three children's drawings, I concluded that they appeared to be using drawing to explore five different perspectives of their identity which I discuss with some depth hereunder:

- The *self in the present*: Who am I?

- The *self in the past*: Where and who was I before I was born?

- The *self (in real roles) in the future*: Who I might become?

- The *self in fantasy roles*: Who can I transform myself into?

- The *self in relation to others*: How do others perceive me? Where do I belong?

Each of the three children drew themselves in various past, present or "imagined identities" (Kendrick and McKay, 2004, p.122) in the future. When the children drew themselves in the past or present, they frequently did so in relation to their family members, where, as Ahn and Filipenko, (2007), Cherney et al. (2006), Miller and Mehler (1994) and Nicolopoulou (2008) suggest, children seemed to be in pursuit of understanding family dynamics, hierarchy functions and their place within the family. For example, Thea's *TH22* (Figure 7.26, Image 1), where she drew herself and her family returning home on a windy day, and Bertly's *BH23* (Figure 7.26, Image 2, refer also to SD card for a video-clip of the drawing under the Folder *Bertly's Video-recordings*) where he drew himself with his mother, sister and grandmother on a tourist train tour, were examples of present life experiences. In her drawing, Thea drew her mother with her distinctive curly hairstyle, above her sister, while on the other side she drew herself above her father. This drawing appeared to be illustrating the relationships within her family, where she could have been emphasising the strong relationship and common past times she enjoyed with her father, while simultaneously highlighting the close bond her sister enjoyed with her mother. On the other hand, Bertly's drawing showed the close relationship he had with his mother, sister and maternal grandmother. In *LH1* (Figure 7.26, Image 3), Luke drew himself in his mother's tummy, "Let me draw myself in your tummy because you [to his mother] are going to marry daddy and Matthias will be in your tummy as well" (16th February, 2012). Here, he seemed to be processing the development of his family, while situating himself in the past to understand where and who he was before he was born; a concept which Thea too illustrated in *TH8* (Figure 7.16, p. 296). The children seemed to use these drawings as a way to capture, share, celebrate and document real-life experiences that helped them understand who they were, while evaluating their position in relation to other family members.

Figure 7.26
Drawings which communicate elements of identity-construction.

(1)

TH22: My family

(2)

BH23: The choo-choo train

(3)

LH1: My family
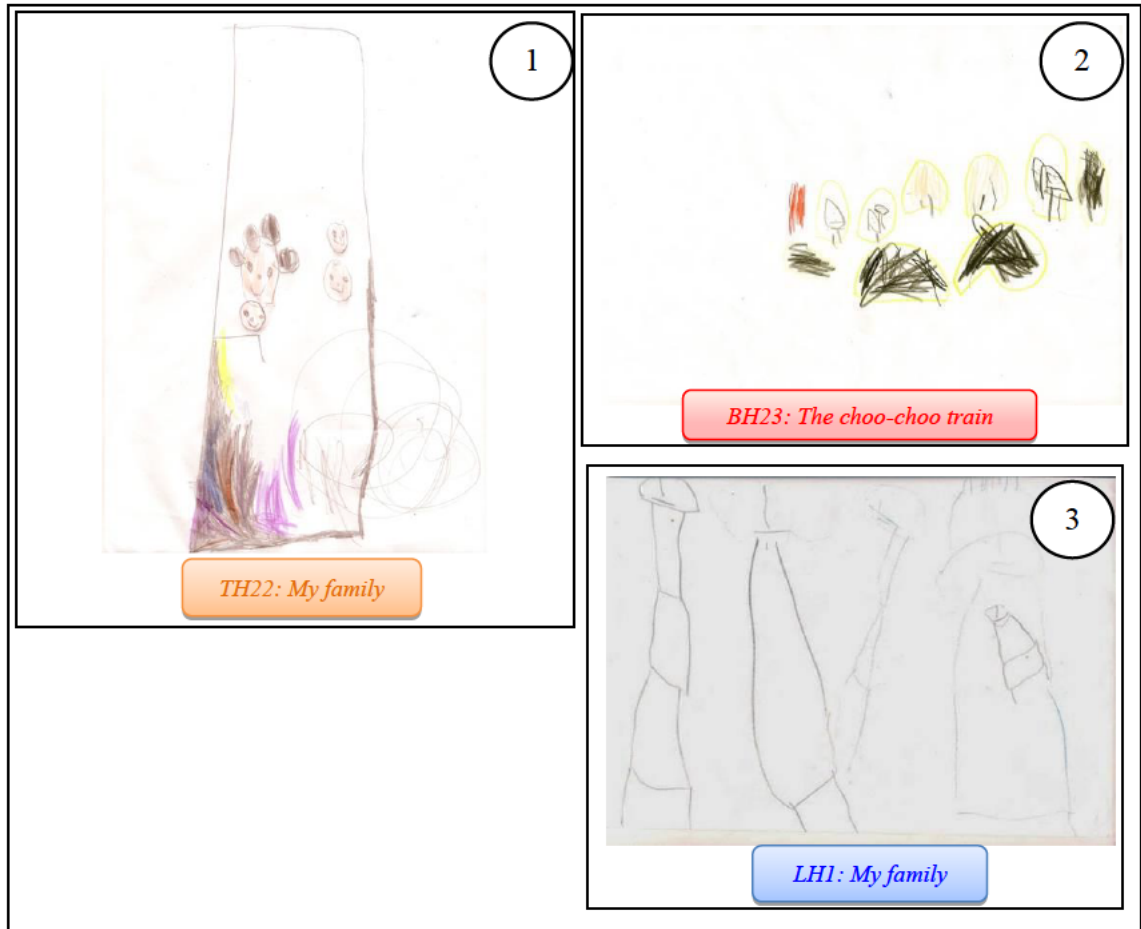
Contrastingly, when the three children drew themselves in future roles, they often drew themselves alone. Presumably inspired by the men in their lives, both Bertly and Luke frequently depicted themselves in an "ideal identity" (De Ruyter and Conroy, 2002, p. 510), as grown-up men with moustaches; a concept which Boytazis and Albertini (2000) contend, is often communicated by boys. Thea on the other hand, drew herself in a miscellany of ideal and imagined identities: as a 10-year old child, as a pregnant woman, as a captain of a ship and a pilot of plane, effectively analysing who she might become in the future. In these graphic representations the children seemed to use their drawings as a playful way to define their identity and "gain a more powerful imagined physical identity" (Hall, 2010b). The three children also drew themselves in fantasy character roles, with whom they could relate, which enabled them to pretend to do things which they could not do in real life and explore who they can transform themselves into. Luke for example drew himself as *Ben Ten* (figure 7.27, Image 1), or as the superhero of his text with the mission to

kill the bad guys and save his family and the world; Thea drew herself as a princess who scared evil people away and showered children with sweets, flowers and biscuits (Figure 7.27, Image 2); whereas Bertly drew himself as Father Christmas, who brought gifts to his sister (Figure 7.27, Image 3). Thus, in line with Ahn and Filipenko (2007) and Edmiston (2008) I suggest that the children seemed to use the text as an "authoring space" (p. 98), which abetted them to identify, relate and fluidly form their identity.

Figure 7.27
Drawings of the three children as fantasy characters.

LH23: I am Ben Ten

TS16: Things falling in my dream

BH24: Father Christmas and Jael Queen of Hearts
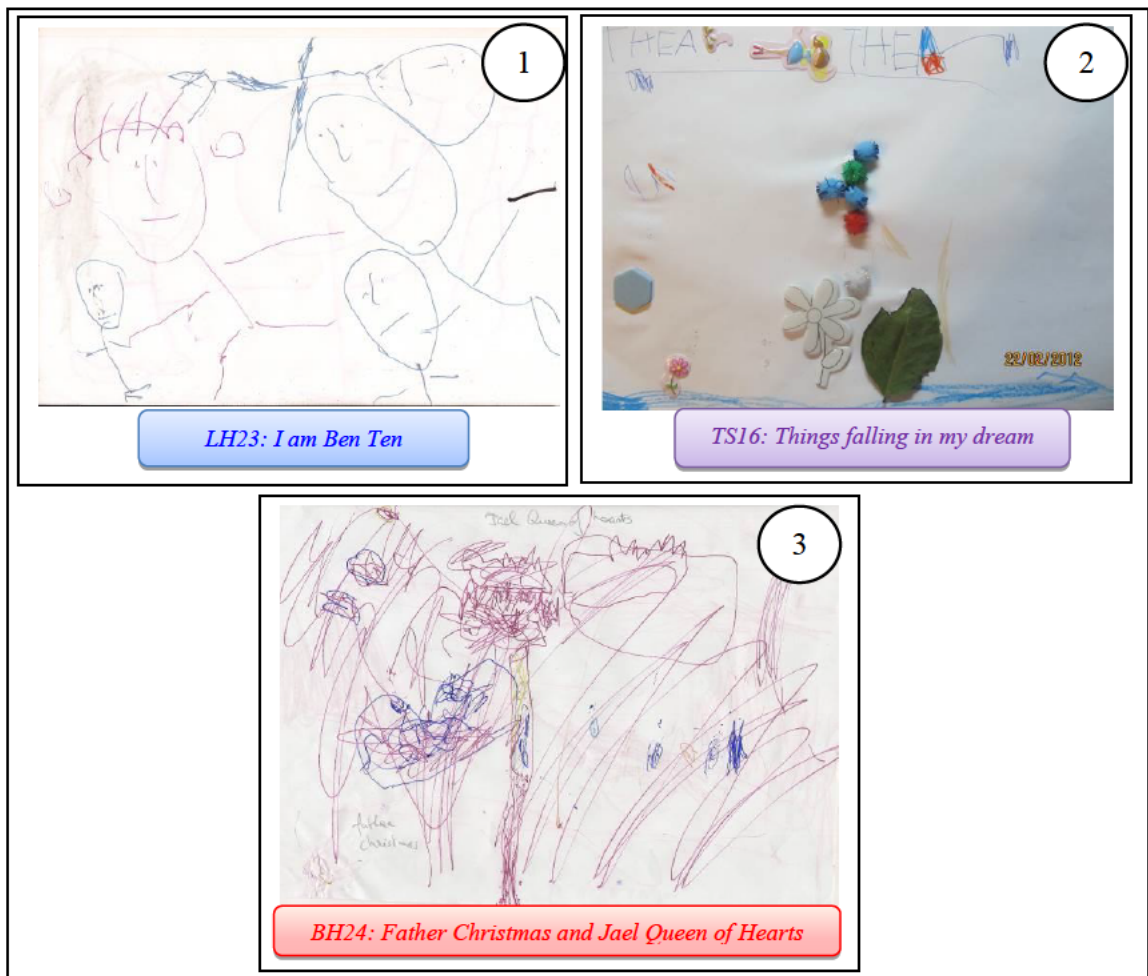
7.6.2 Drawing as a communicator of the self

Adams (2002) asserts that sometimes children use "drawings as perception" (p. 222) which become a reflection of their "inner world of feelings" (p. 133); a symbolic way to represent and "assist the process of making ideas, thoughts and feelings available to others" (p. 2). Correspondingly, the three children regularly used their drawings "as communication" (Adams, 2004, p. 222), as a vehicle to externalise their thoughts

and ingrained inner emotions. On several occasions, the children used the drawing to convey a specific message to a known or unknown audience; at other times, their communication was done in a subtle way where they used their drawings to "portray meaningful and personally important things" (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1947/1987, p. 59) to their parents. For instance, in separate drawings, Luke transmitted his wish to go to a local children's fun park, to have a set of roller skates, and to eat a lot of candy and ice-cream. Bertly on the other hand communicated his wish to swim and to have a piano for his sister, while Thea wished for a tie and to travel to different places. Another application used by both Bertly and Thea was to create cards for significant others so as to communicate particular wishes. Bertly drew a birthday card for his grandmother, "I did it for Grandma Guza … It is for her birthday" (15th March, 2012), while Thea drew birthday cards for her friends. She also drew a well-wishing card for her cousin Romina, a thank you card for me, and depicted other drawings where she expressed her affection towards her peers. Luke had several drawings where he specifically conveyed his affection towards his mother. One common wish which all three children communicated through their drawings was that of having a pet (Figure 7.28). In *LH51* (Image 1), Luke drew his cousin with a dog, explaining that both his cousin and himself would like to have one. By drawing a dog in a box in *BH11* (Image 3), Bertly communicated his wish for a dog, while using her drawing as a metaphor in *TH 37* (Image 2), Thea communicated her disappointment for not being allowed to have a pet cat by drawing a number of animals which were not allowed to enter a castle.

Figure 7.28
Communicating the wish to have a pet.

LH51: Jack jumping in a pool

TH37: Animals not allowed

BH11: A dog in a box
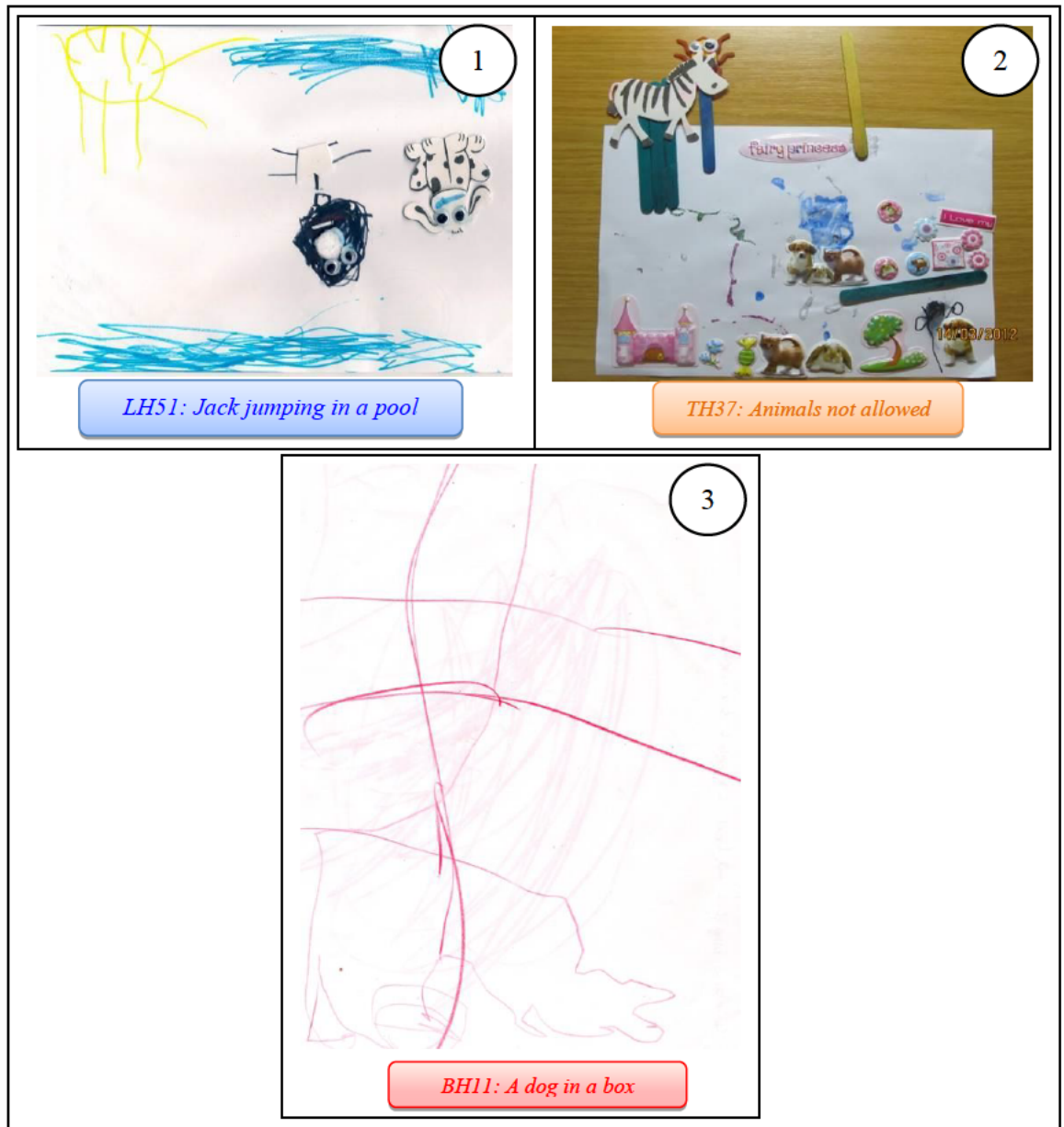
On other occasions, it was the narrative accompanying the drawing, which mirrored the children's inner emotions, feelings and thoughts to the external world. One such example was the feeling of anger Luke fervently conveyed in some of his drawings. In two of his graphic representations (*LH25, LH26*), he voiced his pretend anger in a drawing of his brother Jacob which he explained by saying, "Now I woke up and I am angry … because Jacob woke me up… I shouted, 'Jacob'" [in an angry voice] … and I scared him." In another drawing (*LS8*) he vented his actual anger towards his mother by drawing her tied up for refusing to give him more sweets, and in another

(*LH28*) he communicated his anger towards himself. On the other hand, Thea and Bertly used some of their drawings to convey feelings of fear. Thea expressed her fear from monsters and witches (*TH35, TS21, TS28, TS31*), while Bertly used his drawings to convey his fear of sharks (*BH14, BH21*).

7.6.3 Drawing as a processor of knowledge

One of the perceptions of drawing that emerged in this study is in line with Kress' (2003b, 2000b, 1997) and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) assertion that children's drawings are a way for them to construct, mediate and communicate their knowledge. Here I build on Adams' (2002) notion of "drawing as manipulation" (p.222) or as "invention" (Adams, 2004, p. 6) where I regard children's ways of using drawings, "as an aid to thinking" (Adams, 2002, p.222), that helps them inquire, try, discard, refine and develop their evolving hypothesis about concepts that are of particular interest to them.

Examples from the three children's drawings show that they combined, transformed and made use of their personal "funds of knowledge" (Gonzales, et al., p.3) in complex, meaningful ways. The children's depictions varied from drawings of animals, to drawings that carried information about the weather, to others that dealt with how vehicles worked. One of Luke's drawings (*LS16*), already discussed in Chapter Six (p. 224), provides an example of this, where he developed and communicated his knowledge about the physiology of a worm. Through this design he conveyed his construed knowledge of worms, by drawing a worm with many legs, long fur, a head and a brain inside. He used his visual text as a platform to mediate his experiential, cultural and cognitive knowledge, which he combined with his imaginative abilities to create a plausible and realistic form of a worm. Similarly, Thea and Bertly each drew a series of pictures where they communicated their knowledge about sea creatures. Thea drew fish and shrimps in well-lit aquaria (*TH20, TH24*) while Bertly drew sharks (Figure 7.29, Images 1 and 3), whales (Image 2) and octopuses (Images 4 and 5), conveying also concepts of size, strength and perspective. He showed that octopuses have many 'legs' while sharks are big, black and strong, and live in deep, dark waters. He also communicated his knowledge that, "a shark is bigger than us", and it could be dangerous by asking, "Will it do like this [*opens mouth action*] and eats me? … If he wakes up, do I have to swim faster?" (23rd

February, 2012). Bertly did not only assimilate and represent his knowledge of sharks, but he was also making sense of the information he had acquired "both factually and emotionally" (Nicolopoulou, 1997, p. 157). He was able to appropriate these data selectively and use them for his own purposes to create his own mental image thus, using drawing and telling to "'conceive' the world, rather than merely render it" (Wright, 2011, p. 158).

Figure 7.29
Bertly conveying his knowledge of fish.

1

BH14: A shark

2

BH18: The whale at the beach

3

BH21: A shark in the sea

4

BH28: An octopus

5

BS7: An octopus
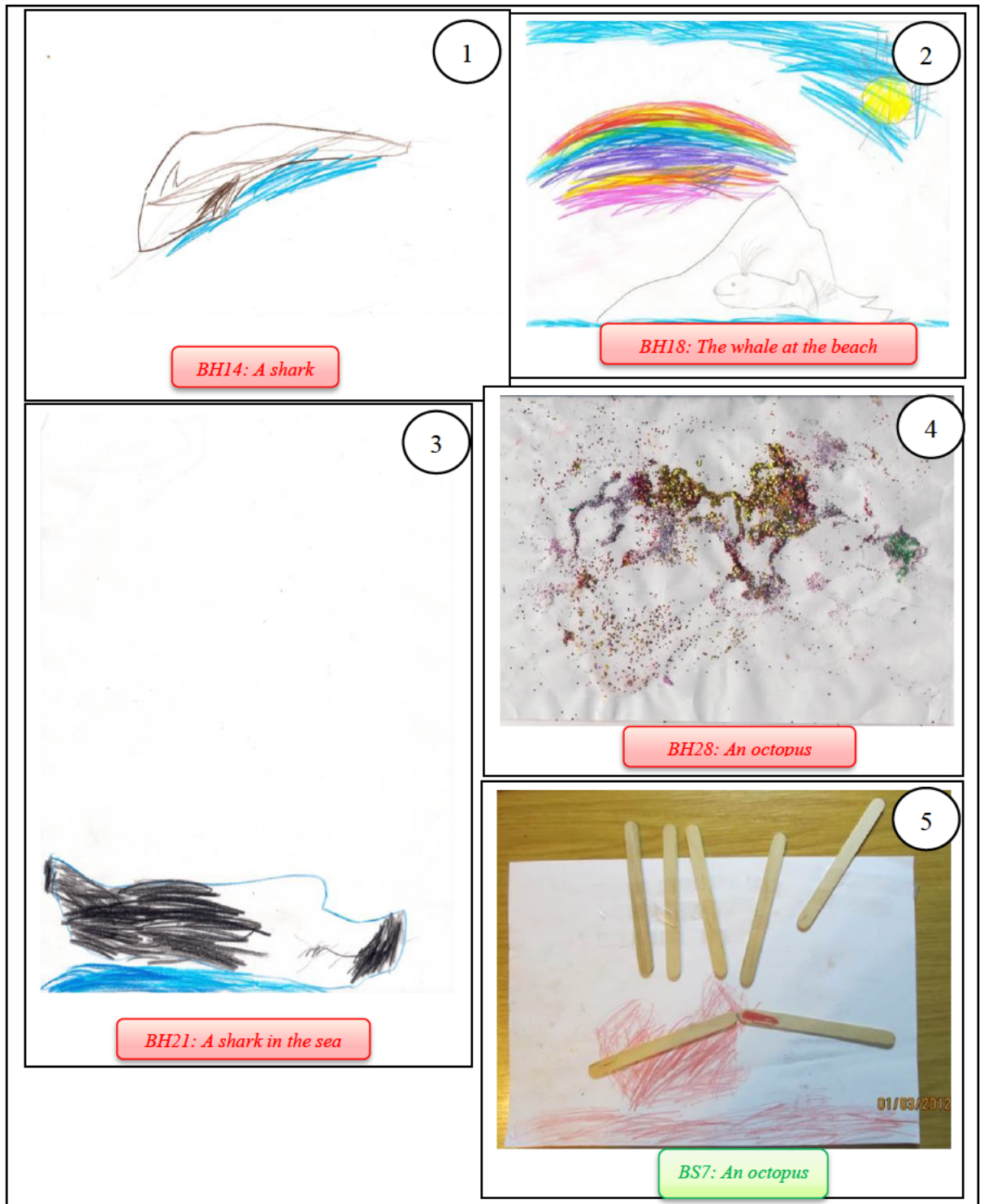
Another example of knowledge-based drawings includes *BH16* (Figure 7.30) by Bertly. It is a drawing with a series of mark-making, which represented the dull, thunderous and wet weather, typical of Maltese, autumn storms. The drawing showed Bertly's in-depth knowledge of the weather and his use of specialised vocabulary that he derived from his "networks of exchange" (Gonzales et al., 2005, p.12), that is, his parents' conversations and his daily observations of the weather forecast which he watched with his father. The accompanying narrative between mother and son provides an indication of the particular meaning Bertly attributed to his text and illustrates his theory construction that rationalises why, according to him, the sun might look green on particular days:

> Bertly: That is the sky. There is a lot of thunder. It is raining …
> … look at how the sun looks with the wind.
> It is not yellow anymore. Look at it.
> Mother: It turned green with the wind.
> Bertly: Yes. It came like this
> Mother: Did it get dirty?
> Bertly: Yes.
> Mother: So it is not nice anymore.
> Bertly: Because the sun got wet. It is being washed.
>
> (23rd February, 2012)

Figure 7.30
Bertly's interpretation of the weather: Dirty rain.

BH16:The storm - Thunder, rain and wind

To fully understand this conversation, one has to have experienced the Maltese weather and its peculiarities. There are days in Autumn when we get southern storms. With wind blowing brown particles from the Sahara desert, these storms bring about a sticky atmosphere, low clouds, murky rain and sometimes thunder. The sun hides behind a thin layer of grey clouds, turning its bright yellow colour into a shady green that changes the bright Maltese skies into a dull atmosphere. The dialogue that ensued between mother and son provides an insight into Bertly's frame of mind, his interpretation, and his reasoning and understanding of the weather. Using his drawing and narrative as a way of reorganising and reconstructing meaning, he developed his theory to explain the unusual dull, greenish colour of the sun and the surrounding atmosphere, which included the hypothesis that the sun got dirty with the wind and was being washed with the rain, leaving a lot of 'dirt' behind: a very plausible and complex conjecture for a four-year old.

I now move to Thea's drawings that reflected her ways of constructing knowledge. She repeatedly made multiple drawings (Figure 7.31) where she played with ideas and made connections to invent, hypothesise and theorise how things work. In *TS40* (Figure 7.31, Image 1), Thea explains how pressing the gas pedal makes a car work. *TS30* (Image 2), shows her invention of how an aeroplane is made on the inside, with wooden sticks for wings, pink lines to denote the entrance and blue corrugated paper to signifcy the seats. *TS18* (Image 3), *TS23* (Image 4) and *TS26* (Image 5) assisted Thea in her development of thought and concepts of how aeroplanes fly, where she explored, refined and practised different possibilities and alternatives that made sense to her. In *TS18* which was Thea's first drawing of an aeroplane, she drew glitters at the back to denote pixie dust, concluding that aeroplanes fly with the help of fairies, who "scatter the pixie dust [*on the aeroplane*], and on themselves to make it fly" (Thea, 24th February, 2012). Drawing on her cultural practice, and using ideas and knowledge she obtained from her network of exchange, she used magic to explicate what to her appeared to be a mystery. This confirms Egan's (1998) assumption that for young children, the use of magic is acceptable in the construction of reality.

Figure 7.31

Thea conveying her knowledge of how cars and aeroplanes work.

TS40: Travelling in a car and aeroplane

TS30: Romina's aeroplane

TS18: An aeroplane

TS23: An aeroplane that flies

TS26: Daddy's aeroplane
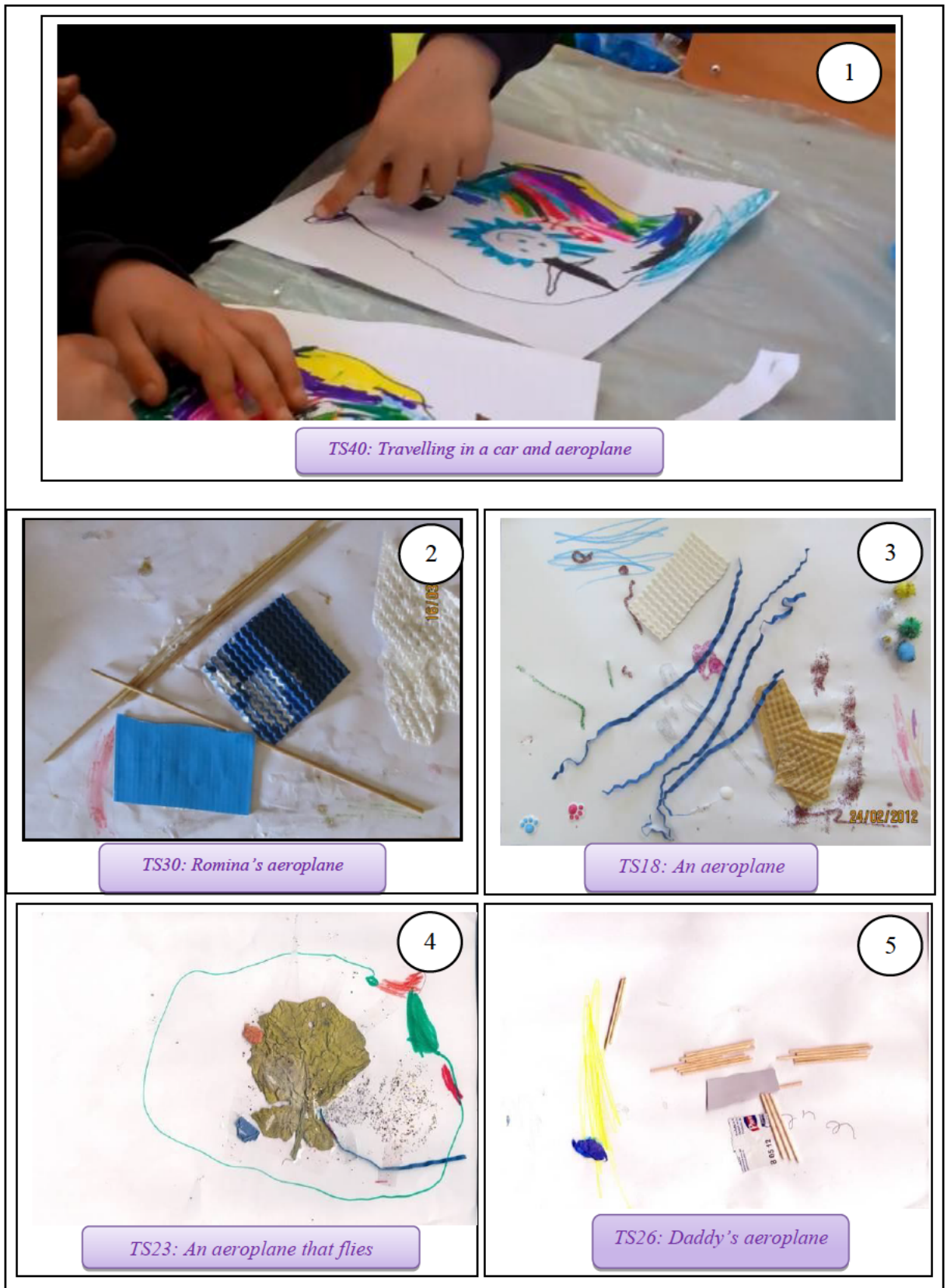
This hypothesis was dissipated in *TS23* (Image 4) and in *TS26* (Image 5) where the idea of making an aeroplane fly with pixie dust was overtaken by the notion of pressing switches. In *TS23* Thea attached two paper balls in the middle of the paper, where she explained that, pressing the blue one makes the aeroplane fly while pressing the orange one, makes it land. Interestingly, in *TS26,* which she drew on the day her father was coming back from abroad, Thea attached only one paper ball, to represent the only switch needed to make the aeroplane land. It was patent, that there was a progression in her reasoning of how aeroplanes fly: from being helped by fairies and pixie dust, in less than two weeks she changed her theory to embrace the idea that a pilot makes a plane goes up and down by pressing switches. It appeared that the drawings became Thea's "'vehicle' for invention … and possibility" (Hawkins, 2002, p. 215), where she used the drawings to meet her "urge to actualise" (Knight, 2009, p. 15), and to develop her own emerging concepts. She made connections between the aeroplane, its flying movement and the use of switches from everyday life, that enabled her to extend her thoughts and try possible solutions.

Thea had other examples of drawing as invention where she provided other remarkable constructions of knowledge: from how a ship's horn can hoot (the green rectangular shape at the back in Figure 7.32, *TS38*, Image 1); to how a see-saw can be used as a catapult to launch animals (the green wooden stick in *TH37*, Image 2); to how her body works (*TS44*, Image 3) by illustrating what happens to the food that goes inside her tummy; and how a butterfly comes out of his cocoon (*TS28*, Image 4).

Figure 7.32
Thea conveying her knowledge of how different things work.

1 — TS38: A ship	2 — TH37: Animals not allowed
3 — TS44: Inside my tummy	4 — TS28: A butterfly-monster story

In line with Ahn and Filipenko's argument (2007), I suggest that, as the inventors of their ideas, the three children used their drawings as ways of reorganising, reconstructing and reformulating abstract, technical and scientific notions. It appeared that they used their drawings as forms of "cultural transmission of their everyday knowledge" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 270), where through a process of intentional "thinking in action" (Cox, 2005, p. 115), they postulated, tested and concluded how to make sense of the things around them. Such drawings also helped them to organise and explain their learned knowledge, concepts and experiences to themselves and others. By drawing on both the fictional and the factual, the children were constantly reinterpreting and restructuring their drawing to construct a plausible hypothesis.

7.6.4 Drawing as a play process

Another function of drawing which emerged during the study was its use by children as "an inherently playful activity" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 279). Habitually, the children seemed to consider their drawings as "imagined spaces of play" (Edmiston, 2008. p. 6), or what Wood and Hall (2011) defined as "spaces for intellectual play" (p. 267), where they concocted, pretended and transformed meaning to create the world as they liked it to be.   I hereby draw on notions of play-based drawings as identified by Wood and Hall (2011), confirming their categorised three main forms of "playing *at* drawing", "playing *in* drawings" and "playing *with* drawings" (p. 267), discussed in Chapter Three.

Playing at drawing.

Playing *at* the physical level of drawing, which can involve the use of the drawing as a prop combined with vocalisations and sound effects to enhance the narrative, occurred for example, when Bertly was drawing a train (*BH23: The choo-choo train,* Figure 7.26, Image 2, p. 322; refer also to SD card for a video-clip of the drawing under the Folder *Bertly's Video-recordings*). Holding the image in a vertical position facing towards him, he moved it forward on the table (Figure 7.33), animating it with sound-effects and stating, "Then we did, Nee-no, nee-no, nee-no. And then someone else got on the train" (1st March, 2012). This example reflects Bertly's kinaesthetic and oral enjoyment in transforming his static, rigid and flat drawing into a 2D prop for play by moving it and chanting.   Luke also engaged in similar physical play *at* drawings where he frequently accompanied his drawings with gestures and vocalisations to animate his narrative, which at times also included banging the drawing media to simulate shooting like in *LS11: The lobster story* (Figure 6.19, p. 211) described in Chapter Six.

Figure 7.33
Playing at drawing: Bertly holding and moving the image forward on the table while animating it with sound-effects.

Luke and Thea, often resorted to another form of playing *at* drawing, that of social play, where they engaged in "playful social interactions" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 274) with their peers. When Luke drew next to Shaun, such as when he drew *LS6: My friend Shaun* (Figure 6.38, p. 250), the two often ended up copying from each other, adding marks on each other's drawings and extending each other's narratives and representation, playfully joking about them. Similarly, when Thea drew *TS40* (Figure 7.34, Image 1)*,* in collaboration with her friend Neil[16], they depicted a very similar drawing to each other (Figure 6.34, Image 2 shows Neil's drawing). Engaged in depicting a super vehicle that could transform itself into a car, boat or aeroplane as the need arises, they focused on creating a mutually interesting text, based on reciprocity, affinity and synergy between them.

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[16] Neil is another classmate of the three children. I used a pseudonym to protect the child's identity.

Figure 7.34
Thea's drawing [1], shows striking similarities with Neil's [2], created in playful reciprocity.

TS40: Travelling in a car and aeroplane

1.

2.

Neil's drawing
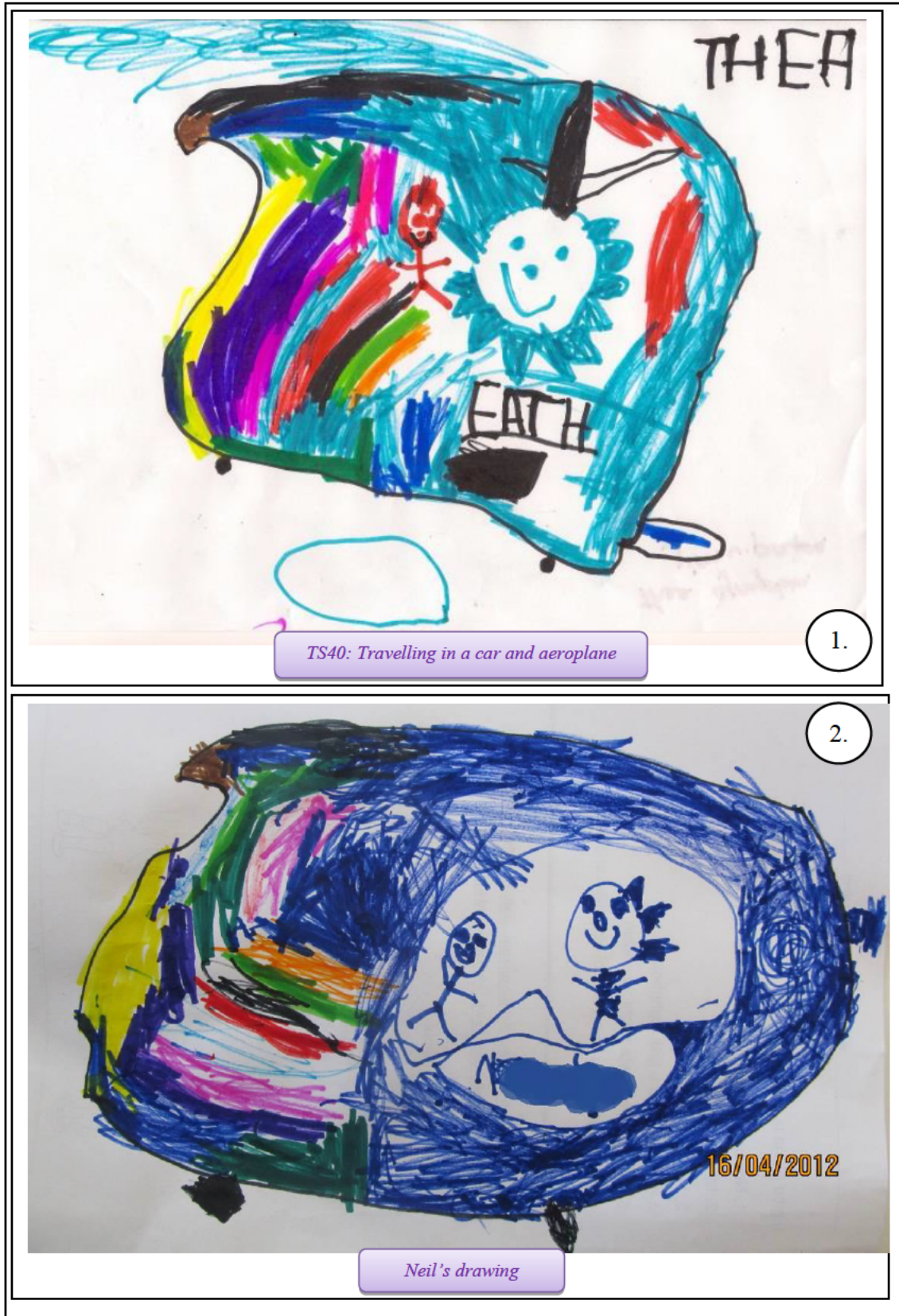
Copying from each other, Thea and Neil interacted playfully as they entered in and out of play to share colours, ideas, humorous anecdotes and concerted discussions to create a very similar vehicle (Figure 7.35, Images 1 - 4). This helped them develop their drawing into a "socially meaningful activity" (Cox, 2005, p.123), while simultaneously shape their friendship; a use of drawing which was also observed in other studies (Coates, 2002; Coates and Coates, 2006; Dyson, 2010, 1997, 1993b, 1989; Hopperstad, 2008a).   When, for example, Neil pointed that "mine [*my car*] has a gas pedal" (16th April, 2012), Thea retorted that, "even I have one like it", while signalling at her protruding oval shape at the bottom of her drawing (Figure 7.35, Image 5). This highlights an example of "complementary relation" (Dyson, 2010, p.18), that of composing in playful reciprocity. A similar episode of mutual exchange occurred when Neil described Sonic the Hedgehog (Sega Corporation, 2013) character, while drawing three knives on his head, presumably, instead of spikes on his back, explaining, "I am going to be Sonic … because I love Sonic. A knife … another knife here … and another one here" (16th April, 2012). Thea did likewise to her 'Fuel' character, stating that, "I am going to draw a knife on his head. I am going to draw it up here" (Image 6). I suggest that the most significant aspect of the two drawings was that through their shared processes, collaborative interaction and a similarly-constructed text, the two children gave their drawing a "social value" (Frisch, 2006, p. 82), where they used their representation as a way to access, establish and reflect their "social relations and contextual conditions" (p. 81) in a playful way.

Figure 7.35
Snapshots of playful interactions between Thea and Neil in TS40.

Neil [on the left] is handing a green marker to Thea to colour like him.	Thea using the same colours as Neil to draw a similar car. The similarity is striking.	Thea is taking a green marker from Neil to colour like him.
Thea will soon put down the purple mark and take Neil's pink one.	Pointing at their respective gas pedals.	In reciprocity with Neil, Thea similarly drew her character with knives [*spikes*] on his head.

Playing in drawings.

The three children engaged in both the physical and the imaginative level of playing *in* drawings. In playing *in* drawings at the physical level, the children drew real people, including themselves, engaged in action. Such drawings sometimes also included play equipment (Wood and Hall, 2011). This type of drawing was more favoured by Luke, rather than by Thea and Bertly. One such a drawing was *LH34: Luxol outing 1* (Figure 7.36) where Luke drew a still image of himself playing with his friends, running and "bumping into each other" (7th March, 2012) while on a school outing.

Figure 7.36
Physical playing in drawings: Luke drew himself and his friends in action, running and bumping into each other.

LH34: Luxol outing 1
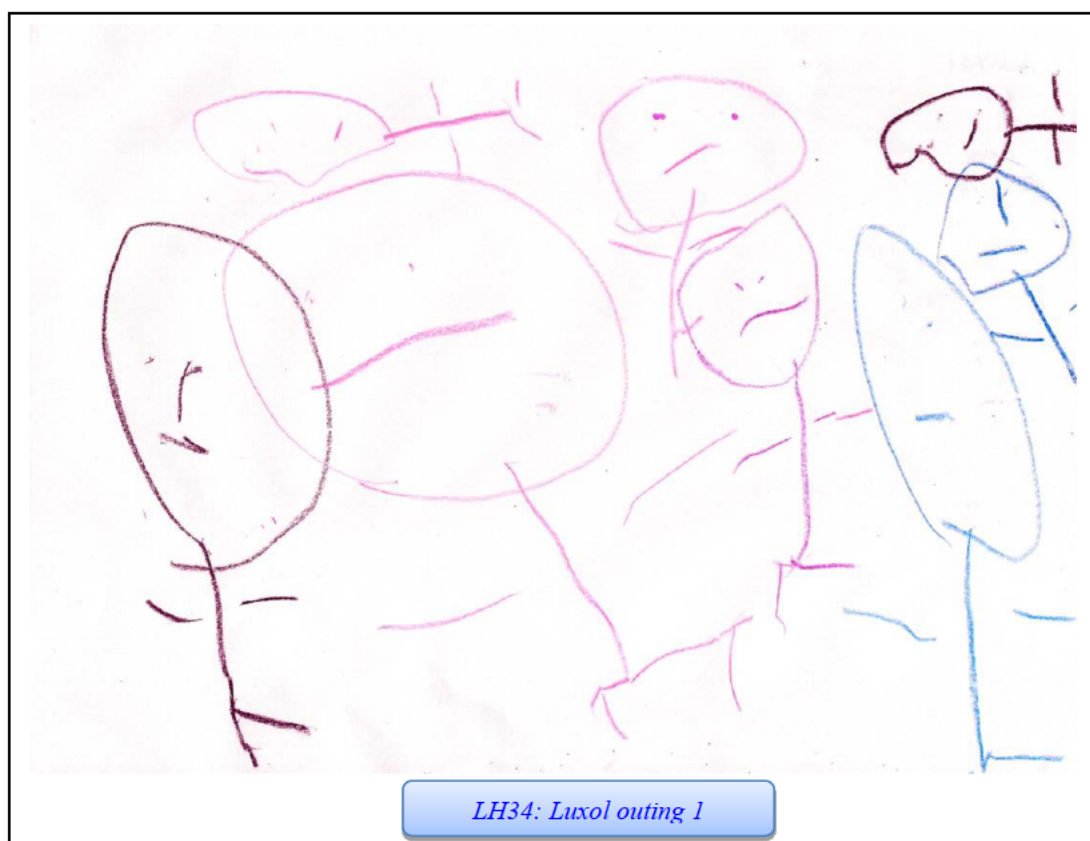
LH38: My mother and I playing with the ball (Figure 7.37) and *LH52: Playing Wii sword fight with mum* (Figure 6.53 p. 270), are two other exemplars of physical playing *in* drawings by Luke which show him playing with his mother, something which he enjoyed. In the former he drew himself and his mother throwing a ball at each other while on a picnic and in the latter he drew them playing with Wii Nintendo video-game at home. Both representations are evidence of playing *in* drawings at the

physical level, as they not only feature figures engaged in action, but they also include play equipment.

Figure 7.37
Physical playing in drawings: Luke drew himself and his mother playing with a ball.

LH38: My mother and I playing with the ball

Another mode of playing *in* drawings which the children resorted to was at the imaginative level where they created images of real-life experiences merged with imaginary ones as if it was dramatic role-play (Wood and Hall, 2011). In such fictive drawings, the children drew themselves as the main character, with family members and other real and fantasy figures. In *LH24: The Blue Lady* (Figure 6.12, p. 196) discussed in Chapter Six, Luke, drew a family visit to a local castle, a reminiscent of a real-life experience that occurred a few weeks prior. He drew the *Blue Lady,* a ghost-figure that is believed to haunt the castle and three figures, all representing his fearful younger brother, Jacob, as "The *Blue Lady* fired at me" (Jacob, 7th March, 2013). While he did not draw himself on paper, Luke was still part of the drawing and stating, "I am Ben Ten" he took the role of the superhero to save his brother. Imitating *Ben Ten's* actions, and stating that "I want to catch the *Blue Lady*" (Luke, 7th March, 2013), Luke then drew lines on the *Blue Lady* to signify her tied up with

ropes. Subsequently, he put her in prison. Treating his drawing as an enfolding role-play, Luke manipulated the characters and text where he positioned himself in an imagined identity (Kendrick and McKay, 2004); that of a witty superhero with super powers who captured and won over the wicked *Blue Lady*. The narrative which interweaved between elements of imagination, mythical narrative, wishful thinking and real-life scenario, was partly depicted on paper and partly occurred as dramatic play outside the text, where Luke became one with his narrative text.

While generally speaking Bertly preferred more the autobiographical type of representations, he too had drawings in which he engaged in active "visual narratives" (Wright, 2007, p. 1), where he became the hero of his drawing. *BS17: When a dragon came to school,* (Figure 7.38), is one such example, where using mark-making as his mode of drawing, Bertly drew himself with his friend Shaun fighting a monster. Projecting himself as the hero of the text, Bertly specified that he threw the dragon in the water, shot and killed him. The drawing, which is dominated by action lines, captured a complex story packed with fear and acts of conflict and heroism where reality and myth interweaved with concepts of friendship. I consider that Bertly could have possibly tried to use this drawing, which was very atypical for him, as "a means of entry" (Dyson, 1997, p. 47) into his friends' social world where, by representing himself as "powerful in a [pretend] danger-filled world" (p. 14), he saved them from a dangerous dragon.

Figure 7.38
Playing in drawing: Bertly taking the role of a superhero who fights and kills the dragon.

BH17: When a dragon came to school

Playing with drawings.

I now refer to Wood and Hall's (2011) notion of playing *with* drawings, which involves physical play and storytelling. Physical play *with* drawings occurred when children used gesticulation to explain movement that was represented in their drawings. Gestures and actions, according to Wright (2008) are two modes which children use as part of their "drawing-telling" (p. 1) that accompanies their texts to explain what is happening in their representations. This type of playing *with* drawings was not very common among the three children and it emerged clearly only in one of Luke's drawings *LH49: Me carrying a bag full of candy* (Figure 6.8, p. 187), discussed in Chapter Six. As soon as he finished drawing himself carrying a bag on his shoulder, Luke stood up on the chair and marched across the room to enact the carrying of an invisible bag. Accompanying his representation with vocalisation and "visual telling" (Wright, 2008, p. 39) to explain that he was marching (Refer to Figure 6.9, p. 188, 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), Luke

integrated what Wright (2008) defines a "graphic-verbal telling of events" (p. 39), to demonstrate to his mother and myself, his audience, the meaning of his drawing.

In playing *with* drawings through storytelling, children used drawing as a narrative function to explain the imaginary words they depicted on paper: a commonly used type of play amongst the three children of my study. Inspired by imaginative content, familiar stories, and sometimes real life experiences, they used the drawing as a springboard to tell a story through which they communicated their emotions, thoughts, concern and actions to others (Wood and Hall, 2011). One such drawing was Thea's *TH23: The aquarium shop* (Figure 7.39), where she drew two aquaria with shrimp and fish. This drawing was inspired by a recent visit to a pet shop which she regularly visited with her father, and the buying of some shrimps for their kitchen aquarium. As Thea explained, "These are two aquariums… these are the fish… the shrimps are here. The shrimps are large because they have grown up. The yellow is the light. We are at the pet shop." (28th February, 2012). However, Thea also included an imaginary aspect to her narrative claiming, "But here [*in the drawing*] our shrimps have died… But our shrimps did not die. Our shrimps did not die for real. They died in the picture only". The drawing narrates a story based on a real-life event intermingled with imagination, where Thea conveyed her concern about the shrimps which they had just bought: the possibility that the shrimps might die; a situation which the whole family dreaded

Figure 7.39

The transformation of a drawing into a story-text based on both real-life experiences and imaginary tales.

TH23: The aquarium shop

Another storytelling by Thea which was likewise based on a real life experience merged with an imaginary tale was *TS31: The interactive whiteboard activity* (Figure 7.40, Image 1). On that day Thea was encouraged by the KGA to write the letter 'm' on the interactive whiteboard (Figure 7.40, Image 2). Inspired by the rarity and uniqueness of the activity, Thea depicted the experience. However, giving a twist to her drawing, she also included an aside story where she referred to a separate, but likewise, real episode, when two handymen came to carry some maintenance work in the class. Perceiving the tough-looking men as monsters, she flavoured her drawing with an imaginary narrative where monsters (signified by the rectangular, colourful shapes on the right, left corner of the drawing) visited the class unwelcomed, "Now somebody is coming to crush the papers … the ones displayed above the whiteboard … because he is a naughty guy. He gets on everybody's nerves, even the teacher's" (22nd March, 2012). Changing the monsters into giants, Thea continued with her story by stating, "They are on top of each other … the giants came from the prison… they fell and got hurt." The drawing told and represented two, different but parallel stories: the first communicated her happiness at writing on the interactive whiteboard, the latter, which verged on the imaginary, conveyed the fear and threat she

experienced when the handymen came to the class and her courage in dealing with them. This confirms Wood and Hall's (2011) affirmation that frequently children use imaginative play to help them deal with "emotional opposites" (p. 277), in this case, those of happiness and fear, as experienced by Thea.

Figure 7.40
A drawing by Thea [1] that reflected an activity she did in class [2] merged with an imaginary tale.

TS31: The interactive whiteboard activity

Bertly too depicted some drawings where he merged the factual with an imaginary narrative. In *BH39* (Figure 7.41), he drew the porcelain duck they had at home. However, in his imaginary drawing, the duck came to life and flew in the rain, "This is that duck over there … It is flying … In the rain. That is the rain!" (29th March, 2012).

Figure 7.41
Playing with drawings: Bertly playing with storytelling where he merged the factual with the imaginary.

BH39: Our duck

I extend Wood and Hall's (2011) notion of playing *with* drawings through storytelling to include Wright's (2007) concept of graphic-narrative play, which consists of fantasy-based experiences that are translated onto paper, where children tell a story through, mythical character development, plot and scenery. Storytelling through graphic-narrative play was Luke's preferred way of drawing, where, adopting a "heroic-agonistic genre" (Nicolopoulou, 1997, p. 166), that mainly included fictional characters, "graphic action" (Wright, 2011, p. 162), and drama, he used the text as a dynamic playing field full of action and narrative. In such texts of playing *with* drawings, to me resembled small world play where instead of playing with small toys, Luke, used the paper as an arena to create a playful plot on paper with fantasy

characters fighting in action.   To represent the action that unfolded in such drawings, he often drew an array of chaotic straight and circular lines from and between his characters. In drawings such as *LS17: The good guy and the bad guy* (Figure 6.13, p. 198), *LS18: Ben Ten Fight* (Figure 6.15, p. 200), *LS11: The lobster story* (Figure 6.19, p. 211), and *LS1: The good and the evil* (Figure 6.37, p. 248), all discussed in detail in Chapter Six, Luke described, modified, enacted, located and relocated his characters while shifting in and out of the drawing to explain what was happening. Such drawing narratives, that usually contained a range of "evolving ideas, fluid themes, [that were] free-form composition" (Wright, 2010b, p. 45) frequently originated from "secondary sources" (Coates and Coates, 2011, p. 102) such as books and animated cartoon episodes where Luke blended ideas, scenarios, actions and characters with personal events to create a playful running narrative with unifying immortal themes of good and evil (Danesi, 2007; Edmiston, 2008; Egan, 1998; Jones, n.d.; Wright, n.d.). Similar to findings from Wright's (2007) study, such narratives had "fluid structures" (p. 2), and "fleeting moments" (p. 2) that evolved through and from fantasy, without adhering to conventional, sequential or rational storytelling.

While, in their analysis, Wood and Hall (2011) kept these three forms of drawing as play relatively distinct, at times I found this challenging as the children moved between the three forms intermittently even within the same drawings. Such exemplars include two of Luke's drawings, *LS17:The good guy and the bad guy* (Figure, 6.13, p. 198) *LS18: Ben Ten Fight* (Figure 6.15, p. 200), which he did immediately after and at the back of each other. Engaging in playing *in* drawings, in *LS17* Luke drew the good guy and the bad guy in action, with the former running and the latter flying while simultaneously shooting each other (Figure 7.42, Image 1). Moving to playing *with* drawings, which he merged with playing *at* drawing (Figure 7.42, Images 2 and 3), Luke developed a narrative which he accompanied with sound effects to signify the shooting.

> A man is running … because he [*the bad guy*] is firing at his head …
> This one [*the guy at the top*] is the bad guy … here he is flying …
> Pum! Pum! He will die …
> I will put him [*the bad guy*] in cage because he is naughty.
>
> (Luke, 1st March, 2012)

Figure 7.42
Merging playing at, in, with drawing in one representation.

Playing *in* drawings: Luke's drawing of figures engaged in action: The good guy running and the bad guy flying while shooting at each other.

Playing *with* drawings merged with playing *at* drawing: Luke telling his story accompanied with sound effects, "A man is running because he [*the bad guy*] is firing at his head …This one [*the guy at the top*] is the bad guy … here he is flying. Pum! Pum! He will die."

Playing *with* drawings: Luke telling his story while drawing, "I will put him [*the bad guy*] in a cage because he is naughty."

Analogously, Luke began *LS18,* by playing at the physical form *in* drawings where he drew *Ben Ten* in action flying and firing at the video-cameras (refer to Figure 6.15, p. 200 for still images from the video-recording). He then moved to playing *at* drawing which he amalgamated with playing *with* drawings where he developed a drawing-narrative accompanied with vocalisations and sound effects while banging forcefully to represent the shooting.

I suggest that, "mediated by their senses and sensitivities" (Edmiston, 2008, p. 98) the children regularly transformed their drawings into spaces for play, which enabled them to create a fusion of real-life experiences merged with elements of fantasy.

7.7 The Role of Talk and Narrative in Creating Meaning

Talk emerged as a result of collective interaction during the drawing process. These examples of talk were a crucial part of the semiotic process, which acted as a catalyst to uncover their meanings (Danesi, 2007; Kangas et al., 2011; Maybin, 2006). It helped the children to overcome the limitations of a static drawing in order to present a comprehensive narrative. Had I grounded my analysis only on my subjective interpretation of the drawings, without considering the children's perspectives and those of their parents, my understandings would have been limited and lacking in accuracy, richness and significance for the children (Hall, 2010b). These apparent unsystematic, informal, improvised and *ad hoc* conversations and narratives, which developed as needed on the onset, during or after the depiction, evolved, altered, shaped and re-shaped the intended meaning to consequently provide a deeper, more analytical and coherent understanding. Drawing on Ring and Anning's (2004) study, it is clear that Luke, Thea and Bertly used the power of talk and narrative to construct, represent and allude to their values, attitudes, intentions and meanings in a fluid and effective way.

The level, extent and necessity of talk during the children's drawing processes varied. At times, they talked at intermittent intervals, while on other occasions they talked incessantly throughout their drawing, to themselves or to their peers who happened to be close by. The talk varied according to the children's personality, mood, the content of the drawing, the media to hand, and the aura in the surrounding

environment at that particular time. Similar patterns of talk were also confirmed by Hopperstad (2008b), Van Oers (1997), Coates and Coates (2006; 2011) and Coates (2002). The use of talk was complex in that it was used by the children to develop the drawing in various ways: to share and describe the content, to voice the process of drawing and to seek advice about technical aspects of their drawings. The children also used talk to internalise and verbalise their intentions and plans; to engage in "complex dialogues which encapsulated a complete remembered experience" (Coates and Coates, 2011, p. 99); to elaborate or attribute meaning to their drawing; to use as "word play" (Wright, 2007, p. 17) and include a playful and amusing twist to their narrative; to use as a "narrative function" (Hopperstad, 2008b, p. 136), typifying a transformation in the drawing or a change in meaning; to create an invigorating story or to use it as instance of social interaction (Coates and Coates, 2006). In keeping with other studies (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007; Anning and Ring, 2004; Dyson, 1989; Coates, 2002; Wright, 2011) I identified evidence that the three children's interaction with other children enabled them to use talk as a tool for conceptual thinking, to process abstract ideas and to develop their knowledge. Before, during and after the drawings, the children also talked with an adult, (their parents and/or myself) while declaring their plans, to communicate the subject matter, to ask for help, to seek encouragmnet or to ask for a different perspective. Ultimately, as Chandler (2007), Edmiston (2008), Rowsell and Pahl (2007) and Wright (2010b) exemplify, the talk and the storytelling that ensued, discursively formed part of the children's process of constructing, mediating and authoring *the self*. The three children in my study told stories about who they were and also communicated their emotions, wishes, dreams, and interests, and portrayed an image of how they would like to be.

7.8 Influences on Children's Drawings

Children's drawings can be seen as socio-cultural activities that are influenced, shaped and reflect the contexts in which they occur (Anning, 2002; Ivashkevich, 2009; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007). The attitudes, rituals, beliefs and practices of parents, siblings and peers as well as the events that the children experienced on a daily basis, together with influences from popular culture and the wider world, affected *what* and *how* they drew. Echoing Hall's (2010b) and Malchiodi's (1998) assertions, that children's drawings are complex representations composed of different elements and

experiences that make them difficult to explain and interpret, I acknowledge that there were inexorable overlapping influences which intertwined and interweaved in a complex web of evocative meaning. From this standpoint, I draw on Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001), Penn's (2000), Rowsell and Pahl's (2007), and Walsh's (n.d.) claim that to better understand the meaning behind a text and be able to interpret it, one has to know the context and its purpose, and should have further procedural, cultural and contextual knowledge. However, I recognise that, even if I spent considerable time with the children and got to know their home and school environments more deeply, some of the influences might still not have been so apparent to me. Similarly, I might have lacked full familiarity with the children's socio-cultural context that went beyond the home-school environments and the limited timeframe of my observations. Hence, in my analysis, I only refer to the most palpable and demarked influences, which I was aware of and informed about.

7.8.1 Influences of the home environment

I now summarise and draw conclusions about the possible home influences that affected the children's drawings.

The influence of parents and the extended family.

My conclusions show that the parents had a direct influence in shaping the three children's drawings (Rose et al., 2006), where, echoing Ring's (2006) claim, I recognise that the mothers had a particular effect on the children's ways of meaning-making, that differed from the fathers' or from other members of the extended family. All three mothers regarded it as their role to provide materials and engage in conversations with their children during the process of drawing. They regularly stayed within close proximity, asked questions, suggested topics, shared ideas, made links, provided advice and encouraged and supported their children's endeavours. Such interactions enabled the three children to develop their thoughts and extend their drawings in a process of co-construction of meanings. Rose et al. (2006) similarly suggest that children often seek verbal instruction and positive reinforcement from more knowledgeable others. At other times the mothers modelled the use of particular media, modes, techniques and drawing behaviour for their children to copy; a practice which was also observed in other studies (Anning, 2002, 1999; Anning and

Ring, 2004; Hall, 2008). In line with Pahl (1999b), my findings also indicate that generally speaking, the mothers "valued visually realistic drawings over an abstract or expressive style" (Rose et al., 2006, p. 347). I also found that while the mothers attentively followed the process of drawing and sometimes even attempted to structure and determine its outcome, an observation which is also congruent with findings from Pahl's (1999b) study, they also allowed for some freedom of choice and decision-making; thus, for most of the times, the drawings were mainly child-led.

All three children drew their mothers in everyday routines and family experiences, both in past and present situations. Thea and Luke drew their mothers pregnant with them or with one of their siblings; Bertly drew his mother driving him and his sister around, and Luke drew his mother sharing special moments with him: all reflecting traces of their everyday practice and family habitus (Rowsell and Pahl, 2007). It was interesting to note that most of the children's drawings of their mothers occurred at home, presumably influenced by her presence and the current dynamics within the context. When at school, rather than drawing their mothers, all three children made drawings as gifts for them. Examples include Bertly's *BS20* (Figure 7.43, Image 1) drawing of a scene of their kitchen to give to his mother, Luke's *LS19* (Image 2) drawing of a cake and party celebration for his mother, and Thea's insertion of a red rose in *TS6* (Image 3), as gift for her mother.

Figure 7.43
Drawings as gifts for the mothers.

BS20: Cooking chicken in the oven

LS19: A party and cake for mummy

TS6: The turkey, the elephant and the flying

The fathers influenced the children in a different way than the mothers did, possibly because they were less present in their lives, and were often absent when the children drew. Corroborating Anning's (2002) findings, the three children of my study seemed primarily inspired by their father's work and interests rather than by their presence. This factor was evident mostly in Thea's drawings who had the largest number of depictions that related to her father. Inspired by his managerial work position, she drew him returning from work (*TH20*, Figure 7.44, Image 1) and waking up *(TH36)*, where in both drawings she emphasised the use of a tie, a garment which she admired and wished to wear. Thea and her father also shared the same hobbies.

Both had an interest in fish, in sports and liked to watch episodes from *The Strongest Man* (IMG, 2014) together. All of these interests featured considerably in Thea's drawings; sometimes directly as part of the drawing, while on other occasions indirectly as part of the accompanying narrative.

Figure 7.44
The influence of fathers.

TH20: Dad coming home

BH30:Grass in our field

LH10: Dad by himself

Bertly did not draw many pictures of his father; however, he too demonstrated shared interests with him: like him he liked to spend time in "daddy's field" (Bertly, 15th March, 2012), (*BH30*, Figure 7.44, Image 2) and was fascinated by fish (*BH14, BH18, BH28, BS7, BS21*) and the weather (*BH6, BH16, BH29, BH30, BS12*). But it was his talk about fireworks *(BS16),* which showed Bertly's true passion, where he

not only described the whole process from detonating them to watching them open in the sky, but he was also able to link them, albeit considering them different, to the shooting of target plates with guns. This interest confirmed the father's influence on Bertly's drawings as well as on his passions and knowledge. In contrast, Luke's drawing did not show a particular admiration towards his father's job or his interests but he mostly portrayed his father in a caring role spending time with his family *(LH24, LH15)*. It was only in one drawing that Luke drew his father by himself *(LH10,* Figure 7.44, Image 3).

The extended family, mainly the grandparents, all played a significant role in the children's lives. However, it was only in Thea's case that the maternal grandparents were present during some of the drawing sessions. On such instances, the grandparents acted like the mother and assisted, guided, prompted and conversed with Thea about the topic of the drawing. Both of Thea's grandfathers had a love for the outdoors and their shared interest in birds seemed to inspire many of Thea's drawings *(TH9, TH14, TH3,* Figure 7.45, Image 1). Surprisingly, Thea never drew her grandmother even if she was very present in her life. Bertly's grandparents were never present during the drawing; however, Bertly drew his grandmother several times. One drawing featured a particular occasion where, together with his mother and sister he went on a train tour with his grandmother (*BH23*). As indicated above, Bertly also drew a card to celebrate his grandmother's birthday (*BH34*), which was immediately followed with a drawing of balloons as a gift for her (*BH35,* Figure 7.45, Image 2). Luke seemed to have a positive affiliation with his grandparents who were present during one drawing session; yet, they did not seem to influence his drawings; rather, it was more his cousins who featured in his graphic represnetations (*LH51, LH2,* Figure 7.45, Image 3), where he depicted them on a family outing to Gozo; reflecting a family's ritual, that of regularly going out with a number of aunts, uncles and cousins.

Figure 7.45
The influence of the extended family.

TH3: Grandpa

BH35:Balloons

LH2: On the Gozo ship

These family-influenced drawings bring to mind Ahn's (2006) conclusion that what children communicate through their drawings about their family members discloses a meaning that is personal, unique and significant only to them. In my study, the children's texts and narratives were suggestive of their relationships with their respective family members and indicative of their home practices, routines and families' ways of living; this echoes the work of Anning (2002), Ring and Anning, (2004) and Rowsell and Pahl (2007).

The influence of siblings.

Sometimes, Luke's, Thea's and Bertly's siblings drew beside them, where the older brother and sisters provided ideas, questioned and were critical of their younger siblings' drawings. Such an attitude was strongly evoked by Jael and Erica, Bertly's and Thea's older sisters respectively. They tended to take on a role similar to that of their mothers and likewise guided, inspired, prompted and encouraged their young siblings in "joint involvement episodes" (Anning, 2002, p. 198). In my informal conversations with Bertly and Thea, they made it clear that while there were times where they shared and adopted notions from their siblings, their drawings were different, original and unique in style and agentive decision-making. Luke's elder and younger brothers, Matthias and Jacob, seemed to take the drawing process more lightly and considered it as a playful arena. The three of them joked and teased each other about the content of the drawings, while simultaneously, albeit contrastingly, appreciated the subject and the effort it entailed to complete a drawing. Whilst it is not possible to generalise or draw even a tentative conclusion about gender here, it is interesting to note that the older sisters tried to exert more influence than Luke's brothers.

Bertly and Thea had each depicted their older sisters in two drawings, mainly with other family members. Such examples included Thea's drawing of Erica with her mother and in another, as part of a family portrait (*TH32*, Figure 7.46, Image 1) and Bertly's drawing of his sister Jael in a Carnival costume (*BH19,* Figure 7.46, Image 3). Luke included drawings of his brothers in various graphic representations. He drew Matthias, his older brother, by himself (*LS24,* Figure 7.46, Image 2), as a pilot (*LH46*), playing swordfight together with Wii (*LH53*), and also in a cage (*LH20*), which Luke explained was a way to punish his brother for not being fair and share his toys with him. Contrastingly, he drew Jacob, his younger brother, in mischievous situations where his aim seemed to tease him (*LH26, LH27, LH31*). My general conclusion of the three children's drawings of their siblings is that they reflected the relationship they had with them and the experiences they shared.

Figure 7.46
The influence of siblings.

TH32:My family

LS24: Matthias

BH19: Jael the witch
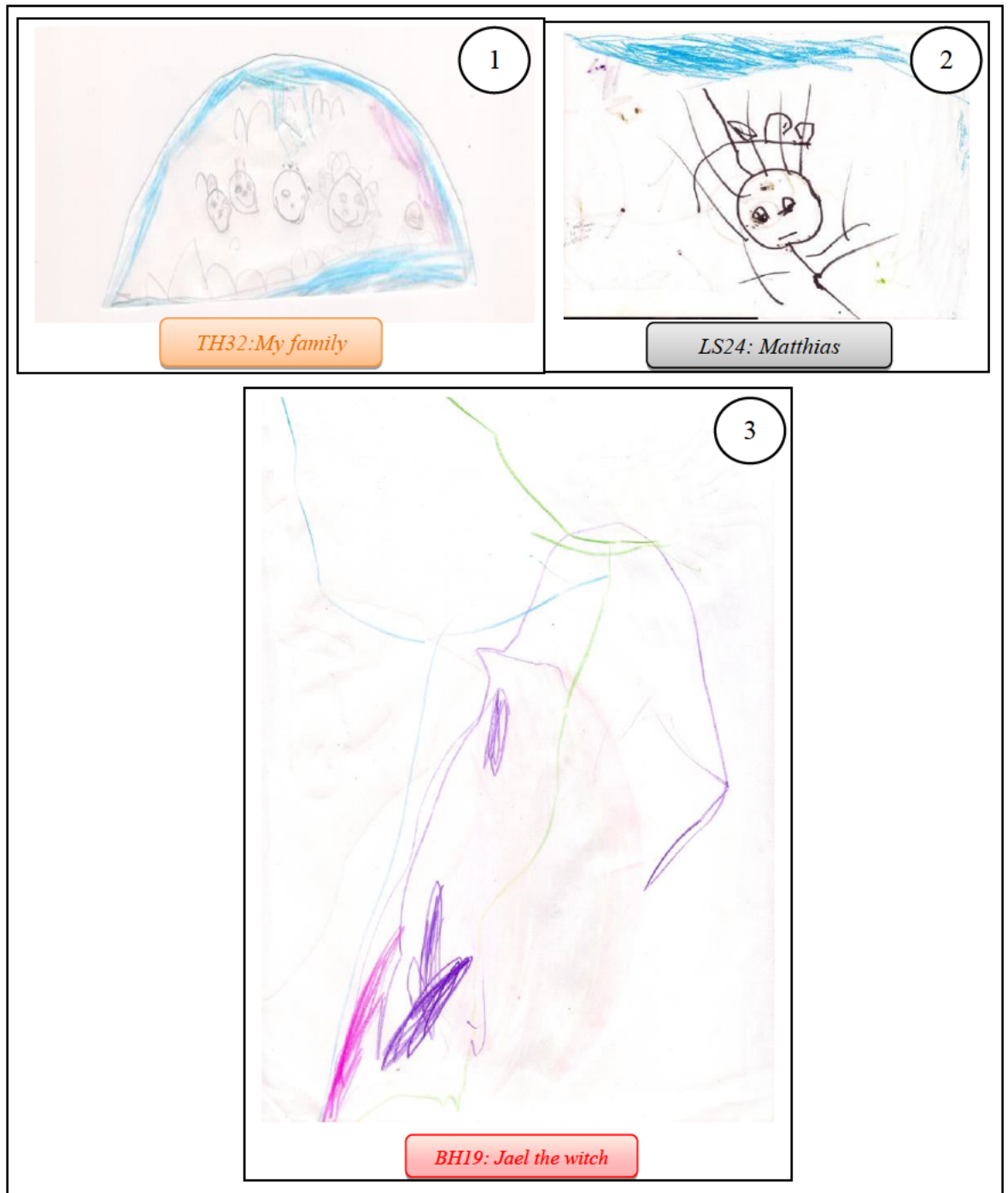
The influence of home practices, rites and rituals.

Similar to the findings of Anning and Ring (2004), Hall (2008) and Pahl (2002), the family culture, including rites, rituals and practices as well as the impact of shared experiences and popular culture were aspects which influenced them and were represented in the three children's drawings. These mirrored the families' respective and specific attitudes, histories, dynamics and socio-economic statuses. In their studies, Anning and Ring (2004), and Pahl (2002), also took into consideration the effect of the drawing materials children had at home. From my observations, Thea's home environment was more conducive to drawing, and she had more exposure and access to drawing materials than Bertly and Luke. This seemed to have helped her become more fluent and develop mastery orientation and flexibility in the use of a variety of media.

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1990), concept of the habitus, Rowsell and Pahl (2007) suggest that there is a "complex relationship between the author of a text and the environment in which it was made" (p.402). The three children's drawings provided multifaceted perspectives of their respective home scenarios, where their ways of being, doing and acting were influenced by all that happened around them. This resulted in the development of drawings that reflected the ordinary and familiar. All three children drew everyday objects and areas in their homes; however, such drawings were preferred by Bertly and Thea. Bertly drew their kitchen table (*BH22,* Figure 7.47, Image 1), and a duck ornament (*BH39,* Figure 7.41) they had at home. Thea drew several drawings of her house from the outside (*TH7*), and detailed areas inside the house, such as the kitchen (*TH20*), including the shrimp and fish aquarium (*TH24,* Figure 7.47, Image 2) of which she was very proud. With less frequency, Luke also drew some objects from his home environment, including *LH13: Black fruit* (Figure 7.47, Image 3), which he observed on their kitchen counter.

Figure 7.47
The influence of the home environment.

BH22: Our table

TH24: Fish in an aquarium

LH13: Black fruit
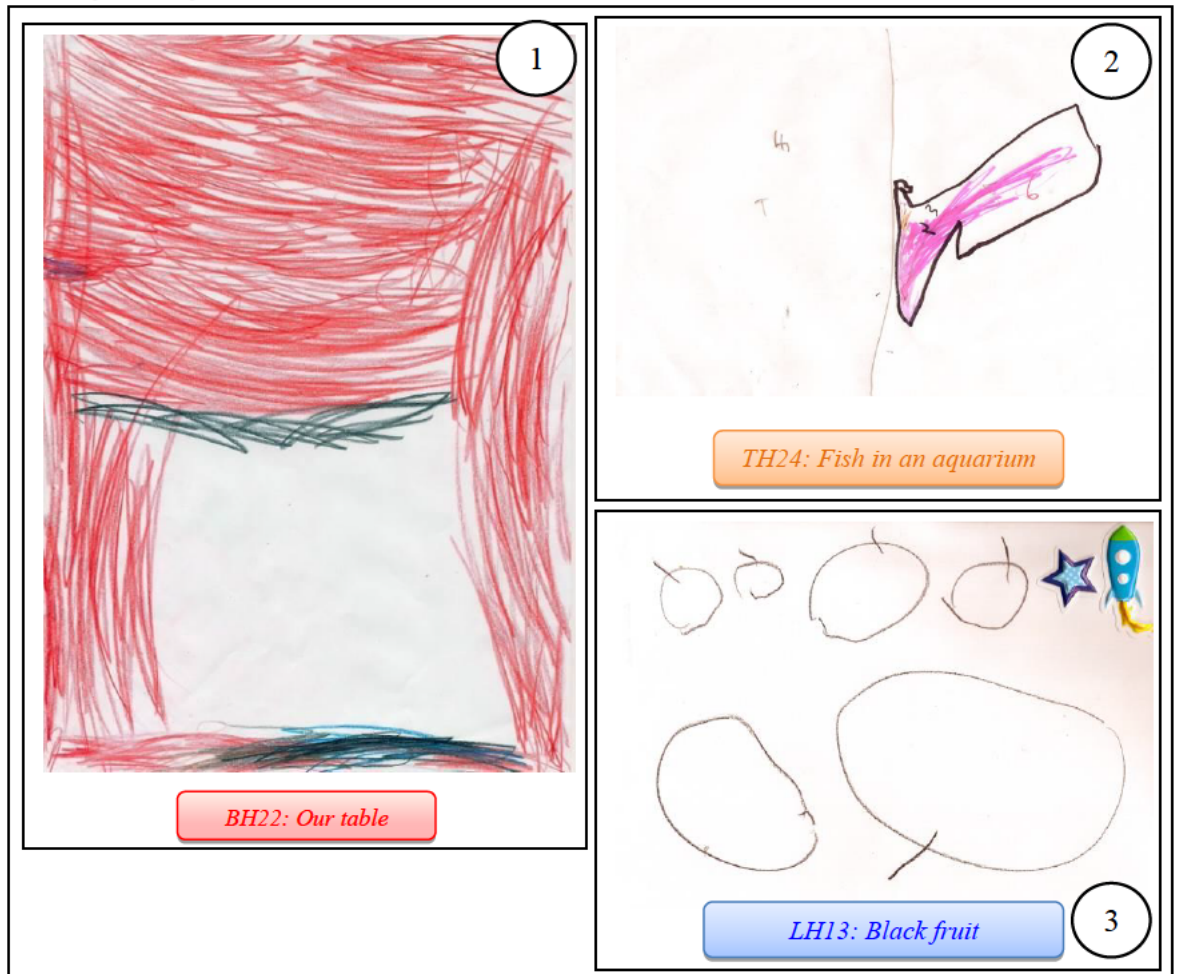
According to Hall (2010b), children's depictions of objects from their homes, as well as of their houses, provide them with ways to avow their identity; and I found similarly in my study where drawings captured the essence of the mundane; the reality of the children's environment and their "rhythmic, cyclical and repeated" (Nicolopoulou, 1994, p. 106), "pattern of life" (Dyson, 1993b, p. 78). The drawings were a complex assortment of combined objects that reflected a true image of their realities and opened a window into their socio-cultural worlds, their ways of living, and the ideas, values and lifestyle their families embraced.

Shared family experiences, structures and narratives seemed to be a considerable influence on the children's meaning-making in both the school and home drawings, a conclusion also made by Pahl (2002). The fact that Thea's father was travelling

abroad for work and her cousin Romina was returning from the UK after treatment, together with her past journey to Sweden to visit her aunt, seemed to influence Thea to make several drawings featuring aeroplanes. Other family events and experiences, such as an outing to the circus, catching crabs at the beach in summer and attending a strawberry fest, also featured in her drawings. Likewise, Bertly's family experiences of birthday celebrations, swimming at the beach and spending long weekends at his father's field were represented in his drawings. Luke's home experiences which had an effect on his drawings, focused on particular family picnics, visits to a local castle and a boat trip. The drawings, with emblematic objects such as fireworks, churches, typical food, summer festas, days at the beach, and castle-touring, signified personal experiences, and epitomised the local, Maltese scenario. Anning and Ring's (2004) and Pahl's (2002) studiesalso showed that significant events and the strong feelings that emanate from their micro and macro contexts tend to be reflected in the children's drawings.

Several studies show that popular culture is a dominant influence on children's drawings (Coates and Coates, 2011, 2006; Danesi, 2007; Kress, 2000b; Marsh, 2006, 2005, 2003; Marsh and Millard, 2000; Pahl, 2003b), and in this study all three children included popular culture as particular and distinctive semiotic meaning-making. Similarly, Coates and Coates (2011), and Pahl (2003) claim that popular culture is constantly memorised and portrayed by children in their creations. As with other studies (Anning and Ring, 2004; Hall, 2010b), all three children in this study were interested in and subsequently memorised and portrayed particular cartoon characters in their drawings or merged within their concocted storylines. Some of Bertly's drawings were influenced by and represented scenes from Walt Disney's films such as *Jack and the Beanstalk* ((2015) *BH7*) and *Pinocchio* (2015), (*BH26*), Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's *Pink Panther* (1965) *(BH27* and *BH32,* Figure 7.48, Image 1) and BBC's *Fireman Sam (BH18)* (Prism Art and Design Limited, 2014). Thea's drawings were filled with themes of witches and fairy tales adorned with pixie dust magic (*TS14, TS16, TS25,* and *TS10,* Figure 7.48, Image 2), which seemed mainly inspired by traditional tales such as *Hansel and Gretel (TS21)* and also by Walt Disney's animated cartoon series, *Jake and the Never Land Pirates* (2015) respectively. Luke's drawings were inundated with his favourite superhero character

of *Ben Ten* (*LS17, LS18, LS11,* and *LS1*, Figure 7.48, Image 3). While some of the influences were obvious as the children drew a character from the story, a replica or an adapted version of a scene from a related animated cartoon, other associations were not as obvious where the children borrowed elements from the main cartoon theme, narrative or characters to create their own text with an original storyline.

Figure 7.48
The influence of popular culture.

BH32:Pink Panther for my birthday

TS10: A fairy princess

LS1: The good and the evil
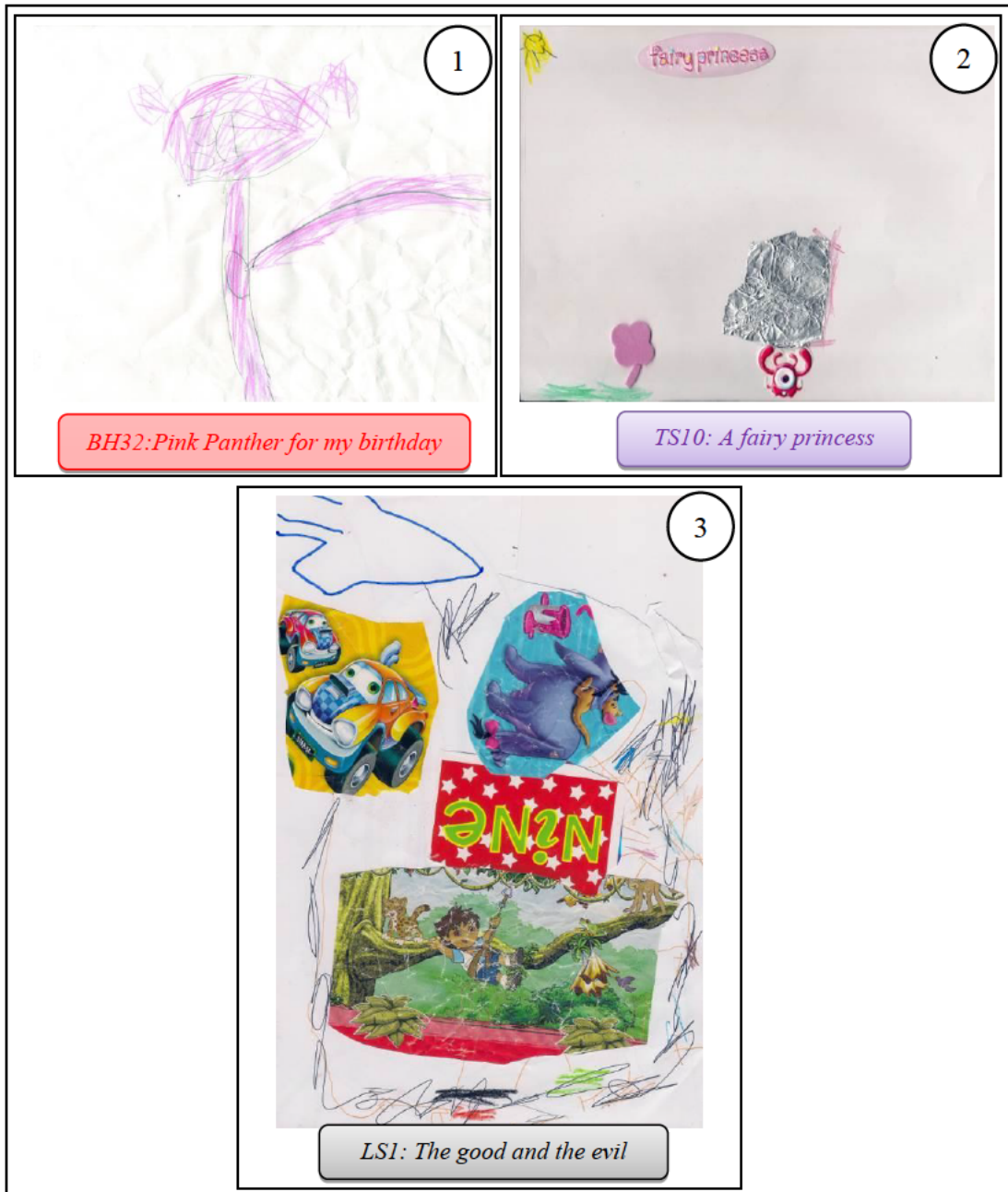
The three children's media-inspired drawings helped me to understand how, they interpreted and selectively internalised the images they watched on TV to reproduce personally meaningful ones. As was the case with children in Thompson's (1999) study, the text became a process of "intertextuality" (Wright, 2011, p. 167), where, engaged in a process of transformation (Pahl, 1999b; Ring, 2006), the children moved between texts, mingling facts with popular culture, knowledge of the world, and notions they learned from television with their own "internal structures and ideas" (Kress, 1997, p. 58). For Coates and Coates (2011), and Wright (2011), text makers rarely represent a whole object but as is also pointed out by Kress (1997), they include only specific selected and "criterial aspects" (p. 11). This was the case of the three children of my study where, through a process of "externalisation" (Pahl, 1999b, p.30) they produced "hybridised texts" (Marsh, 2002, p. 6), that mirrored excerpts from media narratives which they flawlessly integrated with their particular experiences.

7.8.2 Influences of the school environment

I now draw conclusions and discuss the possible school influences on the children's drawings, that were mainly prompted by their peers, the activities and topic discussed at school.

The influence of the kindergarten assistant.

Drawing was perceived by the KGA as a "transitory affair" (Coates, 2002, p. 26), a time-filler to occupy children who finish the teacher-structured activities, while waiting for others. The KGA showed minimal recognition and appreciation towards drawing as a mode of meaning-making; a common characteristic in teachers which was also highlighted by Anning (1997). From my observations and analysis of the drawings, the KGA had minimal influence on the children's drawings. It was only Luke who drew her in two of his drawings, which both were a documentation of a school outing.

The influence of peers.

Being "pervasive and profound" (Thompson, 1995, p. 8), the influence of peers proved to be one of the most noteworthy effects on the three children's drawings: also a finding of other studies (Anning and Ring, 2004; Hall, 2010b; Pahl, 1999b). Peers offered each other "multiple forms of mutual influence" (Boytazis and Albertini, 2000, p.44), that varied from drawing each other, prompting and suggesting changes to their respective drawings, copying, and describing and explaining their drawings through "collegial talk" (Dyson, 2010, p. 18).

All three children drew at least one drawing of their peers. Luke and Bertly drew their common friend Shaun in action. Luke drew *LS4* and *LS6* (Figure 7.49, Image 1) while Bertly included Shaun in his fight against a dragon in *BS4* (Image 2). Thea on the other hand drew a picture of Luke (*TH29*, Image 3), presumably communicating her likeness to him. She also drew another drawing for Darren (*TH16*), with rings, hearts and flowers to signify her love for him. In agreement with Ahn and Filipenko (2007) and Kendrick and McKay (2004) I suggest that when children include their friends in their drawings or create a representation with the intention of giving it to them as a gift, this defines and confirms the importance of ascertaining and sustaining friendships among children.

Figure 7.49
The influence of peers.

LS6: My friend Shaun

BS4: Killing a dragon

TH29: Luke
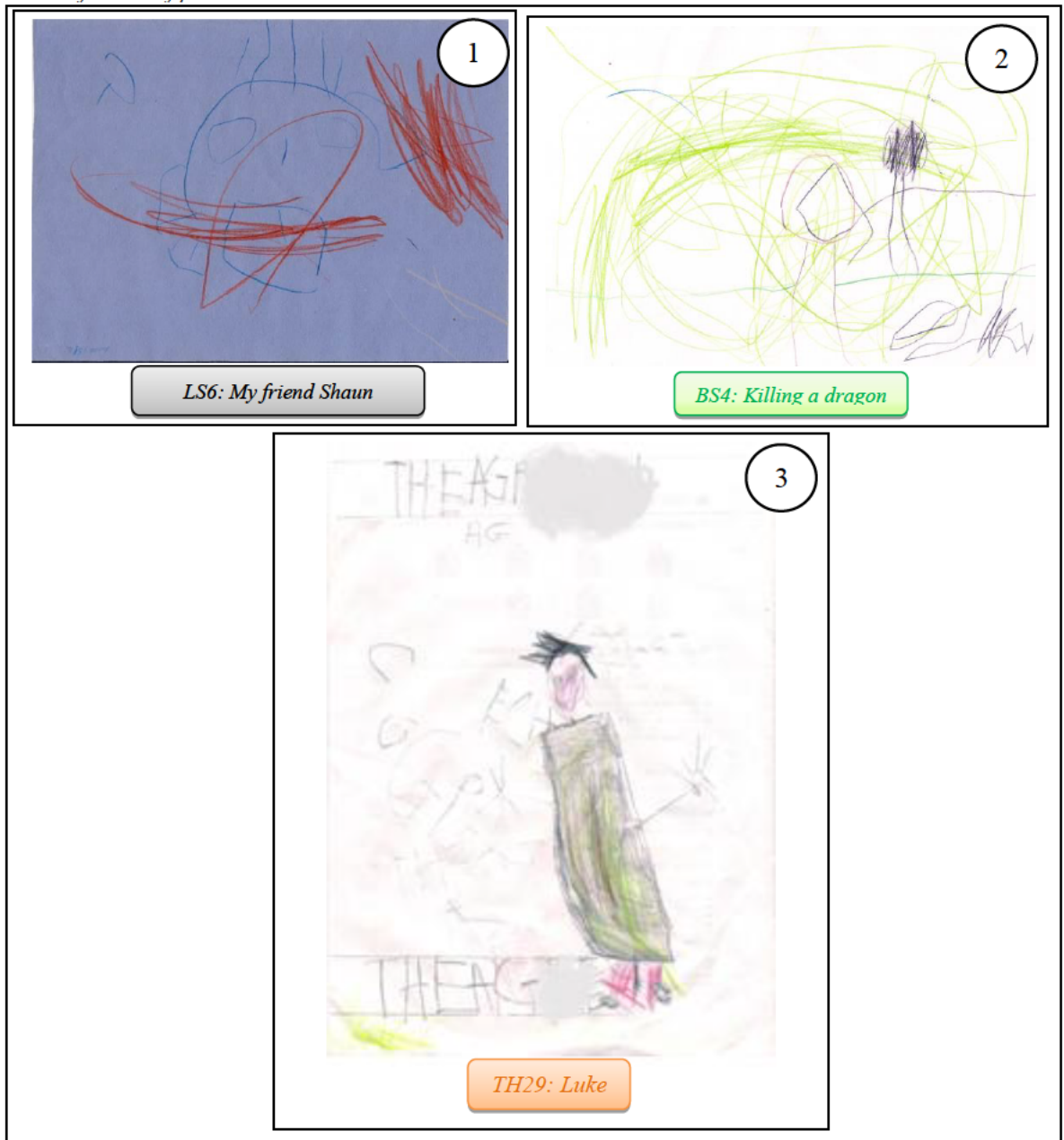
The three children also seemed inspired by their peers' suggestions which resulted in changes in the content of their graphic representations; a conclusion also observed in other studies (Ahn, 2006; Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Coates, 2002; Coates and Coates, 2006; Thompson, 1995). In *LS4:The mushrooms*, for example, which I discussed in Chapter Six (p. 250), Shaun prompted Luke to transform two balls into two mushrooms and then into a married couple. The children were also inspired by each other's use of modes and modalities. Thea and Bertly, for example, were

inspired by Sandra's[17] idea of taping a lollipop stick protruding from her drawing to act as a 'hanger' for her drawing (Figure 7.50, Image 1). Using the same mode and modality, however, Thea and Bertly gave a different form and attributed a different meaning to their graphic representation: Thea attached three lollipop sticks protruding from the paper, interpreting her drawing as a fan (*TS21*, Image 2), while Bertly attached five, interpreting his drawing (*BS7*, Image 3) as an octopus.

Figures 7.50
Inspired by each other's drawings, the children used the same modes to convey different meanings.

Sandra's: Presents for my friends

TS21: A fan

BS7: An octopus

The modal use of taping lollipop sticks puts into context Frisch's (2006) statement that children are influenced by their peers and learn to draw by observing each other. Simultaneously, it echoes Hope's (2008) suggestion that "once a technique appears within a group or class of children, the others quickly copy, and the new technique is tried out and explored by all." (p. 79). The modes and media available as used by Sandra, proved to be a stimulus and an inspiration for both Thea and Bertly, enabling them to encode her idea of the lollipop-stick-transformed-into-a-hanger and decode it to represent a fan and an octopus respectively. So while the modes (gluing, taping), the media (the lollipop sticks) and the form of the drawing were similar to all three children, yet each child "redesigned" (Mavers, 2011, p. 21) modified and transformed the text "into schemes of their making" (Kress, 1997, p. 38), attributing their own, new, distinctive meaning. In each case, the outcome was a graphic artefact, marked with each child's particular interest and personal significance. Thus, it seems that the influence of Sandra did not hinder Thea and Bertly from creating unique drawings where, notwithstanding similarities between their use of modes, each acted on their own agency to give a particular form and meaning to their drawing. I therefore agree with Mavers (2011) that "copying" (p. 15) is not a "mindless" (Mavers, 2011, p. 15) replication but it entails a "process of resemioticization" (Mavers, 2011, p. 15) where the existing modes and themes are reconfigured.

Children use different forms of copying for different reasons, or according to Mavers (2011), would have a different ideological framing. The children's types of copying varied: sometimes they copied each other in their use of novel modes, media and material available (for example, the use of lollipop sticks discussed above and the use of glitter by Bertly in *BS6*), on other occasions they used copying to shape and maintain their friendships (for example, Thea's *TS40* and Neil's drawing example of drawing a car, discussed above), while yet, on other instances they copied the form and content of the drawing from each other (for example, Luke's *LS23* and Thea's *TS30* drawing of an aeroplane discussed in Chapter Six). However, frequently, the three elements of copying were not so linear and merged together and emanated in the same drawing.

The influence of the current topic discussed in class.

The topics that the children were discussing in class at the time of the study, seemed to carry some influence on their drawings (Hall, 2010b).   The topic of animals, which was being discussed in class during the study, for example, emerged strongly. Nonetheless, I found no evidence to suggest that the children's drawings were exclusively influenced by the theme discussed in class. It appears that influences about the theme of animals, for example, could have also emanated from other sources including exposure to popular culture, the children's play and talk, and their personal experiences.

Here I consider some particular drawings which could have been directly influenced by the activities done at school. Bertly's *BS15* (Figure 7.51, Image 1) which he drew in class, was presumably inspired by the colouring-in of a frog-themed worksheet that was a teacher-led class activity, and which he did immediately before. It seemed that, in his drawing, Bertly drew the frogs as monsters splashing in the water.

Figure 7.51
The influence of the activities and topic discussed at school.

BS15: Two monsters splashing in a

LH35: Luxol outing

TS43: Our classroom

Another instance where I could trace the influences of an activity done at school was in one of Bertly's home drawings where he included the atypical purple and pink colours in the rainbow: two colours mentioned in "The Rainbow colours song" (Jenkins, 2010) which the children regularly sang at school. However, it is not possible to say that this was the sole influence, because as Jael highlighted, "there are rainbows on different [internet] sites or … on television" (14th February, 2012), an

observation also made by Coates and Coates (2011). Perhaps, even more palpable was the direct influence of a school outing on three of Luke's drawings *LH34, LH35,* (Figure 7.51, Image 2) and *LS20.* Drawing himself and his peers playing a football match, and in one adding also the parents and the KGA, Luke documented and celebrated the school outing. Possibly, what was more significant was the fact that he represented this experience in drawings done both at school and at home. This indicates a transfer of the experiences and knowledge between the two contexts, where Luke communicated and shared the school outing experience with his family. Two of Thea's drawings were influenced by the activities that occurred in class. *TS43* (Figure 7.51, Image 3) represented her visual, albeit abstract image of the class where she drew herself eating at school. In the same drawing she included a snake that signified a craft she saw displayed in the adjoining class, and the letter C to symbolise the emphasis on letter-learning. Similarly, as explained above, *TS31* signified the interactive whiteboard with the letter *m* written on it, representing that morning's activity. In other drawings the children drew shapes or wrote numbers as part of their depictions, possibly reflecting some of the topics and content knowledge which they learned at school. Notably, in line with Anning and Ring's (2004) conclusions, I claim that through their drawings, the three children demonstrated personalised ways to show how they experienced, processed and appropriated the different activities they pursued in class.

7.8.3 Other influences

In this section I discuss my findings in what I term 'other influences' that go beyond the immediate contexts of the home and the school, to include other contexts and experiences, including celebratory, and community and cultural events.

Influences from other contexts and experiences.

The three children's drawings appeared to be influenced by lived experiences that were important to them. For example, Bertly, but also to lesser extents, Thea and Luke, were influenced by the weather outside. It was relatively common for Bertly to draw a graphic representation that reflected the weather of the day, while Thea and Luke frequently drew pictures which included different weather conditions.

Notions of travelling seemed also to be of interest to all three children, who made drawings that looked like journey maps where roads and tunnels joined two places, because this is how the road network has been developed in Malta, so it is a familiar experience for many young children. Such an example includes Thea's *TS29* (Figure 7.52, Image 2) that illustrates journeying between her home and a farm. Reference to the children's past experiences of travelling to specific places was mainly done through their talk rather than through the drawings *per se*. For example, when making a drawing of Pinocchio (*BH26*) (Figure 7.52, Image 3), Bertly made *en passe'* connections to a family holiday in Italy, from where they bought a toy Pinocchio. Similarly, when drawing one of his space drawings, Luke explained that he was rocketing to Australia (*LH44*) (Figure 7.52, Image 1), conveying his geographical knowledge that Australia was very far away. Thea also made several references to travelling experiences abroad including the family visit to her aunt's place in Sweden (*TS40*), her father's work trip to Paris (*TS26*) and her cousin's journey from the UK (*TS30*). Thus, as was observed by Hall (2010b), the children based such drawings on daily travel experiences, past recollections and imaginary trips.

Figure 7.52
The influence of past and imaginary experiences of travelling.

LH44: Me in a rocket to Australia

TS29: A tunnel to go to the farm

BH26:Pinocchio
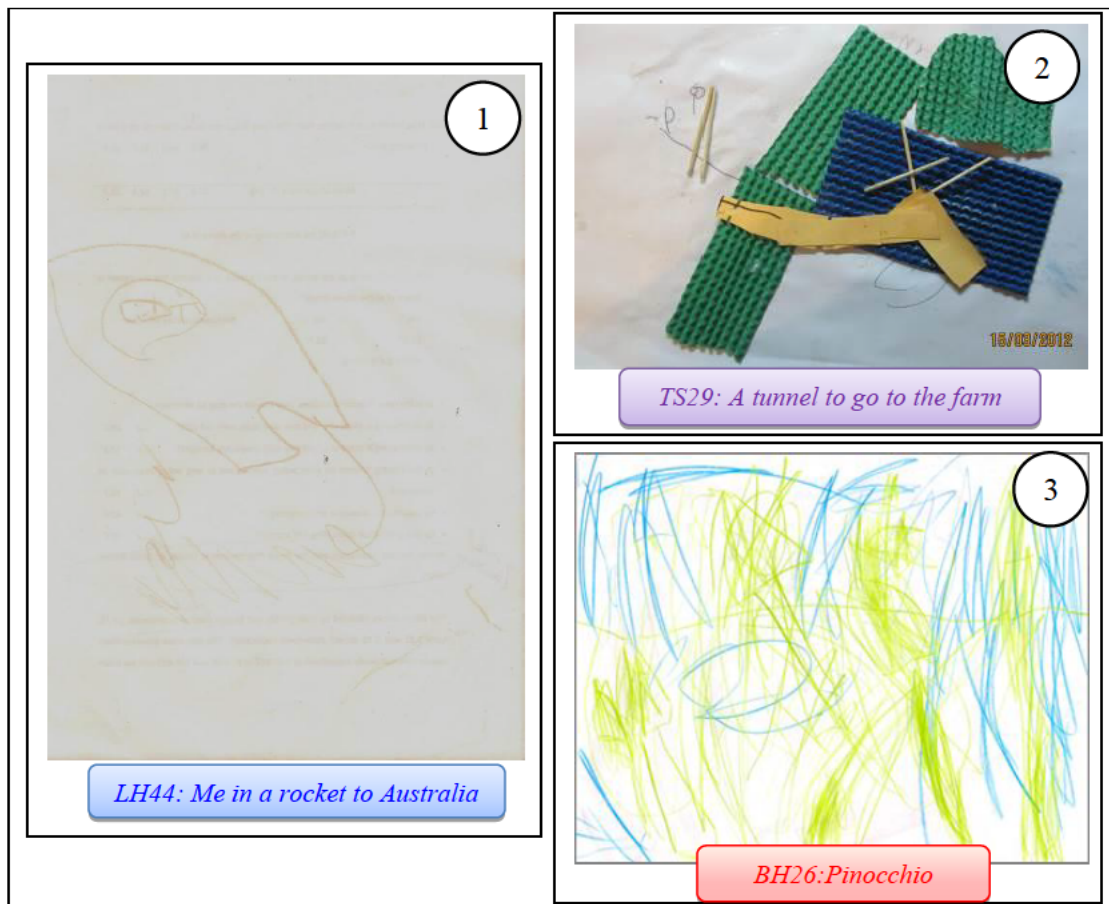
Celebratory, community and cultural influences.

Acting as both "conservators and innovators of cultural traditions" (Dyson, 2001b, p.13), the children's home and school drawings carried celebratory, and community and cultural influences. Christmas was the children's favourite time of the year, and even though I collected data for the study between January and April, they were still drawing Christmas-themed representations, especially at school. A Father Christmas sack which the children located in the role-play area, and the Christmas wrapping paper that I introduced in the drawing table, helped to maintain this interest. In one of his home drawings, Luke drew himself carrying a bag full of candy (*LH49*) while imitating Father Christmas going round with presents as dramatised at school. Similarly, Thea drew a graphic representation of presents and fruit (*TS19*) while in one of his home drawings Bertly drew himself dressed as Father Christmas with Jael wearing a Carnival costume as queen of hearts (*BH24*). Drawing Carnival and Easter-related representations (two much celebrated events in Malta) was very much in line with the time of the year of the study, where the children celebrated both events at school. In one of his home drawings, Bertly drew his sister Jael as an Easter witch (*BH19*); whereas, replicating the costume she wore for Carnival, Thea drew herself as a flower (*TH28*). Easter was also reflected in other drawings where both Bertly (*BH29*) and Luke drew an Easter egg (*LH32,* Figure 7.53, Image 1) in separate home drawings. Valentine's day influenced one of Bertly's home drawings where he drew his parents connected with a line which I took to signify the close bond between them (Figure 7.53, Image 2).

7.53
The influence of celebratory and community and cultural events.
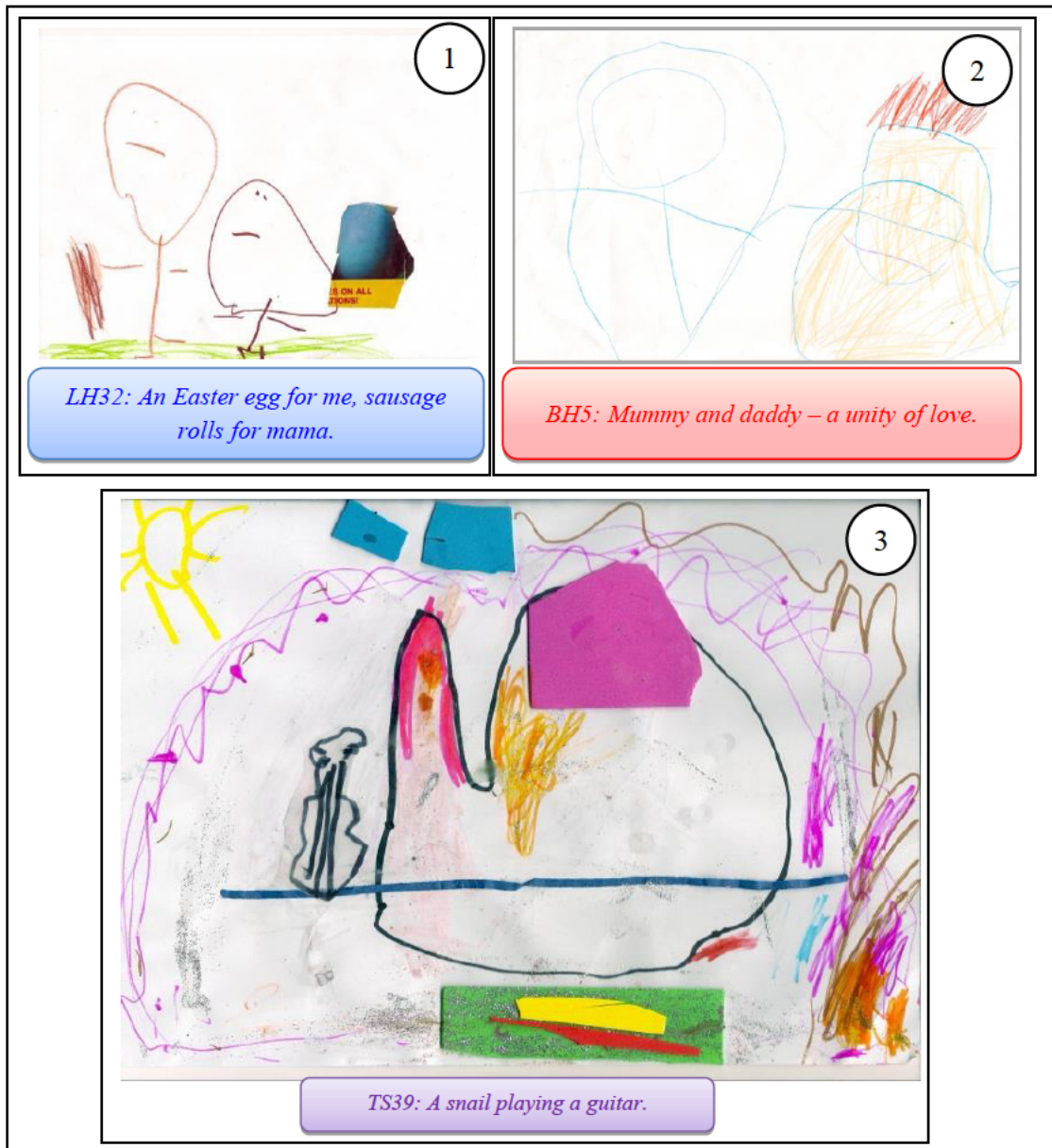
LH32: An Easter egg for me, sausage rolls for mama.

BH5: Mummy and daddy – a unity of love.

TS39: A snail playing a guitar.

Local, cultural celebrations were also of influence on the children's drawings. These included Thea's depiction of a snail playing a guitar (*TS39*, Figure 7.53, Image 3) which reflected her interpretation of a traditional, strawberry fest where snails were eaten as a local delicacy and folk music entertained the crowd. Bertly's drawing of fireworks (*BS16*), illustrated an aspect of Maltese religion and culture, where feasts are celebrated weekly in summer. Confirming findings from Ahn and FIlipenko (2007) and MacNaughton (2004), I consider that through their drawings the children communicated and reinforced different and existing cultural practices where they

showed that they were able to adapt and improvise their texts to create, reconfigure and rearticulate cross-cultural understandings that were meaningful to them.

Personal celebrations such as birthdays seemed to have been influential in the children's home drawings. Bertly drew several drawings that marked his grandmother's birthday. Thea drew two birthday cards, one for her friend Eman (*TH5)* and the other for her cousin (*TH28*). In one of her school drawings, Thea also drew a picture of her fourth birthday party (*TS11*). When at school, Luke drew a party and cake for his mother (*LS19*), combining his grandmother's birthday celebration with his mother's admission to hospital. These drawings not only provided insights into the children's everyday lived cultures, but as Coates and Coates (2011) identified, they documented noteworthy celebrations and memoirs that were considered as landmarks in the three children's lives.

In conclusion and in line with several other studies (Barroqueiro, 2010; Dyson, 1988; Matthews, 2003, 1999; Thompson, 1999; Wood and Hall, 2011), I suggest that these influences helped the children process their perspectives, knowledge and understanding of their everyday factual and fictional worlds. There were numerous instances where Bertly, Thea and Luke "transport[ed] representational resources between home and school" (Mavers, 2011, p. 5). Recontextualising experiences (Bernstein, 1996; Bezemer and Kress, 2008) as lived in their diverse micro and macro worlds, the three children produced "hybrid" (Dyson, 2001b, p. 20) texts that comprised discursive content, composition and associations, which as Gregory (2005) maintains, enabled them to create powerful links between the two contexts of the home and the school. These reflected the transferrability and continuities of their trains of thought, experiences and learning processes between the two domains. Therefore, I echo Pahl's (2001b), and Pahl and Rowsell's (2005) claims that, children's interests emanate from and are shaped by the home and school settings, which interact, cross sites and influence their drawings to provide "intertextual threads" (Dyson, 2001b, p. 9). These reflect the obvious links and transference of the children's experiences between the home and school settings.

7.9 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter I have provided an analysis of the findings where I discussed the three case studies, to bring out the uniqueness of each child's drawings. I began by providing a summary of the number of drawings each child did, where I examined the *form* and *content* of the three children's drawings across their *Data Cross-grids* to identify their personal drawing style. Then I analysed how children used *simple-complex modes,* or what I termed as their *semiotic styles*, to create their drawings. Subsequently, I concluded that the children's intentions of what to draw sometimes determined the choice of mode according to its aptness and semiotic potentialities. On other occasions it was the mode, through its materiality, which generated intention and meaning. I then discussed the children's *configuration style*, that is, their choice of using *simple-complex themes* in their drawings. I then classified their drawings under thirteen headings, which I compiled in an *Inventory of Content*. Supporting my arguments with reference to literature, I discussed some identified commonalities and idiosyncrasies between the three children's drawings and examined how gender inclinations could have played a role in the choice of subject matter. I concluded that the children's choice of *semiotic style* (*simple-complex mode*), together with their *configuration style* (*simple-complex themes*), *types of drawing and* preferred *drawing patterns* represent the child's drawer identity. I then discussed the meanings the children communicated through their drawings, which I categorised under four main headings: *drawing as constructor of identity, drawing as communicator of the self, drawing as process of knowledge, drawing as a play process.* In the last section, I investigated the influences that affected the children's drawings where I elaborated on home, school and other influences.

In Chapter Eight I bring my thesis to a conclusion with a summary of my findings in relation to the research questions.

Monsters splashing in a pond – by Bertly

"Drawing thus becomes a constructive process of thinking in action, rather than a developing ability to make visual reference to objects in the world."

- Susan Cox (2005, p. 123)

Chapter 8

Conclusion

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to examine the drawings of three, four-year old children, and analyse the *modes* they used, and the *themes, meanings* and *influences* that permeated their drawings. In this chapter, I reflect on and summarise the study, bringing together my findings to reiterate my position. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, I considered drawing as one of "the hundred languages" (Edwards, et al., 1998, p. 12) of children; a "semiotic unit" (Wright, 2011, p.160) composed from an interplay between multiple modes, that transforms itself into a visual language that 'gives voice' to children to communicate their knowledge, thoughts and meaning (Brooks, 2005; Hall, 2010b; Kress, 1997).

I begin this chapter by addressing the four research questions, where I also reflect on the role of talk in creating meaning. Subsequently, I explain the originality of my research and how it differs from other studies which similarly investigated children's drawings. I conclude this chapter by reflecting on the limitations of the study and proposing implications for further research.

8.2 The Use of Modes

My first research question was:

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

To answer this question I investigated the type of modes the three children used to create a cohesive, meaningful drawing. Analysing the drawings, I demonstrated the individual and personal preferences of each child in terms of their use of modes. My findings show that Bertly and Luke preferred to use a *simple mode*, while Thea preferred to use a *complex mode*. Drawing featured as the most prominent mode used especially by the boys. Contrastingly, Thea made equal use of other modes, which reflected her competency and skilfulness in using different media.

An important finding was that the availability of modes had a significant influence on the form, content and meaning of the drawings, a conclusion which is also supported by other studies (Bezemer and Kress, 2008; Halliday, 1978; Pahl, 2001b). The more the children were exposed to different semiotic resources, in terms of quantity, quality and duration, the more they were ready to experiment with different and complex modes. My study differs from others on the topic (Anning and Ring, 2004; Frisch, 2006; Hall, 2010b; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007) both in focus and methodology, in that I observed a small number of children in considerable depth, which provided me with detailed descriptions and in-depth analysis. The richness of data enabled me to examine how different children use modes in various different ways to form their drawings and communicate their unique and intended meanings. My analysis in Chapter Seven revealed that the children's use of mode was largely intentional. Sometimes, it was the intention of *meaning* that determined their choice of mode where, having a clear idea of what they wanted to draw, the children specifically chose the modes for their suitability and affordance to develop their envisioned meaning; a finding which echoes the work of other scholars (Cox, 2005; Hopperstad, 2008a; Kress, 2010, 2004, 1997; Kress and Jewitt, 2003; Mavers, 2011, Ormerod, and Ivanic, 2002; Pahl, 2006a). At other times, and as corroborated by Anning (1999) and Pahl (1999b), the choice of mode, with its function and materiality helped the children to generate ideas which gave form and meaning to the drawing. My analysis also led to the finding that, even if the three children had the possibility to use a variety of modes, in the main, Bertly and Luke still opted to use a *simple mode*, which seemed to be their modal preference and *semiotic style* of creating meaning. Conversely, Thea, who in the main preferred to use *complex mode*, at times still drew in *simple mode*. In line with Anning and Ring (2004), and Hall (2008), my findings suggest that the three children's drawings tended to reflect their unique personality, drawing preferences and style, and hence, their unique *drawer identity*. Thus, I conclude that at times children were guided or inspired by their peers' use of media and by the novelty and materiality of the modes, which influenced the form and meaning of their drawings. This in turn saw children shift between the use of *simple* and *complex modes,* yet, still most of their drawings were dominated by their respective *semiotic style*, that is, their preferred use of *simple* or *complex* modes.

8.3 The Themes that Emerged in the Children's Drawings

My second research question was:

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

To answer this question I analysed the subjects of children's drawings, even though they have long been studied and continue to be a matter of interest for researchers (Anning and Ring, 2004; Coates and Coates, 2006; Dyson, 1993a, 1986; Hall, 2010b, 2008; Hopperstad, 2008b; Kellogg, 1969; Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1947; Luquet, 1927/2001; Matthews, 2003, 1999, 1997, 1994). The content themes of the three children's drawings were striking in that they included the "unremarkable … [and] ordinariness" (Mavers, 2011, p.1), of their lives: family members, home scenes, animals, vehicles and objects, routine activities and mundane experiences that mirrored a situation they experienced, which they integrated with their knowledge and fantasy characters borrowed from contemporary popular culture. While in most instances my results supported findings from the studies mentioned above, there were also other times where idiosyncrasies were identified. What was evident from my analysis was that while some content themes such as *People* and *Animals* are common across studies of young children's drawings (Coates and Coates, 2011; Cox, 1993; Hall, 2010b), there were other subjects which, were specific and typical of the children's lives and the social, historical and cultural local context they lived in, which were unique to this study.

Analysing the content themes of the three children's drawings, I concluded that while the children's thematic preferences seemed to be influenced by their personalities, experiences and individual inclinations, gender could also have played a factor. Thea's drawings, for example, were characterised by stereotypical girls' thematic preferences, that typically focused on family scenes, relationships, and soft decorations with hearts, flowers and butterflies. Contrastingly, the boys preferred to draw action pictures of superhero drawings; findings which are also corroborated by several scholars (Cherney, et al., 2006; Dyson, 1986; Hall, 2008; Millard and Marsh, 2001; Thompson, 1999; Wright, 2010b). However, whilst I acknowledge the small sample with reference to my own data, I suggest that these gender dichotomies are not absolute. Contradicting findings from Boyatzis and Albertini (2000), Golomb

(2004), Hall (2010b), Nicolopoulou (1997), and Nicolopoulou et al.'s (1994), I have shown that Thea's catalogue of drawings included also action representations, while Bertly and Luke had depictions of family members and home scenes, with Luke having the largest number of such drawings from among the three children; a phenomenon which is considered a rarity according to these studies. Another anomaly resided in Thea's depictions of vehicles, which according to Anning and Ring, (2004), Dyson, (1986), Hall, (2010b), and Thompson, (1999) is a theme usually prominent in boys' drawings.

8.4 The Meanings the Children Conveyed Through Their Drawings

My third research question was:

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

This concept was also explored by several researchers (Anning and Ring, 2004; Coates and Coates, 2011; Hall, 2010b); however, my study is different, because the depth of analysis was fundamental. Luke's case study conveys the intensity and complexity with which I investigated the three cases. Subsequently, I also identified and categorised the children's meaning-making under four distinctive functions, which included drawing as:

- *a constructor of identity*,
- *a communicator of the self*,
- *a processor of knowledge*,
- *a play process*.

The first key function of drawing used by the children of the study was that of *a constructor of identity*; a concept which was also identified in other studies (for example, Ahn and Filipenko, 2007; Hall, 2010b; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007). Through their texts, the three children created and explored "a range of alternative identities" (Hall, 2011, p.108) and perspectives of themselves, where they used their drawings not only to convey who they were but also who they liked to be (Nicolopoulou, 2008; Pahl and Rowsell, 2005; Wright, 2011). Intertwining constructions of reality and identity, the children used drawings to make sense of past and present experiences and to explore and establish future realities, which helped them to get a better

understanding of themselves. It could also be argued, that through their drawings, the three children developed a "sense of self" (Holland and Leander, 2004, p. 127), that was mediated by personal and cultural experiences as they positioned themselves in the world as they understood it (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007; Egan, 1998). While the children were actively involved in their own negotiation, construction and reconstruction of the self (Wright, 2011), they were simultaneously influenced by socio-cultural practices, relations and discourses (De Ruyter and Conroy, 2002; Edmiston, 2008; Hawkins, 2002). The people in their lives, mainly the parents but also siblings, peers and even cartoon characters, played a crucial part in helping them construe their "ideas and ideals" (De Ruyter and Conroy, 2002, p. 510) and change their perceptions of the self.

In the second function, children used their *drawings as a communicator of the self*, as a way to convey their inner thoughts, feelings and wishes to themselves and others. My findings echo those of Ahn and Filipenko (2007), and Wood and Hall (2011), who claim that the children's texts mirror a combination of fact, fiction and emotions that facilitate the understanding of the socio-cultural worlds in which they reside.

The third function of drawing used by the three children was to make sense of the world around them, and use *drawing as a processor of knowledge*. Some of the drawings were therefore, a form of "cultural transmission of their everyday knowledge" (Wood and Hall, 2011, p. 270), which they acquired, interpreted and restructured from their everyday worlds to create their own, personal and meaningful understandings. On different occasions and at different levels, degrees and ways, they postulated, tested and concluded how things worked, and organised and explained their learned knowledge, concepts and experiences to actively define and create their unique reality.

The fourth function of drawing that emerged from the children's meaning-making was that of using *drawing as a play process*. To do so, I drew on Wood and Hall's (2011) three categories of "playing *at* drawing", "playing *in* drawings", and "playing *with* drawings" (p. 267). It was relatively common for the boys to play *at* the physical level of drawings and accompany their narratives with animations and vocalisations. All three children, but mainly, Thea and Luke, also played *at* the social level of

drawing, where they playfully interacted with others both during and in relation to their drawings while simultaneously developing their relationships. The second type of drawing as a play process involved playing *in* drawings. It was Luke who favoured playing at the physical level *in* drawings where he liked to draw people engaged in action. Imaginative playing *in* drawings was mainly preferred by the boys. This involved the drawing of real and fantasy characters engaged in life experiences and episodes borrowed from popular culture where, ascertaining imagined identities, the children became the hero of their narrative. Playing *with* drawings at the physical level, which involved using gesticulation and action to explain movement and action occurring in the drawings was not very much practiced by the children. It was Luke, who in one of his drawings physically marched away as a way to explain his picture. Storytelling, which is another form of playing *with* drawings, was Luke's favourite modus operandi of drawing, where he frequently engaged in graphic-narrative play and drew fantasy-based drawings of superheroes fighting bad guys. Although less often, Bertly and Thea too drew drawing narratives, where they enhanced their stories with familiar texts merged with imaginary scenarios. Through these meaningful narratives, the children considered their drawings as an arena for play, where they communicated intimate emotions and their own hypothesised and factual knowledge that, in different ways, contributed to their identity construction and authoring process.

8.5 Influences on Children's Drawings

My fourth research question was:

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

Echoing findings of Hall (2008), Ivashkevich (2009) and Roswell and Pahl (2007), I suggest that the context in which the children lived, that is, their social interactions and cultural practices, influenced *what* and *how* they drew, that is, the modes they used, the choice of themes, and the meanings they attributed to their drawings. Investigating the influences in children's drawings, is again, a widely researched topic (Ahn and Filipenko, 2007; Anning, 2002, 1999; Anning and Ring, 2004; Coates 2002; Coates and Coates, 2011, 2006; Cox, 2005; Hall, 2010b; Hopperstad, 2010, 2008a, 2008b; Kress, 1997; Lancaster, 2007; Nicolopoulou, 1997). I identified three main factors that affected the subject and meanings of the three children's drawings. The *home environment* which included influences from parents, siblings and

members of the extended family as well as the events that they experienced on a daily basis, together with influences from popular culture and the wider world that permeated the home through digital technology. The *school environment*, which was less influential when compared to the home context, mainly included influences by peers and the topic discussed in class. The third, I broadly defined as *other influences* which included those experiences from other contexts as well as celebratory and community and cultural ones, that are broader than home or school, where the Maltese context, with its typical weather conditions, traditional festas with fireworks, folk music and local delicacies, the sea, fish and boat trips, emerged as particularly influential. It was also interesting to conclude that the children's home, school and other influences interacted and cross sites, providing transference of knowledge, experiences and meaning.

8.6 The Originality of the Study and my Contribution to the Field

The originality of my study stems from several aspects. As shown in my critical review of the literature (Chapter Two) and in subsequent chapters of my findings (Chapters Six and Seven), many studies have previously focused on the meaning-making aspect of young children's drawings. However, my study is unique in that it provides distinctive insights about three children and brings out the uniqueness of each child as an individual, a drawer and a meaning-maker. To my knowledge, this is the first study that investigated young children's drawings by applying Barthes (1977) semiotic processing of *denotation* and *connotation* to uncover their meanings both at the *surface level* and at the *symbolic level*. Another unique contribution of the study to knowledge in the field is found in the rich data which detailed episodes of meaning-making that emerged from the drawings and my conversations with the children. These reflected particular local practices, traditions, current events and experiences within a particular timeframe, which make the study unique, and in that sense, "incapable of replication" (Coates and Coates, 2006, p. 226)

The principal original characteristic of my study, which is also my contribution to the field, is *methodological*. As discussed in Chapter Four, to analyse the children's drawings from a social semiotics way, I developed a *Data Cross-grid*. This original methodological tool provides a different way of looking and interpreting young children's drawings. It generates a graphical representation of the children's incipient

semiotic styles (*simple-complex modes*), and drawing *configuration styles* (*simple-complex themes),* which combined with their *drawer patterns* and the *types of drawings,* reflects each child's unique personality and identity as a drawer. Such a tool could be used by practitioners to understand the children's preferred ways of drawing, their unique ways of being and doing, and their interests, aptitudes and individualities, which I suggest, is crucial information that facilitates the development of relationships and the learning process.

8.7 Limitations of the Research

Intentionally focusing my attention on investigating the drawings of three children in detail, as it fitted my interpretive paradigm, the nature of my research questions and the design of my study, provided me with a rich catalogue of qualitative data that helped me achieve "depth and specification" (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012, p. 177), whilst sacrificing breadth. This meant that the findings of my study are particular to the three children and therefore, are not generalisable and cannot be claimed to be a definitive reflection of all young children's drawings. However, while the analysis, findings and conclusions from the three cases should be considered as only valid to the specific context, time and participants of my study (Roberts-Holmes, 2005), they provide useful archetypes of the ways children use to create and make meaning, where the distinctiveness of each case could be considered as an "example of a broader class of things" (Denscombe, 2010, p. 60). Subsequently, parallels, comparisons and transfer of understandings could be applied to a larger sample of children that "share the same characteristics of the cases" (Mukherji and Albon, 2010, p. 85), where common *semiotic* and *configuration styles* as well as *patterns* and *types of drawing* and developmental ways of meaning-making might be identified. Comparing my findings to those of scholars who have also studied children's drawings has been a useful check of originality and distinctiveness as well as similarity present in my own study.

Another limitation lies in the fact that the selection of the children was done by the school administration, and so turned out to be very homogeneous: all three children were second-born children in their families, attended the same school and class, lived in the same village, and all came from families that enjoyed a harmonious upbringing and a secure socio-economic background. However, this potential limitation could

also be a strength because influenced by the same school context, similar culture, traditions, experiences and comparable lifestyles, could have resulted in analogous themes, that offered depth in analysis of the similar ways in which the three children created meanings. Acknowledging that different social and cultural ideas and influences are reflected in children's drawings, and impact on children's meaning-making and sense of self in different ways (Anning and Ring, 2004; Pahl and Rowsell, 2005; Ring, 2006; Wright, 2011) I suggest, that if I had deliberately opted for a more heterogeneous group by selecting children from different schools and possibly from varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, the results would have probably been different. Such a sample could have probably provided a broader spectrum of themes, and a wider range of influences and ways of making meaning.

From the first days of my data collection, I anticipated the study would generate a manageable number of drawings. By the end of the study I had 223, an amount which by far, surpassed my initial predictions and needs of the study. As I valued every drawing, and believed that each formed part of the children's meaning-making and drawer identity, I made a conscientious choice to incorporate them all, rather than select a sample. While it was possible to include all the drawings in the *Inventory of Content*, it was impossible for me to discuss each and every drawing in depth. Guided by the first two research questions that sought to analyse the *form* and *content* of each drawing as represented in the *Data Cross-grids*, for each child I opted to analyse with more depth only four drawings that best represented each of the four areas of the grid. This decision was also influenced by the interpretive design of the study as I chose specificity over generalisation. As some of the *semiotic* and *configuration styles* were preferred by the children, this meant that particular sections from each grid, which corresponded to their drawing styles, were over-populated, while others were sparse. This was a limitation, in that, in some sections, where I had a prevailing amount of drawings, I found myself omitting particular drawings which I wished I could analyse at more length, while in other sections, where the choice was limited, I had no option but to discuss the only drawings represented. However, I am confident, that this limitation did not compromise the findings of the study. All the drawings I discussed in detail could eloquently be considered as exemplars that reflected the children's drawing *styles* and *patterns* as well as their ways of making meaning.

Another limitation of the study, which resulted due to the limitation in word-count was the fact that I was restricted to write about only one case study in detail, that of Luke, sacrificing some of the data. Rather than representing three cases in a superficial way, I preferred to present one case in-depth, to show the richness of the children's drawing and serve as a prototype of the way I analysed the drawings. I analysed all three case studies in the way I analysed Luke's and then drew on those analyses for the comparative chapter (Chapter Seven).

8.8 Areas for Further Investigation

My thesis has shown that the three children used the mode of drawing in various ways to make sense of the world around them: as a way to create, recreate and represent their identities; to communicate their thoughts, emotions and perceptions; to process, hypothesise and construct their own knowledge; and as a space to play. Further research could explore other multimodal ways children use to create meaning including different forms of play such as dramatic and construction play as well as story-telling, which could be used as a "research strategy" (Mukherji and Albon, 2010, p. 176) to understand children's meaning-making. I suggest that the *Data Cross-grid,* which I developed as a tool to analyse the *form* and *content* of children's drawings, might be adapted to examine such other modes that children use.

A follow-up study could be developed on a larger scale to evaluate the adults' perceptions of children's drawing, how they respond to them, and to what extent they understand what the children are communicating. Such a study could also provide practitioners with broad, objective data where generalisations could be drawn in a bid to help them value the importance of children's drawings. The findings from such a study could then be used as a starting point for practitioners to explore how they could incorporate the modes children use, as tools for generating and evaluating knowledge and meaning in the classroom.

As the choice of the participant children turned out to be very homogeneous, in line with the socio-cultural underpinnings of this research, another study could intentionally opt to choose children from different socio-economic backgrounds, settings and contexts, or even take the study to a European or international level, where the participant children are selected from different countries. The aim would

be to present insights into the multifaceted cultural, social and economic dimensions, and analyse how the context and experiences impact on the children's ways of meaning-making. Such a study could also bring out the probable differences in the themes that emerge, and the children's diverse and broader ways of communication through drawing.

The study reported in this thesis provided a detailed insight of the three children's drawing lives, their perceptions of themselves, and the way they made sense of knowledge, in the here and now. Developing a longitudinal study, could prove to be valuable in bringing out the differences in *form* and *content* of children's drawings, over time, as their ideas and identities grow. The findings could reflect a cross-section of the children's evolving cultural worlds and experiences, changing interests, and hence, a possible change in the themes they draw, their modification in the use of modes and varying ways of concocting meaning across different ages. This investigation could be extended to test and elaborate whether there are plausible connections between the level of exposure to a variety of materials and everyday experiences, with the use of more complex modes, and the complexities of their drawings. Such a study could also investigate whether the children's *semiotic styles*, *drawing configurations, types of drawing* and *patterns*, and therefore their *drawer identity* are permanent or whether they evolve with age, change in the context, interest, and experience. Further, it would be interesting if a future study, designed on a larger scale and in multiple contexts, considers making an audit of children's drawing environments, and draw correlations between the richness of the environment and its impact on children's meaning-making. Such a study could then be able to draw implications for practice.

Another area which merits further exploration is the influence of gender on the *form* and *content* of the drawings. In line with previous research (see for example, Albers, 2007; Boyatzis and Albertini, 2000; Cherney, et al., 2006; Coates and Coates, 2006; Dyson, 1986; Golomb, 2004; Hall, 2008; Millard and Marsh, 2001; Nicolopoulou, 1997; Wright, 2010a), my study suggests that while it is indisputable that there are stereotypical commonalities in children's drawings (for example, Thea, like most girls, liked to decorate her texts with hearts and flowers, while the boys resorted to sketchy type of drawings that focused on action stories), there were also some

variances (for example, Thea drew vehicles more than the boys while Luke drew family-based pictures more than Thea). However, the sample was too small to confirm this; therefore, it would be insightful if, using a bigger sample, a new study could use the previous research mentioned above as a starting point and challenges the findings by exploring whether gender archetypes and influences remain as absolute or whether they loose permanency over time. It could also be interesting if such a study would be able to explore if or how "children can do gender in multiple ways" (Blaise and Taylor, 2012). It would also be helpful if such a study identified the degree with which personal interests, developmental changes, and social and cultural contexts and experiences outweigh, are in synergy with or are undermined by gender factors in the children's construction of meaning and identity.

8.9 Summary of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the multiple layers of meaning-making young children create and communicate through their drawings. It contributes to understanding the richness of young children's unique meaning-making process through a semiotic perspective. This analysis helped me identify the modes children used to draw, the themes that emerged in their texts and the influences that affected their texts. By listening to the children's personal narratives, subjective interpretations and ways of meaning-making, my study led me to conclude that the three children used drawing as a meaningful semiotic space to voice their emotions, ideas and to communicate their knowledge and theories in transformative and agentive processes that abetted them to construct and mediate their identity. The significance of this study to the field knowledge is two-fold: I created an original, methodological approach to analyse children's drawings, and I brought to the forefront the importance and value of children's drawings, and hence, the potential role and function of drawing as a language of communication. This contributes to the field of study and adds to other research discussed in this thesis to suggest the need for a wider acknowledgement, understanding and appreciation by adults of children's drawings, and consequently, more research in this area of inquiry.

In Chapter One I provided an overview of the study, where I specified my research questions and positionality. In Chapter Two I elaborated on the main theoretical framework that underpins this study, that of social semiotics. In Chapter Three, I

provided a critical review of literature, where I recognised the validity and provided arguments in favour of analysing children's drawings as a language through which children communicate. In Chapter Four, I discussed the design of the study, the data collection process and my approach to data analysis. Holding that children are active participants and agents of their own life and learning, I maintained that children's drawings are a form of sign-making that carry meaning which is significant to them. Such meanings, are influenced and should be exclusively interpreted and understood within the socio-cultural context in which they occur. In Chapter Five I discussed the data analysis process, while in Chapter Six I discussed in detail Luke's case study. I analysed the modes and media he used in his home and school drawings. Investigating his *Data Cross-grid*, I categorised each drawing according to its denotation inventory, that is the *simple-complex modes* and *themes* used. The data obtained from the *Data Cross-grid* shed light and provided me with ways to analyse Luke's distinctive preferences, drawing skills, personality traits as well as his semiotic style of drawing. I also created an *Inventory of Content*, in which I categorised the subject of Luke's drawings under thirteen content themes. In my analysis of Luke's texts and accompanying narratives, I examined the main meanings that he communicated. I also discussed some of the most significant influences that affected his drawings to include, the home, school and other community and cultural influences. In Chapter Seven, I brought together the most important findings of the three cases to answer my four research questions. I also distinguished some gender-related commonalities and idiosyncrasies and considered the role of talk and narrative in creating meaning during drawing. My findings indicated that in the main, the three children used the drawings as a *constructor of identity*, as a *communicator of the self*, as a *processor of knowledge* and as a *play process.* In Chapter Eight I concluded my thesis by discussing its limitations together with my recommendations for further research. I have suggested that evidence from this study indicates that children's drawings should not only be considered as a merely matter of mark-making, as a developmental foundation to the teaching of literacy, as a process of self-expression, or as an artistic representation of form and content. Rather, in agreement with Anning and Ring (2004) and Wood and Hall (2011) I consider children's drawings as transformative mechanisms that are instrumental in shaping and converting the children's meaning, knowledge, and attitudes, as well as a means of developing their relationships and constructing their personal and social identities.

8.10 Epilogue

Conducting the study reported in this thesis was also a personal journey for me where my view of 'the child' changed. I learned to listen to children and understand their worlds and their apparent sporadic and hybrid ways of meaning-making. I learned to capture the children's simple moments in the here and now and value their importance. I learned to appreciate the remarkable in the ordinariness of children's everyday experiences. I learned to believe in children, to trust them more, respect their ideas and value the significance of what they say and do. I learned that children have multiple modes and different ways to communicate with, and they do so with commitment and intent. I learned that the themes children represent in their drawings are a reflection of their current real-life experiences, interests, thoughts and knowledge, and therefore are significant. I learned that children's drawings can be complex and meaningful, and their words often laden with sense that is specific to their situations and contexts. I learned that the social and cultural contexts in which children live, are connected to, influence and are reflected in their drawings. I learned to appreciate their ways of sign-making and to understand their meaning-making from their perspective. I learned that children use their drawings in multiple ways: to create and recreate who they are, to communicate and epitomise their inner and outer worlds, to understand concepts and to play. I feel privileged that this study granted me with access into the three children's lives, their minds and their ways of thinking, while "enabling them to grow in confidence and discover their own voice" (Coates and Coates, 2011, p. 108). In these ways I developed (and still feel) connected to them. My journey to listening and understanding children's meanings through their multimodal ways of communication has only begun.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Appendix 1
Luke's profile

Luke, was outspoken, assertive and extrovert, albeit shy at times. He was the second-born of three boys. Luke was four years six months old, his older brother Matthias was nine years old, while his younger brother Jacob was three years old at the time of the study. The three siblings got on really well together. Jacob attended the same school as Luke, and Matthias attended an all-boys' school, where eventually, the younger siblings would follow. Together with their parents, they lived in a relatively large, well-furnished, terraced house in a different, but close town from the school. The house enjoyed a formal sitting room, a playroom for the boys and a living area comprising of a big kitchen and adjoining dining and lounge room, with bedrooms upstairs. While organised, the house appeared to be child-friendly and lived in. The kitchen fridge was adorned with the children's drawings and photographs. A tricycle and a pushchair lay underneath the main stairs while the playroom was left open with an array of toys ready to be played with. Similar to reports from Marsh's (2002) study, the living area, established the children's space to entertain themselves, where they ate, read, watched television or played with the Nintendo Wii. The latter appeared to be enjoyed and played by all family members, with tennis, sword fights and basketball games being Luke's favourite Wii games. Alternatively they played with toys they brought from the playroom or used the sofa as play equipment to jump on and from. This acceptance for freedom of movement and tolerance for the children to take over the living area as a play space even if they had a designated playroom, without undue pressure to tidy away their toys was evident throughout the house.

Both of Luke's parents worked as pharmacists. The mother was also in-charge of the daily house routines and of taking the children to and from school and extra-curricular activities. The parents also found considerable support from their extended family, with whom they enjoyed a close bond. The father seemed to work longer hours, but both parents were present in the children's life, where they regularly spent time, helped, and played with them. Luke had a very close and affectionate bond with his mother, with whom he frequently demonstrated his soft, caring, tender self.

He regarded her as his role model, a person to simultaneously emulate, pamper and protect. Luke's relationship with his father was somewhat contrasting where he adopted a competitive rapport, while concurrently acted in complicity and reciprocity with him. At the time of the study, Luke's mother underwent surgery: it was an episode which created due tension and concern, and which influenced Luke considerably. During that week, Luke was nervous, tense and worried: feelings which he manifested in class and at home through his restlessness, inability to focus, his temperamental interaction with others as well as in his lack of interest in drawing.

Luke was described by both his mother and KGA as inquisitive, energetic, and dynamic. He was constantly engaged in an activity, moving from one thing to another, and liked to be in control of the situation. His father considered Luke as intelligent and witty, who knew how to manipulate situations to his own advantage. In my view, Luke was a good communicator, very outspoken, who displayed an assertive and extrovert character; attributes which were abetted by his fluency in both Maltese and English languages. His outgoing and humorous personality, where he cracked jokes, teased his friends, and narrated dramatic stories, helped him assume "interactional control" (Dyson, 1993b, p.72), over his peers in a light-hearted way, and earned him popularity, respectful attention and friendship.

Both at home and at school, Luke liked to play with all types of construction material. His choices of toys frequently rested on fast moving cars, motorcycles and guns. He also enjoyed singing songs, and it was quite common to hear him hum or sing in an undertone. He loved exploring outdoor play spaces where he could engage in physical play with his siblings. Once a week he attended an extra-curricular sport program where he participated in different sport activities. He had a passion for adventure, action, destruction, power and victory, that was reflected in his dramatic play, as well as in his drawings, interests which Golomb (2004, 1974) and Wood and Hall (2011) noted as being commonly appealing to boys. This interest in warfare and aggression was likely influenced by his swordfights play on the Wii and by watching superhero films such as *Iron Man* and *Buzz Light Year* of the *Toy Story* series, with his favourite character being *Ben Ten.* Like children in Dyson's (1996) study, Luke liked *Ben Ten* because he experienced a sense of affinity and identification with him.

Like *Ben Ten,* he enjoyed the attention of others and had a feisty character which sometimes verged on the arrogance. This was balanced with positive qualities, manifested through his smartness, good-hearted character and a sincere wish to help others.

Both parents took it as their responsibility to video-record Luke, even if these were outnumbered by the mother. Sometimes, Luke drew alone, while his brothers were away at different extra-curricular activities; at other times, one or both brothers were present. On such occasions, all three brothers would be in the living area where Matthias would probably be doing his homework, and Jacob would want to draw like Luke, using his same material and be video-recorded as well. Combined with Luke's teasing, the observation sessions were sometimes a task for either parent to equally share the attention between the three siblings. Luke was rarely eager to draw and sometimes he appeared clueless as what to draw. While he enjoyed experimenting with new drawing material, he seemed to prefer to engage in more active pursuits. This meant that occasionally he needed to be prompted by his parents to draw. It was apparent that while the father's occasional involvement in Luke's drawing and play processes was exemplified by direct involvement such as habitually playing Wii$^{©}$ swordfights with him or questioning him about the subject of his drawing, it was the mother who through her introduction and modelling of "functional graphical behaviours" (Anning, 1999, p. 164), and the organisation of the home space, routines and time, created a conducive environment that inspired Luke to use drawing as a socio-cultural activity and a meaning-making process (Anning, 2002). Valuing drawing as a way for Luke to communicate his understandings and as a process of learning and development (Wood & Hall, 2011), the mother "tuned in" (Ring, 2006, p.74) to his interests, requests and activities. Using a playful tone, she constantly encouraged her son to communicate his thoughts and to try new drawing skills. She also supported his narratives which emanated from his drawings, even if at times, she struggled to understand his trail of thought and sense-making. Somewhat in contrast, when Luke asked his mother to make use of the various resources provided, which admittedly some were a bit messy, she limited their utilisation; an action, likely compelled by the need to keep the activity under control, especially when all three brothers were present. This, somehow constrained the prerequisite for Luke to use a

variety of modes at home to enable him to create connections and make meaning, as home-scenario also predicted by Kress (1997).

Appendix 2

Appendix 2
Thea's profile

Thea was the younger of two siblings. She was four years, three months old, while her sister Erica, was six. They lived in a comfortable and spacious, first-floor apartment with their parents. Aunts and uncles on the mother's side lived in adjoining residences. Located in a small, quiet, rural hamlet, outside the main town, the apartment was situated in a cul-de-sac with limited access to traffic and overlooking an unspoilt valley. Every day, Thea took the transport to school, which was a mere ten minutes' drive away. The apartment, which was warm and welcoming, looked very well-organised and neat. The well-equipped kitchen, with a big table in the middle and a television on one side, was used as the family room. A well-maintained fish tank with shrimps and small fish, situated by the kitchen door, was a shared family pursuit. The kitchen area was regarded by the family as a "site for ritual performance and the family's social practices" (Marsh, 2005, p.42), where they spent considerable time together. During the video-recordings, irrespective of whether I was present or not, the television was always switched off, except when it was time for the local news, which was a must for the father to watch. Thea and Erica shared a bedroom and a separate play room which was the children's contained space to entertain themselves.

Thea was described by her mother as being very caring, affectionate and sensitive. While she had a good sense of humour, she was also short-tempered and did not like being laughed at. The mother also described Thea as very creative, in that, she liked dancing, acting and painting. Thea seemed very outgoing, jolly and funny, a child who loved to act, joke and make others laugh. She had a love for nature where she enjoyed playing outside and loved animals. The KGA portrayed Thea as "a very smart child, versatile and precise in her work … a good leader and communicator with an unassuming attitude" (Miss Anna, 26th January, 2012). Thea seemed to love learning; at school she seemed confident and perhaps even somewhat superior to her peers; however she used this in a subtle way by eagerly sharing what she knew with her friends without dominating them. This feeling of superiority could either be because she had more letter and number recognition than most of her peers,

something which was valued at school, or because a couple of months prior to the study, her mother, spent one of her Teaching Practices as a student-teacher in the class next door. Thea was also very organised; a trait she very likely acquired from her mother. Thea had an unexplainable fear of witches, which emerged in several of her drawings.

At the time of the study, Thea's mother was following a part-time, undergraduate course. For four to five times a week, when the mother had lectures in the evening, she drove Thea and Erica to their grandparents' house to stay with them until their father picked them up after work. Paying a quick visit to his parents, the father then headed home together with the children to cook for the family and settle them for the day. Thus, the family tasks were shared by both parents in a complementary way. On the other evening, when the mother did not have lectures, the parental grandparents visited and had supper with the family. Thea and Erica were their only grandchildren and this explains the attention and time they spent doting on them. Whereas, like in many households it was the mother who established the home's main "routines, rites and rituals as she organised the pattern of the day" (Ring, 2006, p.82), in her absence, it was the father or the grandparents who established the evening practices. Using Anning's (2003) words, I observed a "strong sense of inter- and cross-generational support within the extended family" (p.15), where the adults, including the grandparents, were in-sync, supporting and balancing each other to provide a harmonious, affectionate and calm family environment for the children. Whereas the children had an understandable close and strong bond with the parental grandparents this did not appear to be the case with the maternal grandfather. The maternal grandmother had passed away several years prior, while the grandfather seemed to lead a solitary lifestyle albeit in close proximity of his children; however, the relationship between him and Thea's family did not appear as close.

The mother adopted a relatively business-like approach with Erica, the elder sister, when it came to helping her with her homework. She regularly gave her extra written work and frequently directed their conversations towards letter sounding and spelling, which Thea frequently listened to. Contrastingly, one of the mother's past-times, was to engage in artistic and creative activities, an interest which she encouraged her

children to follow. She accepted and saw the need for her children to engage in what Pahl (1999b), describes as, "purposeful mess" (p.104). She provided copious open-ended art resources readily available and accessible in a neat and organised way, where the children could cut, draw and glue on their own. Both siblings were very able at using such resources in a flexible and creative manner, mirroring the fact that they were allowed to use these materials regularly. The "mess" was however, confined to the kitchen table and frequently contained by a plastic sheet.

Thea's father was a bank manager. He was articulate, knowledgeable and very composed. Thea had a strong bond with her father and shared many commonalities: they both liked fish, like him she liked technical things, and was passionate about his favourite TV show, "The world's strongest man" (IMG, 2014). It came as no surprise that her father featured in many of her drawings. Half-way through the study, Thea's father went abroad on a business trip, an episode which highly influenced her, both emotionally and cognitively, urging her to draw different aeroplanes. Thea also appeared to have a good relationship with her sister Erica, albeit at times complaining of her as being domineering.

Both parents and the paternal grandparents were involved in the study and took shared responsibility in video-recording Thea while drawing. Most frequently, Thea drew at the kitchen table. Sometimes she drew on her own; at other times she drew in the presence of either parents or grandparents, or in the company of her sister when she happened to be at home.   Thea was, in my view, an independent and determined child. Most of the times she drew silently, engaged in her work, talking only to communicate her intention rather than to seek advice. She also had a sense of drawing for an audience, and was all the time aware that she was drawing for "others in the video-camera" (Thea, 20th February, 2012). At times, she sought to explain and involve the viewer about how and what she was going to draw, "I am talking to the people in the camera, who are watching me" (Thea, 20th February, 2012). On such occasions she intermittently stopped drawing to show her progress to the camera; a finding also noted by Coates (2002) with one of her participants. When Thea was in the presence of either one of her parents, they frequently busied

themselves with attending to other things around the house, while keeping an eye on her and suggesting and prompting

accordingly. Whereas the father adopted a more relaxed and supportive approach in relation to her activities, where he encouraged creativity, independence and self-expression, the mother was keener to ask what, why and how Thea was drawing and to link her answers to content knowledge, letter and number recognition. As Anning (1999) claims, this emphasis on academic content might have reflected the mother's philosophy, of adopting the role of the more knowledgeable one, while simultaneously, communicating that letters and numbers were of a higher status than the medium of drawing. Concurrently, the mother frequently discussed the drawings with Thea, shared ideas, suggested the topic, tried to predict the outcome, or modelled how to draw a particular object; traits, which, as recognised by Pahl (1999b), are values embraced by some parents. Sometimes this interfered with Thea's planning, perception, and meaning-making and generated hints of perfectionism. Concomitantly, the mother encouraged and supported Thea's endeavours and narratives that enabled her to voice her connections in her thinking, answered her questions in a humorous way, valued her drawings and encouraged her to coalesce and try new material and skills in a process where she fostered a positive disposition towards visual and creative representation.

Appendix 3

Appendix 3
Bertly's profile

Bertly was the younger of two siblings. He was four years, five months old at the beginning of the study, while his sister Jael was six years. They both attended the same school, which was a walking distance from their home. The central, entrance area of their first-floor apartment, which was used by the family as a combination of a kitchen-dining-living room, appeared a bit crammed but organised. Similar to reports from Marsh's (2002) study, the use of the living area, that included the space around the television, was evidently established as the children's space to entertain themselves where they watched television programmes and DVDs, store their toys and books, as well as draw, play and eat. Both a television and a laptop situated in the same area were switched on for a good part of the afternoon when the siblings were home from school.

According to his mother, Bertly was a very sensitive, shy and withdrawn child. She also described him as very organised and possessive. He took his time to do things and to get to know people. This corresponds with the way teacher described him, as a, "reserved child who becomes very self-conscious when given special attention … It takes him a while to trust and become confident" (Miss Anna, 26th January, 2012). I experienced this first-hand as it took me quite some weeks to build a friendship with Bertly and sufficiently gain his trust so that he would talk about his drawings; something he seemed to find challenging. Bertly did not seem to have a best friend at school and he did not talk or interact much with his peers, especially the boisterous ones. He was often silent and seemed to feel out of place in the chaotic and noisy class environment. His demeanor at school contrasted considerably with that at home where he was very outspoken and 'bubbly'. In the peaceful home environment, Bertly seemed to feel more accepted, and could function better.

At home and at school, Bertly liked to play with construction toys, play dough and dramatic play. His pastimes included riding his bicycle, going to the playground, playing computer games and watching cartoons on television. Disney's *Pinocchio*, Metro-Goldwyn Mayer's *Pink Panther* and BBC's *Fireman Sam* were amongst his favourites media characters. Bertly spent a considerable amount of time watching

television programmes or videos, or playing at the computer everyday. He was very able at switching on the video-recorder and the television and change channels. He also knew how to switch on the computer, access the internet, find his way around new gadgets and download video-clips from his favourite cartoon films.   This made me perceive Bertly as IT savvy.

At the beginning of the study both his mother and Miss Anna, the classroom teacher, said that Bertly did not like to draw.   When he drew, his drawings were dominated by mark-making, with him saying that, "I don't know how to draw. I only know how to scribble" (16th February, 2012)   His mother explained that this was due to his lack of self-confidence in drawing that resulted from a negative experience the previous year. The previous year's Kindergarten Assistant labelled him as "unable to draw" and "as only knowing how to scribble" (Mother, 9th February, 2012), phrases which she repeatedly said in front of his peers and which some still repeated at the time of the study. Observing Bertly, I wondered if he took this study as a challenge, to prove to himself and others that he could draw. During the development of the study, I saw his self-esteem and confidence levels increase.   He seemed to believe that his drawings were good and worthy of an adult's attention and observation.   His voice could be heard more in class.   When the other children teased him about his scribbling, he stood up and refused to call it thus.

Bertly had a very close bond with his mother and sister, where they spent a lot of time together watching television, visiting relatives, shopping, going to the playground, and public gardens. His mother dedicated all her time taking care of the house and the children. She organised the space and time in the home, exerting her control over the availability and turn-taking of watching the television and the use of a laptop between Bertly and his sister. As is argued by Ring (2006), the mother's organisation of the daily routines, rites and rituals, her interests in their endeavours, and the time she dedicated to answering their questions and positively encouraging them, supported the children in their activities. The mother actively involved herself in the school's Parents-Teachers-Association and helped with the school's extra-curricular activities. She was very much present in her children's life. Bertly's father was a construction worker.   Due to his long hours at work, the father was not constantly present in Bertly's life, with the consequence that sometimes the bond between them

suffered. The father liked to spend his week-ends at his field, which Bertly loved and frequently visited to play and see his pet rabbit, Max. Bertly also seemed to have a high regard for his sister who was warm, caring, protective and nurturing towards him. They were accomplices in play and in each other's endeavours, where they shared ideas, thoughts, and skills. Bertly also had a close relationship with his extended family, where his uncles played an important role in his life as did the maternal grandmother whom he visited frequently.

The mother and Jael helped Bertly with the video-recording of the study. While Bertly drew at the kitchen table, both his mother and his sister were almost always close by his side, coaching him and actively interacting with him. There was remarkable reciprocity in their interactions, which Bertly did not find at school. He frequently asked for his mother's advice when he was drawing and sometimes he even asked her to draw things for him. Both his mother and his sister, who encouraged realistic drawings influenced Bertly in what and how to draw. Such response from parents and other family members who model drawing behaviour emerges in other studies by Anning, (2002, 1999). While this showed the high regard Bertly had towards his mother, it sometimes also showed elements of dependency, or what Dweck (1986) defines as "challenge avoidance … low persistence … [or] helpless orientation" (p. 1040).

Appendix 4

Appendix 4
Personal Data Sheet

Personal Data Sheet

Name & Surname of Child: _____

Date of birth: _____

Parents'/guardians' names: _____

Other family members: _____

_____

_____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone No: _____

Mobile No: _____

E-mail address: _____

Appendix 5

Appendix 5

Project Information Sheet (to parents pg 1/2)

Project Information Sheet

Getting to know your child

Dear parents,

An important part of the study is to learn about the influences that can affect your child's drawings. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you can complete this form to help me get to know your child and your family better. Please leave sections blank where they are not relevant.

About your Child

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Interests, hobbies, dis/likes: _____

_____

_____

Describe your child: _____

_____

_____

About his/her siblings

Brothers: _____ _____

Age: _____ _____

Interests, hobbies, dis/likes: _____ _____

_____

Project Information Sheet (to parents pg 2/2)

About his/her siblings

Sister/s: _____ _____

Age: _____ _____

Interests, hobbies, dis/likes: _____

_____

_____

About parents

Mother's Occupation:_____

Interests, hobbies:_____

_____

Father's Occupation:_____

Interests, hobbies:_____

_____

Other family members

Family member:_____

Interests, hobbies: _____

_____

Pets

Name/s: _____ _____

Type/s: _____ _____

Project Information Sheet (to teacher pg 1/2)

Project Information Sheet

Getting to know the child

Dear teacher,

An important part of the study is to learn about the influences that can affect a child's drawings. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you can complete this form to help me get to know the child better. Please leave sections blank where they are not relevant.

About the Child

Name: _____

Interests, hobbies, dis/likes: _____

_____

_____

Describe the child: _____

_____

_____

About his friends

Friend's name: _____

Interests, hobbies, dis/likes: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Project Information Sheet (to teacher pg 2/2)

About his friends

Friend's name: _____

Interests, hobbies, dis/likes: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

About his friends

Friend's name: _____

Interests, hobbies, dis/likes: _____

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About his friends
Friend's name: _____

Interests, hobbies, dis/likes: _____

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Appendix 6

Appendix 6
Research diary Sample

Week 5 Main study

School visits: Monday 12th, Thursday 15th, Friday 16th

Classroom environment

Space or the lack of it is an important factor in local classrooms. Classrooms are relatively small and this hinders the type of activities that occur. For example, the drawing area which I created could take only between 2 - 4 children depending also on the space provided by the KGA. This was limiting. Frequently, I had to refuse children to draw and direct them to another activity. For example, on Monday, Bertly wanted to draw but there was not enough space in the drawing area. So I asked him to come later. When there was some space available later on, he did not want to draw. In my opinion, this was an opportunity lost. This is simply against my principles. At times, I was so desperate to provide children with the space to draw when they wanted that I suggested that they sit at one of the main three tables, which were not being used; but this was against the normal classroom practice. Some children wanted to draw so much, that they decided to draw during their break time. They finished eating their lunch quickly so that they would have time to draw when there was no-one at the drawing area. This was encouraging and sad at the same time. Encouraging because it was good to see children wanting to draw so much that they made time for it; at the same time it was sad to observe that there was not enough space and opportunities for children to follow their interests so they had to make time. I believe that a class should be spacious enough and offer enough experiences for children to do wherever their interests take them. Besides, the academics are still seen as very important. Activities that focus on the learning of numbers, shapes and letters (by rote) still dominate the day.

Luke and Bertly did not feel like drawing this week; they preferred to play in the role play area and use the computer. Of course I did not force them to draw and allowed them to follow their interests. I consider role-play as an experience which children should be exposed to as much as possible. It is another mode which children use to communicate. So how could I refuse when it is something I believe in?

Time *is another factor which I am struggling with. This goes hand in hand with the methodology being used in class. The KGA presents children with a similar format of activities, where every week she introduces a letter a week, a (flat or 3D) shape a week, new vocabulary, two numbers, and a series of structured 'art' activities where children are asked to follow instructions to create a predetermined end product. She calls a small group of children (5/6 children at a time) and conducts the activity with them. The other children are expected to play at the centres. This would have been acceptable if children were provided with an array of resources and interesting material to experiment with. Moreover, the structured activity took only 10 minutes where other children are then called to the table. They are expected to stop their play and join the KGA. This happened even to the children in the drawing area. For example, one day, Bertly was drawing a picture which he wanted to continue after he was called. But when he came back (after 10mins of activity with the KGA and an hour of break) he simply forgot what it was about. Meaning was lost. And he did not want to continue drawing or talk about it.*

Home environment

The experiences at the homes are more positive. My visits are also helping me to empathise more with parents in understanding the frustrations and level of juggling they have to do every day. I am developing a close bond with the parents. Parents are very trustworthy people. They trust us educators. And at times I feel that they consider me as almost family – where they share their daily concerns and joys with me, something which I fully appreciate and value. For example, Luke's mother shall undergo surgery soon. She is very concerned about it and the toll it was going

to have on the family … and then I visit such a house to collect data! And all of a sudden my data collection, which is very important for me, looks very irrelevant, almost ridiculous when compared to this family's concern. During this week, Thea's mother too had a lot to juggle with. The father went abroad for work, which meant that she had to tend to the family's needs on her own. With all this happening, the mother had limited time to encourage the child to draw. Thea's family also shared the good news that her cousin was coming back from England after several months for medication. It was a bit of good news which the family shared with me. And I felt honoured, really, that they did. Getting to know the families and their everyday experiences helped me with understanding the children's contexts, the family's dynamics and what the children were experiencing, which frequently influenced and emerged in their drawings.

Unpredictable events

Fieldwork will not go as planned. It is never a straightforward process. It is challenging and unpredictable; where every episode, every incident becomes part of the story. This is what I am learning from this process. This week Bertly got sick and did not go to school. Initially I was going to panic, afraid that I will not be able to finalise my research on time. But then I decided that I could always extend the duration of my study. S episodes are teaching me to be flexible and not rigid, to be humane and not theoretical, to be practical and not impractical. At the end I am understanding that this is the story of my children, the story of my study … this is the story which makes my study unique, the story which makes my study irreproducible. This is the story I have to write, about real children, real parents, real life that will make me study real. This is my study. This is the story I have to tell. I have to be as truthful and as honest as I can while respecting the people in it and the trust they endowed me with.

<div align="center">ഓഓഓഓ</div>

Appendix 7

Appendix 7
Record Sheet: Pilot study

Introducing the data collection process to parents

Dear parents,

I am interested to learn about how your child makes sense of the world around him through his drawings. Therefore, together with your son I would like to ask you to collect and take note of his drawings. It would be great if you can also manage to video-record the drawing activity on the flip-camera provided. Some things to remember:

☺ You are to collect a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5 drawings per week.

☺ Your child can draw on the drawing paper provided or on any other type of paper.

☺ Your child can draw anything he likes using the material provided but he is also encouraged to use any other material found at home (ex, recycled material, buttons, stickers, etc.). He can draw, mark, 'write', cut, glue, paste, etc. on the same paper.

☺ If your child draws a picture or a card which he would like to give to someone else, I would appreciate if you video-record or take a photo of that drawing.

☺ I would appreciate if you can help your child video-record the drawing process. Please take extra care to put the video-camera facing the child to capture his face and the drawing process (as shown during my visit).

☺ Please video-tape the final picture.

☺ If you do not manage to video-record the drawing, I would appreciate if you take note (on the provided attached sheet).

☺ Thank You! ☺

Record Sheet of the child's drawing: Pilot Study
(to be filled by parents when the drawing is **NOT** video-recorded)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Duration: _____

Other people involved: _____

Who initiated the drawing?_____

What materials / resources did your son use?

_____

After the child finishes the drawing ask him to describe what he drew:

_____

_____

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Introducing the data collection process to the KGA:

Pilot Study

I am interested to learn how young children make sense of the world around them through their drawings. Together with one child in your class, who was chosen to participate in this pilot study, I would like to ask you to collect and take note of his drawings in the display book provided. It would be great if you also manage to video-record the drawing activity on the flip-camera provided. Some things to remember:

☺ You are to collect a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5 drawings per week.

☺ The child can draw on the drawing paper provided or on any other type of paper.

☺ The child can draw anything he likes using the material provided but he is also encouraged to use any other material found at school (ex, recycled material, buttons, stickers, etc.). He can draw, mark, 'write', cut, glue, paste, etc. on the same paper.

☺ If the child draws a picture or a card which he would like to give to someone else, I would appreciate if you video-record or take a photo of that drawing.

☺ I would appreciate if you could help the child video-record the drawing process. Please take extra care to put the video-camera facing the child to capture his face and the drawing process (as shown during my visit).

☺ Please video-tape the final picture.

☺ If you do not manage to video-record the drawing, I would appreciate if you take note (on the provided attached sheet).

☺Thank You! ☺

Record Sheet of the child's drawing: Pilot Study
(to be filled by KGA)

Name: _____   Date: _____

Location: _____   Duration: _____

Observed by: _____Video-recorded: Yes ☺   No ☹

Other people involved:

_____

What was the child doing before drawing?

_____

Who initiated the drawing?_____

What led to the drawing? _____

What did the child do after drawing?

_____

Theme of the Week:_____

Materials / resources used by the child: _____

_____

After the child finishes the drawing ask him to describe what he drew. Please write in short the child's narration:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix 8

Appendix 8

Ethical Review Approval

The University Of Sheffield.

The School Of Education.

Josephine Deguara

Head of School
Professor Jackie Marsh

Department of Educational Studies
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield S10 2JA

19 December 2011

Telephone: +44 (0114) 222 8081
Fax: +44 (0114) 222 8105
Email: edu-mphilphdmalta@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Josephine,

Ethical Review Application: "Listening to Children: Exploring Young Children's Drawings"

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project. I am writing to confirm that your application has now been approved.

This letter is evidence that your application has been approved and should be included as an Appendix in your final submission.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely

Felicity Gilligan
PG Officer

Appendix 9

Appendix 9

Research Project Information Letter: Head of School

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████

████████

12th May, 2011

Dear █████████ ,

I am currently reading for a PhD degree in early childhood education at the University of Sheffield under the supervision of Professor Cathy Nutbrown. My studies are funded by the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme (MGSS) and the University of Malta.

As part of my studies I have to conduct a research project where, I will be investigating three young children's meaning-making experiences in one local kindergarten class. The title of my thesis is: 'Listening to children: Investigating young children's drawings'. I would like to carry my study at your school during the scholastic year October 2011 – June 2012.

My research study, will involve a multi-method approach of data collection. Through a case-study approach, which will mainly be carried over the second term of the scholastic year, I intend to observe three children from the same class, during their daily learning experiences both at home and at school. The children will be chosen in

consultation with the school administration. My observations will be carried once a week to an average of 14 visits. During my observation visits I will make use of field notes together with micro-ethnographic methodology, where I will record the children's drawing activities through a combination of photographs and audio and video-recordings. Other methods of data collection include informally holding conversations with the children. The study will also involve alternate visits at the children's homes where a data collection process, similar to the one carried in school, will be held.
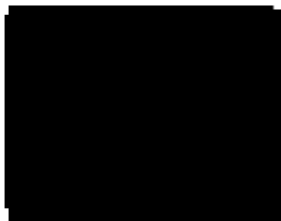
Throughout my study I will seek to meet and respect all ethical requisites as stipulated by both the local Directorate for Quality Standards of Education and the Ethical Guidelines of the University of Sheffield. Informed consent will be sought by all the involved stakeholders, that is the Directorate for Quality Standards of Education, the College Principal, yourself, as the Head of School, the Kindergarten Assistant, the parents / guardians and the children themselves. The identity of the School and the College will be kept confidential throughout the study.
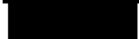
I am therefore asking for your permission to conduct my research in your school. If you kindly accept my request, I would appreciate if we meet at your convenience to obtain your consent.

I appreciate your time in reading this information letter.

Thank you for your collaboration.
Yours truly,

Josephine Deguara
B. Ed. (Hons.), M.E.Ch.Educ.
PhD student
E-mail:
Mobile:

Research Project Consent Form: Head of School

The Head of School

████████████████

20th May, 2011

To whom it may concern,

I, hereby give my consent to Josephine Deguara, to conduct her PhD studies at ████ ;
████████ as per attached information sheet and after all ethical consents are
obtained.

████████

Mr
Head of School
████████

Appendix 10

Appendix 10

Research Project Information Letter:
Classroom Kindergarten Assistant

Research Project Title

Listening to children: Exploring young children's drawings

20th June, 2011

Dear █████████,

First of all I would like to thank you for considering taking part in this project. I understand that the head of school has talked to you about my research study. She suggested that we get in contact to further discuss my study project.

I am currently doing a research degree at the University of Sheffield in the UK. As part of my studies I will be carrying a research project which involves children. The study will focus on children's drawings as a form of meaning-making. The Head of School has agreed to take part in this project, which is funded by the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme and the University of Malta. At the end of the project I will be submitting a write-up of my findings.

The purpose of the project

Through my project, I am interested to learn how young children make and communicate their meanings through their drawings at home and at school. Moreover, I am also interested in how significant others, events and the context affect what and how children draw. This will help me to obtain better understanding of how young children use drawing to make connections between the home and school environments to create new meanings. The purpose of collecting drawings both from the home and the school is to analyse if there are any similarities or differences between the two.

Through this study I aim to:

- give 'voice' to children and listen to their perspectives through their drawings;
- use a participatory approach to involve children as important informants;

- identify what modes children use to create their drawings and communicate their meanings
- explore what themes children communicate through their home-school drawings
- analyse what influences children's drawings in the contexts of the home and in school and the interplay between the two settings;

Invitation to take part in a research project

You are being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with the Head of School if you wish. Feel free to ask me any questions if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Why have you been chosen?

Your school and class will be the only one taking part in this project. The Head of School has agreed that the school will be involved. You were suggested by the Head of School to participate in this project. The main reasons for such a choice rested on the enthusiasm and positive attitude you show towards teaching and learning.

Participation in the project

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary and therefore, the final decision whether or not to take part is entirely yours. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign the attached consent form. The consent form will be then presented to the Ethics Review Panel to ensure that necessary ethical procedures have been observed. You can always withdraw from the project at any time. This will not, in any way, affect any of your benefits or entitlements.

Your role in the research project

The study will be carried through a case-study approach conducted with three, 4-year old children from your class, who will be chosen in consultation with the school administration. Late in the first term (around December, 2011), I would like to visit your class roughly a few times to get to know the other children and learn

more about the daily routine. In the second term between January and April, 2012, the actual study will take place where I will visit your classroom once a week to observe and record the three children during their drawing activities at school. On my first visit I would like to ask the three children to separately take photographs of objects they like in the class (a V-tech digital camera will be provided). The aim of such photographs is to get to know the three children and their interests. During my weekly visits at school I will:

- Ask the three children to take photographs of objects they like (this will occur only in the first session);
- Observe and video-record the three children while drawing;
- Take photographs/scan copies of the three children's drawings;
- Audio record conversations I have with the three children;
- Audio record conversations with you.

Together with the children, you will be the main data collector when I am not present in class. I will provide you with a Flip (video) camera and the necessary training to use it prior to the commencement of the study.

Your role includes:

- Collecting the three children's drawings in a provided Display Folder, one for each child;
- Video-recording the three children while drawing;
- Holding and audio-recording informal conversations with you where I will be asking you some questions that will provide more information about the children's drawings.

Audio and visual recordings and photographs

The use of photographs and audio and video recordings of activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and for the publication of this study in form of a dissertation and related presentations. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

I will also be seeking consent from parents and from the children to participate in this project and for them to be audio and video recorded.

The benefits

I hope that this project will prove to be a learning experience for you where you will learn more about the children in your class and understand better the importance of drawing as a mode for meaning-making for children. At the end of the project you will be given a digital camera as a way to show my gratitude for your collaboration. I hope that you will use the camera to document children's experiences.

Any disadvantages

I will attempt to minimise any disruption to the class routines as possible. The three children will not be withdrawn from class for data collection. I will be respectful of the school's and your priorities and routines and will respond to any requests accordingly.

Confidentiality

Your real name will not be used in the research and, you will not be able to be identified. If at any point a child is unhappy to participate, they will be free to withdraw from the study.

Contact for further information

If you have further queries about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will be happy to come to your classroom to meet you and discuss this further.

Best regards,
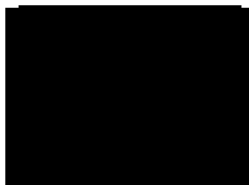
Josephine Deguara

E: josephine.deguara@um.edu.mt

Consent Form: Classroom Kindergarten Assistant

University of Sheffield

Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Listening to children: Investigating children's drawings

Name of Researcher: Josephine Deguara

Participant Identification Number for this project: 1

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 12th January, 2011 for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.

4. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant   Date 19.6.11   Signature

Lead Researcher   Date 19.6.11
Contact number:
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy for the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

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Appendix 11

Appendix 11

Research Project Information Letter to Parents

Title of Research Project

Listening to children: Exploring young children's drawings

Dear ████████ ,

First of all I would like to thank you for considering taking part in this project. I understand that the head of school has talked to you about my research study. She suggested that we get in contact to further discuss my study project.

I am currently doing a research degree at the University of Sheffield in the UK. As part of my studies I will be carrying a research project which involves children. The study will focus on children's drawings as a form of meaning-making. The Head of School and classroom teacher have agreed to take part in this project. At the end of the project I will be submitting a write-up of my findings.

The purpose of the project

Through my project, I am interested to learn how young children make and communicate their meanings through their drawings at home and at school. Moreover, I am also interested in how significant others, events and the context affect what and how children draw. This will help me obtain better understanding of how young children use drawing to make connections between the home and school environments to create new meanings.

Through this study I aim to:
- give 'voice' to children and listen to their perspectives through their drawings;
- use a participatory approach to involve children as important informants;
- identify what modes children use to create their drawings and communicate their meanings
- explore what themes children communicate through their home-school drawings

- analyse what influences children's drawings in the contexts of the home and in school and the interplay between the two settings;

Invitation to take part in a research project

I would like to invite both you as parents and your son to take part in this research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand what the research will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Feel free to ask me any questions if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Why have you been chosen?

The school and class of your child is the only one taking part in this project. The Head of School and the classroom teacher have agreed that the school will be involved in this project. Your child was chosen in consultation with the Head of School and the Assistant Head as he shows willingness to communicate clearly.

Participation in the project

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary and therefore, the final decision whether or not to take part is entirely yours and your child's. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form (which you can find hereunder). Your child will be given a separate information sheet and consent form. I will explain this sheet to your son; however, you collaboration in this process will be appreciated. The consent forms will be then presented to the Ethics Review Panel to ensure that necessary ethical procedures have been observed. You and your son are free to stop taking part in this project at any time without giving a reason.

Your role in the research project

The study will be conducted with three, 4-year old children from the same class. Your son is one of these three children. I will be analysing your son's drawings and how he uses drawing to communicate his understandings. Late in the first term, I will visit your son at school to get to know him and his daily classroom routine. During the same period, I would like to visit your son once at home, to get to know him, discuss the project further with you and start collecting preliminary

data about your son's interests. In the second term, when the actual study takes place I will visit your son's classroom once a week for four months to observe him during his drawing activities at school between January and April, 2012. With your permission and a prior appointment, during the same time I would like to visit your son at home once every weeks for five weeks to observe him and talk to him about his drawings.

The study involves the teacher at school and you as parents at home. As adults you will be asked to help your child video-record himself while drawing. You will be provided with a Flip-camera to conduct your recordings. Training of how to use this camera, which is very simple, will be given to you prior to the project. You and the teacher will be asked to help your son collect his drawings and file them in a provided Display Folder. I would also like to hold conversations with you and your son so that together we will discuss his drawings and the totality of the project. On my first visit I would like to ask your son to take photographs of objects he likes in the home (a V-tech digital camera will be provided). The aim of such photographs is to get to know your son and his interests. During my visits both at home and at school I will:

- Ask your son to take photographs of objects he likes;
- Observe and video-record your son while drawing;
- Take photographs/scan copies of your son's drawings;
- Audio record conversations I have with your son;
- Audio record conversations with you.

Together with your son, you will be the main data collector when I am not present. Your role includes:

- Helping your son collect his drawing in a provided Display Folder;
- Helping your son video-record himself while drawing;

- Holding and audio-recording informal conversations with you where I will be asking you some questions that will give me more information about your son's drawings

Audio and visual recordings and photographs

The use of photographs and audio and video recordings of your son's drawings made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in the writing of my thesis and related presentations. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

The benefits

I hope that this project will prove to be a learning experience for you where you will be able to learn more about your child, and how he uses drawing as a way to communicate his understanding. Throughout the study your son will be encouraged to share his opinion and analyse the videos of his drawing. In the process your son will develop reflective and analytical skills, will understand that his opinion is valuable to others and consequently will learn how to voice and communicate his perspective.

After the study your son will be given a V-tech camera to keep for his personal use. Moreover, you will keep all the drawings and be given a copy of the audio and video-recordings. Regard this as a way to show my gratitude towards your collaboration.

Any disadvantages

I will attempt to minimise any disruption to the school and home routines as possible. Your child will not be withdrawn from class for data collection. I will be respectful of the school's, the teacher's and the home's priorities and routines and will respond to any requests accordingly.

Confidentiality

Your son's or your real names will not be used in the research and therefore, you will not be identified. While I will be video-recording your son at home and at school, I will not use the recordings, or still pictures from them without your special and specific permission.

Contact for further information

If you have further queries about the project, feel free to contact me.

Best regards,

Josephine Deguara

T:

M:
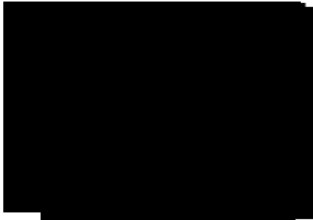
E: josephine.deguara@um.edu.mt

Research Project Information Letter to Parents

(Maltese version)

Ittra ta' Informazzjoni lill-Genituri

Isem tar-Ricerka:

Nisimgħu l-perspettivi tat-tfal: Ninvestigaw it-tpengijiet tat-tfal żgħar

Għeżież ▮▮▮▮▮,

Nifhem li l-kap tal-iskola tkellmet magħkom dwar studju li ser nagħmel fil-klassi tat-tifel tagħkom. Qed niktiblek biex nagħtikom iktar informazzjoni dwar dan il-progett.

Bħalissa qed nagħmel l-istudju tiegħi fil-livell ta' Dottorot fl-Università ta' Sheffield fl-Ingilterra. Bħala parti mill-istudji tiegħi ser nagħmel proġett ta riċerka li jinvolvi tfal żgħar. Jiena nteressata insir naf iktar dwar it-tpengijiet tat-tfal u kif dawn iservu biex it-tfal jikkomunikaw x'jafu. Il-kap tal-iskola u l-għalliema tal-klassi accettaw li jieħdu sehem f'dan il-progett. Fl-aħħar tal-progett ser nikteb tezi.

Stedina biex tieħdu sehem f'dan il-proġett

Nixtieq nistiedinkom bħala ġenituri u lil binkom biex tieħdu sehem f'dan il-proġett ta' riċerka. Qabel ma tiddeċiedu huwa importanti li tifhmu x'ser tinvolvi din ir-riċerka. Hudu l-ħin meħtieg biex taqraw l-informazzjoni li ġejja b'attenzjoni u biex flimkien tiddeċiedu jekk tixtiqux li it-tifel jieħu sehem. Jekk hemm xi ħaġa li mhix ċara jew tixtiequ aktar informazzjoni dwarha, ħossukom liberi li tistaqsuni.

L-għan tar-ricerka

Permezz tal-proġett tiegħi, nixtieq nirriċerka kif tfal żgħar jikkomunikaw dak li qed jifhmu bit-tpengijiet li jagħmlu kemm meta jkun d-dar kif ukoll fl-iskola. Interessata wkoll li nsir naf ki nies vicin it-tifel, bħal membri tal-familja, ħbieb u l-għalliema jinfluwenzawh kif u xi jpengi. Dan l-istudju ser jgħinni biex nifhem aħjar kif it-tfal jagħmlu konnessjonijiet bejn dak li jitgħallmu d-dar u l-iskola.

Kif ġejtu magħżulin?

Il-klassi tat-tifel taghkom hija l-unika klassi li ser tieħu sehem f'dan il-proġett ta' ricerka. Il-Kap ta' l-iskola accetta li l-iskola tkun involuta. It-tifel taghkom ġie magħżul b'konsultazzjoni mal Kap tal-Iskola, L-Assistent Kap u l-ghalliema minhabba l-kapacitaijiet li ghandu biex jikkomunika ma' l-ohrajn.

Parteċipazzjoni fil-proġett

Il-parteċipazzjoni taghkom f'dan il-progett hija kompletament volontarja u għalhekk, id-deċiżjoni finali jekk tieħdux sehem hija taghkom u tat-tifel tagħkom. Jekk intom tiddeċiedu li tieħdu sehem, intom mitluba timlew u tiffirmaw l-formola ta' kunsens li tinsab mehmuza. Kemm intom kif ukoll it-tifel taghkom tistgħu tieqfu tieħdu sehem f'dan il-proġett meta tridu mingħajr ma tagħtu raġuni.

Ir-rwol tagħkom f'dan il-proġett

Ir-ricerka ser issir permezz ta' studju ma' tlitt it-tfal mill-istess klassi. It-tifel taghkom huwa wieħed minn dawn it-tlitt itfal. Waqt ir-ricerka ser inkun qed nigbor informazzjoni dwar ix-xogħol tat-tpengija tat-tifel. Dan ser nagħmlu billi mmur fil-klassi tat-tifel tiegħek darba fil-ġimgħa. Bil-permess tiegħek u b'appuntament minn qabel, nixtieq ukoll li nosserva lit-tifel tieghek waqt li jkun qed ipengi d-dar. Nixtieq li jkolli l-possibilita li nzur id-dar taghkom darba kull tliet ġimgħat għal tul ta' tliet xhur. Matul iż-żjarat tiegħi kemm fid-dar u fl-iskola ser inkun qed:

• Nosserva lit-tifel waqt li qed ipengi;
• Nigbor u niehu ritratti tat-tpengijiet tat-tifel taghkom;
•Nirrekordja xi diskussjonijiet li jkolli mat-tifel dwar it-tpengijiet tieghu;
• Nirrekordja b'mod vizwali lit-tifel waqt li qed ipengi;
• Nirrekordja d-diskussjonijiet li jkolli maghkom dwar it-tpengija tat-tifel.

Flimkien mat-tifel intom mitluba li tigbru t-tpengijiet meta jien ma nkux id-dar taghkom u tirrekordjaw lit-tifel meta qed ipengi. Ser naghtikom Flip© camera u t-tahrig li ghandkom bzonn biex tuzaw din il-kamera. Ir-rwol taghkom jikludi li:
• Tigbru t-tpengijiet tat-tifel u tpogguhom f'Display Folders li ser naghtikom;
• Tghinu lit-tifel jirrekordja lilu nnifsu b'mod awdjo-vizwali waqt li qed ipengi;

• Nitkellem u nirrekordja id-diskussjonijiet informali li jista' jkolli mieghek dwar it-
  tpengijiet tat-tifel.

L-istudju se jsir bejn Jannar u April 2012. Ghall-ahhar tal-ewwel term pero, jien ser
mmur l-iskola fejn niltaqa' mat-tifel taghkom biex insir nafu ahjar u nsir naf ftit it-tip
ta' attivitajiet li jaghmlu fil-klassi. Fl-istess perjodu nixtieq li nzur lit-tifel id-dar
taghkom biex insir naf lil familja, niddiskuti l-progett maghkom u nibda nigbor
informazzjoni preliminarja dwar it-tifel u l-interessi tieghu. Fit-tieni term, meta ser
isir l-istudju propja, ser nżur il-klassi tat-tifel taghkom darba f'ġimgħa biex nosservah
matul l-attivitajiet tat-tpengija.   Matul l-istess perjodu nixtieq li nżur lit-tifel fid-dar,
darba kull tliet ġimgħat biex nifhem l-rabtiet bejn it-tpengijiet li jaghmel id-dar u
dawk ta' l-iskola.

L-uzu ta' taghmir awdjo-viziv u ritratti

L-użu ta' ritratti u reġistrazzjonijiet awdjo-vizivi li jittieħdu matul din ir-riċerka ser
ikunu użati biss għall-analiżi u għall-illustrazzjoni ta' din ir-ricerka f'forma ta' tezi, u
preżentazzjonijiet. Ebda użu ieħor mhu ser isir minnhom mingħajr permess specifiku
mingħandkom. Hadd mhu ser ikollu aċċess għall-reġistrazzjonijiet oriġinali 'l barra
mill-progett. Kull darba li jkun hemm bzonn li jintuza ritratt jew registrazzjoni awdjo-
viziva, ser jintalab permess speċifiku u separat kemm minghandkom kif ukoll mit-
tifel taghkom.

Xi benefiċċji tal-progett

Nittama li dan il-proġett se jkun esperjenza ta' tagħlim għalik fejn titghallmu aktar
dwar it-tifel taghkom, u kif it-tpengijiet tieghu jurukom aktar dwar dak li qed
jitghallem.

Matul il-progett, it-tifel ser jitghallem jesprimi lilu nnifsu iktar. Ser jigi mħeġġeġ biex
jaghti l-opinjoni tiegħu u janalizza registrazzjonijiet vizivi dwaru jew dwar it-
tpengijiet tieghu. Permezz ta' dan il-proċess it-tifel jiżviluppa il-ħiliet riflessivi u
analitiċi, ser jifħem li l-opinjoni tiegħu hija ta' valur ghal oħrajn u għalhekk ser

jitgħallem kif jikkomunika l-perspettiva tiegħu b'mod iktar effettiv. Wara l-istudju ser naghti lit-tifel kamera tar-ritratti V-tech© għall-użu personali. Barra minhekk, ser tingħataw kopja ta' kull ritratt jew registrazzjoni awdjo viziva tat-tifel taghkom u tat-tpengijiet tieghu. Qisu dan bħala gest ta' gratitudni ghal kollaborazzjoni taghkom.

Xi żvantaġġi

Jiena ser nipprova nimminimizza kwalunkwe tfixkil mir-rutina iskola u l-dar. It-tifel tagħkom mhux ser jintalab johrog mill-klassi biex nitkellem mieghu jekk mhux bil-permess minn qabel taghkom. Ser nirrispetta il-prioritajiet u r-rutini tal-klassi, tal-ghalliema u tad-dar.

Kunfidenzjalità

Isimkom u isem it-tifel mhux se jintużaw fir-riċerka. Filwaqt li jistgħu jittiehdu registrazzjonijiet awdjo-visivi taghkom u tat-tifel taghkom, dawn mhux ser jintuzaw jekk mhux bil-permess shih taghkom. Ser tingħataw kopja ta kull ritratt u registrazzjoni awdjo-viziva li tittiehed.

Għal aktar informazzjoni

Jekk għandkom xi mistoqsijiet dwar il-proġett, niehu gost jekk tikkuntattjawni biex niddiskutu aktar fit-tul.

Inselli ghalikom,

Josephine Deguara

T:

M:
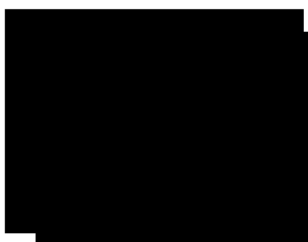
E: josephine.deguara@um.edu.mt

Consent Form Parents

University of Sheffield

Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Listening to children: Exploring young children's drawings

Name of Researcher: Josephine Deguara

Participant Identification Number for this project: 5

	Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet/letter dated [1ˢᵗ November, 2011] for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	✓
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.	✓
3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.	✓
4. I agree to take part in the above research project.	✓

_____ 14ᵗʰ June, 2011   _____
                  Date   Signature

Josephine Deguara   17ᵗʰ June, 2011
Lead Researcher   Date
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Appendix 12

Appendix 12
Directorate of Education, Video-recording Consent Form - Data Subjects-Minors (English version)

Video Recording Consent Form – Data subjects – minors

Name of parent of guardian --

Name of child / children --

Location of video recording(s) --

Date of recording(s) --

The Department of Research & Planning Education Division would like to authorise video recording(s) of your child/ children for research purposes by students/ researchers.

To comply with the Data Protection Act, 2001, your permission is necessary prior to the taking or use of video footage of your child. Please answer question 1, then sign and date the form where shown.

Kindly return the completed form to the Head of School or his/ her representative

To Parent

Please circle your answer

1. May we use your child's video footage/ image in our printed publications or media?   YES   NO

> *Please note that websites can be seen throughout the world, and not just in Malta, where the Maltese law applies. Note also that the conditions for using these images*

I have read and understood the conditions of use at the bottom of this form.

Parent's signature: --   Date: ---------------------------

Parent's Name (in block letters) --

To the Department of Planning and Development – Education Division

I confirm that the parent/guardian has given consent so that his / her child's/children's video recordings may be used in printed publications or the media or both.

Researcher's signature: --   Date: ---------------------------

Researcher's Name (in block letters) --

Conditions of use

We will not include details or full names and surnames of any child in a recorded footage or in printed publications without consent.

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Directorate of Education, Video-recording Consent Form-Data
(Maltese version)

Formola ta' kunsens għall-*Video Recording* ta' minuri

Isem tal-ġenitur / kustodju ——————— ██████████████

Isem / Ismijiet tal-minuri ——— THEA ████████

Fejn se jsir il-*video recording* ——— ████████████████

Data tar- rekording———— JANUARY- APRIL 2012

Id-Dipartment tar-Riċerka u l-Ippjanar - Diviżjoni ta' l- Edukazzjoni jixtieq jawtorizza *video recording* ta' ibnek/ bintek / uliedek li se jsir minn studenti / riċerkarturi.

Bis-saħħa tad- **Data Protection Act, 2001**, qed jintalab il-permess neċessarju minghandek qabel ma jittiehed il-video ta' ibnek/ bintek/ uliedek. Jekk joghgbok wiegeb il-mistoqsija numru 1, iffirma u ikteb id-data fl-ispazju pprovdut.

Ibghat il-formola mimlija fl-ufficcju tal-Kap ta' l-iskola.

Lill-ġenitur / kustodju

1. Nistghu nużaw il-video/ ritratt ta' ibnek / bintek/ uliedek/ f'pubblikazzjonijiet jew fil-media? — Immarka it-tajba ⓘVA LE

   Kun af li l-websites huma accessibbli ghal nies mid-dinja kollha u mhux biss ghal nies f'Malta, fejn tapplika il-Ligi ta' Malta. Ara il-kundizzjoni hawn taht.

Qrajt il-kundizzjoni murija hawn taht.

Firma tal-ġenitur / kustodju ——————— ████████████   Data: 21.6.11

Isem tal-ġenitur / kustodju (ittri kbar) ——— ██████████████

Lid-Dipartment ta' l-Ippjanar u Żvilupp – Diviżjoni ta' l-Edukazzjoni

Nikkonferma li l-ġenitur / kustodju ta' l-kunsens biex il- video ta' ibnu/ bintu / uliedu jista' jiġi ppublikat jew / u jintwera fuq il- media.

Firma tar-riċerkatur ██████████████ ——————— Data: 21/6/11

Isem ir-riċerkatur (ittri kbar) ——— JOSEPHINE DEGUARA

Kundizzjoni ghal l-użu tal-video

Dan il-video ma jkunx jinkludi l-isem shih u l-kunjom meta jintwera jew jiġi ppublikat minghajr il-kunsens specifiku.

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5

Appendix 13

Appendix 13
Research Project Information Letter: College Principal

████████,

████████████

The College Principal

██████

████████████████

█████████████████████

████████████████

██████████████

██████████.   12ᵗʰ May, 2011

Dear ████████,

I am currently reading for a PhD degree in early childhood education at the University of Sheffield under the supervision of Professor Cathy Nutbrown.

As part of my studies, I have to carry out a small-scale research where, I will be investigating three young children's meaning-making experiences in one local kindergarten class. The title of my thesis is: 'Listening to children's perspectives: Investigating young children's representations through a multimodal approach'. I would like to carry my study at ████ Primary School ████, which forms part of ████ ████ College, during the scholastic year October 2011 – June 2012.

My study, which will take form of an ethnographic project, will involve a multi-method approach of data collection. Through a case-study approach I intend to observe three children from the same class, during their daily activities both at home and at school. The children will be chosen in consultation with the kindergarten assistant. During my observation I will make use of field notes together with micro-ethnographic methodology, where I will record the children's experiences through a combination of different tools which include the use of photographs and audio and video-recordings. Other methods of data collection include informally holding conversations with the children. Participatory methods will also be used where

children can take photographs or video-record their work or objects that are of interest to them.

Throughout my study I will seek to meet and respect all ethical requisites as stipulated by both the local Directorate for Quality Standards of Education and the Ethical Guidelines of the University of Sheffield. Informed consent will be sought by all the involved stakeholders, that is the Directorate for Quality Standards of Education, yourself, as the College Principal, the Head of School, the Kindergarten Assistant, the parents / guardians and the children themselves. The identity of the School, the College, as well as that of all participants will be kept confidential throughout the study.

I have already discussed this study with ▮▮▮▮▮▮, Head of School of ▮▮▮▮ Primary School ▮▮, who has kindly accepted that I conduct my research in his school. I am therefore asking for your permission to conduct my study at the above-mentioned school.

If you kindly accept my request, I would appreciate if we can meet at your convenience to obtain your consent.

I appreciate your time in reading this information letter.

Thank you for your collaboration.
Yours truly,

Josephine Deguara
B. Ed. (Hons.), M.E.Ch.Educ.
PhD student
E-mail: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
Mobile: ▮▮▮▮▮

Consent Form: College Principal

The College Principal

████████████████   ██████

██

Directorate for Quality Standards in Education

██████████

Floriana

██████████

VLT 2000

████████

25th May, 2011

To whom it may concern,

I, hereby give my consent to Josephine Deguara, to conduct her PhD studies at ██████ Primary School ██ as per attached information sheet and after all ethical consents are obtained.

_____

████████

College Principal

████████ College

_____

Appendix 14

Appendix 14

Research Project Information Letter Directorate of Education

██████

████████████████

Directorate for Quality Standards of Educ	Dept of Primary Education
Department of Planning & Development	Faculty of Education
Room 401,	University of Malta
Floriana	

31st May, 2011

Dear ████████

I am studying for a PhD degree in Early Childhood Education at the University of Sheffield under the supervision of Professor Cathy Nutbrown. My studies are funded by the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme (MGSS) and the University of Malta.

As part of my study, I have to carry out a small-scale research where, I will be investigating three young children's representations in one local kindergarten class. The title of my thesis is: 'Listening to children's perspectives: Investigating young children's representations through a multimodal approach'. I intend to carry my study at ████████████████, which forms part of ████████████ during the scholastic year October 2011 – June 2012.

My study which will take form of an ethnographic project, will involve a multi-method approach of data collection. Through a case-study approach, which will mainly be carried over the second term of the scholastic year, I intend to observe three children during their daily art and craft activities both at home and at school. My observations will be carried once a week to an average total of 12 – 14 visits. During my observations I will make use of field notes together with micro-ethnographic methodology, where I will record the children's experiences through a combination of different tools, such as taking photographs and audio and video-

recordings. Other methods of data collection include informally interviewing the kindergarten assistant and parents and holding short conversations with the children. Participatory methods will also be used where children can take photographs or video-record their artwork. The study will also involve alternate visits at the children's homes where a data collection process, similar to the one carried in school, will be held. Before the commencement of the study, around November, 2011, I will also hold a Pilot study to help me with developing further my research tools and methodology.

I am therefore asking for your consent to conduct my research in the above-mentioned school. Throughout my study I will seek to meet and respect all ethical requisites as stipulated by your institution, that is, the Directorate for Quality Standards of Education as well the Ethical Guidelines of the University of Sheffield. Informed consent will be sought by all the involved stakeholders, the College Principal, the Head of School, the Kindergarten Assistant, the parents / guardians and the children themselves. The identity of the School, the College, as well as that of all participants will be kept confidential throughout the study.

Attached please find the related documents, which will be translated to Maltese as necessary:

- Request for Research in State Schools Form
- Statement of Consent
- Information letter to College Principal
- Consent form – College Principal
- Information letter to Head of School
- Signed consent form – Head of School
- Information letter Kindergarten Assistant
- Consent form - Kindergarten Assistant
- Information letter to the Parents/Guardians
- Consent form – Parents/Guardians of the three participating children
- Information letter to the Parents/Guardians of the child of the Pilot Study
- Consent form – Parents/Guardians of the child of the Pilot Study
- Information letter to all Parents/Guardians of non-participant children

- Consent Form – All Parents/Guardians of non-participant children
- Consent Form – Participant Children
- Consent Form – Pilot Study Child
- Consent Form – Non Participant Children

The following documents will be sent to your office once I get your consent, participants are chosen at the beginning of the year and specific consent is acquired.

- Signed Consent Form - College Principal
- Signed Consent Form – Kindergarten Assistant
- Signed Consent Forms - Parents / guardians
- Signed Consent Form - Children
- Video Recording Consent Form – Data Subjects – minors
  - 3 children of the study
  - 1 child of the Pilot Study
- Video Recording Consent Form – Data Subjects – adults
  - Kindergarten Assistant
  - 3 parents of the children of the study
  - 1 parent of the child of the Pilot Study.

I accept to abide by the rules and regulations re Research in State Schools.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Yours truly,
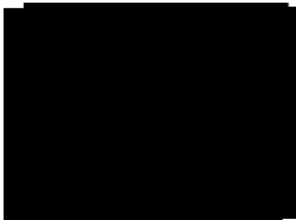
Josephine Deguara

B. Ed. (Hons.), M.E.Ch.Educ.

PhD student

E-mail: josephine.deguara@um.edu.mt

Mobile

Request for Research in State Schools Form

Divizjoni ta' l-Edukazzjoni
Dipartiment ta' l-Ippjanar u Żvilupp
Il-Furjana

MALTA

Education Division
Department of Planning & Development
Floriana

Request for Research in State Schools

A. (*Please use BLOCK LETTERS*)

Surname: DEGUARA   Name: JOSEPHINE

I.D. Card Number: ▓▓▓▓▓   Telephone: ▓▓▓▓▓

Address... ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓

▓▓▓   Post Code ▓▓▓

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Faculty. UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD Course: PHD   Year: 2nd YEAR (2011-2012)

Area/s of research: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Aims of research: (Underline as appropriate)   Long Essay   Dissertation   <u>Thesis</u>   Publication

Estimated duration of research: 1 ACADEMIC YEAR. Language used: MALTESE

Description of method to be used: ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH – OBSERVATION & PARTICIPATORY

School/s where research is to be carried out: ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓

Years / ~~Forms~~: KINDER 2   Age range of students: 4 YEARS OLD

I accept to abide by the rules and regulations re Research in State Schools and to comply with the Data Protection Act 2001.

<u>Warning to applicants</u> – Any false statement, misrepresentation of concealment of material fact on this form or any document presented in support of this application may be grounds for criminal prosecution.

Signature of applicant ▓▓▓▓   Date: 1 / 4 / 11

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1

Request for Research in State Schools Form (continued)

B. **Tutor's Approval** (where applicable)

The above research work is being carried out under my supervision.

Tutor's Name: C. NUTBROWN   Signature ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇
(*In block letters*)

C. **Education Division – Official Approval**

The above request for permission to carry out research in State Schools is hereby approved according to the official rules and regulations.

Raymond Camilleri
Director, RDD

▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇
Assistant Director   Date: 08/07/2011   Official Stamp
(Planning, Policy, Communication & Research)

Conditions for the approval of a request by a student to carry out research work in State Schools

Permission for research in State Schools is subject to the following conditions:

1. The official request form is to be accompanied by a copy of the questionnaire and / or any relevant material intended for use in schools during research work.

2. The original request form, showing the relevant signatures and approval, must be presented to the Head of School.

3. All research work is carried out at the discretion of the relative Head of School and subject to their conditions.

4. Researchers are to observe strict confidentiality at all times.

5. The Education Division reserves the right to withdraw permission to carry out research in State Schools at any time and without prior notice.

6. Students are expected to restrict their research to a minimum of students / teachers / administrators / schools, and to avoid any waste of time during their visits to schools.

7. As soon as the research in question is completed, the Education Division assumes the right to a full copy (in print /on C.D.) of the research work carried out in State Schools. Researchers are to forward the copies to the **Assistant Director Research and Planning, Education Division.**

8. Researchers are to hand a copy of their Research in print or on C.D. to the relative School/s.

9. In the case of video recordings, researchers have to obtain prior permission from the Head of School and the teacher of the class concerned. Any adults recognisable in the video are to give their explicit consent. Parents of students recognisable in the video are also to be requested to approve that their siblings may be video-recorded. Two copies of the consent forms are necessary, one copy is to be deposited with the Head of school, and the other copy is to accompany the Request Form for Research in State Schools. Once the video recording is completed, one copy of the videotape is to be forwarded to the Head of school. The Education Division reserves the right to request another copy.

Appendix 15

Appendix 15
Children's Consent Booklet
Cover & page
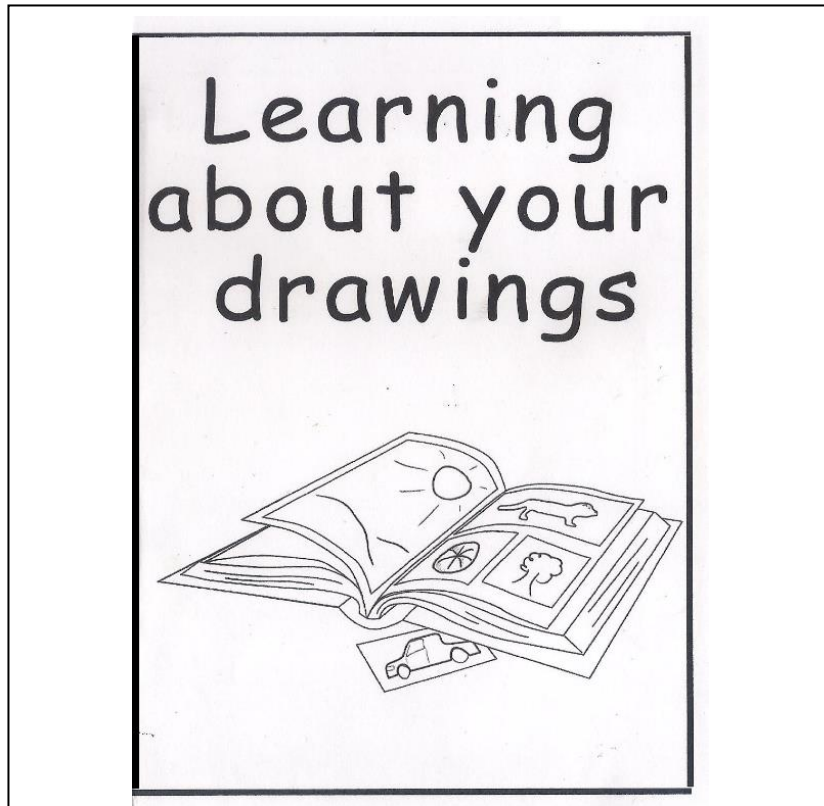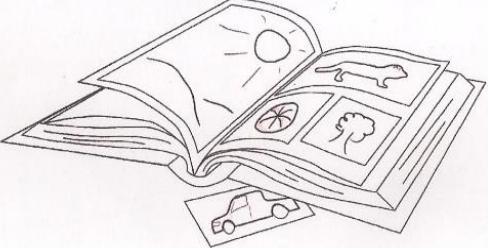
Pages 1 & 2
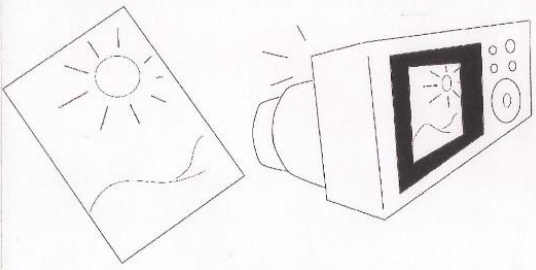
Children's consent booklet
Pages 3 & 4
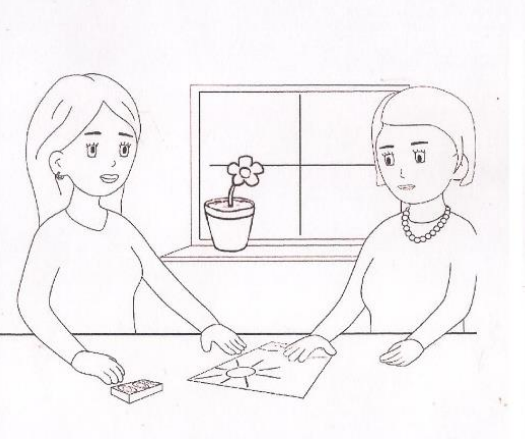
Your parents will also video-record you while you are drawing at home.

3.

You will put your drawings in a display book which I will give you.

4.

Pages 5 & 6
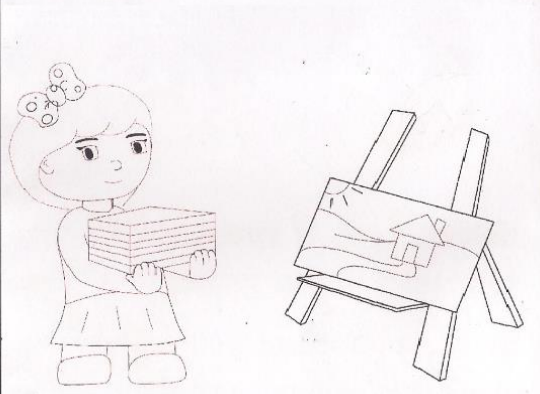
I will look at you while you draw.

5.

I will take photographs of your drawings.

6.

Children's consent booklet
Pages 7 & 8

I will talk to you about your drawings.

7.

I will talk to your parents and teacher about your drawing.

8.

Pages 9 & Back (consent) page

You will keep your drawings.

9.

Colour 🙂 if you agree to take part in this project.

Draw a picture of yourself to show that you coloured the 🙂

Appendix 16

Appendix 16
Specific Consent to Use the Children's Real Names and Show their Faces in Video-recordings

Formola tal-kunsens dwar l-uzu il-videos

Ftit informazzjoni dwar il-video editing :

- Il-videos maghzula ser jigu editjati, u mqassra ghal tul ta 3 – 4 minuti massimu. L-ghan huwa li nuri l-process tat-tpengija u l-valur tal-esperjenza ghat-tifla/tifel taghkom. Ovvjament, l-ahjar siltiet minn kull esperjenza ser jigu maghzula.

- Kliem li jkun intqal u li jkun validu u mportanti, ser jigu maqluba ghal-Ingliz u miktub bhala sub-headings.

- Il-videos dejjem ser ikunu fil-pussess tieghi u nassigurakom li qatt mhu ser jinghataw lil terzi persuni jew jigu mtellgha fuq xi sit tal-internet.

- Napprezza hafna jekk tiddiskutu dawn il-mistoqsijiet mat-tifel/a taghkom u tiehdu l-approvazzjoni tieghu/taghha ukoll. Ghaldaqstant qed nitlob anke l-firma tieghu/taghha – f'forma ta' isem, ittra, tpengija, sinjal – kif irid/trid hu/hi. Il-formola tista' tigi ffirmata minn wiehed /zewg genituri – kif tixtiequ intom.

- Inwieghed li f'kull hin nirrispetta lit-tifel/a taghkom u t-tpengijiet tieghu/taghha.

Peress li nixtieq nuri dawn il-videos lil edukaturi ohra waqt prezentazzjonijiet biex naqsam dak kollu li tghallimt/qed nitghallem mit-tifel/tifla taghkom dwar il-valur tat-tpengija ghal process tat-taghlim, nixtieq inkun certa li intom tapprovaw dan kollu. Hossukom liberi li twiegbu kif tixtiequ. Ghaldaqstant qed nitlob il-kunsens taghkom ghal dawn li gejjin :

---

1. **Uzu ta' videos fit-tezi**

   A. Naccetta li z-zewg videos (wiehed tad-dar u l-iehor tal-iskola) tat-tifel/a tieghi jigu pprezentati f'tezi fejn l-unika nies li ser jaraw l-videos ser ikunu zewg ezaminaturi barranin.

   Iva [✓]   Le [ ]

   B. F'dawn il-videos nixtieq li wicc it-tifel/ tifla tieghi jkun jidher / mghotti (blurred)

   Jidher [✓]   Mghotti (blurred) [ ]

Specific consent to use the children's real names and show their faces in video-recordings

Uzu tal-videos fi prezentazzjonijiet barra minn Malta

A. Naccetta li l-videos (tad-dar u tal-iskola) tat-tifel/a tieghi jigu murija waqt presentazzjonijiet f'konferenzi barra minn Malta. F'dawn il-konferenzi l-udjenza tkun maghmula minn edukaturi professjonisti barranin.

Iva ✓   Le ☐

B. F'dawn il-videos nixtieq li wicc it-tifel/tifla tieghi jkun jidher / mghotti (blurred)

Jidher ✓   Mghotti ☐ (blurred)

3. Uzu tal-videos fi prezentazzjonijiet f'Malta

A. Naccetta li l-videos (tad-dar u tal-iskola) tat-tifel/a tieghi jigu murija waqt presentazzjonijiet u lectures Malta. F'dawn il-prezentazzjonijiet l-udjenza tkun maghmula minn edukaturi Maltin.

Iva ✓   Le ☐

B. F'dawn il-videos nixtieq li wicc it-tifel/ tifla tieghi jkun jidher / mghotti (blurred)

Jidher ✓   Mghotti ☐ (blurred)

4. Uzu tal-isem tat-tifel/a :

Nixiteq li fil-kitba tat-tezi u fil-videos, jintuza l-isem propju tat-tifel/a:

Iva ✓   Le ☐

Jekk LE, aghzel isem fittizzju flimkien mat-tifel/a tieghek li tixtiequ li nuza. Napprezza jekk l-isem ikun jibda bl-istess ittra tat-tifel taghkom ex. Stephen – Silvio.

Isem fittizzju: _____

Isem tal-genitur (1): ████████████   Firma tal-genitur: ████████████

Isem tal-genitur (2): ████████████   Firma tal-genitur: ████████████

Isem tat-tifel/a : THEA ████   Firma tat-tifel/a: THEA

Data: 13 tá Gunju 2012 (isem / ittra / tpengija / sinjal, etc.)

80 Grazzi 80

509

Appendix 17

Appendix 17: Data Log Sample
A sample of one of Luke's Data Logs

Name of Child	L	Age	4:6	Location	School	Date	1.3.12
Drawing Code	LS18	**Duration**	6.18	**Title of Text**	**Ben 10 fight**		

Form (**Modes**)	drawing (simple mode, complex theme/ S:C)			**Tools**	marker	

Semiotic analysis		
Denotation: Content **Themes** -Places, people & Objects	**People:** Fantasy: Ben Ten; another unknown man. **Objects:** Video Cameras; knives and guns **Narration:** Ben Ten firing at the bad guys. A monster came in firing bombs. The whole shooting is video-recorded because Ben Ten is shooting the bad guy.	
Connotation: **Meaning** behind the drawing through process and talk	**Narrative: Myth:** Good & evil fight. **Action:** Flying (spokes detonating flying); Shooting;	
	Luke	Teacher, I am drawing a video camera like this one.
	Jo	Ok Luke.
	L	I drew the video (flip) camera.
	J	Good.
	L	I drew hands on the video camera.
	L	I am going to draw Ben Ten.
	J	Who is that?
	L	Ben Ten.
	J	Do you watch Ben Ten? What do you like about Ben 10?
	L	His watch.
	J	His watch? Do you like his watch?
	L	Yes.
	L	Which one is Ben 10? You have a lot of things in the picture.
	J	This is Ben 10 and this is something else.
	J	Is that another Ben 10 then?
	L	No he becomes someone else.
	J	Oh. I see, because he changes character doesn't he? And what has he changed into now? So here he is Ben Ten and here? What did he become?
	L	A monster.
	J	Wow a monster. And what are these?
	L	Those are the video cameras.
	J	Why are they taking video?
	L	Videoing Ben 10.
	J	What good is Ben 10 doing so that they are videoing Ben 10?

	L	Because Ben 10 is fighting the bad guys… I am going to draw Ben Ten flying.
	J	What are you doing to Ben Ten?
	L	I am making him fly.
	J	Is he flying? And where is he going? Is he flying also on the desk?
	L	Ben Ten did not come out very good.
	J	Who is that?
	L	Ben Ten.
	J	Ben Ten as well.
	L	I drew him again because the first one did not come out very well. I am going to draw his tummy. I am going to draw his hair spikey. Now the hat. Now I am going to draw him …
	J	What are you drawing there? What are those lines? (coming out from Ben Ten?)
	L	He is flying with them
	J	He is flying with them?
	L	The guns are firing from his pockets. His guns are firing at the video-cameras.
	J	Who is firing?
	L	Ben 10 is firing at the video-cameras.
	J	Why is he firing at the video cameras?
	L	Because they are naughty.
	J	The video cameras are naughty? Poor things! Did you draw hands as well for the video cameras?
	L	Now they are firing. Pcho! Pcho.
	J	What is that Luke?
	L	They are firing at each other. Wragh! Vmmm. Vmmmmmm. Wragh! Wragh! Pvummm.Pvummm. Pum! Pum! Puv!
	J	What is happening there Luke?
	L	They are firing at each other.
	J	Who is firing at whom?
	L	This one is shooting at Ben 10 and Ben 10 is shooting at this one, and to this and this. Gish. Gish.

	J	Is that all firing?
	L	Yes. They are all firing at each other. This one is firing at this one. Gish! Gish! It is ready!
Post-drawing conversation	**Immediately afterwards at school**	
	J	Luke, so here we have Ben 10 shoot at the video cameras, am I right?
	L	Yes, and there is another Ben 10 who is shooting at the Ben 10 he loves, who is his friend.
	J	Ben Ten …
	L	The other Ben Ten is shooting at Ben Ten, his friend.
	J	The other Ben Ten is shooting at Ben Ten, his friend. And at the cameras as well, no?
	L	Yes.
	At home, days later.	
	J	Did you forget about this? You drew this, no? This is a whole story.
	L	Yes. They were firing. A BEN TEN story.
	J	Yes BEN TEN. You still remember it then.
	L	They fired with the cameras Ben Ten. A monster came here but was running and he made a lot of .. PFttt Pfttt … bombs.
	J	This is a story fight of Ben Ten...the bad guy and the evil guy fighting each other…we have a whole story here…this is all fighting here.
Influences	**Popular culture**: Ben ten cartoon character. **Resource** :The video camera.	

A sample of one of Thea's Data Logs

Name of Child	T	Age	4:4	Location	School	Date	5.3.12
Drawing Code	TS23	**Duration**	15.16	**Title of Text**	**An aeroplane**		

Form (Modes)	Taping Dabbing Brushing Sticking Mark-making circling (paper into balls) scattering (glitters) drawing **(Complex mode, simple theme - C:S)**	Tools	Leaf; Tape Paintbrush Glitter glue Kite paper Markers Glitters Glue Crayons Corrugated paper	

Semiotic analysis		
Content (Detonation) **Themes** -Places, people & Objects	**Vehicle**: Aeroplane	
Meaning (Connotation) Notions behind the drawing through process and talk	**Knowledge and understanding:** How a plane flies. Creating a switch to make it fly and another one to make it land. (cause & effect) **Experience**: Going to the airport to see daddy leaving by plane. **Feeling**: missing and concerned about daddy being abroad	
	Thea	Sticky glues. Tapes, tapes. Not now.
	Luke	Tape.
	Thea	Ok, use it.
	Luke	Come on. And you use the glue.
	Thea	You use the glue.
	Luke	You use the tape.
	Thea	I haven't done anything yet. I stuck the leaf.
	Luke	I am going to glue this.
	Thea	(*inaudible*) Tapes, tapes, tapes.
	Luke	Sticky tape. Sticky tape.
	Thea	I need it. I need it.
	Luke	You cannot take it all because I need it.
	Thea	Even I need it. Today is tape day as well.
	Luke	The tape is all for me.
	Thea	It is all ours.
	Luke	No, because you already used it. Are you ready from the tape? Did you bring lollipop sticks because I need to use one?
	Thea	Even I need to use one.

J	Check in the scissors container. There are only few.
Luke	There is only one.
Thea	We can share it.
Luke	No.
Thea	I need the tapey, tape.
Luke	Why do you need the tape? I need it as well.
Thea	(*kept on sticking tape using a dispenser*) It is very difficult. I am going to take this picture at home
Luke	Even I.
Thea	(*was called to join another activity outside the class*)

Thea back in class

J	What did you draw?
Thea	Grass. No, that is an aeroplane.
J	What is this?
Thea	An aeroplane.
J	And this?
Thea	An aeroplane.
J	But why did you draw this circle?
Thea	That is the aeroplane.
J	Where are the people?
Thea	They are going to the airport.
J	So like daddy. He went to the airport today.
Thea	We went to the airport to see him.
J	And where did daddy go?
Thea	I do not know the name of the place.
J	Did you forget?
Thea	It is not that I forgot … I do not know.
J	Why did daddy go abroad?
Thea	I do not know.
J	Didn't he go on work?
Thea	He went abroad to work.
J	Right. He went to work. Instead of working in Malta he went to work somewhere else. And he needed the aeroplane to travel.
Thea	No.
J	No?
Thea	He did not go to work. When it is time for him to sleep, he will not come home, he will go to a hotel.
J	Yes, of course. But he will come to Malta.
Thea	It will be a Sunday.
J	So he is going to stay abroad for exactly a whole week.
Thea	In the morning.
J	And where is daddy on this aeroplane?
Thea	He is here on these seats.
J	Are there seats over here?

Thea	Yes. But this is the other seat. And the one next to him is Daddy's seat. He is sitting on it.
J	Ok. And what is this (leaf)?
Thea	That is the petrol.
J	That is the fuel tank? And what about this glitters?
Thea	That is the petrol.
J	And what are these (*the green outline with red and orange switches*).
Thea	Those are the aeroplane.
J	And what are these? (*the orange & blue crumbled paper*)
Thea	This blue button is for the plane to start and this orange one is for it to get down.
J	Oh! So by pressing this blue button the aeroplane starts and goes up in the sky and pressing this (orange switch) will make the aeroplane go down? So the pilot first has to press the blue button so that the aeroplane can go up in the sky, and then presses this (orange button) to get it down? Interesting! Have you ever seen an aeroplane going up and down?
Thea	Yes. Today.
J	So did you wait to see daddy to fly?
Thea	Yes.
J	Wow.
Thea	With the aeroplane.
J	And how did it feel when you saw daddy flying away?
Thea	My sister saw him but I did not see him.
J	Ok. And what is this in the aeroplane *(blue corrugated paper).*
Thea	Those are the wings.
J	The wings! And what about this red over here.
Thea	Those are the wings as well.
J	Ok.
Thea	But those wings are broken.
J	That is bad if they broke down. How did it break down?
Thea	Because there was another aeroplane and they crashed in each other.
J	So what do we need to fix it?
Thea	I do not know.
J	A mechanic. A plane's mechanic.
Thea	Not a mechanic.
J	What then?
Thea	They take it somewhere to mend it.
J	Right. They take it somewhere in the airport. There would be mechanics to fix it.
Thea	It goes back in its place. The pilot presses this (*the orange button*). It goes down and then, it takes petrol.
J	Have you seen the aeroplane getting petrol?
Thea	No.
J	Do you know how they fill it with petrol?
Thea	No.
J	There would be a big truck filled with petrol. It goes next to the aeroplane and it gives him petrol through a big hose.
Thea	I know. Mummy told me.
J	Mummy told you, good. That is how you know about aeroplane's petrol.

	What else did mummy tell you about the aeroplane?
Thea	There will be that big truck filled with petrol and once I saw it giving fuel to the aeroplane.
J	Very good. So you are thinking of daddy today.
Thea	Yes.
J	I think he got to his destination, what do you think? The pilot pressed this button (*orange*) for the plane to go down.
Thea	No, I saw him pressing the (*blue*) button and I saw it fly.
J	What will happen when the plane gets to destination?
Thea	He presses this (*orange*) button and it goes down.
J	I think the pilot has pressed the orange button by now. Daddy got off the plane …
Thea	No.
J	No?
Thea	Daddy will not be coming home today.
J	No, the aeroplane will not get down here, in Malta. It will get down in the other place he went. And he is going to the hotel.
Thea	But that is not today.
J	Yes. Today daddy will go in the hotel to sleep there.
Thea	I know.
J	Then he gets again on the aeroplane. The pilot presses this blue button again to start it off, then he pushes the orange button to make it go down again and it comes to Malta. And he sees Thea. And he says, 'Thank God, I am back home in Malta'.
Thea	But he is not coming home tomorrow.
J	No, when will he be back?
Thea	On Sunday.
J	But he will be back. Sometimes I go abroad with the aeroplane on my own and came back.
Thea	Even I did so.
J	Right. It is a bit far away.
Thea	Even daddy was with me then.
J	Right.
Post-drawing conversation	**Some days later at home.**
Thea	I do not remember what it was.
J	How come you do not remember this?
Mother	What is this? Do you remember what this is?
Thea	That is a leaf.
J	But what is this picture showing us? Do you remember what you drew?
Thea	No.
J	What happened last Monday? Where did mummy take you on Monday? What happened on Monday?
Mother	Look at Erica's drawing over there, maybe it will help you remember.
Thea	Went to see daddy.
Mother	So what is that then?
J	Did you forget that this is an aeroplane? And these are the wings.
Thea	I forgot.
J	This is a switch to start it off.
Thea	Yes.

	J	Ok, you talk now. You seem to have remembered what you drew.
	Thea	This is a switch to put it on (*the blue paper*) and this is for the plane to land (*the orange switch*).
	J	Yes, that is a switch to make it fly and the other is a switch to make the plane land.
	Thea	(*making an Innnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn sound imitating the sound of a plane*). I am going up (*while pressing the blue switch*).
	J	In fact, while you were drawing, I told you, that I think that the pilot pressed this orange switch (*implying that her father would have landed in France by that time but Thea did not see it like that. She thought that the pilot would press the orange switch when the plane landed back in Malta*). You told me, 'No....'
	Thea	The pilot will press the orange switch tomorrow (*The day of her father's arrival*).
	J	Ok, the pilot will press the orange switch tomorrow …
	Mother	Because he is still there …
	Thea	And yesterday ….
	Mother	Last time …
	Thea	He pressed this one (*the blue one to fly*).
	J	Yes. She did not understand the concept that the plane will land in France, daddy will get down somewhere, and then gets back on plane again. Even if she talked about the hotel but for her, the pilot had only pressed the blue button (*for the plane to fly away*).
	Mother	He went up.
	J	Yes, the plane flew away. Now for him to come back, the pilot has to press this orange button.
	Mother	So what is this leaf? What is it doing here in this aeroplane's picture?
	Thea	Now this became the seats where they (*the passengers*) sit down.
	J	Ok, so this became the seats, now. But you had something else … I'm not sure what it was … it could be these …. What did you see when you were at the airport? What do they do to the plane?
	Mother	What do they do to the plane? They do a lot of things to the plane.
	J	What did mummy tell you about the plane?
	Mother	What did they do to it?
	Thea	I forgot.
	Mother	Put on the luggage?
	J	No.
	Mother	So, they give it fuel?
	Thea	Yes.
	Mother	Ok.
	J	I think, at the time she was drawing, that was one of the things that she remembered most.
	Mother	So which is the fuel?
	Thea	These (*referring to the glitter glue*).
	J	Yes.
	Mother	Is that the fuel? They are giving it the fuel right?
	Thea	Yes. And what is this circle, because I forgot what it was.
	J	That is the aeroplane. That's what you told me.
	Thea	And these are the wings.
	J	Yes. But this (*the switches*) is the most interesting part.
Influences (family, school, popular cultures, local cultures)	**Family event:** Daddy went abroad. **Peers**: Thea copied Sandra's idea of circling paper in a ball to make a switch – an idea which Sandra shared with Thea on the 13.2.12 **Experience**: Thea went to the airport and saw the vehicles giving fuel to the aeroplane. Her father went abroad. **Mother**: Gave her info about aeroplanes and fuel filling.	

A sample of one of Bertly's Data Logs

Name of Child	B	Age	4:6	Location	School	Date	1.3.12
Drawing Code	BS7	Duration	25.32	Title of Text	An octopus		

Form (Modes)	**Drawing** **Gluing & sticking;** **Removing;** **Colouring** (complex mode; complex theme: C:C)	**Tools**	Pencil colours, Lollipop sticks; Glue; Rubber paper; Tape & scissors;

Semiotic analysis

Content (Detonation) **Themes** -Places, people & Objects even abstract	**Animal: Octopus**	
Meaning (Connotation) Notions behind the drawing through process and talk	**Previous experience:** He saw an octopus. **Knowledge:** An octopus has many legs (two are hands, the rest are legs – he attached 7 sticks in all).	
	Thea	What am I going to use? What am I going to use? Give me the sticks. Give me the sticks.
	Bertly	*(Bertly is drawing the central part in red. Sometimes he looks at what Thea is doing and the resources she is using. Bertly does not talk much if at all while drawing.)*
	Thea	Another lollipop stick now.
	Bertly	*(Bertly took a glue and a lollipop stick like Thea* *He puts glue on his paper.* *He also took different-sized pieces of foam paper.* *He tried cutting some of the foam pieces, glue one of them and sticking it to a lollipop stick. Then he coloured the stick with a red marker.* *It seems that he didn't like the idea and removed the foam piece.* *He tried again with a smaller piece of foam paper and once again tried to attach a lollipop stick to it. Re-coloured the stick but it seems he didn't like it.* *He changed the stick but then removed everything.* *He tried cutting another piece of blue foam paper and attach another lollipop stick to it and again tried to colour it in red marker.* *He then glued the blue foam paper to the lollipop stick and attached both to the paper.* *He used the tape which Thea was using.* *He couldn't find the tape's end.* *He got another lollipop stick and stuck it with tape.* *He kept on sticking 7 lollipop sticks with tape imitating Thea even in the way he was attaching the sticks.* *At one point he changed to glue.*

Bertly's drawing – An octopus

Thea's drawing – A fan

Similarities:
Sticks attached with tape
A stick in the middle with some red marker at the tip.

		Bertly gave some thought even in the way he stuck the lollipop sticks.)
	Thea	Look at what I did!
	J	What did you do? Wow!
	Thea	It's like Sandra's.
	J	It's like Sandra's, right. It looks like Sandra's. Shall we show it to Sandra.
	Thea	Yes.
	J	Do you know why Sandra does that lollipop stick up there?
	Thea	To hang it from there.
	J	Right, to hang it to the wall.
	J	What's that Thea?
	Thea	A fan.
	J	A fan.
	Thea	I want to hang it at home. When I open the door, it will move.
	J	It will fan.
	Thea	Yes.
	Bertly	*(Bertly kept on looking at Thea's drawing and imitating her even in the way he positioned the sticks.)*
	Thea	Tape, t-t-t- tape, tape, tape, t-t-t-tape, tape.
	Bertly	t-t-t-Tape. *(Bertly kept on sticking lollipop sticks with glue & tape.)*
	Thea	Look how strong I am!
	J	Do you need tape?
	Bertly	*(When he thought he was ready,* *Bertly put the drawing up but some of the lollipop sticks fell.)*
	J	Wow! Do you like it? It's nice, isn't it?
	Bertly	(*Nodded yes*) Tape please. *(He attached more sticks trying to securing it with tape. Bertly was finding difficulties in attaching the sticks and kept on gluing (with glue stick) and tape. He did not try PVA glue even if it was available. He looked at Thea's drawing.)*
	Bertly	At home I drew our table.
	J	You drew your table at home? You drew the table yesterday?
	Bertly	(*nodded yes*)
	J	And what did you draw here? Are you ready or would you like to continue?
	Bertly	That is an octopus.
	J	An octopus? Let me see. Show me the octopus. Show me.

	Bertly	These are its legs. (*the five sticks on top*)
	J	Those are its legs?
	Bertly	And these are its hands.
	J	Which are the hands, show me.
	Bertly	*(Pointing towards the sticks at the bottom)*
	J	Those two are the hands. Wow! And where is its head and its tummy?
	Bertly	*(Bertly pointed to the central drawing)*
	J	That's it. And what is this (*referring to the line at the bottom*) What is that?
	Bertly	That is the ceiling.
	J	And what did you tell me that these were (*referring to the lollipop sticks at the top)?*
	Bertly	Its legs.
	J	Its legs. Have you ever seen a real octopus?
	Bertly	I saw it in the deep sea.
	J	Does mummy cook the octopus in the oven?
	Bertly	(*nodded no*)
	J	So where did you see it?
	Bertly	In the deep sea.
	J	Oh! In the deep seas!
	Bertly	(Bertly *nodded a yes*)
Post-drawing talk	**AT HOME**	
	Bertly	Because Thea did one like it.
	J	Yes, Thea did one like it. But she used the same things but it was a bit different.
	Mother	What did you do? Tell me what you did. Here you have something (*referring to the bottom line*) What is this? Grass?
	Bertly	That's an octopus.
	Mother	An octopus? Is this an octopus?
	Bertly	Those are its legs.
	Mother	Ok, because an octopus has a lot of fingers.
Influences	**His peers** – Thea's use of lollipop sticks stuck with tape inspired him to use the lollipop sticks. He kept on referring to Thea's drawing and imitate it but then gave it his interpretation. **The resource** - Attaching lollipop sticks next to each other reminded him of an octopus which has many legs. **Previous experience: Family events** – He saw the octopus one day last summer when a friend of theirs caught one. On that day he met and swam with his friend Alexander.	

Appendix 18

Appendix 18
NVivo Data Log Sample: Luke

NVivo Data Log Sample: Thea

Thea's Logs

Name	Nodes	References
TH25 - A princess story	30	52
TH26 - A MacDonalds box	22	31
TH27 - Animals hide and seek	33	51
TH28 - A card for Bernadette	22	33
TH29 - Luke	21	28
TH30 - An aeroplane a house and a ...	30	47
TH31 - The shark	22	32
TH32 - My family	30	46
TH33 - Two churches, a roundabout and a pool	45	89
TH34 - An angel and a butterfly	26	43
TH35 - A story of monsters	23	31
TH36 - Dad waking up	25	33
TH37 - Dads swimming paddles	19	24
TH38 - Animals not allowed	52	104
TH39 - A flower for you	27	44
TH40 - Decorations for you	41	71
TH41 - A card for you	29	47
TS 1 - A man dressed as Koala Bear	17	21
TS 2 - Fruits	18	20
TS 3 - In the garden	32	50
TS 4 - A woman wearing many clothes	18	22
TS 5 - The crab	21	25
TS 6 - The turkey the elephant and the flying numbers	46	80
TS 7 - The oven	45	89
TS 8 - Myself	24	35
TS 9 - The crab 2	21	27

Thea's Logs

Name	Nodes	References	Created On	Crea
TH 1 - Man in the rain	28	36	20/11/2012 18:36	JD
TH 2 - The Holy Mary	19	23	20/11/2012 17:43	JD
TH 3 - Grandpa	39	62	20/11/2012 17:43	JD
TH 4 - The car with the heart	23	30	20/11/2012 17:43	JD
TH 5 - A card for Enrique	36	58	20/11/2012 17:43	JD
TH 6 - The glasses	34	51	20/11/2012 17:43	JD
TH 7 - Our house	40	70	20/11/2012 17:43	JD
TH 8 - Erika & Mum before I was born	38	67	20/11/2012 17:43	JD
TH 9 - My loveable grandpa	29	40	20/11/2012 17:43	JD
TH10 - The reindeer	41	78	20/11/2012 17:43	JD

TH 9 - My loveable grand

Click to edit

Name of Child	T	Age	4:4	Location	At home	Date	8.2.12
Drawing Code	TH9	Duration	6.25	Title of Text	My loveable grandpa		
Form *(Modes)*	Drawing writing S:C			Tools	Pencil colours		

Semiotic analysis

Content (Detonation) *Themes* -Places, people & Objects even abstract	People: Grandpa Gann Animals: Baboon; bird; Symbols: Hears, letters
Meaning (Connotation) *Notions* behind the drawing through process and talk	Feeling: Loving my grandpa Knowing that grandpa is an intelligent person — she is showing him the letters she knows

NVivo Data Log Sample: Bertly

NVivo Data Log Sample:
Nodes of modes and themes

NVivo Data Log Sample:
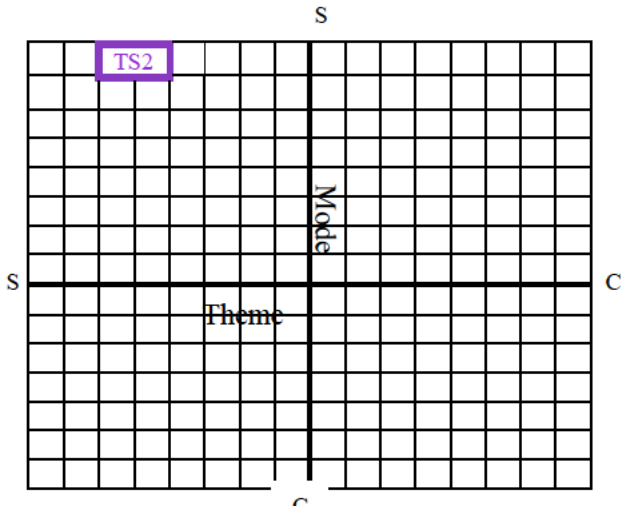# Nodes of meanings and influences
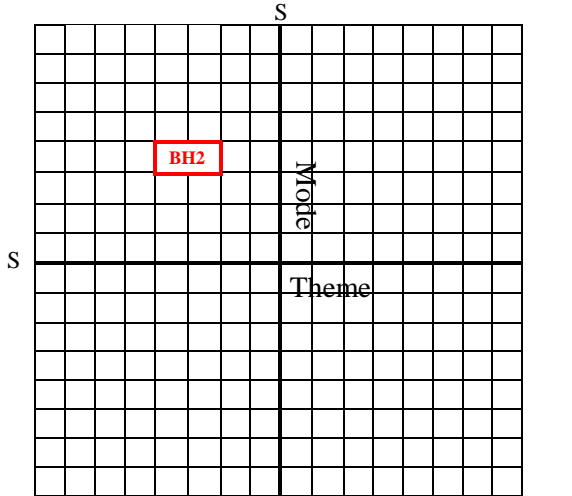
Appendix 19

Appendix 19
A Sample of Luke's Separate Home Drawing Grids

Drawing Code	Drawing Name	Drawing picture
LH1:My family **Simple mode: Complex Theme** S:C	S LH1 Mode S ———— C Theme S C C	
LH2: On the Gozo ship S:C	S LH2 Mode S ———— C Theme S C C	
LH3: The space Scene S:C	S LH3 Mode S ———— C Theme C C	
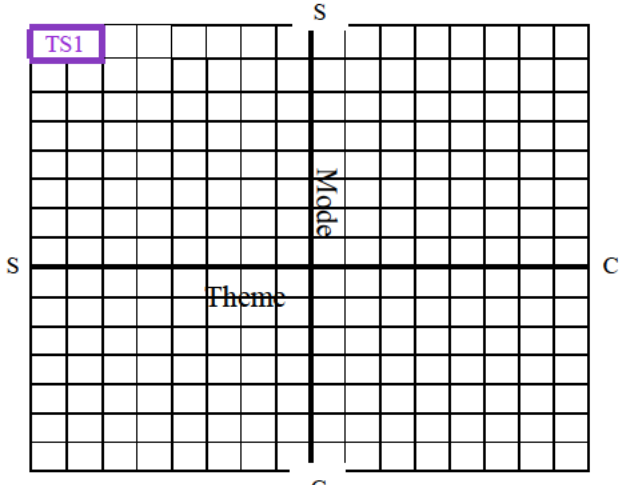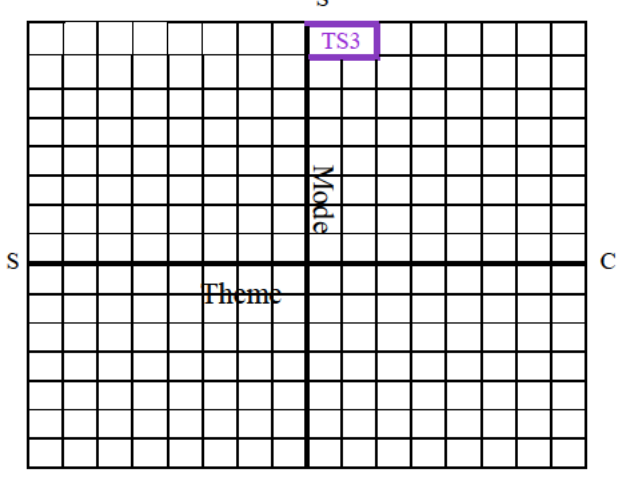
A Sample of Luke's Separate School Drawing Grids

Drawing Code	Grid	Drawing
LS1: The good and the bad **C:C**		
LS2: The fight **S:C**		
LS3: The Rescue **C:C**		
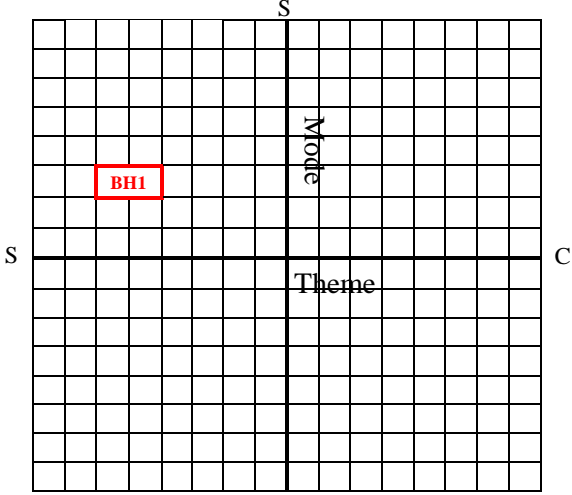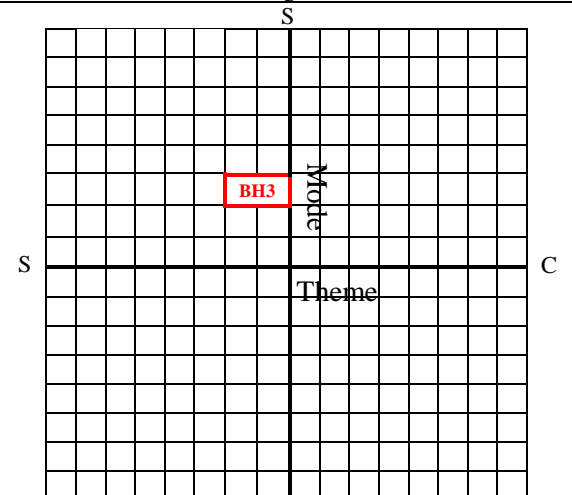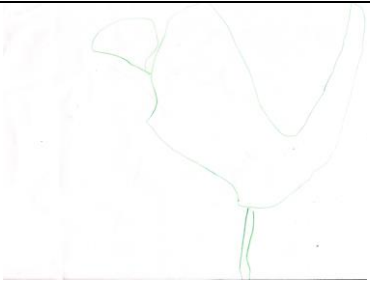
A Sample of Thea's Separate Home Drawing Grids

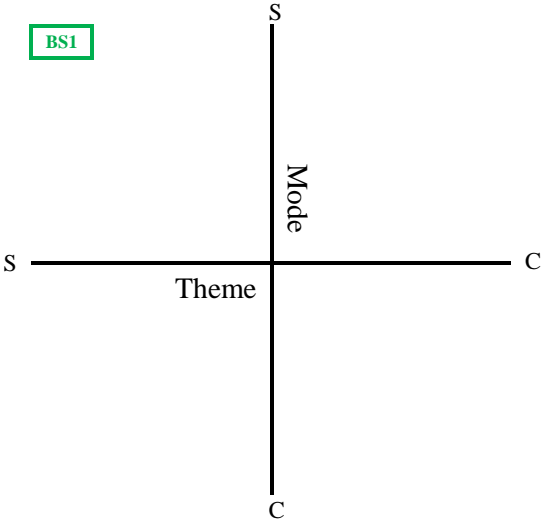| Drawing Code	Drawing Name	Drawing picture
TH1: A man in the rain S:C		
TH2: The holy Mary S:S		
TH3: Grandpa S:C		
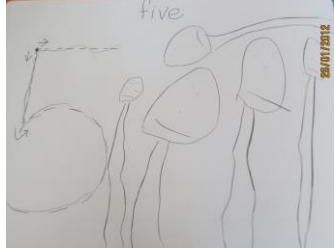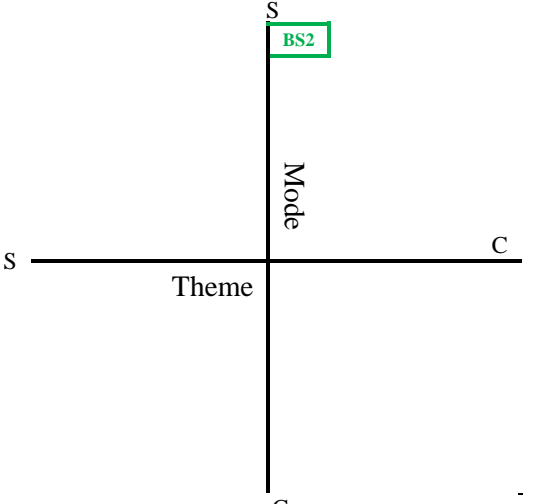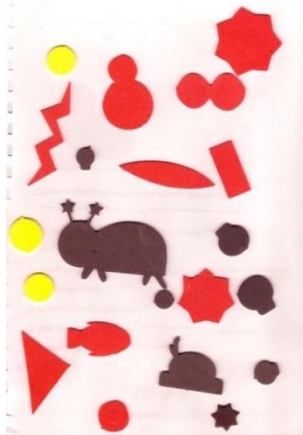
A Sample of Thea's Separate School Drawing Grids

Code	Grid	Drawing
TS1: A man dressed up as a koala bear and doing an animal show. **S:S**		
TS2: Fruit and vegeta-bles **S:S**		
TS3: In the garden **S:C**		

A Sample of Bertly's Separate Home Drawing Grids

Drawing Code	Drawing Name	Drawing picture
BH1: Pizza **S:S**	S / Mode / S — C / Theme / C / BH1	
BH2: Shapes **S:S**	S / Mode / S / Theme / C / BH2	
BH3: The robin **S:S**	S / Mode / S — C / Theme / C / BH3	

A Sample of Bertly's Separate School Drawing Grids

Drawing Code	Grid	Drawing
BS1: Five children S:S		
BS2: Objects S:C		
BS3: Rectangles S:S		