




A critical multimodal discourse analysis of drawings to ascertain identity and self-concept



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Background: Within the multilingual context of KwaZulu Natal (KZN), learners in Grades 1–3 are taught in their native language which is isiZulu. From Grade 4, English or Afrikaans becomes the medium of instruction. Yet, many parents prefer that their children be taught in English. It is the assumption that young learners' self-concept and identity affect English language learning and academic achievement.

Aim: The study analysed the interplay between self-concept, and identity in Grade 1's literacy practices.

Setting: The study was conducted in a Grade 1 class in KZN, South Africa.

Methods: The study drew on Critical Multimodal Discourse Analysis (CMDA) to collect, analyse and interpret data. Four participants were purposefully chosen to participate in the study. Data were generated from children's drawings and online interviews.

Results: The findings showed how learners' self-concept and identity were influenced by their family contexts, and feelings experienced in homes. This study suggests that primary caregivers and teachers create spaces for literacy practice to increase learners' self-concept and identity as speakers and writers of English. Using alternative communication strategies allow learners to (1) think more deeply about what they value, (2) gain an understanding of who they are in relation to their family members and (3) reveal what their cultural preferences are.

Conclusion: The study argues that besides peripheral factors, including family, teachers, and the community, children's self-concept and identity are influenced by their experiences within their social sphere, including school. The study recommends further research to explore teachers influence on young children's self-concept as English Second Language speakers.

Contribution: The study's contribution towards knowledge is captured through CMDA to discover and understand learners' self-concept and identity as English language speakers and writers.

Keywords: self-concept; identity; drawings; literacy; critical multimodal discourse analysis; learners.

Introduction

Nunan and Wong (2011) define a 'good' English language learner (ELL) as one with the ability to reflect on and articulate the processes underlying their own learning. Self-concept determines how young children react, think or feel in their interaction with others. Socially, children experience a sense of belonging when they engage with those who have similar habits, interests and culture, such as family and peer group contexts (Schaffer 2006). Nurturing and respectful relationships play a meaningful role in a child's sense of belonging, and how they relate to and interact within their environment. These relationships also provide the foundation for children's future learning and development. Tridinanti (2018) reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between the variables of self-confidence and learning achievement. That is, the higher the self-confidence, the higher the speaking achievement of English Foreign Language (EFL). Therefore, children learn and flourish in homes or institutions where close and dependable adults offer love, nurturance, security and responsive interactions.

Children's expression through narrative and drawings reflects their experiences, knowledge, and what they want to reveal about themselves. Relationships with family members, caregivers, peers and others are pivotal for young children to thrive. For children to achieve a positive self-identity, Schaffer (2006:83) suggests, 'factors such as – age, gender, religious background, ethnicity,

interests, role models, celebrities, talents, and hobbies play an important part in the emerging concept of self'. This paper explores the link between literacy practices to ascertain self-concept and identity as speakers of English Second Language (ESL).

Within the multilingual context of KwaZulu Natal (KZN), learners in Grades 1–3 are taught in their native language which is isiZulu. From Grade 4, English or Afrikaans becomes the medium of instruction. Yet, many parents prefer that their children be taught in English (Foley 2007; Madiba 2013; Sibanda 2019). Research by several researchers (Bialystock 2001; Espinosa 2006; Oller & Jarmulowicz 2007) reveal that maintaining a home language while learning a second language helps to support cultural identity and boosts both self-concept and metalinguistic abilities. The present study explores how young children in Grade 1 portray self-concept and identity through literacy practices.

Self-concept and child development

Festman and Schwieter (2019) state that cognitive representations and beliefs are what comprise an individual's self-concept. Children's emerging self-concept is a complex, multifaceted and multidimensional construct consisting of different domains. In the field of educational psychology, Marsh and Martin (2011) noted that domain-specific academic self-concept conveys students' perceptions and beliefs about their academic abilities, competencies and performance. These authors further propose that verbal self-concept incorporates all aspects of native and foreign languages (FLs). When young children gain cognitive awareness and understanding as readers and writers during the early grades of school, their self-concept improves. The significant developmental skills of reading and writing are entrenched in early literacy learning (Cunningham & Allington 2011). The growth of a strong and constructive identity involves developing self-esteem, knowledge and obligation to self-definition, decreasing self-discrepancies, and nurturing character development and accomplishment (Tsang, Hui & Law 2012).

Children's early experiences, exposure and accomplishments influence the development of their self-perceptions. Environmental reinforcements play a key role in the refinement of self-beliefs (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976 cited by Festman & Schwieter 2019). Therefore, children develop positive self-concept and high self-esteem within a stimulating and nurturing environment.

Theoretical framework

This study draws on Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, and Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory. Marsh et al. (2019:2) state that 'self-concept and self-efficacy are the most widely used and theoretically important representations of positive self-beliefs about the use of English'. According to Bandura (1995:71), 'Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated

levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives'. Positive reinforcement consistently increases levels of self-confidence to ensure that children perform at desired levels of achievement. Bandura (1995) maintained that self-efficacious individuals can perform a task or successfully maintain behaviour. The self-efficacy theory assumes that people's behaviour influences not only the role of cognitive mediators that link behaviour with the main variables that determine human behaviour, but also social types and emotions. These mediators are mental processes that take place between the occurrence of a stimulus and initiation of an associated response. Bandura (1995) argued that attribution influences self-efficacy through synchronic processes. General self-efficacy (GSE) is concerned about how people perceive 'their ability to perform across a variety of different situations' (Judge, Erez & Bono 1998:170). Self-efficacy is not a simple predictor of individual behaviour, but a dynamic and cognitive mediating process of individual behaviour. Self-efficacy is attributed to self-confidence, self-regulation, task difficulty preference and attribution (Bandura 1977). A learner's self-concept provides a basis for self-confidence and self-efficacy that can be reduced to individual confidence and belief in one's ability. Self-esteem can be viewed as the broadest of the three constructs as it represents the overall value of oneself (e.g. Harter 2006) whereas self-efficacy refers to one's perceived capability to pursue and reach one's goals in relatively context-specific tasks (Bandura 1986). Therefore, ELLs acquire pronunciation, intonation, grammar and vocabulary to improve their basic communicative competence to become confident speakers. Native language speakers find it difficult to speak English as a Second Language with confidence. As they gain confidence, their self-concept improves. The persistence of trying to become fluent English language speakers is regarded as self-efficacy.

In terms of teaching and learning, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory provides the theoretical framework of the study from a critical sociocultural perspective. Vygotsky distinguishes between 'natural' and 'cultural development'. Within a Grade 1 classroom setting, theme work draws on learners' natural and sociocultural experiences. The thematic approach that is used in early years teaching and learning has the characteristic of an integrated approach. This approach compiles the curriculum around an idea or topic (Arce 2000; Driscoll & Nagel 2008; Wortham 2006). The overall goal of a thematic approach is to form a positive attitude towards a child's active learning and real-life experiences (Warner & Sower 2005; Zaizul et al. 2018).

Moll (2019) refers to sociocultural experiences as *funds of knowledge*. These forms of knowledge are generated within a sociocultural context that contributes to the children's learning. The study builds on the premise that the transmission and acquisition of cultural knowledge such as literacy takes place on an interpersonal level between individuals before it is internalized on an intrapersonal level (Vygotsky 1978). Cultural development permits individuals to learn systems of cultural behaviour, including means of

reasoning. An understanding of this recursive relationship between the individual and culture enables us to view children's meaning construction as embedded in their social and cultural milieu (Kendrick & McKay 2004). The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a fundamental concept of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. It is the region outside of the children's achievement abilities where children need assistance from an adult or peer. This type of assistance is 'scaffolding' or helping children to progress. Since this type of learning is beyond the children's developmental levels, it expands their development. Therefore, using Vygotsky's (1978) theory provides lenses to understanding the world to improve young children's development or learning, and thus their self-concept. For example, oral language facilitates thinking processes and is used to execute tasks in a social, cultural and historic community of speakers that forms the tools of mind in an individual. Vygotsky (1968:218) emphasizes 'the primacy of language in thinking and indicates that mind comes into existence through language and thought'. Therefore, language serves as a mediational tool for thinking.

Factors affecting primary caregiving

According to Chaplin (2006) the people in a close environment influence a person psychologically. Caregivers may include both parents in home settings and teachers in school. Parents' communication with children has great importance in their development (Bee & Boyd 2009) and leaves positive or negative permanent traces in their lives (Koksal Akyol & Sali 2013). Early parental experiences and family environments shape the self. Wong, Dirghangi and Hart (2017) reveal that attachment to caregivers is the primary source of information of learning about the self and others. Furthermore, 'emotionally abused children adapt to their caregiver by suppressing attachment behaviors, such as displaying distress, crying, and going to their caregiver for support' (Howe 2005:102). To the contrary, emotionally supportive teachers are kind, sensitive to the emotional needs of the child, and thoughtful about the way they respond to children. In this way, positive self-concept is enhanced.

English second language and foreign language

English language learning skills are influenced by self-concept. Pihko (2007) divides the use of English Second Language/Foreign Language (ESL/FL) self-concept into three components called, (1) real/actual self, (2) ideal self and (3) self-esteem/self-worth. Pihko (2007) refers to the real/actual self as the learner's subjective perceptions and beliefs of oneself as a language learner. The ideal self, in turn, reflects language learner's hopes, wishes and self-demands. Furthermore, Mercer (2011:14) distinguishes 'foreign language self-concept (FLSC) as an individual's self-description of competence and evaluative feelings about oneself as a foreign language learner'. When learning English as a Second Language, this is believed to be an important factor affecting academic achievement. English Second Language learning may enhance children's thinking, and

thus their self-esteem and identity as second language speakers.

Literacy

The conventional forms of literacy are early reading and writing. Early literacy explains a child's knowledge of reading and writing skills before the child can read or write words. Literacy is the basis for later communication and concept development during formal school. From an institutional perspective, literacy involves using symbols and signs to communicate and assign meaning to objects and experiences (Notari-Sylverson 2006). While Street (1995) acknowledged literacy as a social, and ideological practice. Street (1995) views literacy within the sociocultural context of school and associated relations of power within the institution of school.

Emergent literacy has been defined as 'the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are developmental precursors to reading and writing' (Whitehurst & Lonigan 1998:848). The term 'emergent' implies that becoming literate involves growth along a continuum rather than the mastery of a series of discrete pre-reading skills (Clay 2001; Crawford 1995). Strauss (2018) cited Clay (1996) who attested that emergent literacy is the basis for later concept development, skills and the knowledge that is required for children's reading and writing development before school and during the early grades.

Identity

Defining identity for analytical purposes is difficult because we often embody multiple kinds of identities, roles and subjectivities while at the same time possessing a stable sense of selfhood (Gee 1999; Ivanic 1998; Moje & Luke 2009). The social sciences in general and the New Literacy Studies perspectives share common ideas about identity. According to Canagarajah (2004), (1) identity is a social construct mediated by history, society, ideology and language, (2) discursive practices including language and other ways of sign-making are the primary means through which we construct a sense of self, (3) the self is composed of multiple subject positions which may have unequal status and power concerning others in society, (4) our sense of self may change or shift depending on the context and power relations within society, (5) in constructing a stable sense of self and developing agency, one negotiates between multiple identities and subject positions across contexts and power relations (Moje & Luke 2009). 'Agency' implies that a person acts independently to make free choices.

Based on the above assumptions, identity is viewed specifically through the metaphors of *practices*, *narratives* and *voice*. The metaphor of *practice* describes identity as an ongoing project (Lesnick 2005). Through our everyday practices and interactions in the world, we develop what Bourdieu (1999) describes as 'habitus or internalization of our socially constructed position in life'. Another term used to describe

identity especially as it relates to writing is *voice*. Canagarajah (2004:267) explained, 'voice as a manifestation of one's agency in discourse through the means of written language'.

Critical discourse analysis

Gee (1999) refers to discourse as language-in-use or language used in specific contexts. In referring to language-in-use, it does not only refer to 'grammar' but also the actual utterances or sentences in speech or writing within a specific context. Gee (1999) uses building tasks/tools to build things in the world through language. These building tasks are significance, practices/activities, identities, relationships, politics (distribution of social goods), connections, and the sign system and knowledge.

Methodology

The researchers drew on critical multimodal discourse analysis (CMDA) as seen in the approaches of Gee (1999) and Kress (2010) to collect, analyse and interpret data. Foucault uses linguistic text analysis and social theory to demonstrate the functioning of language. Fairclough's (2003:121) translation of these resources is genre, discourse, and style or 'ways of interacting', 'ways of representing' and 'ways of being', respectively:

[G]enre addresses the semiotic 'emergence' or social organization, practices, and interactions. Discourse and genre make it possible to refer to 'what' and 'how' of meaning-making, who is involved, in what ways, and what is going on in the world. (Kress 2010:113)

These practices were represented in the social interaction of grade learners' narratives and drawings. Gee's (1999) seven building tasks/tools provide a common lens that directs the analysis of how the form and patterning of semiotic signs construct identities, relationships and power relations (Rogers 2004). Gee's (1999) approach to discourse analysis is that people use language in purposeful ways, situated within social, historical and political contexts. Gee (2006 [2011]:88) indicates that 'the building tool of significance gives meaning or value in certain ways'. The building tool of relationships is particularly useful in linking children's self-concept and self-esteem as language users. This building tool is used to sustain relationships within the family, with others, culture or institutions. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) connects micro-analysis of actual spoken language and written texts to macro-analysis of societal discourses by tracing patterns of repetition words, synonymous phrases or other linguistic features (Gee 1999).

Kress (2010) uses multimodality which reveals what modes are used to show the boundedness of language to make meaning. Modes organise and shape meaning. The multimodal analysis involves isolating, examining and explaining aspects of Grade 1 learners' drawings to understand how children use the available semiotic resources to represent meanings and carry out social practices in the interplay between self-concept and identity in their drawings. Kress (2010:54) states that 'the social semiotic theory is

interested in meaning in all forms and meaning arises in social environments and social interactions'. Kress brings a broader perspective to communication in general especially applicable for second language learning. For example, when a child draws figures and names the specific drawing 'my family', this is how the child interprets and makes socially constructed meaning of the drawing. Kress (2010) adopted:

[T]he semiotic approach of Halliday (2003) namely that a full theory of communication presents meaning about actions, states, events in the world – the ideation function, to represent meaning about the social relations of those engaged in communication to create the social world. (p. 87)

In this case, the Grade 1 learners used narratives and drawings to shape the literacy practices, and what was delivered in the Grade 1 curriculum during online interviews. According to Rogers and Mosley Wetzel (2014), critical literacy is not possible without discourse analysis. Therefore, the study brings discourse to life within teaching and learning.

Our activities were designed based on the theme 'Everyone is special' incorporated in the national curriculum for Grade 1 Life skills. The teacher explored the learners' perception of their self-concept based on their drawings. This study involved Grade 1 learners from a primary school in KZN in South Africa. The data are presented based on four learners' drawings. This first-grade class completed the specific unit within six lesson-hours for 1 week during March 2020. As part of their learning for this study, learners produced self-portraits based on the topic 'everyone is special'.

In this study, multimodality and CDA are used to provide a systematic way to analyse the semiotic modes presented by Grade 1 learners when they drew self-portraits and narrate what their drawings entail under the theme 'Everyone is special'. The multimodality reveals the visual modes and environmental modes (near/far, backgrounded, foregrounded) of selected drawings, and indicates how meaning is constructed through social practices. Two major themes were captured: *family and feelings*.

The learners were probed during interviews based on their drawings and how they project themselves and those who are special for them within the context of the images. The drawings provided an impetus for self-concept and identity. Texts were created across a variety of genres and teacher/learner narratives form part of the data collection and presentation of the study.

The researchers have mainly used phrases from the interviews to build the discourse of significance, relationships and identity. In the presentation of data, examples of learner and teacher conversations are presented. The researchers chose entry points into the data to answer the research question. Furthermore, the discourse tools seek to find keywords or phrases within the narratives that give linguistic features for interpretation to create a theoretical framework.

Participants and sampling

The selected case participants 'from whom the most can be learned' required purposeful sampling (Merriam 2009:77). Four case participants, from the Grade 1 class of the co-researcher were chosen. The researchers wanted to 'discover, understand, and gain insight' about learner's self-concept, self-esteem and identity as English language speakers and writers or drawers. The data of four participating learners were used. One participant was from an isiZulu background; the other three learners were of Indian descent and speak Hindi at home.

The four learners are referred to by pseudonyms, Child 1–4 in the data presented. Learners were requested to draw a self-portrait after teaching the theme. These portraits included words or phrases connected to an idea or a specific theme.

In the follow-up interview online, the learners talked about their self-portraits. The learners described their feelings in one word or as a phrase in writing when communicating with their class teacher. The video recordings were transcribed, and children's narratives are presented in Stanza 1, Stanza 2, and Stanza 3 and excerpts in the presentation of data. The transcription process relied on orthographic data transcription processes (Ochs 1999). We have mainly captured the voice tone that depicts language while transcribing the data. The selected transcript was segmented to deduce the interview transcripts' macrostructure (Gee 2006 [2011]). Then, we conducted CDA by examining the lines of the transcript for examples of genre, discourse and style. We identified salient information in each stanza. These stanzas were segmented into topics that aligned with the research question: how do young children in Grade 1 portray self-concept and identity through literacy practices?

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria to conduct the study. The co-researcher also obtained consent from the learners' parents and explained the purpose of the study to them. The learners were informed that their participation in the project was voluntary. The drawings in this article have been anonymized, and they are reproduced with the permission of the participants.

Comber's (2016) work on critical literacy offers three key tenets. These include (1) repositioning students as researchers of language, (2) respect for student resistance and exploring minority culture constructions of literacy and language use and (3) problematizing classroom and public texts. The researchers adhered to these principles during the data collection and analysis.

Presentation and analysis of data

STANZA 1: Self-portrayal of self-concept and identity:

1. Teacher: Tell me more about your drawing//

2. Child: Ok ... my drawing/ In that drawing/ I feel happy and excited/ not to
3. be alone/ To be with my family ... My mom/ my dad/ myself and my
4. baby brother ... I feel happy to be with all of them//
5. Teacher: Do you like the drawing as it is//
6. Child: Yes/ mem// I love the drawing as it is//
7. Teacher: Why do you like it as it is//
8. Child: It's because ... It's colorful/ smiling ... We all are there// There is no one//
9. to distract us to be together// There is no one to tear us apart//
10. Teacher: What do you like the most about your picture//
11. Child: Uhm ... I love it// The reason why I love this picture is because my
12. father and my mother are there ... and brother is there// We are all in a happy mood there//
13. Excited ... You see ... it's because not all the time we're together//
14. Most of the time daddy is not here// That's why//
15. Teacher: What else did you draw in your picture//
16. Child: Uhm ... It just we there// Can I draw the sun/ the grass, and clouds there//
17. Teacher: Why do you want to draw that//
18. Child: Because we are outside, and we are happy// It's like we're enjoying
19. ourselves// If you seeing the picture ... There have to be a sun/ the sky/ clouds/
20. and grass// That's what completes the picture//
21. Teacher: Whom are you standing next to//
22. Child: It's my father and my baby brother//
23. Teacher: Why do you stand next to dad//
24. Child: Because he is not there all the time// So ... I really want to stand close/ to him//
25. Teacher: How does dad make you feel//
26. Child: He makes me feel happy/ makes me feel excited/ surprised/ and angry//
27. Teacher: Why angry//
28. Child: Because he always troubled me all the time// He tickles me/ he plays with me (laughing)// He cares and makes me feel good//
29. Teacher: You likes that//
30. Child: I love that/ but only ... then I say daddy don't do that// Daddy don't do that ... (laughing)//
31. Teacher: Thank you for talking to me// Now you can complete your picture//

Under the theme 'Everyone is special', the discourse tool 'significance' was used to analyse Child 1's drawing. The building tool of significance is used to make things significant in certain ways (Rogers 2011:30). Child 1 indicated who is significant in the above drawing in the following way: 'My mom, my dad, myself and my baby brother ...' Lexicalization in the use of nouns indicates the significance/situated meaning of family.

The building tool of 'relationships' portrays people's participation in events in which they enact relationships with other people, texts and Discourse (Rogers & Mosley Wetzel

2014). In this case, the respondent indicated her relationship with her dad when she replied: 'He makes me feel happy, makes me feel excited, surprised, and angry'. As such the building tool 'identities' shows every event made up of the enactment and recognition of certain kinds of identities, and appraisal. Identity is enacted in the excerpt: 'I love that, but only ... then I say daddy don't do that. Daddy don't do that ... (laughing)'. Intertextuality and appraisal manifest in recognizing care, typical of parents. In this case, 'dad' is foregrounded in the drawing and the act of drawing is backgrounded. In Discourse 'Ways of Representing', the following excerpt indicates the use of social language. In response to the question: Who is next to you in the drawing? The respondent replied: 'It's my father and my baby brother. Because he (father) is not there all the time. So ... I really want to stand close to him'. The excerpt represents Child 1's relations with her family members. Positive relations with family members support positive self-concept, self-esteem, and build identity as speakers of ESL.

STANZA 2: Self-portrayal of identity and self-concept:

1. Teacher: Tell me about your drawing/ Who is in your drawing/
2. Child: My family (softly)//
3. Teacher: Can you tell me more/
4. Child: There are flowers/ there's grass//
5. Teacher: Why did you draw the flowers and the grass in your picture/
6. Child: To make the picture good. To make the picture blossom//
7. Teacher: Do you like your picture/
8. Child: Yes//
9. Teacher: Why do you say that/
10. Child: The picture has more detail//
11. Teacher: What do you like most in the picture/
12. Child: Me and my mom// I'm standing with my mom//
13. Teacher: How do you feel about your picture/
14. Child: Happy//
15. Teacher: Do you like flowers/ What are you doing with the flowers/
16. Child: Keep it//
17. Teacher: Thank you for talking to me about your picture//

Significant of Child 2's drawing, Figure 2, is herself and her mother who are foregrounded in the drawing. In the building task of identity, Child 2 has built identity as a speaker of English. On the question who is in your drawing, she replied: 'My family (softly)'. Child 2 was hesitant/insecure to participate, a factor that could be attributed to the academic self-concept of ESL learning'. The visual representation of the word reveals her feelings, 'happy'. However, the spatial aspect between the mother and daughter (as portrayed in the picture) may also reveal a conflicting message and be an indication of why the child is hesitant to answer. According to Rogers (2011:33), 'we use sign systems and ways of knowing the world to make meaning'. In the analysis of the data, the discourse tool, Style: ways of being, social

relationships are emphasized by the child's attitude 'I'm standing with my mom'.

STANZA 3: Self-portrayal of identity and self-concept:

1. Teacher: Can you tell me/ who is your drawing/
2. Child: Me and my family// We do everything together// I love my family// It's nice to have a family//
3. Teacher: Who stands next to you//
4. Child: My ... my cous My cousin//
5. Teacher: What are you doing in the drawing//
6. Child: Standing//
7. Teacher: Do you like your drawing as it is//
8. Child: Yes// Because I love my family//
9. Teacher: What is your mom's favorite food/
10. Child: Pizza (laughing)
11. Teacher: And ... what is your favorite food/
12. Child: Rice//
13. Teacher: Tell me where are you going with your cousin/ Are the two of you having plans to go somewhere/
14. Child: No ... we are in the garden// I am here with my cousin in my garden//
15. Teacher: Can you tell me a little bit more about your drawing/
16. Child: No//
17. Teacher: Tell me more in terms of your position in the drawing/
18. Child: I stand next to mom// I feel happy// We are together and will never
19. leave each other// It's nice to have a family//
20. Teacher: What else did you draw/
21. Child: I draw some flowers/ the grass/ and the sky//
22. Teacher: So ... why did you choose that particular order-sky/ grass/ flowers ...
23. Child: Because its lovely//
24. Teacher: What do you like most about dad/
25. Child: Because he protects us//
26. Teacher: And mom/ Does she protect you as well/
27. Child: Yes //
28. Teacher: Why is it important for you to feel protected/
29. Child: It feels nice to have your family.
30. Teacher: Do you feel safe with mom and dad around you/
31. Child: Yes//
32. Teacher: Thank you// Keep your drawing safe// We may talk about it again//
33. Child: Ok//

Figure 3 focuses on the 'building tool of relationships' (Rogers 2011:31), and has an information focus: six family members holding hands while standing on a lawn with flowers that are foregrounded.

In Child 3's interview, Gee's (1999) Genre, Discourse and Style were used to analyse the interview transcript. Child 3 revealed that he is with his family and his 'cousin' is with him in the drawing. He appraised and voiced cohesion in the excerpt: 'It's me and my family. We do everything together. I love my family'. The use of pronouns

'we' and 'I' show identity and collectivism. In terms of his position in the drawing, he revealed that 'I stand next to mom. I feel happy. We are together and will never leave each other. It's nice to have a family'. The collective pronouns situate him as a member of a community/group – the family. The use of present tense throughout the conversation is consistent and showcases a firm position or identity as a language speaker and in the family. He showed affirmation by saying 'Dad protects us'. Environmental reinforcements and significant others seem to play a key role in refinement of self-beliefs (Festman & Schwietzer 2019). Parents' protection matters and contributes towards the development of a positive self-concept and identity when entering school.

Table 1 shows Child 4's narratives. Significant of Child 4's response is a reference to his 'mom'. The use of the noun expresses his socially situated identity through relationships as a building tool when referring to his mother in the use of grammar. The family atmosphere is defined as the emotional climate in which children live. Marshall and Henderson (2014) stated that the family climate describes the family context, including family conflict, support, warmth, control and autonomy. This warmth is expressed in line 2- 'I love her. She makes me feel good. He also feels "good" about his flowers'. Gardening is a culturally normed family endeavour. Family shapes children's experiences by extending their social networks, providing them with contexts through which their self-concept is developed, such as leisure, providing security and means of subsistence, introducing them to other family members and engaging them in different household and educational activities (Guralmick 2006). Therefore, the family is the key unit of society where values for social life are instilled in every child in their homes and in society.

Discussion

Learners' multimodal texts provide meaning to the analysis. The drawings reflect on who learners are within their family contexts when they portrayed rich experiences and positive attitudes to showcase their self-concept and identity as ESL speakers and learners. As young learners participate in social events at home, in their community, and in school, they integrate various forms of communication. They portraits identify their identities, what they value. Kress (2003) indicates that children as players and designers strategically emphasize salient features of objects to represent essential aspects of the surrounding reality. Besides children's peripheral factors including family, teachers and the community, they learn from their experiences within their

TABLE 1: Child 4's narratives.

Teacher	Who is next to you?	Why do you stand next to her?	And dad?	Where are you in your picture?
Child 4	'My mom'.	'I love her. She makes me feel good'.	'He always buys me nice things'.	'In the garden. I feel happy when I'm in my garden. I feel good about my flowers'.

social sphere. The oral and visual modes recorded grammatical structures, vocabulary, feelings and opinions about the theme, 'Everyone is special' and participants attribute meaning from their socio-cultural contexts. The learners' self-concept and identity as English language speakers vary according to their experiences within their language learning environment. The teacher prompted the learners to make meaning of their drawings and to provoke conversation about the 'self'. Dweck (2000:xi) describes the 'self' as 'meaning systems' that people use to 'organize their world and give meaning to their experiences'. Identity occurs within the CDA of the drawings and was revealed in distinct family character/context – nuclear, single parent and extended families.

Figure 1 framed and modelled the conception of what *Child 1* portrayed under the theme. For (Fawzy 2018:12; Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006:108) 'specific objects are made salient, foregrounding or exaggerating is achieved in size, when the object is given symbolic status'. Foregrounded in Figure 1 is the participant, mother and little brother. Her father is in the



Source: Artist: Keisha

FIGURE 1: Child 1's drawing.



Source: Artist: Katie

FIGURE 2: Child 2' drawing.



Source: Artist: Swazi

FIGURE 3: Child 3' drawing.



Source: Artist: Simpiwe

FIGURE 4: Child 4' drawing.

background of the drawing, but in the online interview, her father came strongly to the fore. Writing involves the act of drawing and all participants' responses were formulated when they participated orally to converse about their pictures. Kendrick and McKay (2004) show different ways in which drawing provides opportunities for young children to communicate their literacy knowledge and experiences when using multiple modes of representation in a variety of social contexts.

Children's choice of words as ESL speakers signals their voice and identity as readers and show positive self-concept as English language users.

The visual self-portraits express interpersonal relations through multimodality depicted in words such as 'my mother, my brother, or father'. How the participants viewed themselves revealed the interaction and relationships with family members and others within their environment. Throughout life, we form our self-concept. When a parent tickles a child, compliments, hugs or protects, these gestures contribute towards a positive self-concept. To the contrary, when parents judge, disregard children's efforts or disdain children when they make mistakes, it may negatively influence their self-esteem.

Learners defined the symbolic representation of how parents make them feel. The following words depicted positive feelings, mood and appraisal 'good, happy, or loved'. As such, these feelings influence self-concept positively.

Functional identity occurred when the learners depicted themselves in household activities such as 'gardening'.

Conclusion

Critical multimodal discourse analysis provides evidence of ELL's literacy activities. These activities portrayed learners' family contexts based on their oral and written portraits. Home and thus the family is an essential context in which human development occurs throughout life. It plays a pivotal role in the development of personality. When children are

safeguarded, nurtured and supported by parents their self-concept is positively affected. As ESL/EFL speakers the participants' self-concept and identity were influenced by their family and positive feelings. Therefore, this study implies that when learners reflect on their self-portraits, (1) they think deeper about what they value, (2) gain an understanding of who they are in relation to their families and feelings, (3) reveal what their socio-cultural preferences are and (4) used complex vocabulary as Grade 1's to describe who is special, and whom they value. This study suggests that primary caregivers and teachers create spaces for literacy practice to increase learners' self-concept and identity as speakers and writers of ESL/EFL in homes and teaching environments.

Limitations and recommendations

The findings are specific to the participants of a primary school in KZN. The study sample engages a relatively small group of participants which were suitable for using multimodality and CDA analysis. A true measure of self-concept and identity may further be investigated to show how family and culture affect ESL learning during face-to-face learning. Furthermore, research in this area is recommended to gain a true reflection of how teachers may influence young children's self-concept.

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Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

Authors' contributions

A.S. involved in conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing (original draft), review and editing, project admin; P.S.T. involved in conceptualisation, investigation and data curation; K.B. involved in conceptualisation, writing, supervision and funding acquisition.

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Data availability

For Discourse Analysis, the data was included in the data presentation and analysis section.

Disclaimer

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