Young expatriate children forming friendships: A cultural-historical perspective

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Abstract

The increasing trend of world trade that supports globalisation has expanded the movement of families across countries (Thomas & Kearney, 2008). There is limited research exploring the everyday settings at home and school as families' experience new countries due to one or both parent's employment with international companies. One area that has not been theorised is the way very young expatriate children form friendships. Hedegaard, Fleer, Bang, and Hviid (2008) propose a methodology supported by cultural-historical principles. This methodology has been used to explore the complexity of friendship formation in a sub section of the expatriate population. A multiple case study approach was used to research five families with 13 children in total (aged 3 to 7 years), transitioning to and from Malaysia. Data collected were 90 hours of digital video recording, interviews, field notes, and photographic documentation to capture the everyday lives of families. Findings reveal that Western parents place priority on their children's social interaction when entering a new country. Play dates are used as vehicles to support the formation of social interaction and potential friendships. It is argued that Vygotsky's (1987, 1994) theoretical framework and specifically the concept of the ideal and real form, which is an integral part of *perezhivanie*, are valuable for theorising friendship formation. These concepts provide a different perspective on initiating friendships as participants enter new social situations in a new country.

Keywords

Friendship; expatriate children; *perezhivanie*; ideal and real form; social interaction

Introduction

Multinational companies employ internationally mobile workers and often these workers have families with young children who are beginning their school life. The multinational companies require skill sets that are not always available from the local population, therefore short term contracts of one to two years (depending upon the company) may be offered, which may result in multiple international moves across countries for the employee and their family within their children's early years. There are unintended consequences that arise from this situation, including young children entering into international schools mid-way through the semester and changing from an Australian curriculum to a British one depending on the type of schools available in the new country. These types of scenarios add to the tension and stress that international moves may place on families with young children (Adams, 2014; Adams & Fleer, 2015). Therefore, for the child, and the parents entering into new and unknown social situations across institutions, establishing friendships may become a major priority.

There is a growing body of literature that analyses friendship during the early childhood years within educational settings (Corsaro, 1985). However, minimal literature comments on the processes that are created by the child and parent as the families enter into new social situations and form friendships across institutions in a new country. There is even less literature on the emotional and intellectual learning and development that these new situations afford young children. Using a cultural-historical perspective (Vygotsky, 1987, 1994) provides a theoretical and methodological perspective based on a unified analysis of behaviour and consciousness. Vygotsky's theory provides a unique argument for the socio-historical and cultural nature of the human mind, which offers a new perspective when theorising friendship. An important premise in Vygotsky's system of concepts is the relation the child has with the environment, particularly the emotional experience (*perezhivanie*), which determines the influence of the environment on the developing child. Taking this into consideration, although Vygotsky proposes a system of concepts, due to the scope of this paper, the main concepts used are that of the ideal and real form, which are explored and interwoven with *perezhivanie*.

This paper begins with a literature review that comments on some philosophical perspectives of friendship over time, followed by more contemporary research on friendship, which is predominantly situated with teenagers in both traditional (face-to-face) and contemporary (online) forms of making friends. This leads to a discussion of early childhood settings and friendships formed when moving countries. A brief synopsis of cultural-historical theory is presented, followed by a discussion on the ideal and real form, and *perezhivanie*. A presentation of the study design, and a combination of the findings and discussion in relation to the conditions created by the individual child and parent, are highlighted.

Friendship

There is a variety of literature that comments on friendship from a historical and philosophical perspective drawing on Plato, Aristotle, and Derrida (King & Devere, 2012). The main thesis in this literature rests with friendship as more than a personal matter, but instead, a phenomenon that needs to be viewed with links to social and political thinking (King & Devere, 2012; Smith, 2011). Taylor and Giugni (2012) explore the idea of "common worlds" and the way that ethics and politics are central to forming relations and living together in the world, which relates to inclusion in early childhood settings. This is pertinent for the expatriate population in the current study as

families with young children enter new social, political, and ethical domains frequently as they traverse across countries, seeking a "common world" in which to live.

The majority of participants in empirical research in relation to forming friendships are aged 10 years and over (see, e.g., Epstein, 2002; McLeod, 2002). Contemporary research with this age group is concentrated with the way teenagers form friendships online. Livingstone (2008) analysed online social networking and friendship in youth and older teenagers, including online risk-taking across different age groups. Sheer (2011) studied the impact of social media and teenagers initiating friendships online. Whereas Davies (2012) focused on Facebook and the language and literacy practices of teenagers, this included the way teenagers construct friendship merging contemporary (online) and traditional (face-to-face) ways of making friends. This trend of online friendship formation differs markedly to contemporary early years literature, which explores friendship in very young children in more traditional modes (face-to-face) and usually within early childhood settings.

Literature encompassing younger age groups includes Bradley, Sumsion, Stratigos and Elwick's (2012) study that discuss the contributing actions of toddlers and their carers when a friendship is being formed in a daycare centre. This includes the power that educators have with physical positioning of the children (consistently placing the same children in highchairs close together during meal times) and describing the children as "special friends" (p. 147). In addition, in this example, the same two children look, reach for, touch, and eat each other's food and try to gain each other's attention (Bradley et al., 2012). In other literature, a greater age range of participants is included for example, Stephenson's (2011) research (babies to 5-year-olds) found that children's main concern was forming and sustaining relationships within early childhood centres. Findings from this study indicate that older children were consistently focused on their peers whereas younger or children new to the centre tend to focus on caregivers. However, it was the complexity of friendships that Stephenson (2011) highlighted.

There is a growing interest globally with the phenomenon of friendship beginning with the seminal works of Corsaro (1985) and Corsaro and Mollinari (2000). More recently, research on friendship has emerged in early childhood education (Danby, Thompson, Theobald, & Thorpe, 2012; Riggs & Due, 2011). A main theme in the early childhood friendship literature relates to the exclusionary practices of young children in early childhood and primary school settings (Riggs & Due, 2011; Tay-Lim & Gan, 2012). Exclusion in the early childhood friendship literature is well documented and indicates a global phenomenon, as there are studies noting exclusion that originate from a variety of countries, for example, Singapore, (Tay-Lim & Gan, 2012), Nordic countries (Lofdahl, 2010; Skanfors, Lofdahl, & Hagglund, 2009) and in Europe (van Hoogdalem, Singer, Wijgaard, & Heesbeen, 2012). Other areas that Danby et al. (2012) comment on are the need for children entering school for the first time to engage in supportive relationships with parents, teachers, and peers, and the different strategies that children use as friendships are formed. According to Danby et al. (2012), the three strategies that most children use when forming new friendships include making requests using the word "friend" while entering play situations, child initiated formation of clubs or groups, and individual children intervening to include others in play. Missing from this body of literature are the conditions created by the parents and children in the home setting during leisure time, particularly as the families are settling in to a new country.

Friendship when moving countries

Riggs and Due (2011) argue that children who originate from and attend school in the same country are offered the opportunity to grow and develop friendships, whereas those children who immigrate or are refugees find that "school can be a site of further exclusion" (p. 73). One of the main findings that Riggs and Due (2011) note is the limited number of friendships between children born in Australia and new arrivals from other countries. They hypothesise that the exclusionary practices of individuals and those at the societal level may compound the small number of friendships formed between these two groups. Guo and Dalli (2012) substantiate this claim, finding in their research of Chinese immigrants to New Zealand that similarity (of culture, language and country of origin) between children is an attribute that supports formation of friendship in the early years. Guo (2005) noted that some immigrant children entering New Zealand are shy and have few strategies for making friends, resulting in a need for the child to participate with friends in playful contexts, which often needs to be organised by the educator. The same study found that educators are required to be explicit with established children in the class and explain that the new child may want to be their friend but, because of limited English language, assistance by an adult is required. However, missing from this body of literature are the emotions involved and the way children moving into a new environment create conditions for forming their own friendships.

Friendship from a cultural-historical perspective

There is a growing body of literature from a cultural-historical perspective that mentions social interaction between children, and notes the role of the adult in the child's learning and development (Højholt, 2012; Kousholt, 2012; Richards, 2010; Winther-Lindqvist, 2012a; 2012b). The majority of this research considers the child's perspective as an analytical unit (Hedegaard, 2014; Højholt, 2012) and the tensions created as children move across settings. For example, when transitioning from primary school to high school, where the importance of legitimising the self while creating possibilities for positive social interactions is highlighted (Winther-Lindqvist, 2012a). However, there is little from this theoretical perspective that comments on expatriate children and the process of friendship formation or the emotions involved.

Much of the cultural-historical literature reviewed provides an analysis on the social interaction between children and positioning of the child by the educator (Kousholt, 2012; Richards, 2010; Winther-Lindqvist, 2012a). Richard's study involved a Chinese Australian boy's exploration of difference, where identity and friendship are explored. Richards (2010) argues that the focus participant begins to "know his world through social interactions… that lead to transformation of his thinking and actions and the reconstruction of knowledge" (p. 96). The contrast between the focus child's competencies afforded within the family and those when in the community or with peers provides a glimpse of the differing patterns of social interaction when there is minimal shared language, values, and traditions. By contrast, Kousholt (2012) analyses a family moving from one city to another in Denmark, acknowledging the importance of forming connections across home and school settings, such as the importance of inviting friends home and the conditions created when this is not possible. Kousholt (2012) argues that "problems in the family are often connected to conflicts between different contexts" (pp. 135-136) where there may be a lack of understanding due to poor communication between adults across institutions.

Drawing this literature together we see there are a number of gaps, which position the current paper. The first is the limited connections between the historical commentaries on friendship

displayed through parents' interactions with their child, and the everyday experiences that children participate in during the formation of new friendships across settings. The second gap highlighted is the conditions created by adults and children that enable the social processes to occur through inviting friends on play dates during the early stages of an international move. Finally, it is the emotional aspects created by social interaction and potentially ensuing friendships that are missing from this body of literature. This literature review positions the theoretical framework of the study, which is based on Vygotsky's (1994) concepts of the ideal and real form, and *perezhivanie*.

Theoretical framework

Vygotsky's (1987, 1994) interrelated system of concepts informs this study; in addition, more contemporary understandings are utilised (e.g., Fleer, 2014; Hedegaard, 2014; Veresov 2004, 2014). The concepts of *perezhivanie* and the ideal and real form are used to analyse the processes related to social interaction after a transition while a child is experiencing the initial stages of an international relocation. This interaction potentially leads to a new friendship that occurs across institutional settings (home and school). An important foundational concept that needs to be foregrounded when using Vygotsky's cultural-historical perspective is the child's social situation of development. According to Vygotsky (1994, 1998), each child experiences the same context differently, which is related to the child's psychological age period. These age periods are psychological structures that are intricately related to the social and cultural environment and the child's personal experiences in their specific but dynamic context. Vygotsky (1994) argues, "the environment's role in the development of higher, specifically human characteristics and forms of activity is as a source of development" (p. 341).

As with all of Vygotsky's concepts, *perezhivanie* is interwoven with the child's environment and social situation of development. The concept of *perezhivanie* is situated within a contested space (see González Rey, 2004; Smagorinsky, 2011) and has various understandings attributed by different scholars, empirically and theoretically. González Rey (2004) for example, used subjective senses and subjective configuration in an attempt to advance questions that he argues were not defined by Vygotsky when discussing *perezhivanie*. Veresov (2015) uses *perezhivanie* as a concept and unit of analysis. In empirical research, it has been used as an emotional experience (Ferholt, 2009), extended as visual *vivencia* (Quiñones, 2013), and used to explore double subjectivity (Fleer, 2014). In addition, the concept has been used as a unit of analysis (Adams & March, 2015; Brennan, 2014), which is followed in this research.

Perezhivanie*, and the ideal and real form*

It is the emotions, learning, and development as children move through processes after a transition that is of interest in the current study. The child's emotional experience is also known in Vygotsky's work by the Russian word *perezhivanie*.

The concept of *perezhivanie* translated into English is commonly defined as "lived-through experience" or "emotional experiencing" (see Bozhovich, 2009). However, this is a basic definition and does not reflect the full conceptual and theoretical understanding proposed by Vygotsky (1994), who describes *perezhivanie* in the following manner:

> The emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] arising from any situation or from any aspect of his [*sic*] environment determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child. Therefore, it is not any of the factors in themselves (if taken without

reference to the child) which determines how they will influence the future course of his [*sic*] development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of the child's emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] (pp. 339-340).

To advance this concept, *perezhivanie* as the unit of analysis is briefly explored.

According to Vygotsky, individual elements should not be the focus of analysis, but the units that "preserve the simplest form of properties intrinsic to the whole" (Bozhovich, 2009, p. 66). In Vygotsky's *The Psychology of Art*, there is explicit reference to the unconscious character of the psychological nature of *perezhivanie*. However, in Vygotsky's (1994) translated version, there is discussion of *perezhivanie* as the unit of analysis that is related to developing conscious processes in the child and the child's immediate environment. Vygotsky (1994) argues that:

> *An emotional experience [perezhivanie] is a unit where, on the one hand, in an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e.* that which is being experienced - an emotional experience *[perezhivanie]* is always related to something which is found outside the person - *and on the other hand, what is represented is how I, myself, am experiencing this,* i.e., all the personal characteristics and all the environmental characteristics are represented in an emotional experience everything selected from the environment and all the factors which are related to our personality and are selected from the personality, all the features of its character, its constitutional elements, which are related to the event in question. So, *in an emotional experience [perezhivanie] we are always dealing with an indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics, which are represented in the emotional experience [perezhivanie].* (p. 342).

When used as the unit of analysis, *perezhivanie* provides a holistic approach where the social and material conditions from the child's environment form a unity with the child's developing understanding and consciousness. The child's relation with their environment is seen as dialectic where both are active agents as the child develops and makes meaning gradually, becoming consciously aware. The dialectics highlight the contradictions that occur during development between the child and their environment; that is, the child loses something, gains something, and transforms in some way (Chaiklin, 2012). Vygotsky highlights the importance of the individual and the collective where each experience is social first and then, with developing consciousness, becomes an individual experience for the child. In relation to this research, *perezhivanie* is used as the unit of analysis that highlights the emotional connection the child has to the changing environment, where the interaction is first collective, between the mother, new friend, and focus child, and gradually becomes individual through emotional experiences and processes of understanding how friends interact socially. This methodological use extends the current understanding and use of the theoretical concept of *perezhivanie.*

Vygotsky (1987) claimed, "there exists a dynamic meaningful system that constitutes a unity of affective and intellectual processes" (p. 50). The unity of affective and intellectual processes, when considered with the ideal and real form during analysis of social interaction and formation of friendships in very young expatriate children, extends the use of *perezhivanie* and creates a need for further investigation into these interrelated concepts. The concepts of *perezhivanie* and the ideal and real forms are related intricately to the child's social situation of development (Bredikyte, 2011; Veresov, 2010; Vygtosky, 1994).

Ideal and real form

Like most of Vygotsky's concepts, the terms ideal and real form are situated within contested spaces. F. L. González Rey (personal communication, December 11, 2015) for example, argues that objective processes in the environment are turned into ideal forms through *perezhivanie*. In addition, he argues that the human environment is subjective due to the dialogical scenarios that occur. It is these processes and differences that provide the individual with a sense of the environment or situation. González Rey (2011) argues for the use of the term "subjective" rather than the more well know term "ideal form" found in van der Veer and Valsiner's (1994) translation of Vygotsky's work. Further, in Soviet psychology, ideal was used to define the representation of the object in mind, which reduces the richness of the subjective processes that are understood as refractions and not as reflections, therefore adding to the argument for use of the term subjective rather than ideal (González Rey, 2011). In addition, N. Veresov argues that the translation of Vygotsky's term, "real form", is problematic and that preferable terms would be "incipient" or "emerging" (personal communication, August 19, 2015). However due to the scope of this paper, it has been decided to use the terms ideal and real form in alignment with the translated works by van der Veer and Valsiner (1994) to avoid confusion. However there is scope for thorough examination of these terms in future publications.

Veresov (2004) argues the interaction between ideal and real forms is a main concept in cultural-historical theory, which explains the "moving force of development" (p. 16. Vygotsky (1994) explains that the ideal form "acts as a model for that which should be achieved at the end of the developmental period; and final in the sense that it represents what the child is supposed to attain at the end of his development" (p. 348). In the same paragraph, Vygotsky elaborates that the "real form" is the activity or behaviour of the child. Vygotsky explains that experiencing and having the ideal form present during child development highlights a unique aspect of developmental processes. The child interacts with the adult who performs the functions as an ideal form this potentially leads to the child beginning the process of understanding social interaction. However, not all forms of interaction will lead to qualitative changes in the child; it is more likely that development will occur through interaction with a more capable other (Vygotsky, 1987), but there are many variables that interrelate within the social situation before development occurs (Chaiklin, 2003).

Drawing on Vygotsky's (1994) example of adult speech as an ideal form, we see the moving force of development is available in the child's environment from birth through interaction between the ideal and real forms of speech as the mother interacts with the child. The form of speech used by the mother is directed to the age of the child (e.g., "motherese"). In addition, it has been "perfected by humanity during the process of historical development, this fact is essentially what provides the foundation for interaction between the ideal and the [real] form" (p. 352). Therefore, in real time, it is the interaction between what the mother says and does, and the child's understanding and "creative reworking of the situation" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 16). However, we must always consider the historical development of speech, where the mother's speech becomes a manifestation of the ideal form that exists in society.

When discussing the ideal and real form, Veresov (2010) illuminates an important point, which is foundational within Vygotsky's system of concepts, that is, "social interaction exists as a process of interaction [between] the ideal and real forms" (p. 85). This directs our attention to the type of social interaction between expatriate parents and children during the processes involved with

moving into a new country. As highlighted in Adams and Fleer (2015), the child's social situation of development changes alongside the changing environment, where the expatriate children and families often move countries with minimal social support or structure in the new country. Therefore, analysis of social interaction in the new situations may provide further exploration of the ideal and real form and the way the mother models the ideal form (Vygotsky, 1994) of social interaction for a child who has experienced challenging processes of social interaction after an international move.

Positioning the study

Social interaction and the formation of friendships in a new environment are the main interest in this study, where the ideal and real form, which is interwoven with *perezhivanie*, is explored. The research has therefore been framed to investigate the following question:

> What conditions do adults and children create related to new social interaction and developing friendships when moving through processes related to moving countries?

Study Design

In the larger study, the research sites included international schools and new homes of expatriate families who had recently relocated into Malaysia. Other sites included gardens, playgrounds, markets, sports fields, shopping centres, birthday parties, and swimming pools. The main aim was to examine the everyday life of children experiencing moving countries.

In total there were five families, with a total of 13 children. The mean age of the child participants at the beginning of the study was 5.4 years. Other participants included seven teachers and three principals (Adams, 2014; Adams, & Fleer, 2015). One family was in the process of repatriating to their country of origin and the remaining four families were experiencing processes of moving to reside in Malaysia. The fathers were employees of well-known international companies. Teachers and principals were employed to work at the international schools and either taught the focus children or were the principals of the school the children attended. It is noted here that although invited to participate in semi-structured interviews and to be present during data collection, fathers were absent due to employment related activities (travel or working long hours to become familiar with their new position). Three international schools in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia were approached to participate in the study and principals of these schools supported the lead researcher to contact newly arrived families with children attending the schools aged under 8 years. The participants who agreed to be involved in the study signed consent forms. All names used are pseudonyms.

In the first finding, there is data from all families included. To illustrate the second finding, only one of the main focus participant's data is drawn upon in depth to highlight the process of friendship formation where learning and development of social interaction comes to the fore. Although the focus participant's data is representative of the total data set, it must be noted that allowances need to be made for individual difference.

Procedure – Obtaining video data

Over the course of six months, video observations, still images, and field notes of the everyday life of five families experiencing relocating into Malaysia were gathered. There were a total of 90 hours of video data, including semi-structured interviews with parents, teachers, and principals. The main

form of data collection included the use of a handheld digital video recording devices and an iPhone, all semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim. Video data were analysed, and vignettes relating to the themes of the research were transcribed verbatim, with subtitles placed onto the clips for ease of reference and use during analysis.

Situating perezhivanie *and the ideal and real form for analysis*

Once in the new country, the family members enter new institutions in everyday life including new work places, early childhood centres, international schools, sporting venues, and accommodation. It is within these institutional spaces that new social interactions begin to unfold, some of which are structured where there is variation in social norms, values, rules, and roles to abide by (e.g., work places and schools), which may be different to historical family practices, potentially leading to contradictions between the child's known and the new social situation of development. Entering these new social situations and beginning the process of making a friend requires a unity of emotion and intellect as there needs to be a certain understanding of how to relate to others positively in a new social situation. There is an historical component, where there is an ideal social interaction required to support the processes of the real form that the children experience, for a positive beginning in a new country. Therefore, *perezhivanie* has been used here to analyse social interaction as a child moves into a new environment along with the ideal and real form that are both present (interwoven between historical and in real time) in the environment, through social interaction. This is outlined in throughout the data analysis process.

Data analysis

Initially, we need to ascertain the dynamic processes that are developing in the child; in this instance it is positive social interaction between peers on a first play date. The ideal form is the historical and abstract conception of what a play date is, whereas the real form is the actual social interaction between the participants during the play date, where emotion and intellect are highlighted. These concepts have been targeted using Hedegaard's (2008) proposed analysis where a three-stage approach is utilised when analysing data. This approach begins with *common sense interpretation* where providing details in written form and organising the data are completed. At this stage of interpretation, the data extracted depicted the social interaction of adults, the focus child's interactions across settings (home, school, after-school activities), the focus child's peers in the class and mention of social interaction from interview data. In addition, any form of explicit emotion by all participants was targeted at this stage and included laughter, joy, tears, anger, embarrassment, and frustration. Cues that were tagged in the video data were usually connected to actions and or verbal utterances, which occurred individually and or collectively. *Situated practice interpretation* was the next level, where settings were linked together and conceptual patterns were located across research sites. This level included: emotions and learning, or signs of beginning awareness or understanding in the participants and peers through comments, in addition to an adult participant mediating children's interaction or commenting on interaction arising from the interview data.

The third level of data analysis is termed *thematic interpretation*. Here, video and interview data were connected with the research aims. In addition, theoretical concepts were used for extraction of social relations and patterns within the data (Hedegaard et al., 2008). It is here that the dialectic is evident between the categorisation, the aims of the research theoretical standing, and the empirical data (Hedegaard, 2008), which are brought together to inform new and different ways of

interpreting the data providing an avenue for further theorisation.

Context of the data sets
The first finding is presented from the overall data set, which includes each family, the number of countries resided in and the number of moves. This is then supplemented by data from one focus family (the Williams family): specifically, Catt (the focus child), M1 (Catt's mother), and Sim (Catt's friend). Catt's family was the most recent arrival in Malaysia. Therefore, only the Williams family context is briefly outlined here and can be found in other publications (Adams, 2014; Adams & Fleer, 2015).

The Williams family had resided in Malaysia for eight weeks and moved from temporary into more permanent rented accommodation. The family's shipment had arrived from Saudi Arabia and the vast majority of belongings had been unpacked; however, there were still boxes visible around the house.

Catt had experienced challenges connected with the moves. M1 commented that Catt was challenging to manage, as she displayed physical and verbal aggression towards other children including her siblings, peers in her class, and the educator (Adams & Fleer, 2015). Catt met Sim on the bus and attended the same class at school. The children agreed on a play date at Catt's house and organised the details with their mothers' help. The children agreed that they needed to wear best dresses and shoes and they would take their babies (dolls) to the park in prams. The current data set is extracted from Catt's first play date with Sim. M1 accompanies the children to the park.

In addition, due to Catt's challenging interactions with other children across settings, M1 was in close contact with the educator who advised acceptance of any social invitation from class members and to invite children from the class for play dates. However due to the initial transient nature of accommodation, M1 found this difficult to arrange until the family had moved into their more permanent rented accommodation and had some belongings unpacked (Adams, 2014). The vignettes included below originate from the first play date that Catt had in her new home, once the majority of her belongings were unpacked. During the play date, M1 felt that she needed to be close to the children as she felt that Catt was unpredictable and needed close supervision, just in case she reverted to past challenging interaction styles (M1 interview).

Findings and discussion
Findings indicate that for young expatriate children who experience multiple moves in their early years, social interaction and making friends is available in their environment from the very beginning (Vygotsky, 1994). The children are present as their parents create conditions for social interaction and make friends building a social community in a new country; see Table 1 for a summary of the countries and age of the children during the move.

Table 1
Summary of participants

Family, Parent ID	Age of focus participants	Passport country	Number of Countries Resided in
Williams, Mother 1 (M1)	Ollie, 7.9 Mish, 7.9	Australia	3

	Catt, 5.6		
Schmidt, Mother 2 (M2)	Tris, 5.2	Holland	4
Jones, Mother 3 (M3)	Isa, 7.3	England	4
Smith, Mother 4 (M4)	Zeb, 3.9	New Zealand	3
King , Mother 5 (M5)	Ben, 5.3	Australia	2
Total			16

From Table 1, it is noted that the five families have in total resided in 16 countries with an average of two international moves per family prior to their children reaching the age of 8 years. The most number of international moves in the children's early childhood years was three (Schmidt and Jones families). The next was two moves (Williams and Smith families) followed by one international move (King family) and this family was in the process of repatriating to Australia. Therefore, it is argued that each of the children had experienced moves in their early childhood years, where the mothers participated in social interactions and forming new friendships in new countries, often multiple times (Schmidt, Jones, Williams, and Smith families).

Specifically, in relation to the focus family presented here (Williams), the family experienced multiple international moves in their children's early years and therefore, the focus child Catt has experienced M1's ideal form (Vygotsky, 1994) and interrelated social interaction from a very young age. During M1's interview it was stated:

> Catt was only 9 months old when we moved from Australia to Saudi, she was with me all the time… It was a stressful move I don't like change (M1 interview).

Further findings reveal that European heritage parents in this study place a high priority on their children's social relations and forming friendships through positive exchanges. Play dates are used by parents and encouraged by educators as a vehicle to support the formation of social interaction and potential friendship. Parents are usually within close proximity of the children during play dates and model (Vygotsky, 1994) positive interactions with and between children and allow the child agency. As seen in Table 2, the mother, M1, models verbal exchanges and actions of the ideal form of social interaction on occasions, alluding to an historical understanding of positive social interaction that potentially leads to friendship. In the example provided, Catt's interactions highlight the real form of social interaction where there are instances of spontaneous actions (collection of flowers for the self, running ahead to get on a favourite swing) and thoughtful actions (negotiating, helping Sim with the seat belt on the pram to keep baby safe, giving Sim a flower).

Table 2
Play date and modeling friendship by M1

	M1's interaction	**Catt's interaction**	**Sim's interaction**
Inside	Encouraged Catt to let Sim choose role in play stating that visitors normally get first choice, which would be reciprocated when visiting Sim's house	Catt wanted to be the 'Mummy', following M1's interaction stated they were going to take turns to play the Mummy	Sim wanted to be the Mummy and choose her baby Sim agreed with taking turns as suggested by Catt and M1.
Emotions	*Calm, reassuring*	*Serious, loud, excited*	*Disappointment, happy, excited*
Eating afternoon tea	M1 directed playful exchanges with the children	Catt initiated conversation	Sim initiated conversation
Emotions	*Playful*	*Happy, laughing*	*Happy, laughing*
Walking to the park	Collected magnolia flowers and insured that Sim had the same number of flowers as Catt. Asked Catt how many flowers Sim had collected	Catt collected her own magnolia flowers and gave one to Sim after prompting from M1. Catt directed Sim where to pick the flowers	Sim picked one flower as directed by Catt and took the flower that M1 presented, which she placed in the pram for her 'baby'
Emotions	*Serious, questioning*	*Serious, smiling*	*Happy*
Continued walk to the park and arrival at the swings	M1 explained that Catt needed to wait and that she had longer legs than Sim and that Catt could walk faster than Sim. Helped Sim to swing on the swing.	Catt ran ahead, stopped at M1 and Sim's insistence. Catt then walked fast to get to her favourite swing. Catt started swinging on her favourite swing	Sim ran calling after Catt. Sim walked fast behind Catt. Sim found it challenging to climb onto the swing
Emotions	*Serious*	*Excited, happy, surprised*	*Frustrated, high pitched voice, yells*

Playing at the playground	M1 helped Sim onto the swing and explained how to use legs to increase the height of the swinging motion. M1 pushed Sim. Helped her from big to small swing	Catt continued to swing high laughing	Sim found it challenging climbing onto the bigger swing and swinging to the same height as Catt. Alighted and moved to the smaller swing
Emotions	*Serious to Sim, smiling, laughing*	*Joyous, laughter,*	*Concerned, worried, frustrated*
	Helping Sim to climb onto the slide cautioning that Catt might fall and for Sim to stay on the correct place for climbing onto the slide	Non conventional means to get onto the slide, climbed around the outside of the equipment	Sim wanted to take 'baby' to follow Catt on the outside climb, took M1's advice and climbed up the ladder
Emotions	*Concern, serious*	*Laughing, joy*	*Serious, concerned*
	Laughing at children on the slide Suggests to the children they should swap shoes	Catt climbed up the slide, descended and climbed over Sim to ascend the slide	Lying at base of slide slipped down Sim found it challenging climbing in boots and wanted Catt's shoes
Emotions	*Laughter and Serious*	*Happiness,*	*Laughter/frustrated*
	Asked Catt how to solve the tension created by Sim wanting Catt's shoes to climb the slide	Catt did not want to relinquish her shoes. Catt suggested Sim take her shoes off and climb in bare feet	Sim tried to negotiate to obtain Catt's shoes and when not successful walked off to play something else
Emotions	*Concern, serious*	*Serious, frustration*	*Upset frustrated*

Friendships are central for humans living together in the world and forming positive experiences in institutional settings.

Discussion

Elkonin (2005) argues that play is social and the origins are based in the society of which the child is a member. Social interaction provides a means for forming friendships and originates through the interaction of *perezhivanie*, which is interwoven with the ideal and real forms (Vygotsky, 1994). As Vygotsky (1998) states,

the social environment is the source for the appearance of all specific human properties of the personality gradually acquired by the child or the source of social development of the child which is concluded in the process of actual interaction of ideal and real forms (p. 203).

The historical development of the ideal form provides the foundation for the mother to manifest the societally developed ideal form, which interacts with the child's (real) form (Vygotsky, 1994) of understanding how to make friends. Friendship is found throughout historical and contemporary literature (King & Devere, 2012) and can be viewed as an ethical (Taylor & Giugni, 2012), social, and political phenomenon (King & Devere, 2012) with values, and cultural and social mores playing an important role. This is highlighted throughout Table 2 where M1 intentionally teaches Catt regarding historically formed socially accepted practice. For example, where M1 encourages Catt to provide Sim with a choice of which role to play and which doll and pram to use, stating that visitors normally get first choice, which is reciprocated when invited for play dates outside the home. Generally, in Western households, offering guests first choice is an accepted historical practice and highlights the ideal social practice of sharing with others.

M1's ideal and Catt's real form interact and provide contributing actions that show a developing understanding of how friendship is formed. This includes individual and collective processes (Vygotsky, 1994) beginning with suggesting a play date to the children (mothers and educator), planning a play date (children), and verifying and obtaining permission from the adults involved, who need to communicate to arrange the details. This highlights the need and importance of supportive relations between parents, the educator, children, and their peers (Danby et al., 2012). In addition, we see the children's own agency as Catt and Sim discuss and plan the type of play prior to the play date, which involves sharing and agreeing on ideas including what clothes and shoes to wear and the imaginary games to play. It is argued that through this discussion, the participants highlight their own agency and are forming their understanding within the bounds of socially accepted and understood practice (Vygotsky, 1994) of what is expected to occur between children on a play date. This research substantiates Stephenson's (2011) claims that friendships in young children are complex. In addition, throughout the developing processes, adult mediation is implicit and explicit (Bradley et al., 2012). Further, Stephenson's (2011) research is extended as the example provided shows that children not only want to form and sustain relationships within the early childhood centres or schools, but also move beyond this to invite and sustain friendships between settings including their home environment.

The importance of adults interacting with each other across settings of the home and school (Kousholt, 2012) is highlighted and equally important is including children in discussions (Corsaro, 1985) of how to organise and play while participating in a play date. This is exemplified in this study and in other cultural-historical literature (Højholt, 2012; Kousholt, 2012; Richards, 2010; Winther-Lindqvist, 2012a; 2012b). For example, M1 and Educator were initially concerned with Catt's challenging social interaction across settings and therefore met and discussed common strategies to support Catt, such as accepting all social invitations, inviting children home for play dates (when in more stable accommodation), and beginning a star chart between home and school (Adams, 2014). In addition, the parent and educator shared these strategies with Catt and asked what she would like to participate in, thereby providing Catt with agency and some control over strategies that supported and created conditions for potentially positive social interactions. The strategies were further developed at home during the play date where M1 continually mediated and modeled social interaction (Vygotsky, 1994), which is the ideal way of supporting individually and

collectively the interaction between the children. In Table 2 for example, M1 helps Sim get on and off the swing and explains how to use her legs to go higher while on the swing. In addition, M1 suggests that Sim needs a flower and explains to Catt that it is important for Catt to wait for Sim and not run ahead. M1 models implicitly and explicitly various ways of positive social interaction. It is the historically accepted ideal form of how to interact when a friend visits in combination with modeling the ideal form of social interaction, which continually interacts with the dynamic real form of the child. Thus, potentially leading to the ideal form of behaviour, between the two participants, a shared and sustained friendship.

Throughout the interaction between the ideal and real form, we see that each participant's emotion and understanding of the situation is interwoven through collective and individual experiencing (see Table 2). Using *perezhivanie* as the unit of analysis, the collective and individual interactions that affect participants are highlighted. Each child brings their unique experience to the situation and takes away their unique experience (Vygotsky, 1994). Vygotsky (1994) argues that it is "the same factors refracted through the prism of the child's emotional experience [*perezhivanie*]" (p. 339). Both participants experience a range of emotion, collectively and individually, throughout the play date ranging from frustration to laughter. The frustration was inferred by voice intonation and body language and facial expression, for example, when Sim did not want to take the doll on the slide but could not move it away quickly, and when Catt did not want to relinquish her shoes (see Figure 1). Enjoyment by participants was inferred by voice intonation, usually high pitched and uncontrolled laughter as, for example, the participants were climbing over each other in the tube slide. Although there were times of collective emotion that correlated, such as laughter (on the swing and slide), there were also contrasting emotions between the children. For example, when the other did not understand an action or the participant did not obtain her goal (when Sim wanted Catt's shoes). This was determined by the flinch of an eyebrow, or a scowl, or high pitched voice intonation and physically turning away or removing themselves from the interaction. These emotions were fleeting and interrupted the general flow of play momentarily until the incident was resolved and the next moment was presented. The microgenetic examples of emotion highlight the contradictions that occur where crises are inferred, potentially leading to development.
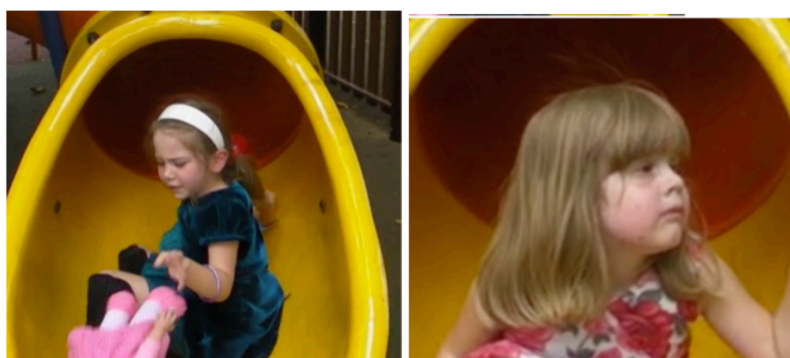

Figure 1: Emotional expressions of focus participants

This collective and individual experience highlights *perezhivanie* where

> an emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] is always related to something which is found outside the person – *and on the other hand, what is represented is how I, myself, am experiencing this*, i.e., all

the personal characteristics and all the environmental characteristic are represented in an emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 342).

Bringing together the empirical literature, theory and synthesis, conceptualisation is presented in the model below (Figure 2), which depicts the interaction between the ideal and real form, and *perezhivanie* and the social situation of development, while a new friendship is being formed.
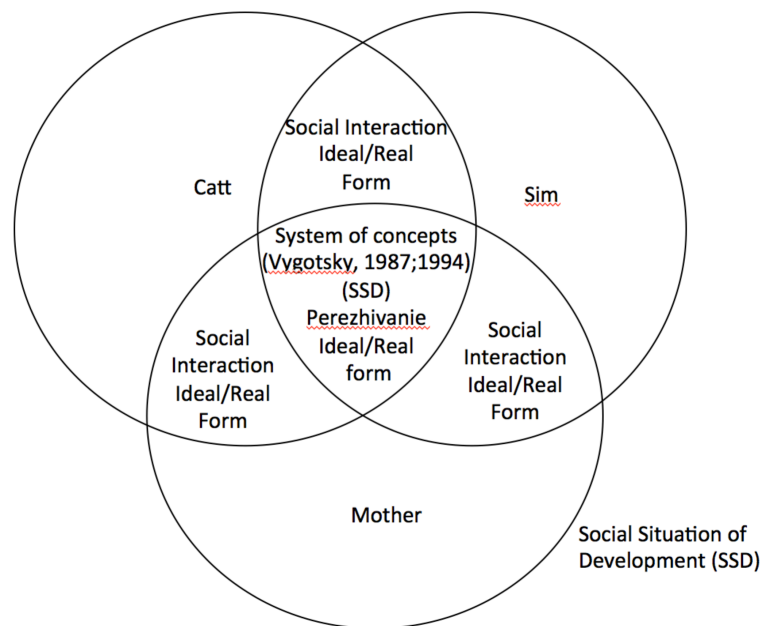

Figure 2: Relation between Vygotsky's concepts and *perezhivanie*

At the center of Figure 2 are the interrelated concepts depicted in Vygotsky's system of child development, which highlights the importance of learning through social interaction. The social situation of development is where each child shapes and is shaped by the environment, which becomes a source of development (Vygotsky, 1994). In addition, it is the way the social situation of development, *perezhivanie,* and the ideal and real form are woven together through individual and collective interaction. The next connections rest with *perezhivanie*, and the ideal and real form which once again cannot be separated. It is here that the conversations and actions that occur between the mother and children highlight the ideal and real forms of social interaction. These interactions have their genesis with historical forms of culture (Vygotsky, 1987) in addition to: historical cultural mores; values and expectations; and social, political, and ethical understandings of social interaction (King & Devere, 2012; Smith, 2011). Further, the way the mother "models" the ideal form through everyday life by reading stories, entering into discussions and actively seeking her own friendships creates conditions for the child to be immersed in the ideal form. The conditions support the developing interaction between the ideal and real form as the child begins to gain conscious awareness of what constitutes a good friend. The real form of social interaction is depicted in relations between the two children. The way the children know what is expected on a play date, plan and discuss, show abstraction of the concept of play date and friendship. However, the reality is that the children require implicit and explicit modeling from the mother (ideal form) to keep the play date flowing and to support negotiating with each other's needs and wants, so that both participants experience a positive play date.

Conclusion

It is argued that Vygotsky's (1987) theoretical framework, specifically the concept of the ideal and real form, are integral parts of *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994) and valuable for theorising friendship formation during international transitions. These concepts provide a different perspective on establishing new friendships as the child enters new social situations in a new country.

The current research highlights the importance of the implicit and explicit modeled interaction from a more capable other (Vygotsky, 1987) as children move through the processes of experiencing social interaction, potentially resulting in friendship, which, in this case, is the ideal form of social interaction. This adds to Danby et al.'s (2012) research by emphasising the importance of building relations across settings and the negotiation of activities that may require adult modeling and support to continue due to individual differences, understanding, and the experiences of each child (Vygotsky 1994). Further, Bradley et al.'s (2012) research with younger children is substantiated, as the way carers interact with very young children to establish and sustain a friendship is similar to that with the child in this study. Building on this, in the current research, it is possible that the children are aware of the ideal form and are able to project their understanding abstractly of what is required to occur during a play date, as highlighted by the planning process of what to wear and what to play. However, as the children participated, the real form of social interaction did not always equate with the ideal form that seemed to be present in the participant's discussion and imagination. Instead, there were microgenetic contradictions and crises occurring throughout the play date individually and collectively (Vygotsky, 1994) as processes formed and reformed depending upon the emotional state of the individual and the type of playful interaction. However, Vygotsky and Luria (1994) argue that these microgenetic moments, which occur regularly in social interaction, support learning and development.

During the initial stages of the international move, one participant displayed challenging social interactions with others, including physical and verbal aggression (Adams, 2014). Through the processes and conditions suggested initially by the educator (accept all social invitations) in collaboration with the child's mother (suggesting Catt invite a peer home) and the child's own agency (approaching Sim and inviting her for a play date), we see a difference in the type of social interaction in which the child is involved. As the child experiences microgenetic moments of contradictions and crisis, we can infer that learning may be occurring due to the conditions created and the social interactions that are supported by adults (Vygotsky, 1987, 1994). The social interaction highlighted in this research supports the foundational position that Vygotsky argues for, which is that social interaction is a process that occurs between the ideal and real form. However, in this study, *perezhivanie* is inextricably linked with the ideal and real form. Although not conclusive, it is beginning a conversation on the processes associated with friendship formation in young expatriate children, where more research is required.

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