

An Intercultural study on Children's Meaning-Making through Visual Communication

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We live in an increasingly connected and diverse culture where global images are more and more reachable to students from across political, cultural, and religious divides. In this cultural and educational environment, where students encounter and effort to relate to numerous forms of otherness, understanding the "*Meaning*" is a key skill that can help place [them] outside their own comfort zone and within the lifeworld of another person. In this study, I propose communicative functions as a guide to the language of art, and to help me to understand the embodiment of meaning in children's visual interaction of two divers nation.

Through conducting the empirical settings which took place in two research sites in Iran and Germany between primary schools' children (age 7-9 years old), and exchanging the children's artworks, the responsive impulses of children's drawings has been clarified. Significantly, children's interactive process extends through three phenomena: Perception, Imagination, and Expression. This investigation tries to illuminate the relationship between emotion, memory and cognition in young children's meaning making to understand their lived experience through art, its signs, and symbols. This study investigates the multiple layers of meaning-making, young children represent in their drawings. Therefore, I will begin by pondering which semiotical considerations may be of relevance for experimental work, starting by grounding both theory and practice in phenomenological reflection (cf. Sonesson 2009a, 2011).¹

Taking an experimental study of children's pictorial understanding, this study is organized in two stages: The first, a *social semiotics theoretical framework* to value and attempt to understand children's drawings as a semiotic vehicle in which messages are created and conveyed during the drawing process through representation and signification. The second, a theoretical and philosophical investigation of children's drawing practices, which underpin *hermeneutic phenomenology* to interpreting children's lived experience and reflection upon its development and significance along with their application to educational research. My theoretical approach is designed around four main research objectives: to understand the emerging semiotics in children's drawing, the relation between the picture and the world outside the picture, development and transformation visual metaphors over the communicative process, and actions as a criteria of understanding the picture.

¹ Sonesson, G.: The Mind in the Picture and the Picture in the Mind: A Phenomenological Approach to Cognitive Semiotics. In: Lexia. Rivista di semiotica, 07/08, 2011, pp. 167 - 182