

Research Article

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Constructing a hybrid Samoan identity through Siva Samoa in New Zealand: a multimodal (inter)action analysis of two dance rehearsals

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Abstract: The construction of Samoan identity in New Zealand is shaped by complex historical and contemporary social, economic, cultural and political factors. In addition, New Zealand-born Samoans are negotiating an ethnic and identity that incorporates their experience with the intergenerational stories and cultural knowledge of their ancestors. Such cultural and identity negotiations are occurring through the practice of Siva Samoa, Samoan dance. Using Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis we conduct a micro analysis of two excerpts of video data involving female Samoan dancers rehearsing for a dance showcase. Vertical identity production (Norris, S. (2011). *Identity in (inter)action: introducing multimodal (inter)action analysis*. Berlin and Boston: Mouton: 179, 2020:85) is used as a framework to analyze the multiple layers of discourse within each site of engagement that shape the construction of Samoan Identity for the participants involved.

Keywords: Dance; Multimodal interaction; Samoan identity; Siva Samoa; Vertical identity production

“In today’s world young people growing up away from their Pacific cultural heritage are placed in the predicament of living two worlds, a Westernised world and a Pacific cultural world. Their stories often reflect the conflicts and complexities of these two worlds, and the struggle in finding their identity. Being able to express themselves through their Pacific traditions of poetry, song, music and dance has enabled many of them to create a balance of sorts between the two worlds, where they utilise Pacific cultural compositions and movements with Western theatre forms, structure and framework,” (Taouma 2016: 249).

1 Introduction

Engaging in creative practice can positively contribute to the construction of ethnic identity (Lengel et al. 2022:236). For individuals who identify with more than one ethnicity or nationality, creative practice can provide a forum in which to examine the discourses that shape ethnic identity (Cheng et al. 2008: 1179), a medium in which to experiment (George and Rodrigues 2009: 20) and a platform from which to share their constructed ethnic identity (Warrington and O’Donnell 2017: 210). For people of Pacific descent who live in New Zealand, ethnic identity construction can be made complex by competing identities such as a New Zealand identity, New Zealand born Pacific identity, a pan Pacific identity and a ‘home island’ identity (i.e. Samoan identity) (Ross 2021: 211). However, this complexity contributes to the art that New Zealand located Pacific people create: their fluid ethnic identities constructed through multiple creative channels “manifesting identities in transition which reflect their own experience” (George and Rodriguez 2009: 20).

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This paper is co-authored by Tui Matelau, a researcher who has investigated the construction of Māori and Pacific identity through the creative practice of Māori and Pacific female artists and Ufitia Sagapolutele, a Samoan dancer and researcher who participated in Tui's research project. We write this paper as researcher and co-researcher, both of us invested in understanding how Pacific identity and more specifically Samoan identity is constructed through dance. Working together in this way addresses issues of data sovereignty (Walter et al. 2020:143), extending the application of research ethics to the dissemination of research. Pirini et al. (2014: 241) explain that "treating participants as co-researchers, with a real vested interest in how the research progresses, can overcome many of the issues associated with research ethics."

In this article, we begin by contextualizing the research question within the social-time-place in which it is explored before introducing literature themes in relation to Pacific identity and Samoan identity construction in New Zealand. We then detail the application of Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis within the wider research project before presenting a micro analysis of two excerpts of video data involving Ufitia and other dance colleagues rehearsing for a dance showcase. Finally, vertical identity production (Norris 2011:179, 2020:85) is used as a framework to analyze the multiple layers of discourse within each site of engagement that shape the construction of Samoan Identity for Ufitia.

2 Literature review

2.1 Social-time-place, Pacific people in New Zealand

Identity production depends as much on the social background, the time and the place as it depends upon the situatedness and the actions that social actors perform. Norris (2011: 30) explains the relationship of the social-time-place to identity. She writes "identity is embedded and (co)produced in what I call the social-time-place of a particular social actor together with other social actors, together with and within the historical time, together with cultural tools, and together with and within the environment." Therefore, in the study of Pacific identity and Samoan identity as constructed in New Zealand, it is essential to first understand the social background and place in which these ethnic identities are situated.

New Zealand is a country located in the South Pacific Ocean and it has a diverse population. According to 2018 census data, people that identify as European make up 70.2% of the population, followed by Māori (16.5%), Asian (15.1%), Pacific people (8.1%), Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (1.5%) and other (Statistics NZ 2020). New Zealand's colonial history shapes the ethnic identity elements of its citizens. Due to the focus of this article, the following section will highlight the ways in which colonization has impacted Pacific identity construction in New Zealand.

Large scale migration of Pacific people to New Zealand was preceded by a history of connections, constitutional ties and conflict between New Zealand and Pacific countries. The Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau were New Zealand dependencies in the 1920s and in the 1940s Pacific people from these countries were given the right of free entry and citizenship (Krishnan et al. 1994). New Zealand governments also helped to maintain colonial rule in Fiji and had governmental responsibility of Western Samoa after World War 1 until 1962 (Mackley-Crump 2015: 24). Two historic events that significantly shaped the relationship between Samoa and New Zealand were the 1918 influenza pandemic in which pneumonic influenza was introduced to Samoa through a New Zealand cargo ship and then in 1929, the Mau Independence March, whereby New Zealand police fired upon Samoan independence demonstrators, killing 11 people (Mackley-Crump 2015: 24). George and Rodrigues (2009: 4) explain that the post-colonial relationship between New Zealand and many Pacific countries has been one defined by neglect and exploitation, both offshore and onshore.

The 1950s saw the beginning of large-scale migration of Pacific people to New Zealand. For Pacific people from Samoa, an immigration quota restricted the number of Samoan permanent immigrants to 1000 per year from the 1960s. For Tongan and Fijian immigrants, there were more limitations (Krishnan et al. 1994). Work schemes between New Zealand and Pacific nations such as Tonga, Fiji and Samoa were implemented and withdrawn intermittently in the 1960s and the 1970s in response to growth and decline in the manufacturing

and agricultural sectors. Entry and departure into New Zealand was highly regulated through these work schemes, with contract periods not extending past 11 months after which the Pacific workers were to return to their origin island. Mackley-Crump (2015: 26) defines the method of migration used by Pacific people during this time as ‘chain migration.’ The process involved the initial migrant settling into a home and building a reputation as a conscientious tenant, employee and community member. They were then able to gain employment for relatives from the islands who then migrated to New Zealand and followed the same pattern. A consequence of this method was that Pacific migrants became concentrated in certain neighborhoods and sectors which would have ongoing negative impacts of Pacific communities (Mackley-Crump 2015: 26).

In the 1970s after the New Zealand economy declined, Pacific overstayers were targeted by government and mainstream media. Mackley-Crump (2015: 40) suggests that politicians of the time used Pacific Islanders as scapegoats for the economic downturn for electoral advantage and to draw attention away from Britain’s joining with the European Community which negatively impacted New Zealand’s export industry. This led to a crackdown on overstayers, a proliferation of negative stereotypes of Pacific people in mainstream media and the Dawn Raids. The Dawn Raids involved police raiding the homes of suspected Pacific overstayers leading in many cases to deportation (Anae 2003: 92). The Polynesian Panther Party, which was made up of urban Pacific young activists, took part in political action to stop the raids. They conducted dawn raids on the homes of government officials and followed police in order to offer legal advice to Polynesians that were stopped. In 1976 due to the actions of the Polynesian Panthers and a public outcry, the Dawn Raids ceased (Mackley-Crump 2015: 41). The migration of Pacific people to New Zealand has continued and today the majority of the Pacific population in New Zealand is situated in urban areas. This history of social, economic and political experiences shapes the construction of Pacific identity in New Zealand.

2.2 ‘Pacific’ identity

In the analysis of Pacific identity, it is important to address the usefulness or not, of using a pan-ethnic category in the discussion of ethnic identity. Within ethnic identity research in New Zealand, there is both support and criticism for its use. Anae (1997: 128) criticizes the use of the pan-ethnic label ‘Pacific Islanders’ as she posits that it implies a homogenous group, whereas Mila-Schaaf (2013: 50) highlights the affordances of the term in that it draws attention to the shared struggle experienced by Pacific people in New Zealand. She posits that it is a symbolic struggle shaped by identity politics and culture. McGavin (2017: 125) also emphasizes the usefulness of pan ethnic labels like ‘Pacific’ when examining the experience of diasporic communities. However, it is imperative to understand that in New Zealand ‘Pacific culture’ is made up of several distinct cultural groups and languages, those born in New Zealand as well as those who are not and those who can speak their Pacific language and those who cannot (Ross 2014: 1315).

In contrast, research does indicate some common values and practices that have been identified as components of Pacific identity. Firstly, genealogy, family and place are key values that make up Pacific identity (Howard 1990: 273). Family is a priority and the concept of family extends beyond the immediate to include extended family members, both living and deceased (Fairburn-Dunlop 2014). Due to the importance of relationships, acceptance by and within Pacific communities is also a significant value. Inability to speak one’s ‘home’ language can potentially lead to experiences of exclusion from one’s community as language proficiency indicates an individual’s engagement with cultural worldviews. Fairburn-Dunlop (2014: 876) expands and explains that the Pacific worldview is made up of “the spiritual, cultural, social and physical and the presence of the sacred.” This worldview is developed and maintained through engagement with and performance of oratory and physical activities, such as traditional song and dance and is transmitted within specific settings, such as school and church.

The experience, perception of and self-perception of New Zealand born Pacific people is significantly different to that of their Pacific migrant parents or grandparents (Ross 2021: 211). Therefore, measuring their ethnic identity by proficiency in language and knowledge of cultural practices can be problematic. More and more Pacific youth are born in New Zealand and may not be able to perform perceived important cultural

markers, such as speaking their ‘home’ language and articulating their ancestry and ‘home’ village connections (Sitieni 2010: 4). Being unable to perform these cultural markers can lead to “misrecognition, penalties and rejection” (Mila-Schaaf 2013: 62). Furthermore, this misrecognition can be heightened when New Zealand born Pacific people travel to their ‘home’ islands. Anae (1997) explains that when New Zealand born Samoans travel to Samoa, they can be perceived by Samoans as “papalagi (a white person) ... who have had different papalagi socialization experiences and who therefore may not participate in normal Samoan activities and practices,” (Anae 1997: 132). In response to these challenges, Pacific identity within a New Zealand context is being renegotiated in many ways. Ross (2021) describes some of the hybrid Samoan identities being constructed by New Zealand born Pacific people, for example Kamoan (Kiwi Samoan) and ‘fa’a NiuSila’ (a New Zealand born Samoan). The Nesian identity, on the other hand, is a pan-Pacific identity that includes the indigenous Māori community.

Creative work provides a forum for the construction of emerging hybrid and fluid Pacific identities. George and Rodrigues (2009: 20) explain that young Pacific Islanders are constructing fluid identities through multiple channels. O’Donnell (2018: 302) explicates how this is manifesting within creative work, he writes “the mixed-race person with a mixed Indigenous/migrant heritage who functions in several contrasting realities becomes skilled at negotiating the spaces in between cultures. This is expressed in art that is both transgressive and transformative.” Furthermore, by producing such art, artists gain a better understanding of their experiences and identity construction. Greenwood (2016) highlights the affordances of using art to explore one’s culture and identity. She explains that art is a useful medium to use because there are similarities between the experience and construction of identity and culture and the construction of art. “In the making of art, makers can use, adapt or even break the culturally derived semiotics held in form in order to express their own understandings of how they relate to their cultural identity or to that of others” (Greenwood 2016: 162).

Moreover, creative work allows for the exploration of discourses that shape the construction of fluid and hybrid ethnic identities. Colonial power structures, urbanization, relationship with other marginalized communities are some of the themes that are present within New Zealand based Pacific creative works (Marsh 2015: 48; O’Donnell 2018: 280; Stevenson 2002: 404). The use of traditional motifs and symbols enables artists to reframe the traditional within their contemporary experience. Stevenson (2002: 406) explains that the use of Pacific motifs in Pacific art creates art forms that “binds together the stereotypes and myths, the authentic and the traditional, the eclectic and eccentric, the island and the urban.” For New Zealand born Samoans, *Siva Samoa* (Samoan dance) has become a significant site for identity negotiation.

2.3 Hybrid Samoan identity and Siva Samoa

The identity of an island-born Samoan is embedded in the Samoan way of life, *Fa’asamoa*. Pratt (1862: 131) defines *fa’asamoa* as “an act according to Samoan customs.” Tagoilelagi (1995: 4) explains *fa’asamoa* is a term that outlines the “political, social, economic, cultural, and spiritual system of the Samoan people”. It is without a doubt the foundation of who a Samoan is (Anae 1997:132). *Fa’asamoa* provides a foundation for Samoan people with values surrounding culture, spirituality, beliefs, and customs (Seiuli 2013). In the Samoan hierarchical social system, chiefs and elders hold the positions of authority and respect and when a person challenges that system, it is considered disrespectful to the system, to *fa’asamoa*.

The construction of Samoan identity in New Zealand, like Pacific identity, is shaped by complex historical and contemporary social, economic, cultural and political factors. In seminal research into Samoan identity construction, Anae (1997) highlights that a New Zealand born identity can equip Samoan people to negotiate these factors that shape their ethnic identity. She writes,

For NZ-borns with a secured identity, to take on a NZ-born identity therefore, is to take on both the insider and outsider versions of the identity story, and the NZ-born label represents a clear affirmation and reconciliation of both identity stories (Anae 1997: 135).

In this way, New Zealand born Samoans can be seen as having the best and worst of both worlds; growing up within a western education system, yet aware of two different knowledge systems. This tension can lead to exclusion within their families and communities as they may fail to perform the required cultural markers.

However, the notion of an ‘authentic’ Samoan identity is being challenged within the Samoan community (Grainger 2006: 45) and Anae (1997: 135) explains that New Zealand-born Samoans are negotiating a hybrid identity that incorporates their experience with the intergenerational stories and cultural knowledge.

Such cultural and identity negotiations are occurring through the practice of *Siva Samoa*, Samoan dance. It is a dance that is characterized through graceful and delicate arm and hand movement. Traditionally, it was performed by *Matai* (chiefs) but now in a *fa’asamoa* setting it is performed by a *taupou* (daughter of the chief). Different forms of traditional Samoan dancing include the *taualuga*, *siva afi*, *sasa*, *māuluulu*, *laumei* and *tautasi*. Different dance types are distinguished by a combination of music and movements used by dancers. *Siva Samoa* has developed over the past few decades. One significant factor contributing to its development over time is the influence Christianity has over all facets of Samoan life. Radakovich (2004: 11) explains that development of *Siva Samoa* is also a result of cultural exchange, cultural evolution, and individual creativity. Through the migration of Samoans around the world and the increasing number of Samoans living in diasporic communities, *Siva Samoa* is continually undergoing developmental changes. It is within these communities that we find variations of *Siva Samoa* performed in different settings such as festivals, birthdays, and theatre. New performance contexts, individual creativity, and the Samoanisation of foreign elements, among many other things will continue to influence Samoan dance (Radakovich 2004).

In the next section of the article, we introduce Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis and describe vertical identity production, an analytical tool within it that is useful to analyze the multiple layers of discourse that identity.

3 Multimodal (inter)action analysis

Multimodal (Inter)action Analysis (MIA) is a methodological and analytical framework that was developed to analyze the actions and interactions that social actors perform and engage in (Norris 2011: 35). MIA is founded on the principle that all actions are social actions because human beings are social animals, in that, in order to survive, human beings need other human beings and all actions have been learned from within a social environment (Norris 2019: 32). Within MIA the unit of analysis is the mediated action which highlights “the person or persons in the moment of taking an action along with the mediational means which are used by them” (Scollon 2001). By examining people as they use mediational means in order to perform social actions the connection between these aspects (the actor, the action and the tools they utilize) can be examined and each aspect can be heuristically analyzed in order to reach a deeper understanding of social action (Norris 2013: 280).

As social actors interact, they perform multiple mediated actions (Scollon 1998). MIA differentiates these into lower-level actions, higher-level actions and frozen actions. A lower-level action is the smallest meaning unit of a mode. Higher-level actions consist of numerous related lower-level actions and are produced at different levels of scale (Norris 2017: 130). Furthermore, the research question being explored by the researcher defines the higher-level actions examined (Norris 2014: 190). Frozen actions refer to actions that are embedded in objects and/or the environment. Conducting a micro analysis of the modes used to produce higher-level actions can make visible the discourses and practices that intersect with the mediated actions and mediational means within a site of engagement. A mode is defined as “a system of mediated action with regularities,” (Norris 2020: 16). Embodied communicative modes can include spoken language, proxemic behavior, posture, gesture, head movement and gaze (Norris 2020).

3.1 Vertical identity production

Also, in MIA there are three vertical layers of discourse that Norris (2011: 180) identifies, and these are relevant for the production of identity. They include the outer layers, the intermediary layers, and the central layers of discourse. Social actors have discourse enforced upon them within each layer as they enforce discourses on others. Disconnecting and analyzing the above three layers of discourse aids the analysis of a social actor’s

identity elements and can reveal discrepancies between them. Matelau-Doherty and Norris (2022: 321) utilize the analytical tools, vertical identity production and site of engagement to illustrate the complex interplay between vertical layers of discourses, wider societal discourses, identity and well-being, “just as concrete layers of discourse and the concretely linked identity elements produced impact a person’s well-being, so do the ephemeral practices and discourse that shape and largely enforce particular ways of producing identity elements in a society.”

3.2 Central layers of discourse

The central layers of discourse produce a social actor’s immediate identity element (Norris 2011: 194). The immediate identity element is constructed through the mediated actions and the practices that the social actor performs and participates in. For example, a choreographer teaching another dancer a dance is producing central layers of discourse that relate to their immediate choreographer and dancer identity element through the actions that they are performing. It is within this central layer of discourse that a social actor produces a strong sense of agency. Social actors choose the actions that they perform and the way in which they perform them, but at the same time are limited in their choices by the discourses that make up their habitus.

3.3 Intermediary layers of discourse

The intermediary layers of discourse produce the continuous identity element of a social actor. The intermediary layers are made up of people from the varying networks that the social actor belongs to. These networks produce the identity of a social actor through their implicit and explicit rules and mediating forms (Norris 2011:191). Higher-level actions and practices performed by social actors within these networks are (co)constructed and therefore the social actors (co)develop continuous identity elements. Social actors force intermediary layers of discourse onto their networks as well as having them forced upon themselves through recurring interactions. Returning to the example of the choreographer, the action of teaching the dancer (co)develops the continuous dancer identity element for both the dancer and choreographer. The continuous choreographer identity element is also (co)developed.

3.4 Outer layers of discourse

The outer layers of discourse contribute to the general identity element of a social actor. These outer layers of discourse include forces from society that impact the social actor. The rules and laws, institutions and media that exist in society, all of which develop a social actor’s identity. There can be numerous outer layers of discourse relating to one identity element and these layers can intersect, enforce similar identity elements or differ hugely (Norris 2011: 181). The general identity elements that come from the outer layers of discourse are largely non-agentive. In the example of the choreographer and the dancer, compare whether the choreographer is devising a dance for a renowned festival or for a secondary school production. These two different institutions (the dance festival and the secondary school) produce diverse outer layers of discourse that may shape the general choreographer and/or dancer identity elements of both the choreographer and the dancer.

4 Wider research project

The data discussed in this article comes from a wider research project whereby the objective was to conduct a video ethnographic study of six female artists in order to explore the ethnic and creative identity construction of Māori and Pacific female artists. The overarching question for this wider research project was: What does a

multimodal analysis of creative practice reveal about the construction of hybrid and fluid ethnic identity elements? Six participants were recruited to be part of this research project. The criteria for inclusion in the research was that they identify as a creative practitioner, be female and be of either Māori or Pacific ethnic descent.

4.1 Data analysis

Collection and analysis of the data followed the five systematic phases of analysis outlined by Norris (2019: 271). These phases include data collection, delineating data, selecting data pieces for micro analysis, transcribing data and using analytical tools. After video ethnography data collection, higher-level actions were demarcated within the videos. Doing this made the mediated actions within each data set visible and revealed patterns of mediated actions across participants. Further analysis of the higher-level actions was conducted using vertical identity production in order to explore the connection between the participants' mediated actions and layers of discourse.

Then, based on the emerging patterns, video excerpts were selected for transcription and micro analysis. In order to create multimodal transcripts of the video excerpts, multiple transcripts were created to depict individual communicative modes, for example, proxemics, gesture, posture, or gaze. Then these individual transcripts were collated. Lastly, spoken language was added to the images, prosodic behavior indicated by the font size and 'waviness.' The final transcripts depict the entirety of the higher-level actions being analyzed.

4.2 Data collection with Ufitia

Ufitia is an artist whose practice interweaves *Siva Samoa* and contemporary dance. Her creative practice derives from her lived experiences as part of the Samoan diaspora in New Zealand and navigating between the integration of her culture and practice. Her research and creative practice have reflected her journey of constructing a hybrid New Zealand Samoan identity. Ufitia went through different variations of Samoan dance and what it meant to her using a Pacific and western lens. Her first dance work 'AVE' explored ideologies around cultural belonging and the challenges she faces as a Pacific woman of the diaspora, showcasing traditional *Siva Samoa*. Her newer work 'Tofa Si O'u Tinā' is a fusion of *Siva Samoa* and contemporary dance creating its own body of movement which better reflected Ufitia and where she sits as part of the diaspora.

In this article, we are focusing on video ethnography data collected within two sites of engagement where Ufitia and other dancers were rehearsing for a dance festival. The first site of engagement occurred within a creative community space where Ufitia was directing three dancers, two that she had previously worked with and one new dancer. During this session, they were focused on teaching the new dancer a dance piece that they had performed previously, as a starting point for the choreography of the new piece. The second site of engagement is taken from the next data collection session. There, Ufitia and two of the dancers from the first rehearsal were rehearsing choreographed movement and further devising the dance piece. The two video excerpts extracted from recordings taken during these two data collection sessions were selected for transcription and micro analysis as they each contain interactions and actions relating to *Siva Samoa*. Furthermore, central, intermediary, and outer layers of discourse pertaining to Samoan identity are visible within each site of engagement.

4.3 New Zealand born flick

The first site of engagement to be analyzed is the first of many dance rehearsals that Ufitia held, in preparation for a dance piece that she was choreographing for a Pacific dance festival. She explained that she wanted to draw on a previously performed dance piece as the starting point for this show. This dance piece had included herself and two of the three dancers depicted in the transcript. Figure 1 depicts the dancers, circled in colours



Figure 1: The dancers and the colour of their transcribed utterances seen in Figure 2.

which reflect the transcribed utterances in Figure 2. The dancer circled in red in Figure 1 is new to the group and is learning the dance piece. The front dancer circled in yellow is teaching a part of the dance to the new dancer. Ufitia is circled in white.

The transcript begins after the front dancer (circled in yellow) has shown a section of the dance that incorporates *Siva Samoa*, and they are about to repeat the section of the dance. The three dancers are facing the window, as they are using it as a mirror. In image 1 of the transcript, she is saying “let’s go” as a prompt to move through the section of dance again. In image 2 of the transcript, the new dancer (circled in red) gazes at her feet and she follows this gaze shift with the utterance “ahm can you be specific to the feet?” In image 4, the lead dancer performs a gaze shift as she looks at the new dancer’s feet. She then moves into position in image 6, her hands raised and one foot ready to step as she says “ahm, just the flick,” the other dancers gaze at her feet. In images 7 to 9 she holds the position as she says, “but not like that hardcore New Zealand born.” The other dancers laugh and in image 10 Ufitia is seen responding by questioning “hardcore?” In images 11 and 12 the lead dancer repeats “New Zealand born flick that goes like” as she performs the hand and foot movement, laughing along with Ufitia and the new dancer. She then expands in images 13 and 14, “just real graceful,” emphasizing the word “real”. She then performs the hand and foot movement again in images 15 to 16 as she says, “and not all the way up either.” In image 17 she performs the movement a third time as she explains, “so just here” before she moves through the movement in image 18 and begins to count.

4.4 New Zealand born flick: vertical identity production

Within this site of engagement, the layers of discourse that shape Ufitia’s Samoan identity construction can be heuristically delineated and analyzed. At the outer layers there are wider, more ephemeral discourses relating to being Samoan and to being of Pacific descent in New Zealand which are shaped by the social-time-place in which this interaction occurred. Wider colonial and racism discourses, remnant of New Zealand’s colonial history with several Pacific nations, and the racist Dawn Raids practice of the 1970s, contribute to the general Pacific identity element for Pacific people in New Zealand. These wider ephemeral discourses are also reflected in the more concrete outer layers of discourse produced through the institutions that deliver the annual Pacific dance festival which Ufitia’s piece was being developed for, The Pacific Dance Fono. The Pacific Dance Fono is organized by Pacific Dance New Zealand (PDNZ) in collaboration with Dance Aotearoa New Zealand (DANZ). It was first held in 2006 as a forum for Pacific dance practitioners to explore issues unique to the Pacific dance community in New Zealand. PDNZ was then formed in 2010 and is an organization aimed at developing and showcasing the talent of emerging Pacific dancers. By deliberately creating space for Pacific choreographers and dancers to produce art that represents their experience in New Zealand, the Pacific Dance Fono and PDNZ produce outer layers of



Figure 2: Vertical identity production visible within the first site of engagement.

discourse relating to representation, in challenge to wider racism and marginalization practices and discourses. They also produce outer layers of discourse that counter the exclusionary practices of Pacific communities in which the New Zealand born Pacific experience can be treated as inauthentic. For Ufitia, these institutions produce agentic outer layers of discourse that challenge discourse that might position her as an outsider within her Samoan community, as *papalagi* and support the construction of a hybrid general Samoan identity element.

At the intermediary layers of discourse, the mediated actions performed by the interlocutors produce discourse that shapes the construction of Ufitia's (and each other's) continuous Samoan identity element. Within Figure 2 the dancer circled in white is shown performing the action of ridiculing the 'New Zealand born flick' in *Siva Samoa* and her mockery implies that New Zealand born Samoans are unable to perform the *Siva Samoa* correctly. She produces this discourse through her use of spoken language, her facial expression, her intonation and her hand and foot movements. It is especially evident in a comparison between images 11 and 17. In image 11, her hand, foot and head movement are much more exaggerated and she is seen laughing whereas in image 17 her facial expression is serious and her movements are less exaggerated. This comparison is reinforced by her utterance 'just real graceful' as she begins to show the correct way to perform the foot movement (seen in image 14). The response of the interlocutors to this mediated action is laughter. The intermediary layers of discourse produced through this mediated action and the laughter of the observers is one that questions the authenticity of the New Zealand born Samoan's performance of *Siva Samoa* and positions them as outsiders. Although we are analyzing the actions of one dancer in this site of engagement, it is important to highlight that these intermediary layers of discourse are an extension of the wider challenges and

issues facing New Zealand born Samoans and are not a reflection of this one dancer's character. However, that does not negate the potential negative impacts these intermediary layers of discourse can have on the continuous Samoan identity element for Ufitia and the interlocutors within this site of engagement.

At the central layers of discourse, Ufitia is performing the mediated action of challenging the intermediary layers. Although she laughs during this interaction, image 10 shows her saying 'hardcore' with rising intonation, questioning the dancer's use of the term. By doing so, she is producing counter discourse, questioning the implication that New Zealand born Samoans are unable to perform *Siva Samoa* correctly. This mediated action contributes to the central layers of discourse that produce Ufitia's immediate Samoan identity.

4.5 A challenge

In the second site of engagement, Ufitia and two of the same dancers are continuing to rehearse their dance piece. It is later in the devising process with much of the dance choreographed. Figure 3 shows the dancers that were present during the site of engagement. Ufitia is circled in white, and the dancer that was teaching *Siva Samoa* during the previous session is again circled in yellow and the third dancer is circled in red.

Prior to the beginning of the transcript seen in Figure 4, the front dancer performed a solo *Siva Samoa* piece which Ufitia and the third dancer observed. After which, the front dancer turned to face them. Image 1 in the transcript depicts Ufitia pointing and gazing at the front dancer as she says "I'm gonna give you a challenge." The front dancer shifts her posture to face Ufitia, walks in her direction as she asks "What?" She then laughs as she says "Girl," lengthening the word out through emphasis, as she walks away from Ufitia and Ufitia repositions her body, so she is standing upstage and facing both of the dancers. The front dancer then walks back towards Ufitia and repeats the question "What?" Ufitia replies, "Just a, I think like what Giles said, like to play around with the Siva." Image 10 shows the third dancer increasing the proxemic distance between herself, Ufitia and the front dancer, giving them space to discuss the challenge. The front dancer asks, "What like the, all the parts?" and then the third dancer moves back towards them. Ufitia begins to answer, "Hmmm no," at which point the third dancer suggests "I think mostly, you need to drag it out." Image 14 shows the front dancer and the third dancer gazing towards one another, before the front dancer performs a hand movement and clarifies "like these, like these?" Ufitia adds "you can even go like" as she performs a head and hand beat movement which is visible in image 18. The front dancer looks at Ufitia as the third dancer also suggests "you can split it up into this one" as she performs the suggested movement. Images 19–20 depict the two dancers holding the movement as Ufitia suggests, "yeah or break it," as she observes them.



Figure 3: A still depicting dancers and the colour of their transcribed spoken language seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Vertical identity production visible within the second site of engagement.

4.6 A challenge: vertical identity production

Like with the first site of engagement, vertical identity production is an analytical tool that can be utilised to analyse the three layers of discourse produced within this site of engagement which shape the construction of Samoan identity for Ufitia and the interlocutors. There is little difference in the outer layers of discourse produced within the first and second site of engagement, however, the intermediary and central layers of discourse differ greatly.

The intermediary layers of discourse visible within this interaction are again produced through the actions and interactions of the present interlocutors, the other dancers. However, whereas in the first site of engagement the intermediary layers of discourse potentially negatively impacted the construction of Ufitia's continuous

Samoan identity element, here the intermediary layers of discourse potentially enhance the construction of a positive, hybrid continuous Samoan identity element. Within the first site of engagement, intermediary layers of discourse invalidated the New Zealand born Samoan's performance of *Siva Samoa*, but here, the interlocutors produce a New Zealand born interpretation of *Siva Samoa*. After performing her *Siva Samoa*, the dancer (circled in yellow in Figure 3) was challenged by Ufitia and the other dancer to "play around with the Siva." Her initial hesitation to do so was shown through her spoken language, prosody, proxemics, facial expression, and body posture. She first asks "what?" as she walks towards Ufitia. She then replies "girl" with rising intonation as she walks away from her laughing. This modal configuration suggests that she is unwilling to "play around" with her more traditional performance of *Siva Samoa*. However, when she moves back towards Ufitia and repeats that question "what?" she is opening the higher-level action of collaborating with Ufitia and the other dancer to perform a more contemporary interpretation. By collaborating with them in this way, she produces intermediary layers of discourse that validate a less traditional performance of *Siva Samoa* and contribute to the construction of a hybrid Samoan identity element.

At the central layers of discourse, Ufitia also contributes discourse that enables the construction of a hybrid immediate Samoan identity element. She does so by performing the mediating action of challenging the dancer to "play around with the Siva." She uses spoken language, proxemics, eye contact and gesture to produce this mediated action. She performs a deictic gesture, pointing at the dancer and maintaining eye contact as she says "I'm gonna give you a challenge." In image 4, we can see that her gesture shifts from a closed palm pointing gesture to an open palm reaching gesture. This gestural shift is in response to the portrayed hesitancy of the dancer to engage with the challenge Ufitia offered. Although Ufitia is producing a hybrid immediate Samoan identity element through her actions, she seems to be reluctant to enforce this onto the other dancer. However, this changes once the dancer opens up the higher-level action of collaborating with Ufitia and the other dancer and also when the other dancer begins to contribute intermediary layers of discourse that support the central layers of discourse being produced by Ufitia.

4.7 Vertical identity production, dissonance and overlap

By focusing on the production of Ufitia's Samoan identity element within two sites of engagement, the layers of discourse that shape her general, continuous and immediate Samoan identity element can be delineated and by doing so, we can demonstrate where there is dissonance and overlap.

Figure 5 depicts the three layers of discourse within the first site of engagement that are contributing to the construction of Ufitia's Samoan identity element. At the outer layers, the concrete layers of discourse produced in connection with the institutions that deliver the Pacific Dance Fono contribute to the construction of a hybrid general Samoan identity element. This overlaps with the central layers of discourse produced through Ufitia's actions. Through these layers, a hybrid Samoan identity element is validated. However, there is dissonance with the intermediary layers of discourse that are enforcing a traditional continuous Samoan identity element, whereby the New Zealand born Samoan experience is invalidated and inauthentic.

In contrast, Figure 6 depicts an overlap between the outer, intermediary and central layers of discourse present within the second site of engagement. A hybrid Samoan identity element is produced through the institutions that deliver the dance festival, the actions of the interlocutors and the actions performed by Ufitia herself.

5 Conclusion

The construction of Samoan identity in New Zealand, like Pacific identity, is shaped by complex historical and contemporary social, economic, cultural and political factors. However, creative work can provide a forum for the construction of emerging hybrid and fluid Samoan identity and allow for the exploration of discourses that shape it. Such cultural and identity negotiations are occurring through the practice of *Siva Samoa*. As we have

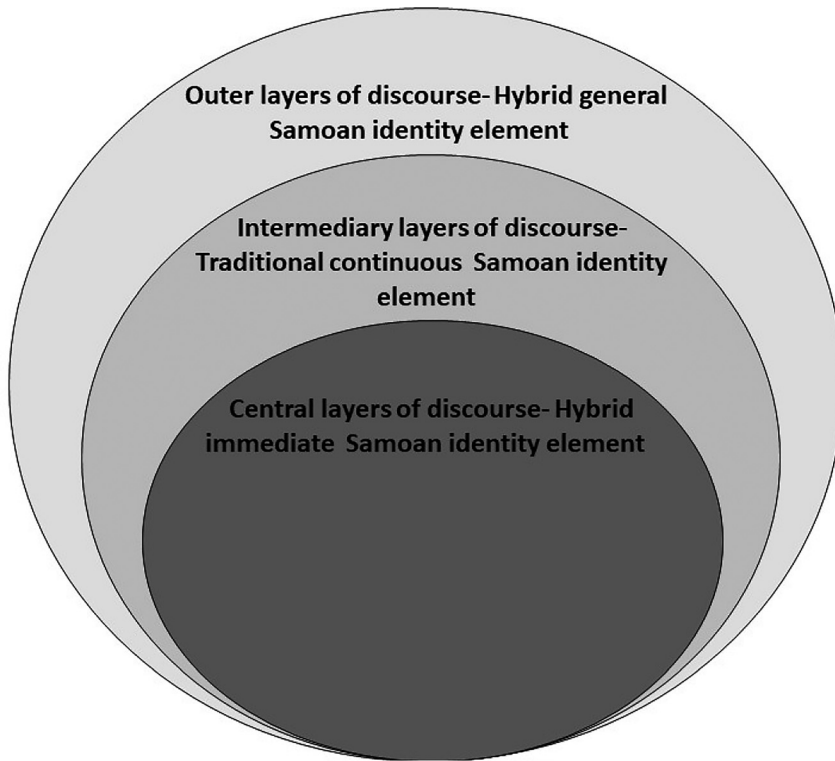


Figure 5: Vertical identity production within the first site of engagement.

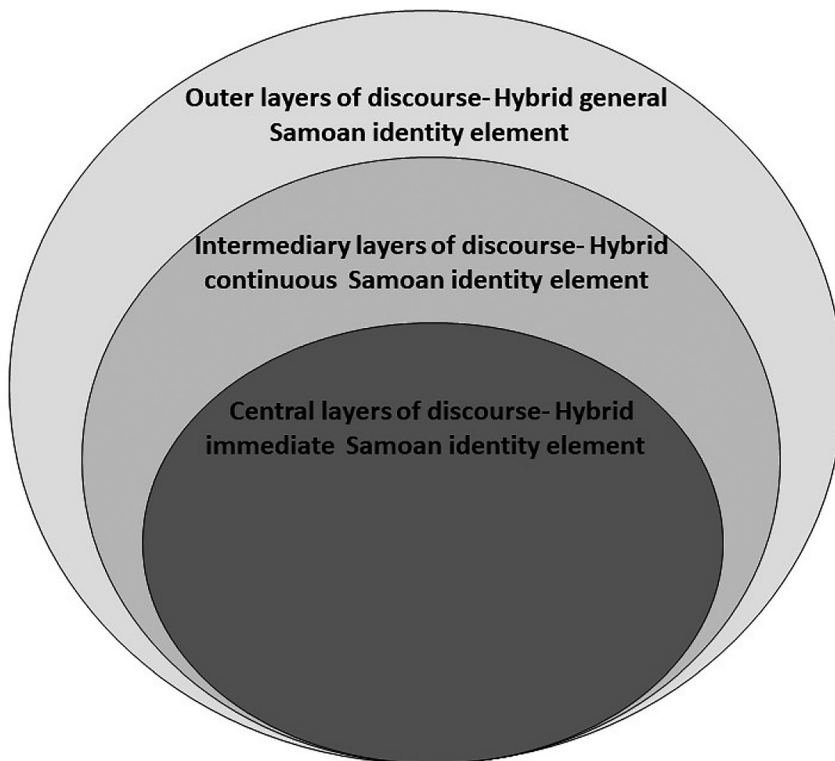


Figure 6: Vertical identity production within the second site of engagement.

tried to demonstrate in the above analysis, for Ufitia, there are multiple outer, intermediary and central layers of discourse that shape her Samoan identity element. By comparing her vertical identity production within two sites of engagement, we are able to see where there is dissonance and overlap between her general, continuous and immediate Samoan identity elements. By doing so, we contribute to wider discussion on constructing positive and agentive ethnic identities for Samoan and Pacific communities in New Zealand. We also make visible the ways in which creative practice, more specifically dance and Siva Samoa are significant sites of identity negotiation. The two dance rehearsals which have been analyzed here, became forums in which Ufitia and the other dancers were able to examine and explore their Samoan identity elements and when performed at the Pacific Dance Fono, a way to share and contribute outer layers of discourse that potentially shape the Samoan identity and Pacific identity construction of others.

A limitation of this project is one that impacts on many multimodal research studies and that is the use of video recording as data collection and data. Norris (2019: 73) notes that all video recording data is incomplete as it can only record what is occurring at a particular time, within a particular place and from a particular angle or angles. On the one hand, the analysis presented within this article was made possible by having access to video data but on the other hand was limited by the video data that was available. We aim to taper this limitation by working as researcher and co-researcher, bringing two perspectives to our analysis and discussion.

For future research into Samoan and/or Pacific identity construction in New Zealand, a similar research design could be applied but instead working with a larger participant group and with participants who have diverse occupations. Doing so may reveal discourses that shape the immediate, continuous and general ethnic identity elements of participants across gender and/or age and/or occupations. Such research would contribute significantly to wider discussion on positive and agentive ethnic identity construction for Samoan and Pacific communities in New Zealand.

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