

## The visual Expression of Children's Drawings

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### Abstract

*The focus of this article is in the visual expression of children's drawings. It learns how children try to express or communicate through symbolic visual sign in the drawings. Stroke and lines, colours, and object chosen might represent the object in their surrounding environment. There are many ways to draw proportions of real objects. It depends on the way the children see and understand the object within their logical thinking and the way they feel or experience. There is a various expression created from their fantasy and creativity which expressed in the drawings. The writing of this article aims to describe visual language as the expression of children through their images. The visual expression of the children's drawing has shown how the children try to communicate through symbolic sign in their drawings. Some of the drawings also show the achievement of creative skill and logical thinking skill. This study uses a purposive sampling method, which observes three children of different ages, namely children aged 4 years, 7 years and 10 years. The results would present such a category and classification of children's drawing.*

**Keyword:** visual expression, Children drawings, creativity.

### Abstrak

*Fokus artikel ini adalah ekspresi visual gambar anak-anak. Ini belajar bagaimana anak-anak mencoba untuk mengekspresikan atau berkomunikasi melalui tanda simbolik visual dalam gambar. Stroke dan garis, warna, dan objek yang dipilih mungkin mewakili objek di lingkungan sekitarnya. Proporsi objek nyata digambar dalam banyak cara. Itu tergantung pada cara anak-anak melihat dan memahami objek dalam pemikiran logis mereka dan cara mereka merasakan atau mengalaminya. Berbagai ekspresi diciptakan dari fantasi dan kreativitas mereka yang diekspresikan dalam gambar. Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk menggambarkan bahasa visual sebagai ekspresi anak-anak melalui gambar mereka. Ekspresi visual dari gambar anak-anak telah menunjukkan bagaimana anak-anak mencoba berkomunikasi melalui tanda simbolis dalam gambar mereka. Beberapa gambar juga menunjukkan pencapaian keterampilan kreatif dan keterampilan berpikir logis. Metode yang digunakan adalah purposive sampling, dari 3 anak yang berbeda yang dipisahkan oleh usia, misalnya 4 tahun, 7 tahun dan 10 tahun .. Hasilnya akan menghadirkan kategori dan klasifikasi gambar anak-anak seperti itu.*

**Kata kunci:** Ekspresi visual, Gambar Anak, Kreativitas

## **INTRODUCTION**

All children have the potential to be creative, although the level of creativity varies. As a result, creativity, like every other potential, needs to be given an opportunity and stimulation by the environment to develop. New perspectives on creativity encourage research to determine what are favourable environmental conditions and freeze the development of creativity (Sari, 2005: 80-94).

Many things can be done to increase creativity, such as providing creative encouragement, time to play, and so on. Children need time and solitude to develop productive, imaginative lives. In addition to this, they also need the means to play, and later other means must be provided to stimulate experimental and exploration Impetus, which is an essential element of all creation with the support of a stimulating environment.

Laying the basis of personality, development, and formation of the child's personality depends initially when the child gets his first experience in the learning process he experiences. The process of creative learning by providing learning stimuli for children following their intelligence will significantly determine the future of the child.

Pranata in Sari (2005) said that in the drawing process children carry out creative and fantastic learning, play freely and spontaneously in a world that is possible, without limits to norms, rules and dimensions as that binds the factual world. The wealth of values obtained through the "process of becoming" determines the line of its future development.

Children draw people, animals, trees, and even houses in much the same way all over the world. They draw before they can write. They connect images with thoughts, even before they can draw anything they recognize. They also associate their drawings with feelings, distorting subjects symbolically and providing clues that might be inaccessible otherwise (Silver, 1989:69)

## **METHOD**

Definition of images is "transient, percept-like representations that exist in short term memory" (Kosslyn, 1988, p. 319 in Kunzendorf 1990). Visual expression is an image-like representation created in an external medium with its qualities influencing these representations. Both imagery and visual expression are multileveled and constructed over a while, although means of construction differ, and so does time required.

Pamadhi revealed that when viewed from the point of development of the body, the child's vision is: (1) Partial, meaning that the child still cannot see clearly that the parts of the object have a relationship with one another. (2) Influenced by egocentrism, namely the sense of selfishness is still high so that what is observed is something from the object that he likes. Thus what is observed by the child is only part of the object that attracts his attention. (3) Physiological movements of the hands and coordination with the brain are not yet balanced (Suryani 2011). Sometimes the child's mind has been able to reach out to the shape of the object in detail and is considered to attract his attention, but on the other hand, the skill to declare the object does not have the child. (4) Thoughts or feelings act faster than hands, so the child becomes confused to state the shape of the object. (5) Children's style may be different from the others. In the development of the mind, a picture that has happened before turns into perception. This perception then continues to develop into an impulse of object form by associating (connecting and equating) with the previous object. In most children's drawings, forms are created as if

they have a soul. This can be seen in images of the sun that has eyes, nose and mouth. Likewise, a picture of a mountain that has eyes and mouth. As expressed by F. Frobel (in Suru, I Made: 1983) In children aged 3-7 years, the state of the soul is just beginning to be seen its development. So that his observations have not been able to give birth to sensing and detailed responses, but are global. His soul is still completely leaning on fantasy. The child at that time said that his life was still "animistic" because he assumed that everything or something around him had a soul.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Developmental Levels** The developmental levels of mental imagery can be organized along the stages of development of the intellect (Piaget, 1962; Piaget & Inhelder, 1971). A stable mental image, which is a prerequisite for intimate experiences using imagery, is achieved by the end of the sensory-motor period. The formation of mental images is based on deferred imitation through sensory-motor activities using objects and self-body and the internalization of these activities.

During the conceptual stage, the next developmental level, the mental images have a static quality and require concrete objects as their external counterparts—symbolic play facilitates differentiation of the images. The static quality of images continues throughout the preoperational stage. Images achieve a dynamic and anticipatory quality in the stage of concrete operations during which the child learns to manipulate the images internally. This ability blossoms with the advent of formal operations and adolescence when daydreaming is at its peak (Singer, 1975; Starker, 1982).

The developmental sequence of imagery is essential in art therapy. Children's graphic development and visual expressions differ in different developmental stages and reflect their intellectual and visuomotor development and their understanding and reference point of the world around them (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982). Adults may regress in their visual expression to earlier stages of graphic development.



Figure 1. "Temanku" Anava, 4 years old; Source : Hadiprawiro, 2019

The object chosen in Figure 1, show the phase of elementary development of a child's drawing skill. The child drew objects here with a straight lined stroke, showing the confidence expression in the early stage. The wavy line represents water flow-like in the river or sea. Two stickman human figure represent the child herself and her friend while playing. Two straight lines with a simple circular form on each line, represents balloon. There are also four imperfect circular shapes above the first wavy line. The one on the left side might represent sun, and the other three shapes on the right represent clouds. The drawing seem almost simply symmetrically designed.



Figure 2. "Upacara" Aneira, 7 years old; Source : Hadiprawiro, 2019

In Figure 2 there are 7 figures. One person looks separated from the other 6 people with gestures holding hands. Most likely the draftsman wants to show he looks different like a leader among the others. Instructors in the word balloon as in the comic, say: "rest in place, motion", such as chanting orders to rest from the squad leader in a ceremony. What is quite unique is the fashion variant as a differentiator between the leader and his army. The leader is made with short hair / ribboned, short-sleeved shirts, short skirts widened, and shoes. While the other six figures are made almost similar in the same uniform, hijab, long sleeves, trousers, shoes. The existence of a child's image is contained in the formalistic form of a child's drawing which is considered a pure work of art.



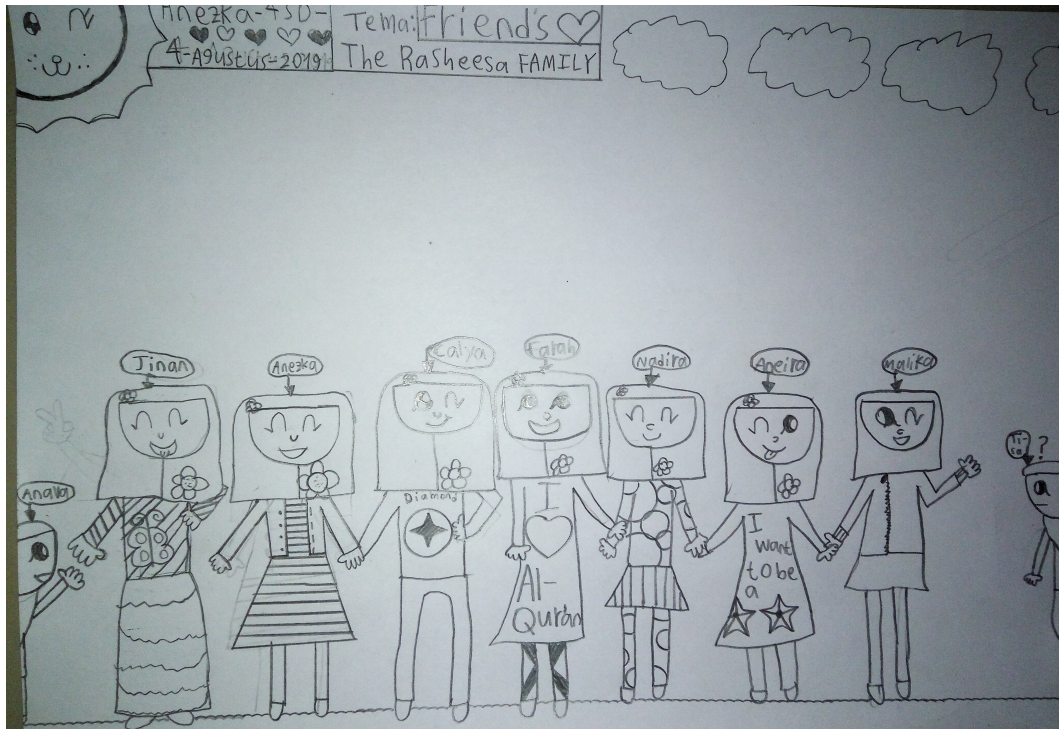


Figure 3. "Friends, the Rasheesa family" Anezka, 10 years old;  
Source : Hadiprawiro, 2019

Expression from Figure 3. Shows extraordinary detail for children at their age. Human figures appear more expressive, with displayed varied faces. Fashion and attributes are also made not similar, illustrating the dynamics of differences between personalities that have their own personalities and tastes. The impression of the appearance of girls depicted in hijab shows friends in the Muslim-dominated environment of the child.

On the left and right sides there are 2 figures smaller than 6 other figures, Looks like little children between their groups, and are not included in the arm of the hand. This shows the possibility of distance or differences in playing groups even though they are still in the same home or school community.

The naming of each character can be exposed to varying attachments to each figure, because maybe in real life it really does exist, or it could also be a mere imaginary name.



Figure 4.  
"Buah-buahan" Anava, 4 years old  
Source : Hadiprawiro, 2019

Based on Figure 4, there are many objects visualized by the child. 2 Human figure showing different fruits from different trees. The purple cursive and circular doodles may represents grapes. The only yellow object among other objects represents pineapple forms. And the rounded shape, with pink coloured represent a tomato or apple. The human figures may represent herself and her friend. One was drawn with a pink stroke-outlined, and a long hair. The other female figure was drawn with a purple stroke-outlined, with a side pony tail hair style. The random cursive shapes above the human figures was colored blue with an orange outlines represent the cloudy whether outside the house. A yellow objects surrounding with a wild pink-zigzag line represent the sun in the upper corner. Many yellow vertical yellow lines, with a pink circles above it, represent flowers in the garden.

The expression of many fruits that can grow from trees, and the colorful objects in the drawing, shows the understanding of a toddler's world to the environment in the real world. Although some of the object does not seem so realistic in a way of the existing object in the real world, the child's visual concept can be understood by viewer, especially by the adults.

As the result for this research consists of: (1) Truly said, that the children from 3-10 years old may still not clearly described. They still need a large efforts to connect each of the objects. (2) The size of an object in the children drawing can be extraordinary vary. The proportion of one object might be drawn in the different size and proportion. It shows the child's attractiveness to the object itself. (3) Children's ability for drawing is related to how they think and feel about the world. Some of the them might visualized the objects in detail form and shape.(4) They tend to draw expression, not only the object in the realistic form. Some of them might be drwn as a symbolic sign which represent the way they think. Therefore the object usually drawn in distorted proportion of shape and color. (5) Children drawing shows the characteristic of the visual expression. An art impulse comes from the perception of a child's mind and the intrinsic motivation.

## CONCLUSION

The visual expression of the children's drawing has shown how the children try to communicate through symbolic sign in their drawings. Some of the drawings also show the achievement of creative skill and logical thinking skill. In this research, the skill, communication ability, visual categories and the learning disabilities are not yet revealed. Therefore the visual expression for specific children mental growth problem, learning disabilities, or children with autism, or other spectrum disorder are recommended for future research.

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