



**BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA**

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**FACULTAD DE LENGUAS**

**A Case Study on Gender and Writing in an Elementary  
school: Writing for a Gender-specific Audience**

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Languages  
for the degree of

Maestría en Enseñanza del Inglés

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Puebla, Puebla

February, 2020

**“A Case Study on Gender and Writing in an Elementary school: Writing for a Gender-specific Audience”**

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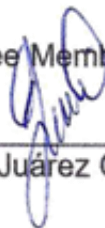
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Puebla

February, 2020

# **A Case Study on Gender and Writing in an Elementary school: Writing for a Gender-specific Audience**

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to the BUAP MEI's teachers who gave me the golden opportunity to finally achieve this project on the topic of gender, which also helped me in doing real research and I came to know about so many new things. I am really thankful to them. My completion of this project could not have been accomplished without the support of Teresa Castineira who worked with me at the beginning of this mission.

I cannot express enough thanks to my committee for their support and availability. I offer my sincere appreciation for the learning opportunities provided.

I am extremely thankful to my parents who have always been there. The countless times they have been my support and motivation will never be forgotten.

I also want to say thanks to my sister and my niece who are continuously trying to help me with little details like not being noisy, and last but not least, to my friends, I am sure they will continue in my life for a long time.

## **Abstract**

This thesis reports on a case study on gender and writing by comparing and analyzing stories written by six-year-old children focus on a specific audience. The study was carried out by taking advantage of an interest in gender research. Its primary aim was to identify how girls and boys try to accomplish the female and male reading necessities when becoming writers and trying to write stories for them and what characteristic these stories exhibit. Moreover, the study subject was to see if the process of gender skewing would feature in the stories and how gender roles influence them with their decisions about what to include on them.

The research findings revealed that it was clear from the discussion with the children and their written stories that the majority of the children had clear ideas about what sort of stories girls and boys find interesting. They all seemed keen to demonstrate their awareness of gender roles to others. Children need to know that they conform to the roles assigned them and boys, in particular, do not like to be associated with anything they consider to be feminine, nevertheless, girls tend to think that equality must be present in their stories.

These young children were able to assess the needs of boys and girls in relation to the content of stories. They were clear about their audiences' preferences. The assessment appears to come from their own interests, which are based on popular culture and are therefore highly gendered. Most of the children chose subjects for their stories that correlated to their list of the interests of girls and boys.

In overall conceptual terms, the study has contributed to our understanding of the particularities and influence of gender schema and gender identity into writing. In addition, this study provides a significant source of information for further research in the area since it is a

product of analyzing, reading and organizing original material that provides valuable information to the gender researching field.

# **A Case Study on Gender and Writing in an Elementary school: Writing for a Gender-specific Audience**

## **1. 0 Introduction to the problem**

Different social factors have significant effects on our relationships: attitudes, values, culture, norms, and personal characteristics during different levels of our lives. One of these factors is related to the role that gender plays in our identification inside society. It also influences the perception and the structure that men and women have about the world. According to Howe (2013), this world is understood through language, an important tool that provides us with the ability to make changes and to find a place within it.

As stated by Gosh (2015), all of this contributes to the way of behaving with the opposite sex from childhood. By the time children are in primary school, they become aware of their gender identity and the implications it has in their relations with the opposite sex (ibid.). This awareness makes girls and boys develop different likes for reading, listening, watching and writing. Preferences that most of the time varies from one to another gender.

This research intends to identify if and how these things appear in children's writing. White (1990) studied gender skewing in English writing adolescents, and Marsh (1998) looked at children's writing and they found that both groups of the study had strongly fixed gender conceptions. Marsha also states that “[f]rom a very early age, children seem locked into gendered constraints which affect many aspects of their writing” (Marsh, 1998, p.10).

Regarding the purpose of Marsh' study, which was to see how gender conceptions influence six years old children's writing, this case study will be in charge of looking for similar

gender notions when writing stories for each gender written by six-year-old Spanish speaking students of elementary school.

### **1.1 Significance of the study**

The analysis and the results of the present research are intended to contribute to the field of qualitative research regarding gender and genre. Besides, this study aims to see if the process of gender skewing would feature in the stories produced by six-year-old Mexican children.

This phenomenon was observed by Marsh in 1998, in her study with six years old British children when writing stories to the opposite gender. And also, by White in 1990, who examined stories written by nine to twelve years old Canadian for a younger audience. They both found patterns along with the girls' and boys' writing, which indicated that gendered worlds are constructed very early on in our lives (Marsh, 1998).

Therefore, the present study is looking at the same issue, in a different culture (Mexican culture), with children of a different language (Spanish), and in a different time (the studies mentioned above were accomplished more than twenty years ago). All of these differences will provide to the present study more reliability and validity. Moreover, as said by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) to study gender in any field is not just a cause, but an effect. The results of the present research will provide the effects that gender has on writing

### **1.2 Context of the research**

As it was mentioned above, gender is an important criterion in identifying ourselves inside society. However, it is important to know about the negotiations of the subject positions

within the existing gender systems, and the production of individual gender positions through gender discourses (Järviluoma, Moisala & Vikko, 2003).

One kind of these gender discourses is made through writing because it might express in many ways what kind of person you are; but also it reflects the bases upon our work, our learning, and our intellect could be evaluated or accepted. Writing requires that a writer anticipates the reader's needs. The ability to do so might imply intellectual flexibility and maturity from the writer. But overall, writing fosters the ability to explain a position to readers (Chappel, 2007). As can be seen, it is crucial to carefully analyze gender differences, in order to know how this knowledge might help with the formation of identities, simultaneously as an individual and a social project.

This study attempts to address if gender skewing permeates male and female's writing through the awareness of their gender identities.

### **1.3 Background of the researcher**

As a student of a Master's degree program, I have learnt many interesting topics about researching, and one of those topics was related to gender in discourse analysis. I read many articles about how gender could influence the way men and women use signs, instructions, requests and other language areas, revealing the position of the sexes in our social system.

I also noticed that most of my teachers recommended me to think about our readers when writing a paper. I did understand that writers always have to think of their audiences they want to read their papers. Finally, one of my teachers shared with me a very enjoyable article where the points mentioned above, gender and audience, were taken into account during the development of a study, but this time with children as writers of little stories, previously explained.

Because all of the reasons above, it was interesting to know if similar results could be gotten as the ones that were presented in Marsh's study, since this study is carried out in another country, in this case, Mexico, where the culture and kind of education implies many differences in comparison with British education, but also since this is another time where gender differences are trying to disappear.

#### **1.4 Location of the research**

This research was carried out in a private bilingual elementary school in central Mexico. The school was selected because the researcher had easy access to it and the availability to interview the students, but also to ask them to write a little story for boys and girls.

The participants were randomly selected. All participants were native Spanish speakers who have been studying English since kindergarten. The group comprised a sample of ten children that were studying second grade of the elementary level; they were five girls and five boys. Their names were changed to keep their anonymity.

The decision of working with this group of children was because they were able to write, but also because they represented the same kind of participants that Marsh (1998) had in her study. These children knew what a story was and they could read fluently.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

In order to find out how children raise their awareness about their audience's needs in writing, the following questions were addressed:

**RQ1** What characteristics do short stories written by female children to a female audience exhibit?

**RQ2** What characteristics do short stories written by female children to a male audience exhibit?

**RQ3** What characteristics do short stories written by male children to a male audience exhibit?

**RQ4** What characteristics do short stories written by male children to a female audience exhibit?

**RQ5** How gender skewing permeates male and female's writing through the awareness of their gender identities?

**RQ6** How is children's writing influenced by gender roles?

## **1.6 Content and organization**

In this chapter, the statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study are provided. There is also information about the place where the research was carried out. The whole chapter provides a general idea about what the researcher expected to do along with the research and what were the bases of the study.

The outcomes of this study might provide the identification of a similar result to the Marsh and White's paper, regarding gender skewing in a different culture, language and time. It also might raise awareness about the importance of knowing the needs of an audience when writing, in this case, its focus on gender but this study could provide a base for a further investigation about audience awareness in writing.

The following chapter will discuss these issues in more detail through literature review and discussion of the theoretical framework that support the main topics related to gender and writing.

Afterwards, in Chapter 3, the methodology of the study is described, as well as the description of the data collection procedures and instruments used to obtain the data for analysis. In Chapter 4, the data and the findings of the study, as well as the results are presented. Finally, in Chapter 5, the conclusions about this research are included, along with some recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Chapter Overview**

As explained in chapter 1, this study attempts to explore the evidence and manifestation of early gender differences featured in stories written by six years old children. To make this even clearer, the theoretical framework is presented in chapter 2, by providing a description and discussion of the issues and data that are related to this phenomenon. Hence, in this chapter, several concepts, theories and aspects of gender will be understood. Additionally, in the same sense, it will explain other important concepts underpinning this study.

### **2.1 Introduction**

During the last thirty years, attributable to the different women's movements, within the larger study of language and society, language and gender have become a stimulating area of research and theory development. Gender studies and language studies are both interdisciplinary academic fields. (Xia, 2013). The field of gender has moved further than just the descriptions of apparent or real differences between men and women's speech or power hierarchies. There has also been some avoidance to separate the social world into two and only two sexes or genders (ibid.). Furthermore, researchers such as Holmes and Meyerhoff (2008) have tried to avoid the assumption that categorizing any given individual as female or male, necessarily determines or predicts characteristics of their linguistic interactions.

However, the fact that gender as a social category matters has not changed at all. There is a piece of broad evidence to suggest that gender is a fundamental component of people's social world. Many people find it essential to be able to have the ability to separate what is around them

into female or male, and they find linguistic or social behaviors as disturbing threats which affect the stability of this important distinction (de la Sablonnière, 2017).

According to Holmes & Meyerhoff (2003, p.8):

Analyses of gender and language tend to start with people's participation in their immediate and most salient social groups to the extent that those analyses attempt to relate generalizations about larger trends in society to specific evidence of how gender is understood, contested, and absorbed as a category for social membership in the very 'local' domains from which the analysis started.

In light of this, this study sets out to understand the phenomenon of gender skewing in a group of ten children through their written stories. As stated by Mathu (2008) children learn about gender and how to 'do gender' because it is a central part of the organization of society. Children "learn culturally appropriate ways of thinking and being as they follow routine rituals and respond to the everyday demands of the world in which they live. ... [T]o be considered competent members of society, they must learn how to fit in as appropriately gendered individuals." (Mathu & Jain, 2008, p. 30). According to this, it is interesting to see how all these 'rituals' interfere in their writing, and more interesting it will be to know how these 'rituals' of the opposite gender will be reflected in their stories.

Before going further, it is necessary to clarify the concept of gender and its implications in the present study. Below, there is an explanation of all the factors that are related to the field of gender.

## **2.2 Gender**

Gender has always been an important issue that is present in almost all the things around us. Gender is embedded in-depth in our institutions, actions, beliefs, and desires that it appears to be completely natural. Even the words that we use in our everyday communication have a gender. Nowadays, it has become more important than in previous times because "equality

between men and women in all aspects of life, from access to health and education to political power and earning potential, is fundamental to whether and how societies thrive”. (Breene, 2016, p 2). For this reason, it is important to discern the meaning of gender and the influence it has in our behavior, our preferences, and in our society.

In the fifth century BC, the term ‘gender’ was used for the first time by the Greek Sophists to describe the threefold classification to name the things as masculine, feminine, and intermediate or neutral (Lyons, 1968 cited in Archer & Lloyd, 2002 p.17). However, nowadays the concept of gender as it is employed in social science is relatively new and its meaning has been varied.

Various dictionaries offer the earlier meanings of the word. It is defined as a grammatical term, used to categorize nouns in male, female or neuter. Its definition in the dictionary states that this can be actual or recognized, which give an immediate trace to the way that gender categories have been central to the different ways to represent the world. Through this basic classification, humans tend to divide and categorize the perceived reality (Archer & Lloyd, 2007).

At this point, it is interesting to see if the children participants without all the background that adults have in doing divisions, also tend to categorize their worlds in gender terms. Because as Mikkola (2017) says, gender is a cultural phenomenon, gendered forms of conduct are learned, and therefore they also could be unlearned.

Regarding the cultural phenomenon, Scott (1988, p.18 cited in Ainsworth 2012) enunciates that gender is “... a social category imposed on a sexed body”, so he disagrees that ‘gender’ is not just a cultural learning fact, but it is something that is enforced by society. Because of this, a more accurate explanation of gender could be the one given by West

& Zimmerman (1987, cited in Eckert & McConnell, 2003, p.10) “[g]ender is not something we are born with and not something we have, but something we do”. Also, Gormley (2015) adds that gender is something we do, something we perform.

To sum up, gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of women and men that are created inside the core of the family, society and culture. The concept of gender also includes the expectations about the characteristics, aptitudes, attitudes and actions that men and women should have. These role expectations are learned, besides they can change over time and they vary within and between cultures (Aitken et al., 2015).

Although the different explanations about the concept of gender above do not express a real connection with the biological fact, the debate about the difference between sex and gender should be presented, to have a clearer idea about the correlation and the difference of these two concepts.

### **2.2.1 Sex and gender**

Although there has been a discussion between the concepts of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ and its interrelation, there are some authors that claim that these words refer to different conceptions and see a notable difference, while others set out that these concepts should not be seen as two dissimilar notions.

Different old dictionaries show that gender was only used as equivalent to sex in a jocular manner (Yaghoubi-Notash, et. al, 2020); however, it has now entirely replaced sex in politically correct speech, except when sexuality is meant (as in the sex act). Thus, when a form asks whether a person is a man or a woman, it is now customary to use gender rather than sex.

As stated by Lloyd (2002) many psychologists habitually use the term gender differences rather than sex differences. The purpose of this change of usage was to emphasize those distinctions between men and women arise largely from cultural rather than biological sources, which might be implied by the term sex difference. Gender was seen as the cultural part of what it is to be a man or a woman. Little (2013) emphasizes that words such as womanly or manly and masculine or feminine were viewed as not being connected with a person's biological sex, but as describing culturally variable characteristics. Gender was therefore cultural

Feminists tend to argue that many differences between women and men were socially produced and, therefore, changeable. Gayle Rubin (1975, p,165 cited in Mikkola, 2017) uses the phrase 'sex/gender system' to describe "a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention"

Also, there is reason to maintain a distinction between the terms sex and gender when discussing findings from social psychology (Morgenroth and Ryan, 2018) Following Macoby (1988), Bem (1989) and Eagly (1995), sex refers to the binary categories male and female, and gender, as Tolland and Evans (2019), stated it is a social construction relating to behaviours and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity.

According to Eckert & McConnell (2003), sex refers to a biological categorization based on the reproductive potential, while gender is the social elaboration of biological sex. They establish that people tend to think of gender as a result of nurture, whereas sex is simply given by biology. Sex is based on a combination of anatomical, endocrinal and chromosomal features, and the selection among these criteria for sex assignment is one male or female. Thus, the definition of the biological categories of male and female, and people's understanding of themselves and others as male and female, is ultimately social.

Following Fausto-Sterling (2000, cited in Rubin 2017) to label, a man or a woman is just a social decision. Scientific knowledge might help to make a decision, but also our beliefs about gender can define our sex. Moreover, our beliefs about gender affect the kind of knowledge that scientist produces about sex. To whatever extent gender may be related to biology, it does not flow naturally and directly from our bodies.

As it was previously described, the concepts of gender and sex will have different positions and definitions. In general, the authors claim that gender is a social position that we decide to play because of our beliefs, influences or society. Because of this, there exist different theories about the influence of gender in our lives and personalities; on account of this, a discussion of gender theories needs to be included in a study related to gender to have a better understanding about its influence in language, in this case in its written representation.

### **2.3 Theories of gender typing**

Over the years several major theories have been proposed to explain gender development (Paynton and Hahn, 2019). The theories differ in several important dimensions such as the relative emphasis on the psychological, biological, and socio-structural determinants (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). According to McElhinny (2008), these theories are not only focused into the concepts of male and female but also in masculine and feminine, terms that have to do with the characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, values and performance that we adopt from the people around us. Some of the theories that have a valuable part in this study are discussed below.

### **2.3.1 Gender schema theory**

This theory is associated with those individual perceptions that humans develop from childhood. The gender schema theory tries to explain why gender stereotypes about sexuality persist along with the human life; moreover, it has been one of the major theories used to understand gender development (Petersen & Hyde, 2010).

Gender schema theory was introduced by psychologist Sandra Bern in 1981 and avowed that children learn about male and female roles from the culture in which they live. According to the theory, children adjust their comportment to align with the gender norms of their culture from the earliest stages of social development.

Bern proposed that a child's cognitive development combined with societal influences largely influence the patterns of thought (schema) that dictate "male" and "female" traits

In the opinion of Cherry (2019), gender schemas have an impact, not only on how people process the information but also in their attitudes and beliefs to generate gender-appropriate behavior.

The child learns to apply this same selection of schemas to the self, to choose from among the many possible dimensions of human personality only the ones that might apply to his or her sex and thereby eligible for organizing the diverse contents of the self-concept (O'Neill, Hansen & May, 2002 cited in Gadpaille Horvat and Kennedy, 2018, p. 223). Thus, the self-concepts become sex-typed, and thus the two sexes become not only different in degree but different in kind. At the same time, the child also learns to evaluate his or her adequacy as a person in terms of the gender schema, to match his or her preferences, attitudes, actions, and personal attributes against the prototypes stored within it. The gender schema becomes a rigid standard or guide and self-esteem becomes its moto (Bem, 1983 cited in Martin & Cook, 2018).

As stated by Yaghoubi-Notash, et. al, (2020) the gender schema theory emphasizes the role of cognitive process that involve attention, memory, impressions and making references to understand the dimension of gender development. This theory has been particularly influential in “providing insights into how stereotypes about the sexes develop, how they are maintained and how they are used” (Martin & Dinella, 2001)

According to the gender schema theory, individuals are inclined to pay attention to gender-stereotype consistent information and ignore the gender-stereotype inconsistent information. Sexual gender schemas are caused by a double standard. As reported by Petersen & Hyde (2010) the steady information received with a double standard is often remembered, while the information that is inconsistent with it tends to be ignored.

Gender schemas influence many aspects of children’s behavior and preferences. Although more research is needed on the topic, it has been proposed that gender schemas may affect children’s preferences for academic choices careers (Lipsitz, 1981. cited in Leaper 2013). Academic areas and careers are often gender-typed, and gender schemas may lead the narrowing of children’s choices in these areas just as they do in toy and peer choices. Children evaluate situations, determine if they are self-relevant, decide if they are for boys or girls, and then decide if the situations are for them or not. Children may use gender schemas to decide whether something is relevant, whether it is for the same or the other sex. At an early age, children may begin to narrow their preferences (Martin & Dinella, 2014).

Gender schema theorists believe that individuals are involved in the process and interpretation of information that comes from their social environments (Petersen & Hyde, 2010). Below the theory that has to do with the influence of the social aspects in our gender performance is described.

### **2.3.2 Social learning theory**

One sociological theory that provides a general explanation of human behavior is social learning theory developed by Bandura (cited in Grusec, 1992, p.776 cited in Greene, 2016). As reported in this theory, the individual observes something external and starts repetition about it, then he or she begins to internalize it and mimic it. If the individual receives external rewards for this behaviour, then he or she will internalize the learning. All of this constitutes social learning.

Social learning theory is a quite uncomplicated way to understand the socialization process. In agreement with Greene (2016), this theory explains how we consider what we are told and what we observe and then we go through repetition, this cycle becomes how we try to understand ‘truth’ and ‘reality’.

During childhood, people create different behaviors through imitation, and it is when we learnt what correct or incorrect conduct is. Many theorists see gender like any other socially acquired role. Strong, DeVault & Cohen (2008) stress out that we have to be socialized in order to act according to the expectations of our status as female or male.

Social learning theory is derived from behaviorist psychology and its focus on observable events and their consequences rather than internal feelings and drives (Strong, *et al.*, 2008). According to behaviorists, we learn attitudes and behaviors as a result of the social interactions we have with others.

According to social learning theory, individuals learn to be masculine or feminine according to what they see and. The social learning theory “explains that children mimic the behavior they are told is appropriate to their gender and receive reinforcement, they are likely to repeat it” (Wood, 1994, p. 37 cited in Greene, 2016). This is also supported by Strong, DeVault & Cohen (2008) who express that the foundation of social learning theory is the belief that the

consequences of our acts control our behaviour. For example, acts regularly followed by a reward lean towards occur again; acts regularly punished are avoided.

The cognitive processes involved in social learning include the ability to use language, anticipating consequences, and making observations. (Strong, DeVault & Cohen, 2008). These cognitive processes are important in learning gender roles. A person's ability to anticipate consequences affects behavior. Children observe what others do. We also learn gender roles by imitation, according to social learning theory. According to this, we always try to play a role in our society to maintain good social relationships. Those roles let people develop an identity in their environment through different social influences

## **2.4 Gender Identity**

People often play a role in their daily lives; it is not frequent that a person behaves in the same way in all places. But, as we develop different personalities, we also present a gender identity that does not have any relation with the biological aspect.

Gender identity is more than feelings and thoughts, it also implies how a person acts, the use of voice, and the wish of being treated. Different social factors contribute to the way of behaving with the opposite sex since we are children. Gender identity is where one can explore a great distinction in creating non-stereotypical characters. All of these factors affect the way a woman speaks to a man and vice versa, so I have thought that the same will happen when writing.

Gender identity describes where one falls on the scale between masculine and feminine. This, of course, is also context-dependent.

Järviluoma, Moisala & Vilkkö (2003, p.17) state that:

“[g]ender identity – that is, gender which one ‘attributes’ to him/herself, her/his gendered self-image – evolves from differences between ‘I’ and ‘others’, as well as between ‘we and ‘others’. When positioning oneself in the category of ‘we’ as distinct from ‘others’, the experienced similarity to people also belonging to the category of ‘we’, as well as the experienced differences from ‘others’, are part of the identification process”.

It means that men tend to find their identity when experiencing equality with other men and differences from women, as well as when they experience sameness with women and different from men. Gender identity is just only one aspect of total identity. It is constructed and has a close connection with the other aspects of identity, such as age, race, class and ethnicity.

Identity is not something that is given, we are not born with an identity; rather, it gradually develops concerning our experience of social interaction and our cultural surroundings (Järviluoma, Moisala & Vilkkö, 2003). Through the experiences, a person localizes her or himself into a social reality. According to Whitehead and Conaway (1986, cited in Ghosh, 2015), gender identity emerges as a consequence of the categorization based on the sex and gender profile associated with it.

Nowadays, though, gender identity is no longer seen as a static entity which is formed in one’s childhood and early adulthood. Instead, it is a process never completed, an identification. In the words of Hall (1996, p.2, cited in Järviluoma, Moisala & Vilkkö, 2011, p.17), “identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or a group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation”. The concept of identity which he displays is not constant and essential but it becomes strategic and positional, constantly in the process of transformation.

Braidotti (1994, p. 159) claims that “gender identity is discursively constructed in three connected domains: differences between men and women, differences among women and differences within oneself”. Gender identities are constantly negotiated. The negotiation of

gender identity takes place concerning gender convention and structures of the culture and society, in various social situations, in interaction with people of the other and the same sex, and as an integral growing process of an individual.

Gender identity, like any other identity, emerges from gendered experiences of sameness and differences, it is situational and it changes through life. It is also important to notice that gender identity is not the same thing as a gender role. Even though these concepts connect, the latter refers to adapted social roles, whereas gender identity refers to what one feels oneself being. The formation of identities is simultaneously an individual and a social project, which is always undertaken in the context of historically available interrelations (Marshall, 2000, cited in Järviluoma, Moisala & Vilkkö, 2011).

Gender identity is how we feel about and express our gender and gender roles — clothing, behavior, and personal appearance. It is a feeling that we have as early as age two or three. A child's acquisition of gender identity is, however, more than a cognitive high point; it is also surrounded by affective significance. Identity has been analyzed from a social and cultural perspective; nevertheless, the combination of both approaches gives a richer analysis. Identity is perceived as dynamic and changing through time and according to the place (Block, 2013). One of the objectives of this research is to identify how participants shape their identity in their writing, therefore it is important to know the interest that helps to an individual to form his or her gender identity.

### **2.4.1 Gender Interests**

Gender interests are most of the times linked with what men and women alike, due to the different goals and interests that each gender could have. Molyneux (2000 cited in Kramarae & Spender, 2000, p. 1145) asserts that “interests may be defined as the objectives and social outcomes that are held to benefit groups or individuals”. In most usages, interests have been understood in primarily economic terms, and social strata were conceived as having different and often conflicting interests. The idea that different social groups had common interests, which could be defended or advanced, is still used do to the found similarities among cultures.

Gender interests referred to interests arising from gender relations; therefore, these interests pertained, in distinct and specific ways, to both men and women. A second distinction identified two ways in which gender interests could be derived, practical interests, those concerned with the satisfaction of needs arising from gender’s placement within the sexual division of labor; and strategic interests, those involving attempts transform social relations to improve gender’s position and to secure a more lasting reposition of men and women within the gender order and within the society at large. Molyneux (2000 cited in Kramarae & Spender, 2000)

The different kind of interest that both sexes have in society could lead to having limitations in some aspects such as behavior, professional development or in the way of expressing ideas or feelings. In the same way that exists gender interests, some constraints influence the gender identity, these constraints will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.4.2 Gender constraints**

As it was mentioned above, genders can find limitations that could affect different areas in their daily lives. These areas can be the workplace, family, school, society. Men and women should act like the gender they were born, if they fail, they could not be accepted by society. Society's gender constraints can affect an individual's life (Butler, 1990). From being a child and being negatively reinforced to act the gender he or she was born to. To be a parent and treated like she or he was a failure because the individual didn't care to act the way the gender he or she was born to be supposed to act, and then the gender identity is affected.

Socially constructed gender constraints are dynamic rather than static and can be negotiated. Gender-based constraints are "barriers inhibiting men's or women's access to resources or opportunities based on their gender" (Ilo,2018). Some constraints or barriers are the same for women and men.

This gender identity is also reflected through the different discourses we use to communicate our ideas or feeling. For this reason, gender discourses will be discussed.

### **2.5 Gender and discourse**

In Renkema's words (2006, p. 283), discourse is seen as a constitutive factor of social relations and belief systems". In other words, discourse represents and reproduces social relations and belief systems. The community use discourses to represent ideas. On the terms of poststructuralist theories, discourses are understood to be "practices that systematically form the objects of which we speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49) and thus produce both practices and people who engage in these practices (Fairclough,2012; Parker and Aggleton, 2014).

Many times the kind of discourse that is used could represent how powerful, polite or knowledgeable a person could be, although as observed by Renkema (2004, cited in Lassen, 20015), it is uncertain whether the discourse phenomena found can be characterized as gender-bound. All of these differences and similarities in gender discourses are often influenced by the interests that men and women demonstrate.

According to Gaddis, Kotzé, & Crocket (2017), while discourses are performed through discourse practices, they determine the appropriate actions, for both men and women. They also claim that discourse makes us 'listen as a certain type of person' and then offering us particular speaking or acting positions (Parker, 1991, p. 9, cited in Gaddis, Kotzé, & Crocket 2017). As a result, it produces expectations about how we will act as gendered persons.

The study of discourse and gender is an interdisciplinary effort, shared by the areas of linguistics, anthropology, speech communication, social psychology, education, literature, and other disciplines. As claimed by Kendall & Tannen (2015) many researchers have been focused primarily with documenting gender-related patterns of language use, but the field has also included many for whom the study of language is a means to consider social and political aspects of gender relations. In spite of the vantage point from which research emanates, the study of gender and discourse not only provides a descriptive account of male and female discourse but also reveals how language functions as a symbolic resource to create and manage personal, social, and cultural meanings and identities (ibid.).

A distinctive category of a discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations is the genre. Genre involves the practices encountered in the classroom, work and social contexts. Consequently, it is necessary to define the concept of genre and the different types of genres to organize the main practices found in the literature.

## 2.6 Genre

The different practices lived by people in different areas such as the office, school, home and others are part of the genres. The different types of text that involve different elements and similar characteristics are known as genres.

Genre involves different literacy elements with similar characteristics. It refers to the different events that share similar purposes. According to Devitt (2012, p.1), “Genre pervades human lives. As people go about their business, interacting with others and trying to get along in the world, they use genres to ease their way, to meet expectations, to save time.”

The term “genre” does not have only one definition; therefore, several perceptions of this concept are presented regarding the context where it is applied. Melissourgou and Frantzi (2017, p. 387) claim that genre “is more often referred to as a kind of text, such as description, procedure, or exposition... genres are often described as events or social actions that help people interpret and create particular texts”, in summary, it refers to a class of communicative events.

Genres are based on the texts and talks that are used in different contexts and times. This idea is supported by Biber (1989) who states that “the term genre characterized texts based on external criteria, such as a text that is written or spoken by a particular person, for a particular audience, in a particular context, for a particular purpose, and viewed by the discourse community as being an example of the particular genre.” (cited in Johns, 2012, p.74)

According to Kress “genre is a useful term for understanding what texts do and how they do it” (cited in Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, p.22). In this respect, the author works for a concept of genre in which the grammar makes meanings for social and cultural significance. The grammar needs to

focus on function in texts; consequently, social categories need to be established for explaining the texts.

The different texts create a “social fact” for the readers. Those social facts are meaningful social actions that are accomplished through the language or “speech acts” which are carried out in textual forms or “genres”. These genres are connected to other texts and genres that occur in related circumstances. The genres are organized in groups based on the similar characteristics, and these “genre systems” are part of the “systems of human activity” (Bazerman, cited in Bazerman and Prior, 2003 p.311).

The term “genre” is also used to refer to different types of texts that represent several types of social contexts (Martin & Rose, 2013, p.7). For a specific social context, there are certain types of text used for establishing relations among people. It is important to take into account that an engineer is going to read and write certain kinds of texts different from a doctor or an accountant. These texts contain information related to the field of study and professionals manage to read and write the texts that correspond to their areas.

For Martin & Rose (2013, p.7) “a genre is a staged, goal-oriented social process.” A genre is ‘social’ because people interact and participate with other people in different genres. It is ‘goal-oriented’ because people use genres to get different things done. Finally, it is ‘staged’ because people need to go through different steps to reach their goals.

“Genres are ways in which people ‘get things done’ through their use of spoken and written discourse” (Paltridge, 2015, p.84) People use the spoken or written discourse for different purposes. The text is the production of a written genre while a talk belongs to the oral genre. Once

that the explanation about what genre is, it is necessary to present the different types of genres that exist.

### **2.6.1 Types of genre**

The different texts, documents and speeches are classified into different types of genre. It is necessary to identify the different types of genres to make a clear classification of the texts, documents and speeches that belong to different people in different contexts. Because of the purpose of the study mentioned in point 2.0 that is only related to written genres, they will be explained below.

#### **2.6.1.1 Written discourse**

The written practices that are presented in different places such as the classroom, the workplace and social contexts, are part of the written genres. These are composed of different texts written by different people. It is important to mention that identifying the most relevant properties of a text is a hard task. However, this process is necessary to find different sets of properties that distinguish one text from other texts.

Miller & Weinert (2008, p.17) consider that “within the genre of written language there are sub-genres such as literature (including sub-sub-genres such as a novel, play, poetry, autobiography, and diary), business correspondence, company reports, academic books.”

Different genres have different roles. For example, fiction and dramatic genres help students and writers learn and improve their communication skills. A poetic genre, on the other hand, enhances the imaginative and emotional power of the readers. Non-fictional texts and essays help readers develop analytical and persuasive capabilities. However, the major function of the

genre is to establish a code of behavior between the writers and audience and keep the readers informed about the topics discussed or the themes presented.

## **2.7 Gender and writing**

Our attitudes, behavior and even our thoughts are very influenced for our gender, so it is of common sense that our way of write can also reflect our gender preferences. According to Goldberg & Roswell (2002), it is significant that evidence of difference in performance by gender, and teachers' sensitivity towards that difference, has been growing in tandem with a mounting consensus that reading is best understood as a process of constructing meaning by interacting with text in a variety of ways, along with the general acceptance of a process-oriented approach to the teaching of writing. Only within the context of contemporary understanding of what it means to be a proficient writer can make sense of differences in how boys and girls interpret and compose texts.

The decisions that writers make about shaping and presenting a topic, their determination of a suitable form, and the means they choose to demonstrate attention to a specific audience, all derive from the purpose they have for creating text. Although student writers can create hybrid forms, and the following distinctions are far from absolute, writers generally write for one of several purposes: to express personal ideas, by recounting, reflecting upon, or describing a personal or imaginary experience or perspective based on real or imagined occurrences or observations. To inform, and explain or describe something by developing ideas with information drawn from prior knowledge or experience (their own or others). To persuade, by identifying and defining a problem or issue and developing a position based on personal and/or factual evidence.

The language used by people is determined by social classification such as gender, social class, age, ethnicity, education, etc. (Muto-Humphrey, 2005, cited in Bijami, 2013).

One of the sociocultural factors shaped by learners in the process of learning a language including writing is gender (Kamari, Gorjian, & Pazhakh, 2012).

Writing is a social activity in which writers line up themselves in acceptable discourses to express themselves by reinventing ideas and linguistic expressions created by others (Prior, 2001). In this view, writers' identities are socially constructed and writers position themselves in social identities available to members of the discourse community (Clark & Ivanic, 1997; Ivanic, 1998).

## **2.8 Short stories**

According to the dictionary's definition, a short story is “an invented prose narrative shorter than a novel usually dealing with a few characters and aiming at unity of effect and often concentrating on the creation of mood rather than plot”.(Merriam-Webster, 2019).

Short stories are written in prose, and organized according to the whims of the author, in whatever fashion considered necessary to deliver the story with maximum effect to the reader. (American Literature, 2019)

The Plot Diagram is an organizational tool focusing on a pyramid or triangular shape, which is used to map the events in a story. This planning of plot structure allows readers and writers to visualize the key features of stories.

The basic triangle-shaped plot structure, representing the beginning, middle, and end of a story, was described by Aristotle. Gustav Freytag modified Aristotle's system by adding a rising

action and a falling action to the structure. This interactive version of the graphic organizer supports both Aristotle's and Freytag's conceptualizations of plot structures. (Nay, 2019).

Short stories usually start by describing the setting which helps to make the reader aware of the landscape in which the characters will live. Second, the characters are introduced, they should be believable and human. The characters should be able to speak, to move and to create relationships with each other. Third, conflict should be introduced, it does not necessarily have to be a fight, but also a natural disaster, a hard decision, a threat, a misunderstanding or a coincidence.

When the characters are trying to deal with the conflict, many verbs and adverbs should be used. This is the 'action' stage of the story which has to reach a climax, and here the action stage ends and reveals whether the characters were successful or not in dealing with the conflict and becomes the turning point of the story. Finally, a resolution is presented. This is the final stage of the short story and reveals the results of the climax to know if the characters survived, changed or prospered.

### **2.8.1 Elements of a story**

According to Wyse, Andrews and Hoffman (2010) the elements that a short story usually present are title, characters, events and interaction, setting, time, organization, writing style, symbolism and retelling of a story.

The title of a story tells what the author wants to communicate to the reader and it must be short, catchy and have a general implication of the whole story's main idea.

A character is the mental, emotional, and social qualities to distinguish one entity from another (people, animals, spirits, automatons, pieces of furniture, and other animated objects).

The events and interaction are related to the plot and theme of the story, the order in which things move and happen in a story.

The setting is the place where all the events take place.

Time and organization denote the time and the order on which the events take place, it could be chronological or reverse chronological order.

The writing style is how the author says something, the choice of words and the use of language, sentence construction, imagery, not what the author says. It adds significance and impact on the author's writing.

Symbolism is a person, object, situation, or action that operates on two levels of meaning, the literal and the figurative or suggestive.

The retelling of a story involves having readers transform a text into their own words. In other words, the reader needs to organize text information in order to provide a personal interpretation of it (Han, 2005).

### **2.8.2 Stories for children and gender**

In our days, initial education (from 3 to 6 years old) represents one of the most important and indispensable basic levels in education. The most fundamental objective is the physical, intellectual, social and moral development of the child through the spontaneous acquisition and/or transmitted by the knowledge and the exercise of activities of the adults, with the purpose of achieving the education of feelings, values and the formation of habits in the child.

One of the key instruments in this stage is the development of language and it is through language that the boy or girl is inserted into the world and differentiated from it. Since the development of the child goes from an affective and individual function to fulfil an eminently

cognitive and social function (Ochoa, Parra y García, 2006). Through both oral and written language, the boy and girl can represent their feelings and explain their reactions to others, to learn different points of view and learn and apply values and norms.

Likewise, the boy and the girl, having active contact with the materials offered by the school and home environment and facing the different alternatives presented to them, begin to explore, express emotions and sensations. From this experience, they become aware of building new knowledge, this exploration allows them to appropriate language as well as ways of acting and thinking. Equally important is the interaction with the images that accompany the texts, about which the children comment, interpret with the adults in their environment and their peers.

Children's literature, in general, is the set of manifestations and activities that have the word as a vehicle, but with an artistic and creative touch (intentionality). The intention is what gives the word creative value (Alonso, 2005). It must be taken into account that children's literature in primary education focuses its attention on the story, which is a short story involving characters that perform actions in a specific place and time.

Children's literature is considered as an important segment of the cultural expression of language and thought, it gives children the opportunity of ethical training in their behaviour, aesthetics in their sensitivity and stimulating their creativity. Stories use language to express feelings, customs, values and other cultural manifestations (Moreno, 2003). Within the narrative, a direct interleaved dialogue may also appear. These stories are told by a person who tells or talks about things that happen to other people or himself and that have a beginning, a knot and an end.

The story, as an expression of children's literature, contributes to the enjoyment of reading because it allows children to relate and transport themselves to a magical and imaginary

world, based on everything lived in their real-world. At the same time, it allows young and small to think, imagine and even make their own creations.

However, its importance for the conformation of gender identity is not denied, since the story within the classroom contributes to promoting reading, writing, the transmission of values and ways of relating, hence the importance of content and images.

Turin (1995) also states that the illustrations the stories possess convey a parallel message to the one of the text, using a symbolic lexicon that could find distant roots in the popular imaginary and that describes a traditionally patriarchal society, especially rural. Some of these frequent symbols that stories have, which refer to discrimination against women are the apron, the main symbol of the feminine role that indicates the cleanliness of the house, the care of the children; buckets, brooms, which also expresses the work of cleaning the house or the witch of the story; the lenses: they represent intelligence, but can also express discrimination based on physical condition when it refers to girls; the briefcase: represents the intellectual and executive of man; the chair: which represents the passivity of the girls, while the boy plays, and the window, which represents the passivity of the girls, while images are shown where the boys are playing in the park.

These contents and symbols that represent sex discrimination in one way or another, will serve as one of the indicators when reading, evaluating and revealing the types of discrimination that exist in the most used stories in preschool.

Children's stories, despite their importance in the development of children's language, provide discriminatory information about human beings by different conditions (sexual, age, social class, religion, ethnicity, physical condition, etc.).

Qualities and stereotypes linked to the female and male characters of some children stories exhibit sexism, which manifests itself through stereotyped gender behaviors since the psychological and cultural characteristics most often attributed to boys and women, whether virtues or defects, not only limit girls but also boys.

Stereotypes are beliefs, ideas, prejudices and opinions conceived and they are imposed by the social environment and culture (children's stories are part of it). These stereotypes assign to each sex certain psychological, intellectual and manual traits and aptitudes (often opposites), applied in general to any person belonging to any category, whether by nationality, ethnicity, sex, etc. These ideas or beliefs are printed in people's minds and end up being believed to be true in such a way that they contribute to the confirmation of what is called gender identity. Children's stories make these beliefs, ideas and prejudices transmitted and reproduced from generation to generation, thus contributing to give continuity to the power relations of one group over the other.

## **2.9 Audience**

An important part that represents the success or failure of a written or oral text is the audience. A writer must know who is directing his work toward to accomplish his purpose and the reader requires to feel a part of the intended audience and that she understands what the author wants his work to say to her (Ciesielski, 2014)

Audiences are a product of social context (similar cultural interests, information needs and understandings) and a response to a particular pattern which comes from the family (McQuail, 1992).

Keeping the audience in mind while the writer is communicating his ideas on the paper, can help to make good decisions about what material to include, how to organize the ideas, and how best to support the argument (Writing Center, 2019).

### **2.9.1 Audience awareness**

One important aspect of writing is to have in mind what kind of audience will read what a writer is creating on a paper.

Keeping the audience in mind while the writer is communicating his ideas on the paper, can help to make good decisions about what material to include, how to organize the ideas, and how best to support the argument (McQuail, 1992).

This point is important because in this way the writer knows what specific kind of language could be used, the vocabulary that is needed to express their message clearly.

Knowing the audience—whether readers or listeners—will help to determine what information to include in a document or presentation, as well as how to convey it most effectively. The audience must be considered when choosing the tone, content, and language or the message may seem unfocused or inappropriate (Writing Center, 2019).

### **2.9.2 Audience needs**

A writer should keep in mind what the audience likes and hope from him, instead of just write for himself. It is important to know what necessities the audience has, what kind of information expects to read; if the purpose will be learning or just having fun.

Audience needs may be wants, deficits, conditions, or other gaps between skills/knowledge audiences already have and those they want (Iupui, 2015).

## **2.10 Conclusion**

In this chapter, information related to the different concepts that are linked with gender and audience awareness was provided, as well as what are the factors that might permeate writing since childhood in terms of gender. Different theories that influence our gender behavior were also described, and some issues related to gender. After that, an account of a genre which is an important part of the area of discourse analysis in which this study is based was given. Next, the relationship between gender and writing was highlighted, an explanation about the importance of audience awareness was provided.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological stages that were employed to collect the data that was used to carry out this research. It provides a detailed description of the context, the participants and the instruments involved in this study.

Since this project attempts to increase our understanding of children's abilities to assess the needs of an intended audience by the awareness of gender roles to others, the data procedure followed a qualitative perspective.

This research follows the case study approach which is particularly useful to employ when there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context (Crowe, Creswell and et.al., 2011) and also the textual analysis methodology that involves understanding language, symbols, and/or pictures presented in texts to gain information regarding on how people make sense of and communicate life and life experiences (Botan and Kreps, 2015). Communication may be understood by the use of visual, written, or spoken messages which provide cues to lead a message. Often the messages are understood as influenced by and reflective of larger social structures. For example, many texts reflect messages and/or challenge historical, cultural, political, ethical contexts for which they exist. In short, the textual analysis consists of describing the characteristics of a text and making interpretations to answer specific questions. (McKee, 2009).

### **3.1 Research location**

This study was carried out in a private bilingual elementary school in central Mexico. This private institute offers different levels of education from kindergarten to senior high school. Its teaching philosophy is based on providing a mixed-gender and lay education to help the children to develop enough skills to get meaningful learning in short, medium and long term, supported on universal values, attitudes and knowledge and growing up in a healthy and equal environment. Finally, its teaching approach is based on the constructivism and the program High/Scope to know the students' necessities and capacities in each level of their education.

Every level is directed by different principals; in this case, the principal of the elementary school is a psychologist woman of 42 years old. The students receive three hours a day of English classes and three hours of classes in Spanish. In the elementary level, seven teachers teach in Spanish and seven teachers are in charge of the English program. All of them are women from 25 to 54 years old. Besides them, three men teachers are in charge of teaching PE, IT and arts. There are a total of six grades and twelve groups. The number of students varies from 20 to 25.

The school, described above, was selected because it was where I was able to get access for the study. I had to write a letter to get permission directed to the principal to be able to apply the current study in this school. I was asked to avoid interrupting classes for more than three days to the children and to try to interview at the end of the class day or when the children were taking PE, IT or art classes.

### **3.2 Participants**

In this institution, the students, who participated in the present study, were selected by the coordinator randomly from different groups. The reason why I chose the second-grade students is that it was the same grade that Jackie Marsh used in her study, which was similar to this one. The names of the children were changed to protect their anonymity.

The participants were ten students, five girls and five boys. All of them were seven years old. They were called to an empty classroom while they were participating in the interview, and they wrote the stories as part of their class activities. The other students were in the classrooms during the interview, so there was not a lot of noise that could distract the participant students. And it was decided to ask them to write the stories as an everyday activity to avoid to make them feel that they were doing an extra job from the rest of their classmates.

Children were sitting in small chairs and they used individual small tables when writing their stories, their teachers were with them all the time and they answered the few grammar questions they had.

The classroom had enough lighting and some windows were open to have enough air and the children could breathe comfortably. I gave them three standard size sheets of paper (21.59 cm x 27.94 cm) and a pencil to facilitate them with their writing.

In this research also participated two of the children's parents. I asked them a series of 10 questions after I listened to the children's opinions during the interview and read their stories.

### **3.3 Data collection instruments**

Research is always conducted to find out an explanation of a problem. There are so many factors involved in the research process from data collection to result from analysis. These factors sometimes distort the result, sometimes influence the findings. But a valid and reliable result is always wanted and widely acceptable. To make the research result bias-free, valid and generalized triangulation plays an important role in this area by increasing the rate of certainty and bringing neutrality. It is a process of using more than one method, theory, researcher and data collection method & technique to make the research findings more valid, reliable and generalizable. (Rezaul, 2007).

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) mention that “in all forms of qualitative research, some and occasionally all of the data are collected through interviews. The most common form of interview is the person-to-person encounter in which one person elicits information from another.” This is the same that was done for studying the children’ stories.

The instruments selected in this study were the same used by Jackie Marsh in her article *Gender and Writing in the Infant School: Writing for a Gender-specific Audience* (1998), described in chapter one. These instruments were to elicit an interview and ask the children to write two little stories, one for a boys’ audience and one for a girls’ audience. The purpose of using these instruments was because she wanted to see if the process of gender skewing would feature in the stories produced by six-year-old children. But I also added an interview with two of the children’s parents, to know about their gender identity background.

### **3.3.1 Children's Interviews**

The elicitation of the data was by doing a semi-structured interview dividing the children into two blocks of five participants (first interview 3 girls and 2 boys, second interview 3 boys and 2 girls). The interview started with the question: what do girls and boys like to read, and then according to their answers I asked some other questions such as if the stories are for both boys and girls, what they should be about, what sort of stories they think boys would like and vice versa, to get more information about the initial question. Both interviews were recorded for later reviewing during data analysis.

### **3.3.2 Stories**

The children were requested to write two little stories, one directed for boys and another directed for girls. They wrote about what they thought would be interesting to read for each gender audience. These stories were another instrument to compare the answers that the children provided during the interviews and what they wrote in their stories. Also, these stories were used to find possible patterns followed by the children in their stories.

### **3.3.3 Parents' interviews**

Just two parents were interviewed due to the principal's request about not bothering the children's parents and just work with two of them. One was selected by me and the other by one of the teachers. The interview was based on five questions related to gender identity background.

### **3.4 Data collection procedure**

First, the coordinator randomly selected the children that participated in this study. Second, the children were divided into two blocks of five girls and five boys to interview them. The interviews were made on different days (Wednesday and Thursday), and I allowed them to express themselves using their voice and giving their personal opinion all the time. These interviews were recorded during the whole time I was having the conversations with them.

On Wednesday, the ten students were invited to write the two stories along with all their classmates, so they would not feel they were doing an extra activity and probably have the impression they were having extra work. All the stories were kept, by only the ones who participated in the interviews were selected.

The instructions were given by the teachers. The children were asked to number their stories to know which story was the one they wrote first. They were free to choose the subject matter of the story and also to draw if they wanted to do so.

The only restriction they children had was the paper space because I folded in half, four letter-size sheets, and they were asked not to use more sheets than the ones they received.

After reading the ten selected stories, and because of the principal's request of not bothering the children's' parents, I selected to interview the parents of those children whose stories stood out from the others. One of them accepted to answer some questions and the other did not. That is why the teacher helped me to choose a parent that seemed participative and would accept to be interviewed. IT was decided to apply a shallow interview about gender without delving in their responses, so both parents could express themselves deprived of any hindrance or possible shame.

### **3.5 Data analysis procedure**

After the collection of data, I started by listening to the interviews and then I transcribed them in their whole (See Appendix A and B). I looked for answers that let me know that they were aware of their gender roles to know how they support their answers or if they changed their attitude when their classmates gave a different answer.

I used different colors to identify when they had a feminine or masculine attitude when they thought there were no differences between genders and when they changed their point of view. I also identified parts where the children provided an opinion that was influenced by someone of their family or people around them, comments that made me aware that they are building their gender identity.

About the stories' analysis, I read all of them. I divided the stories for girls and boys. I identified all the stories that were written first for each gender. I highlighted all the similarities that were found in both stories and I analyzed different extracts that allowed me to identify their gender schema and identity when writing. Besides, I also compare the elements of short stories they included.

Concerning to the parents' interviews, ten questions were asked. I decided to choose the questions that seemed no to be overly personal, about general concepts and roles between men and women, that allowed me to identify the influence they could have on their children with the gender they represent.

Both parents were interviewed separately in a private room and I have to say that I did not want to deepen into the subject of their answers to avoid controversies or affect their emotional state, and I just limited myself to ask the questions I planned.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the methods regarded in this study were described to give a whole perspective about all the elements that were an important part of this study, such as the context, the participants and the instruments. As well as the procedures that were taken into account to give reliable results, that are described in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter will present the results from having analyzed the available data as described in the methodological framework in Chapter 3. Data is analyzed and interpreted because it was felt that both actions were inseparable entities in qualitative research of this kind. There will be a comparison and contrast of the results found in the different data sources. Also, figures, as well as specific examples from the data, will be shown and discussed.

### **4.1 Research Questions**

This research was guided to answer the following questions

**RQ1** What characteristics do short stories written by female children to a female audience exhibit?

**RQ2** What characteristics do short stories written by female children to a male audience exhibit?

**RQ3** What characteristics do short stories written by male children to a male audience exhibit?

**RQ4** What characteristics do short stories written by male children to a female audience exhibit?

**RQ5** How gender skewing permeates male and female's writing through the awareness of their audience needs?

**RQ6** How is children's writing influenced by gender roles?

## **4.2 Results**

To answer the questions mentioned above, the stories written by the children will be analyzed in terms of similarities and differences presented in the girls' and boys' stories when writing to an opposite audience (see 2.8.1) will be identified. Special attention on how their gender schema and social learning gender (see 2.3.1 and 2.3.2) influence the children's writing, by taking into account their ideas from the interview and relate them with what they wrote. Finally, the last question will be answered by reviewing the children's parents' answers.

The data that is going to be analyzed below was gotten by interviewing ten children to know what were their thoughts about the interests that boys and girls' audiences have about stories. Later, they were asked to write two stories; one for girls and one for boys. They were free to choose the subject matter of the story. The only restriction was the size of the paper and the number of pages (see 3.2.2). However, it is necessary to say that not all the students used the six sheets for their stories.

After collecting all the stories, two parents were interviewed to know more about two of the children's gender background to see if their gender schema has a relation to what they wrote and answered during the interview. The interviews and the stories will be described below.

### **4.2.1 Interviews' insights**

The beginning of this study was the interview that was applied to the ten children, As it was explained in 3.3.1, the children were divided into two groups and the purpose of doing this was to look for the children's ability to assess the suitability of topics in stories for boys and girls.

It was easy to perceive from the discussion with all the children that the majority had clear ideas about what sort of stories girls found interesting and those they thought boys would like. They all seemed eager to demonstrate their awareness of gender roles to others. However, it was surprising to see that they did not accept the fact that both genders could have different likes, since the beginning of the interview.

**Ana:** *Ok niños, vamos a suponer que ustedes son famosos escritores de historietas, ¿ok? Bueno, pues díganme primero ¿qué tipos de historias creen ustedes que les gustan a los niños y a las niñas?*

**Ximena:** *Yo escribiría historias que les gusten a los dos.*

**Anna:** *¿Ah sí? ¿Cómo qué tipos de historias crees que les guste a los niños y a las niñas?*

**Regina:** *De animales, como Madagascar, esa les gusta a los dos.*

**Norberto:** *Si, también de osos, o de animales, o de súper héroes que sean hombres y mujeres.*

**Ximena:** *Si, porque los dos tienen sus propias capacidades*

**Anna:** *¿Sus propias capacidades? ¿cómo?*

**Ximena:** *Los súper héroes también pueden ser mujeres, con súper poderes que puedan destruir todo, como por ejemplo Shrek. Fiona es más inteligente que Shrek, ella pelea más mejor, y lo defiende de todos.*

**Figure 1: Extract of interview 2**

With the other group of children, there was an immediate answer from two boys about what male children like to read.

**Ana:** *Ok niños, vamos a suponer que ustedes son famosos escritores de historietas, ¿ok? Bueno, pues díganme primero ¿qué tipos de historias creen ustedes que les gustan a los niños y a las niñas?*

**Emiliano:** *Las de terror*

**Daniel:** *Si, las de terror.*

Q

**Figure 2: Extract of interview 1**

Though, one of the girls disagrees with that answer, affirming without any hesitations that she does not like horror stories.

*Adriana: No, a mí no me gustan*

*Daniel: uuuu le dan miedo*

**Figure 3: Extract of interview 1**

During these participations, Daniel made fun of Adriana's answer and listened that she did not agree with the idea that girls like horror stories and this provoked that Gina answered back with another new statement where she accepted that she could enjoy a horror story, not as much as other story but she could take the opportunity of reading it.

*Gina: A mí sí, si me gustan, me gustan, bueno no mucho, pero si me gustan.*

**Figure 4: Extract of interview 1**

Following the belief that children like the same kind of stories, it is highlighted that there's a girl who stands out because of her ideas and the way of giving her arguments:

*Norberto: Si, también de osos, o de animales, o de súper héroes que sean hombres y mujeres.*

*Ximena: Si, porque los dos tienen sus propias capacidades*

*Anna: ¿Sus propias capacidades? ¿cómo?*

*Ximena: Los súper héroes también pueden ser mujeres, con súper poderes que puedan destruir todo, como por ejemplo Shrek. Fiona es más inteligente que Shrek, ella pelea mejor, y lo defiende de todos.*

*Roberto: Ah pero Shrek es diferente, no es un súper héroe y por ser ogro ya todos le temen*

**Figure 5: Extract of interview 2**

As it is observed, she does not see differences between men and women, for her, both are perfectly able of having the same performance, she even gives an example of an exception, and emphasizes how the woman character could be even better than the male ‘...as Fiona, she is more intelligent, she fights better, she is always protecting him’. However, Roberto wants to justify why is that ‘Shrek is different, he is not a superhero, he is an ogre’, and there we can see his resistance to admit Ximena’s statement about women.

There are other moments where children support the idea that there are no differences, overall in the second interview: Look at the next extract:

**Stephy:** *Pues yo pienso que las mujeres, aunque no tengan súper poderes, también hacen bonitas historias, no todo debe ser con sangre o que maten a todos a su alrededor.*

**Roberto:** *Pues no sería divertido.*

**Stephy:** *Madagascar no tienen sangre y es bonita historia, y hay malos y buenos y nos gusta a los niños y a las niñas.*

**Roberto:** *A mí no.*

**Anna:** *¿Por qué no te gusta?*

**Roberto:** *No hay acción*

**Stephy:** *Si hay acción, sino cómo sería historia, ayyy.*

**Anna:** *Ok, Norberto, tú qué piensas.*

**Norberto:** *Pues yo creo que a las niñas y a los niños nos gustan casi el mismo tipo de historias. Porque a mí me gusta Shrek y la era del hielo y también a las niñas les gustan esas historias, tal vez a ellas no les guste mucha sangre.*

**Stephy:** *Si, no debe haber mucha sangre para ser divertida una historia como la de Garfield o Toy Story*

**Regina:** *Si miss, los hombres sólo quieren muerte en sus historias, que haya malos, muy malos.*

**Norberto:** *No, como la de Perry, ahí hay malos, pero no se mueren y a mí me gusta esa caricatura.*

**Stephy:** *Sí a mí también me gusta Phineas and Ferb, porque Perry es muy tierno.*

**Roberto:** *A algunas niñas les gustan de robots, porque a Pau le gusta transformes es su película favorita y también la mía, yo digo que a veces nos puede gustar lo mismo. Porque sino en el cine diría películas para hombres y películas para mujeres.*

**Anna:** *¿Y tú crees que eso sería correcto?*

**Roberto:** *Sí, así las mujeres no gritarían cuando vean morir al malo.*

**Norberto:** *Yo digo que no, cada quien ve lo que le gusta.*

**Regina:** *Si, no pueden prohibir la entrada a los niños o a las niñas.*

**Roberto:** *No, porque Paulina no podría haber visto transformes o yo no podría haber visto Toy story.*

**Figure 6: Extract of interview 2**

Stephy and Norberto gave arguments about what kind of stories do not have the common violence that many stories present (although they were mentioning the name of movies more than the name of stories). Robert claimed ‘there is no action’ and Stephy replies ‘of course there is action’. For her, it is clear that all stories must have ‘action’ to be considered a story and she even gave examples of stories that do not include violence and are for both audiences ‘toy story, Garfield, Phineas and Ferb’. Norberto agrees with his women classmates and gives an argument to balance the previous opinion ‘maybe they don’t like blood’, but he stills considers the idea that both genders could enjoy all kind of stories, of course, if there are some restrictions like bloody scenes, and here the assumption of thinking that women don’t like that kind of scenes, and here it is where the socially constructed pattern is shown (Alloway, 2007).

Yet Roberto showed a position in regard to the fact that boys and girls definitely like different kinds of stories, he reminded a similar taste he has with a girl he called Pau, to agree with Stephy and Norberto, both like ‘transformers’, in spite of considering that movie a boys’ movie.

However, there are moments where the children are very clear what boys like. Regina mentioned ‘men just want death in their stories, and bad, bad people’, and Roberto mentioned that the stories should be specific about what kind of audience they belong, to avoid bad

moments like hearing women screaming when the bad guy of the plot dies, although he had recognized before that it was possible that both audiences enjoy the same kind of stories. In both cases, the presence of the gender schema is more than latent and each one gave their arguments to defend their positions about what men and women should like.

Throughout the interview 1 there is a moment where children mention specific likes for each gendered audience and suddenly one of the girls, Gina, again, gives a disagreement and explains why that cannot be possible. She says: ‘the Chronicles of Narnia is a love and action movie and it is for everybody’ and then she also arguments that probably if the story just includes violence, it must be just for boys, but if it includes romanticism then, the story becomes a tale for both kind of audiences.

*Anna: Entonces creen que las historias de niños deben ser de acción y las de las niñas cursis y de príncipes y princesas?*

*Adriana: Claro que no, Pocahontas está llena de acción también*

*Diego: Yes cursi, amor, amor, sólo amor*

*Gina: Las crónicas de narnia está llena de acción y de amor, y es para niñas y niños, entonces yo creo que si son de acción y matar, son sólo para niños y si también hay de amor son para los dos.*

*Anna: Las historias de niñas deben ser de amor, entonces?*

*Adriana: No miss, no todas son de amor, la de hello Kitty no es de amor, ni Bob esponja.*

*Diego: Si son para niñas, deben ser cursis y si son de niños con súper poderes y súper armas.*

*Anna: ¿Están de acuerdo todos los demás?*

*Gina: No miss, no me gustan sólo de amor, Phineas y Pherb también me gusta y no hay amor, ¿verdad?*

**Figure 7: Extract of interview 1**

Through both interviews, it is very perceptible that girls and boys really know what the opposite audience likes or not, but when they feel that their classmate opinions are limiting their choices, especially the girls, they look for examples that their boys classmates know to make

them aware that their suggestions are not really acceptable, because there is evidence that what they are saying is not entirely true and it was shown with Gina and Stephy's participation.

In the first interview, children's answers showed a vision that stories for women and men must be different, for a while.

*Anna: Así es, también díganme ¿qué historias les pueden gustar a las niñas? O ¿creen que a las niñas también les gustan las de terror, carros o dinosaurios o súper héroes?*

*Emiliano: No, a ellas les gustan las de hadas, y blanca nieves, y la sirenita*

*Diego: A ti también Emiliano, te gustan*

*Emiliano: Si, unas son chistosas*

*Diego: (Laughing) Entonces eres niña.*

*Emiliano: Pues tú también, porque también te sabes los nombres.*

*Diego: No (upset and frowning) a mí no me gustan esas. Mi hermana las ve, por eso sé.*

*Anna: Ok, ok, pero síganme diciendo.*

*Adriana: Si, las de princesas, las de hello Kitty, de barbie y de fantasmas*

*Diego: A las niñas no les gustan los fantasmas, son bien miedosas.*

**Figure 8: Extract of interview 1**

When Diego assumes that Emiliano likes stories for women, he admits it and claims that are funny, but once that Diego tells him he is a girl because he likes that kind of stories immediately he answers saying 'well you also like them because you know them' and Diego justifies himself saying that it is because of her sister. So, I realize that to be considered feminine in any aspect, is something that children do not like, and they try to justify that behavior to clarify that they could have attitudes or likes that do not correspond with the stereotype owing to a certain situation that is from their everyday contexts.

Daniel and Diego were the ones that showed many hints of their resistance accepting that they could like the stories for women, they even mentioned that they would never read a story for girls. Daniel may accept that many girls would prefer to read a story for boys, and that is acceptable for him (*Maybe the girls like to watch movies for boys and boys can read love stories*), but he totally refuses to do it flatly (*I would never do it*). According to Fradet (2019), men can be “manly” but still accept being feminine if they can explain where this feminine behaviour comes from.

**Anna:** *¿Y tú qué dices?*

**Daniel:** *Mmmm no sé, a mí no me gustan de princesas, como los cuentos de niñas son algo aburridos tal vez ellas se aburran y pues vean las películas de niños, pero yo no vería películas de hadas.*

**Diego:** *Yo nunca leería una historia de niñas*

**Anna:** *Ok, entonces ustedes dicen que los niños eligen lo que quieren leer, ¿aunque la historia sea para el género opuesto? Es decir, si la historia es de niños, ¿las niñas las pueden leer?, y si es de niñas, ¿los niños las pueden leer?*

**Adriana:** *Si, no pasa nada*

**Daniel:** *Pues si miss, los niños pueden leer historias de amor alguna vez, aunque yo nunca lo haría*

**Figure 9: Extract of interview 1**

Then, after discussing what stories are the ones for both audiences, in both interviews, there is a final agreement, and a very interesting concept is introduced by all of these children, they came to the conclusion that boys and girls can be free to choose what they want to read. For them, there are no reasons to limit their options.

**Anna:** *Ok, entonces ustedes dicen que los niños eligen lo que quieren leer, ¿aunque la historia sea para el género opuesto? Es decir, si la historia es de niños, ¿las niñas las pueden leer, y si es de niñas, los niños las pueden leer?*

**Adriana:** *Si, no pasa nada*

**Daniel:** *Pues si miss, los niños pueden leer historias de amor alguna vez, aunque yo nunca lo haría*

*Anna: ¿Alguna, otra opinión?*

*Gina: No, que lean lo que les gusta*

*Anna: ¿Alguien más? (No response)... ¿No?, ok entonces muchas gracias.*

**Figure 10: Extract of interview 1**

*Norberto: No deben ser tiernos los niños para ver esas películas. Cada quién escoge lo que quiere ver.*

*Ximena: Si por eso somos libres, yo puedo leer lo que a mí me gusta.*

**Figure 11: Extract of interview 2**

Nevertheless, during the second interview, the children decided to mention a list of the possible topics that could be part of the stories options for boys and girls, they even mention a list of what to include as a story subject matter.

*Anna: Ok, ¿alguien más tiene otra opinión? (silent) Bueno, entonces, por último, díganme entonces como conclusión, que historias serían para niños y qué historias para niñas.*

*Norberto: Para niñas, de la sirenita, de la cenicienta, de todas donde haya princesas. Y para los niños de football, fantasmas, zombies, carreras y monstros.*

*Regina: Yo digo que no debemos decir cuáles, mejor que cada quién escoja lo que le guste. Si yo fuera escritora, pues escribiría historias que pudieran leer los dos, como Madagascar o Garfield.*

*Roberto: si yo también, para que fuera más rico, porque todos leerían mis historias*

*Stephy: Yo escribiría para niñas, cuentos de hadas como Rapunzel, Pocahontas, La mujer maravilla y para niños Batman y Spiderman*

*Anna: Y ¿tú qué opinas?*

*Ximena: No se miss, algo bonito para las niñas y algo lleno de terror para los niños.*

*Regina: Si, de princesas y cuentos de hadas y los niños historias de football y monstros.*

*Ximena: De carros, animales, dinosaurios y para las niñas, mmmm la cenicienta, blanca*

**Figure 12: Extract of interview 2**

It is convenient to mention that many of the children's suggestions are related to the popular culture, that includes toys, television and videos. It was not surprising to see that children were sure about the words and decisions to mention what are the boys and girls' interests. Hilton (2006, p. 134) points out there is a "highly gendered range of stories and images' which help to socialize young children into strictly gendered roles".

If it is accepted that what children like to read about, they also like to write about, and given the evidence, and these children were perfectly sure about what their answers, then it is clear that this group of children were all able to assess the needs of their audience in terms of the content for boys' and girls' stories.

#### **4.2.2 Boys' stories**

Once the children identified the needs of their audiences, I wanted to see how they could meet them in their writings. I asked the children to write two stories; one for girls and one for boys. They were free to choose the subject matter of the story. The boys and girls' stories will be described one by one to know how they meet their audiences' needs and if what they wrote suits with what they mentioned during the interview.

##### **4.2.2.1 Daniel's participation during the interview**

Daniel expressed during the interview a clear point about what he thinks the female and male audiences prefer to read, but also when deciding what kind of story to write for each gender. At the beginning of the interview, he manifested a tendency to say that some stories are preferred more for boys than for girls: *Sí, las de terror (yes, the horror ones)*. He stated that boys like horror stories and girls do not, because they are afraid of them: *uuu le dan miedo (uuuhh they are scared of them)*.

However; during the middle of the interview he accepted there could be stories written for both genders, although he would never read any story written for girls: *Mmmm no se, a mi no me gustan de princesas, como los cuentos de niñas son algo aburridos tal vez ellas se aburran y pues vean las películas de niños, pero yo no veria películas de hadas (Mmmm I do not know, I do not like the princess stories, tales for girls are kind of boring, so maybe they get bored and watch movies for boys, but I would not see fairy movies)*. And he made it clearer later: *Pues si miss, los niños pueden leer historias de amor alguna vez, aunque yo nunca lo haría ( ye s miss, boys can read love stories sometimes, although I would never read them)*. With these examples, it is clearly shown that he does not like to have any association related to female likes (Whyte, 1983).

Hence, during the interview, his ideas about the differences, regarding stories election, were very clear for both genders. He knew what he and boys like *Si como las de spiderman, batman, ironman* followed by *Sí de zombies, que se coman todo, y luego vivan...* (Yes, about zombies that eat everything and then live again,) and also, he provided feedback about what girls could like *Yo creo que a las niñas les gustan las de príncipe azul (I think girls like prince charming stories)*. With these examples, there is a clear perspective that he knew what he could write in his stories, and what they should be about.

As it was presented above, Daniel had a clear vision about boys' and girls' preferences, however, we have to see if he also accomplished his audience needs during his writing.

#### **4.2.2.2 Daniel's stories**

Daniel, like the other children, has not developed yet the ability to write a sustained narrative (this information was provided by his teacher). However, his writing is understandable,

with a clear view of what he wanted to write and to express through his story. He chose to write the boys' story first, and he decided to write about a popular subject, Phineas and Ferb, a well-known cartoon nowadays. Below, figure 13, illustrates his story:



**Figure 13: Daniel's boys' story**

It was surprising he chose a non-violent story like the one he mentioned in his suggestions during the interview. The story includes the characters from a very well-known cartoon, but it is just a summary of the complete plot.

The story introduces in the first sentences, who the characters are and what happens with them. During the description of the story, he moves from one event to another in a chronological

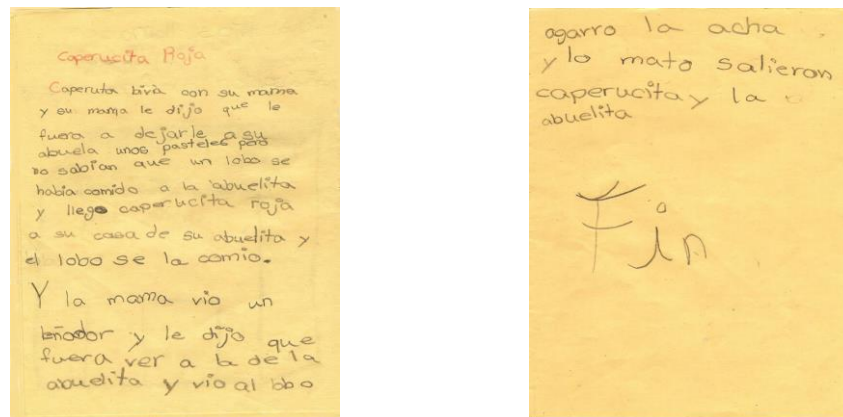
line, in general, it sums up what is the whole story about. Some gaps do not tell the reader what happened with some of the events. However, the reader can understand the end of the story as the beginning of new adventures for the three characters he mentioned.

Some shreds of evidence in Daniel's writing about he is trying to accomplish his audience needs are that he wrote about a character, in this case, Perry, a platypus, who has a secret identity. Secret identities are a common pattern of heroes' stories (Paley, 2014) that will help the characters to experience different exciting situations and to have a normal daily life. He also wrote the word 'had' (*tuvieron*), which implies that the story will continue in the future, and one writing male characteristic is that boys' stories always have adventures that will keep on almost forever (Marsh, 1998).

The title and its illustration show Perry in its secret identity; however, the rest of the elements on it, show a sun, grass and clouds, drawings that could be used by girls, because it is very detailed (Marsh, 1998). Besides this, the context where he places the beginning of the story is seen here as asexual (White, 1986), because he wrote about a pet store, and this place is not just for boys, but also for girls. However, on the third page where Daniel mentions that Perry is an agent, he used monsters' drawings that are attacking Perry, and it is here where he shows his gender schema (see point 2.3.1). It means that there is something linked to the information he has already received from society and that information is that superheroes always fight against monsters or powerful people (O'Neill, 2002).

Nevertheless, when Daniel writes the story for the girls, he does not give a special page for the story's title, although, he uses a different color (red) to distinguish the title from the rest of his handwriting. He also wrote about a well-known story (Little Red Riding Hood), a story

that has been considered more for a female audience than for a male one. And a factor that is also highlighting is that he did not use any drawing to illustrate his story as he did with the boys one.



**Figure 14: Daniel's girls' story**

The story does not have as many details as he used in his previous story. He does not mention any context during his narrative, either. Moreover, the kind of narrative he used while writing the girls' story, is a little aggressive: *agarró el acha y lo mató* (he took the ax and killed it). The verbs are very direct, without any previous background to them. He mentioned just facts, he directly wrote about what happened. There was a description of actions one after another one, without giving details as he did with the boys' story.

In short, even when Daniel wrote about two well-known stories, he was more creative with his boys' story. He used drawings and represented a context on it, he gave details that give the reader extra information about what happened. He knew what boys like and how they would like to see their story. In addition, it seems that he was enjoying writing the boy's story.

Yet, when he wrote the story for the girls, he did not pay as much attention to the details as he did in the boys' story. He wrote a story about a well-known tale, in general, aimed for girls, full of facts, without revealing any detail. For him, it was more important to mention what happened with each one of the events and gave a conclusion, in this case, little red riding hood and his grandmother stayed alive, while in the boys' story the adventures will continue.

The data also shows that Daniel is aware of girls' likes, he knew about a story that is considered for girls and he just rewrote the story he already knew. He wrote about it without describing anything else than just facts. Possibly, Daniel does not remember more details of it or he did not want to write them because these details were not important for him.

In sum, Daniel noticeably tried to write for both audiences since he changes his way of writing from male to the female story. The tone he uses, the drawings, and the way of moving through the different facts that develop the story, clearly show that even when he is aware of his audience there is always 'something' that pull him to his gender schema (see point 2.3.3). That 'something' at least in these two stories is the way of illustrating and narrate both stories.

#### **4.2.2.3 Norbertos' participations during the interview**

Norberto was one of the boys who showed a tendency to say that boys and girls may enjoy the same kind of stories: *Si, también de osos, o de animales, o de súper héroes que sean hombres y mujeres (Yes, also about bears, or animals, or superheroes that are men and women)* proceeded by *pues yo creo que a las niñas y a los niños nos gustan casi el mismo tipo de historias porque a mí me gusta Shrek y la era del hielo y también a las niñas les gustan esas historias... (I think that girls and boys like almost the same kind of stories because I like Shrek and Ice Age, and girls also like those stories...)*. However, he also agrees that girls may not like

the same kind of stories and he gives a reason about it: *tal vez a ellas no les guste mucha sangre (maybe girls do not like a lot of blood)*.

During the whole interview, he manifested a lucid idea about that girls' and boys' may like the same kind of stories, and boys do not have to feel anything in special to like a story written for girls. This assumption is proved with his answer: *No deben ser tiernos los niños para ver esas películas. Cada quién escoge lo que quiere ver (Boys do not have to be tender to see those movies[referring to Toy Story], each one chooses what to watch)*.

Nonetheless, though he is sure about his ideas and established reasons to his answers at the end he gave a list of what boys and girls could like *Para niñas, de la sirenita, de la cenicienta, de todas donde haya princesas. Y para los niños de football, fantasmas, zombies, carreras y monstruos (For girls, the Little Mermaid, Cinderella, anything about princesses. And for boys, football, ghosts, zombies, racing and monsters)*. This answer gives a plain idea that he is aware of each audience's needs. Still, it is necessary to see if he took into account this needs when writing his stories.

#### **4.2.2.4 Norberto's Stories**

Norberto shows to be a self-confident writer, both of his stories presented detailed information. The events are chronological, although a little sparse, because he jumps from one to another event, sometimes without any detail about the information provided. This boy decided to write the story for girls, first (a decision that was not made by any of the other male participants). He also decided to write about a well-known story: The Little Mermaid. Figure 15, presents Norberto's girls' story.



Había una vez una sirena que se encontró con un príncipe pero la malbada bruja quería igual al príncipe entonces la bruja hizo un echiso para que el príncipe se enamorara de la bruja pero la bruja se disfrazó de una linda mujer y ariel la bruja le quitó la voz a ariel

y la bruja tenía en un collar que se abría y ahí tenía su voz de ariel al día siguiente la bruja y el príncipe se iban a casar y el padre de ariel le dijo que se apure por que si no ya se iban a casar y después ariel se apuro llegó a la boda a la bruja se le cayó la voz de ariel y el príncipe adentro a ariel y se volvió sirena con el sol y la bruja se llevó a ariel.

Fin

Figure 15. Norberto's girls' story

Regarding his story's presentation, he drew a little mermaid representing his title and used a special page for it. Then on another page, he started writing his story. He chose to use the traditional opening for fairy tales *había una vez* (*once upon a time*), evidence of trying to reach his audience's needs. Through his entire story, he appeals to his female audience with different characters that are common in girls' stories, the princess, in this case, the little mermaid, the witch, and the prince. He paid attention to details because he mentioned a spell, a love story, what the witch did to the little Mermaid. He perfectly knows the story.

la malbada bruja quería igual al príncipe entonces la bruja hizo un echiso para que el príncipe se enamorara de la bruja pero la bruja se disfrazó de una linda mujer y ariel la bruja le quitó la voz a ariel

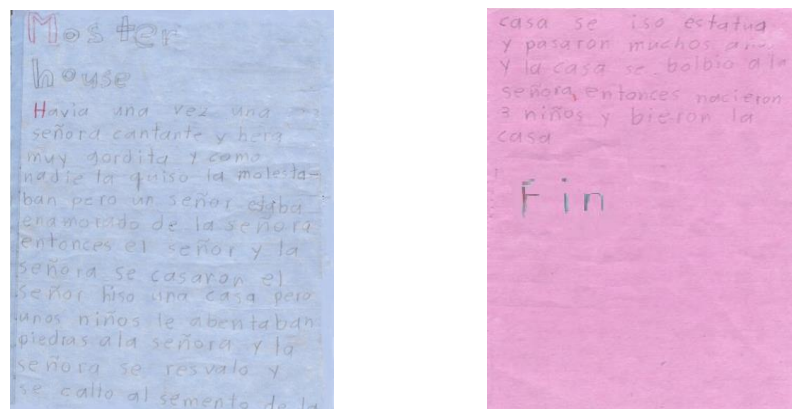
Figure 16. Norberto's girls' story

Everything appears to reach girls' expectations; the little mermaid almost defeats the witch to defend her love. However, the end is completely different here; the prince did not live happily ever after. Ariel, the mermaid, is taken by the witch and the prince could not help here.

This final observation is a clear example of gender skewing, even when he tried to accomplish his audience's expectations, he did not want to give a common ending, and here the witch wins, because Norberto writes *'el príncipe agarró a Ariel y se volvió sirena por el sol y la bruja se llevó a Ariel (the prince grabbed Ariel and became a mermaid by the sun and the witch took Ariel with her)*.

In many aspects, the writer accomplished his audience's needs when writing about a fairy tale, and the common characters included in most of these kinds of stories. Nonetheless, in the end, he does not leave the mermaid to be happy after ever, and it is here where gender skewing is presented, he seemed not to be interested in making them happy, for him the action and development of the facts were more important. Yet, he did a great attempt to write to his audience.

On the other hand, Norberto's boys' story exhibits characteristics completely different to his girls' story. Figure 17, illustrates his story.



**Figure 17. Norberto's boys' story**

As can be seen, Norberto did not use a special page for his story; he did not use drawings to illustrate it either, as he did it with the girls' story. He did not use a special page for the title, he just considered using bigger and different letters to write his title.

Norberto's writing is a little sparse; however, the story is eventful, full of facts and description of the events. The title indicates that the story will be full of horrible things '*Monster house*'. Thus the title could be considered highly gendered because the word 'monster' implies that there will be events related to fantastic horrible facts, that do not necessarily could be interesting for the girls, as it was mentioned during the interviews (See Appendix B). However, Norberto's story is not like that.

The story starts by using 'once upon a time' an uncommon beginning for boys' stories according to Dyson (1997) who mentions that most of the fairy tales should have a beginning like this to catch the girls' attention. Nevertheless; the singular situation here is that events are not really full of action, superpowers or superheroes as it is frequent in boys' stories (Paley, 1984, Willis, 1990); and the principal character is a fat lady that is enclosed in a statue. Though, Norberto described the events in a way that make the reader know more about it, even when the characters are not bad or strong enough as in his girls' story.

This story does not seem to be highly male-gendered because of the description of the principal character and the events of the story. The principal character is a fat woman who became a spell statue after falling down when some boys were throwing stones to her because she was fat. According to Dyson (1997), boys imagine themselves as heroes, so they picture in their writing a person similar to them or use supernatural creatures, generally of the same gender.

There is romance in this story but is just a fact, he does not give more details about the romance between them. According to Katz, Cain and Flynn (2017) men use to write about actions to describe their feelings without giving details about those feelings, but what provokes them. Along with this, Norberto's story has something supernatural when he mentions an alive statue, but the character does not accomplish the previous statement, and it is here where he corroborates his opinion that he does not see any difference regarding boys' and girls' stories election, as he mentioned during the interview. (See Appendix B).

In many ways, the text could be considered as a boys' story, except that he introduces emotions into the plot, in a manner that boys not often do (Marsh, 1998). He wrote *'the boys never came back and the lady felt sad'*, and in this case, the story does not move to new adventures (Paley, 1984). The end mentions that the fat lady loves the boys and boys did not care about her physical appearance.

The story is interesting because he is combining elements of both audiences in both stories. None of them is highly gendered. There is a mixture of both audiences in both stories. They are full of details; their title seems to be appropriate for each audience, as well as the characters. However, it could not be denied that gender skewing is presented, when in both stories, just one character is in charge of the destiny of the others (National Project Writing, 1990, cited in Marsh, 1998).

#### **4.2.2.5 Diego's participation during the interview**

Diego was one of the boys that made it clear since the beginning of his participation in the interview that boys and girls do not like the same stories, but also gave different reasons about why his opinion: *'es que a las niñas no les gustan las historias de terror, porque gritan y*

*chillan y a los hombres nos gusta que haya mucha acción (Girls do not like horror stories because they scream and cry, and we (men) like a lot of action)'. He also highlighted what characteristics the stories for each gender should have: 'Si son para niñas, deben ser cursis y si son de niños con súper poderes y súper armas (If the stories are for girls, they must be corny (cheesy) and for boys, there should be superpowers and superweapons)'.*

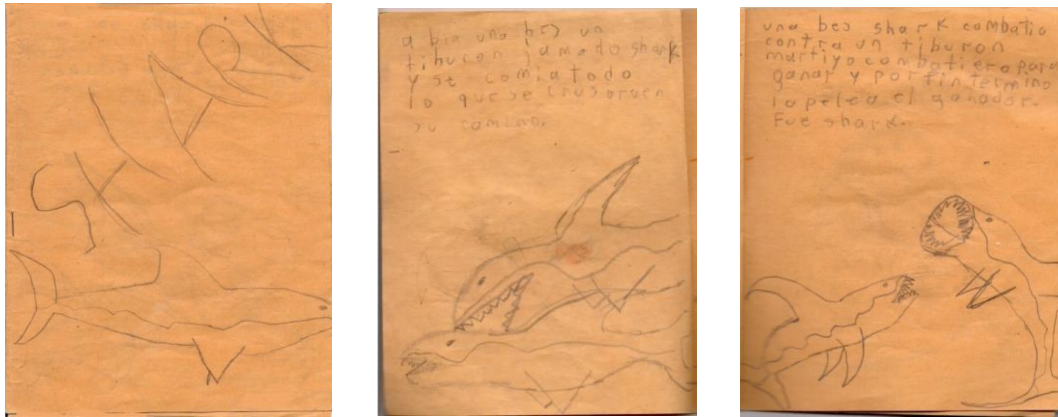
There was a moment during the interview that he did not accept that one of his male classmates could like a girl story. When his classmate accepted to like them he immediately answered: *'Entonces eres niña (So, you are a girl [laughing])'*. And when the same boy inferred that Diego also could like them because he recognized the name of the different stories, he felt offended and immediately explained why he knew about them: *'¡No! a mí no me gustan esas. Mi hermana las ve, por eso sé (No! [angry and frowning] I don't like those stories. My sister sees them that is why I know!)'*.

All of the above shows that he has a high gender masculine schema (see 2.3.1). For him, stories must be divided into girls and boys' stories. However he accepts that girls could like some boys' stories: *'Mmm sí, hay algunas niñas que les gustan los carros y el football ¿no? (mmm, yes, there are some girls that like cars and football, are not there?)'*. Though, anything related to the opposite gender is not suitable for him: *'yo nunca leería una historia de niñas (I would never read any girls' story)'*. With this, it is clear that he has already shaped his gender identity (see 2.4) and his opinions about this topic are evident.

#### **4.2.2.6 Diego's stories**

Diego showed self-reliance and imagination when writing his stories. He decided to write first the story for a male audience. His principal character is a shark, and in fact, that is the

name of the story. He did not write about a well-known story, but about a completely new one. Below, figure 18, shows his male story.



**Figure 18. Diego's boys' story**

He started the story using 'once upon a time', beginning that in this case is not associated to the feminine audience because the writer immediately adds information about a shark that ate everything he found through its way. Thus, although it is a common beginning for girls stories (Marsh, 1988), here it is considered asexual since the whole story is about fights between powerful characters. Continuing with the narrative of the story, on the third page, the adventure began without any preliminary event. Shark found a hammerhead shark and they started to fight until there was a winner, of course, the winner was Shark.

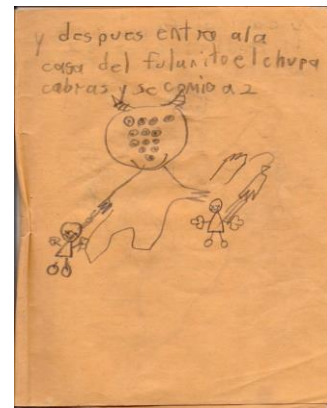
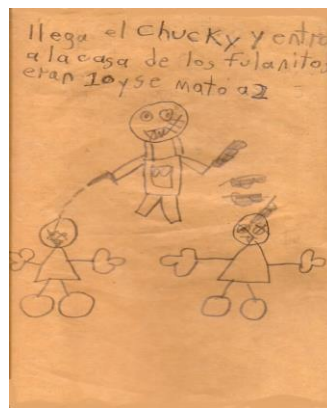
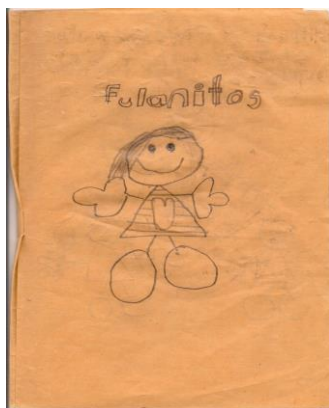
Shark is the main character; it is stronger by itself and it does not have any special power. The context is implied because shark is a fish, so there was no necessity for him to say where the events took place, and it is highly gendered since the events are full of action and fights because the principal character is really strong, characteristics that boys' stories should have, according to his opinions during the interview.

Besides all of the above, Diego illustrated his story with a big shark that has sharp teeth; he also pictured what he was saying in the text. Shark is always the winner even if the opponents are stronger than him. According to White (1990), boys tend to present the principal character as the one who never loses a battle or saves the world. In this case, Shark did not lose the battle he had against the hammerhead shark. All of these factors implied that Diego is writing directly to his male audience and he is taking into account the possible situations that could attract the audience's attention to read his story.

In addition, Diego is using male characters with a strong personality. He focused the story in a battle and it seems that it is a common characteristic of boys' writing because it has been presented in different stories (more examples about this, will be shown below).

Subsequently, all of the above, indicates that Diego is directly influenced by his gender schema (see point 2.3.1) because along his writing he is choosing what could be applicable to his own gender, it means that he is matching his own likes and attitudes with his audience (O'Neill, Hansen & May, 2002).

On the other hand, Diego wrote a story full of violence directed to his female audience. Even when he used as principal characters some cartoons that are considered tender and nice (fulanitos) the antagonists were well-known characters that are considered 'villains' in different movies.





**Figure 19. Diego's girls' story**

Diego started the female story by giving a special place to the title, as he did with the male story. He wrote the name 'fulanitos' and draw a picture to represent his title that could be considered nice and catchy for girls. However, the story is completely different to what a reader might expect, after seeing and reading the title page.

The story begins with violence: '*Chucky gets into fulanitos' house, they were ten and Chucky killed two*', and it continues the same pattern by presenting different characters who killed fulanito after other fulanito, until all of them finally died. At the end he even wrote '*At the end revenge wins and fulanitos died*'; ending that is not related to a female audience (Katz, Clain and Flynn, 2017).

Through this story, his writing style is totally sparse, contrary to the style he used when writing his male story. There is not an introduction of characters, he started the story by immediately describing the actions. Also, the events the characters perform during the story do not vary, it is always the same, they killed Fulanitos. He brought up villains from different movies or cartoons that killed each one of the Fulanitos members. All of these villains have never been part of a story directed to girls, so his gender schema (see 2.3.1) is also highly presented during his writing, he seemed to refuse to write a nice and corny story, features he mentioned during the interview referring to girls' stories.

Besides this, Diego did not give the background to introduce the characters as he did with his boys' story. He avoided writing details throughout the whole story. Furthermore, the illustrations picture the villains and how they eliminate Fulanitos.

In this case, although Diego considered 'Fulanitos', as characters of a female' story; he did not continue paying attention to his female audience's needs. According to Millard (1994), children write and draw about what they like, and these two stories give evidence about what Diego likes.

In conclusion, Diego desisted to not pay attention to his opposite gender needs. His gender schema (see 2.3.1) implies what he has learnt and noticed about different aspects that are considered linked to his own gender (O'Neill, Hansen & May, 2002). Because of this, he applied his selection of schemas in writing his stories and he did not know or he did not want to heed to the inclination of the female schema he has about stories, he said '*girls like corny stories*' during the interview, nevertheless, he did not paid attention to his own words.

#### 4.2.2.7 Roberto's participation during the interview

Roberto exhibited during the interview a very clear position about what boys and girls like at the beginning, he mentioned that he did not like girls stories because there is no action; however, as the conversation progressed he changed his mind.

He expressed that boys and girls might like the same kind of stories. He stated with one of his participations: '*A algunas niñas les gustan de robots, porque a Pau le gusta transformers, es su película favorita y también la mía (Some girls like robots' stories, because Pau like transformers, it is her favourite movie and mine too)*'. followed by: '*yo digo que a veces nos puede gustar lo mismo (I think we might like the same kind of stories)*'. He also stated a relevant point: '*Porque sino en el cine diría películas para hombres y películas para mujeres (Otherwise there would be a sign for the movies that would say movies for men and movies for women)*'. So for him, it is almost logic that the stories are not made for one or another audience. Although there are other moments that he rejects his own idea '*sí, así las mujeres no gritarían cuando vean morir al malo (yes, so women would not scream when they see the bad one die)*, and when their classmates assure that there must be differences he claimed that the idea could not be possible because he and his best friend could enjoy some movies, and if he wrote stories for both audiences then he could become a rich author '*si yo también, para que fuera más rico, porque todos leerían mis historias*'. So, it could be concluded that his male gender schema stands out when there is not any interference, but after listening to some other opinions and reflecting on his own expressions he changes his mind and accepts other possibilities, even when they do not match with his gender identity.

#### 4.2.2.8 Roberto's stories

Roberto showed to be a self-confident writer, his narrative is chronological but sparse. He also paid attention to the cover of his story, he placed the title and a drawing related to it on the first page. The story is not the retelling of a well-known story, but a completely new one.

His story is about a dog which was pretty and its name was Rocky, and the owner was Robert. It is interesting to observe that he was the only one that used his own name as being one of the main characters and to write about personal experiences, as a support for his story (Salazar and Allende, 1995).

The dog grew up and became a bad dog who killed Robert. And after Robert died, Rocky became a good dog again.

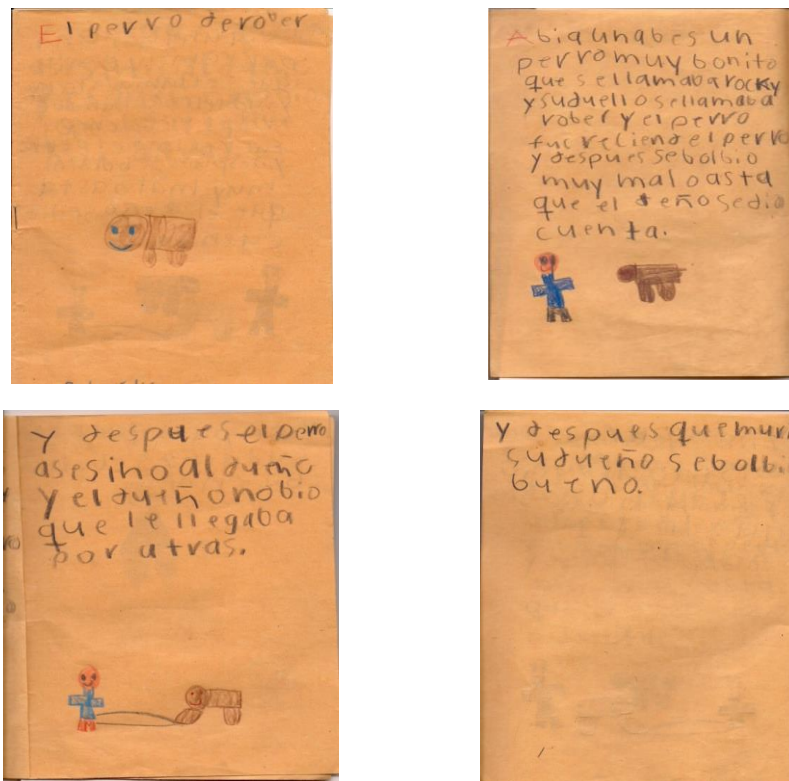


Figure 20. Roberto's boys' story

This story does not seem to be highly gendered at the beginning because of the description of the dog, he used the words 'it is pretty', but also the character he is using as the main one, a dog, can make the reader believe that the plot will be related to something nice and cute. However, according to DeVault (2008), the influence of the society can change the way male and female use language, they start to decide what words are appropriate for their gender after realizing that some words are not good for their gender position. Nonetheless, his male gender schema starts to be noticed when he writes that the dog became a bad one, as bad as he could kill his owner.

Conferring to Ochoa, Parra and García (2006), Robert's story presents male characteristics, it refers to the stories where dominant and other dominated characters appear, taking as indicators the activities and roles performed, the dog becomes a villain and the victim is the owner. Also, there is not a female character present along with the plot.

There is a similar storyline when Robert wrote for the girls. The title is 'la niña (the girl)'. He gives a special cover to the tale, he also uses a drawing of a girl, giving pictographic meaning to the title as he did with the boys' story. During his writing, he presents the events in a chronological course. He does not give many details either as the rest of his classmates, but the story is understandable and we know what happens.

Below, the girls' story is presented in figure 21.



Figure 21. Roberto's girls' story

As can be seen, this text also starts by introducing the characters, he also uses the starting phrase 'once upon a time', and he describes that there was a girl who was very happy and met

another girl named Nathaly, they became very good friends, and with that, he meets the needs of the female audience. Notwithstanding, he immediately presents his male side because the girls, who are also represented as boys with most of the drawings he made, turned into bad girls who like to fight, rob and people were frightened of them. They even start killing people, yet nobody knew about it, and at the end, the girls realized that what they were doing was wrong, so the little girls decided to be good again.

The story is pretty similar to the boys' story, the characters are nice, good and cute but then they develop into villains who commit bad actions. It is clear in both stories that he tries to meet his audiences' needs, but his gender identity pushes him to what Parra, Ochoa and García (2006) claimed when describing the most common masculine likes which manifest stories full of characters that are dominant and Robert's story are a great example of it.

#### **4.2.2.9 Emiliano's participation during the interview**

Emiliano was one of the two boys whose gender identity was almost inflexible. He did not have extensive participation during the interview, but the few answers he gave were enough to show that he has a strong male gender identity. He named topics for men and women, without any hesitation *'[for boys] pues las de terror, las de carros, las de dinosaurios, a ellas les gustan las de hadas, y blanca nieves, y la sirenita (those of horror, those of cars, those of dinosaurs, girls like fairies, and White Snow, and the little mermaid).*

The only moment where he accepted that it was a possibility that boys and girls might like the same kind of stories was when he recognized that stories for girls are funny (*si, son chistositas*) and the again he says clearly what he likes *'sería una historia chida, no de princesitas con su príncipe azul y bailando un vals, como la de transformers o iron man.*

#### 4.2.2.10 Emiliano's stories

Emiliano is a boy that has not developed enough writing skills. His narrative is sparse and the reader has to imply what is happening through the story. He also illustrated his writing with different drawings that were representing the text.

He gives a special page to the cover where he writes the title and exemplifies it with a big snake drawing. Figure 22 shows Emiliano's story.

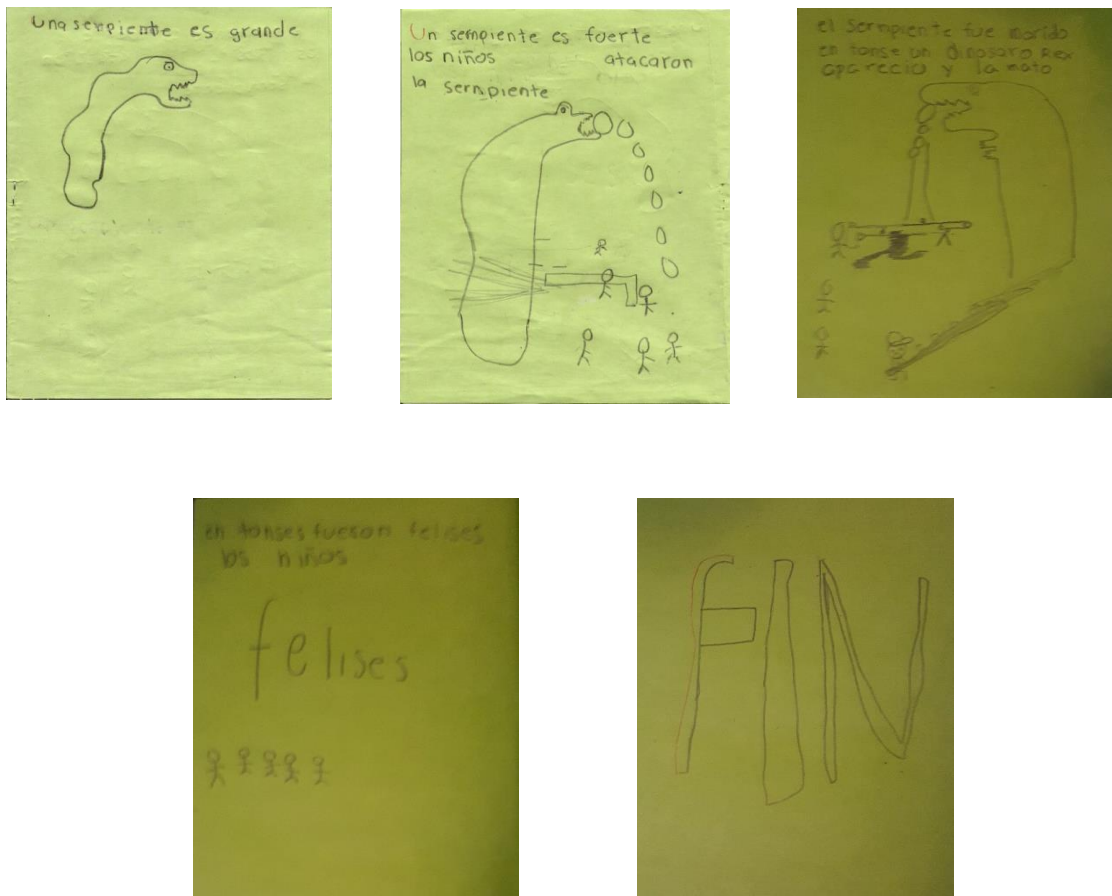


Figure 22. Emiliano's boys' story

The story starts by illustrating a big snake, then Emiliano adds another characteristic to the snake, it is strong. That is why some children attack it. On the third page, Emiliano wrote ‘the snake died’ and suddenly without any preliminary explanation or setting, a rex dinosaur appeared and Emiliano added that it killed the snake, and the children that appeared at the beginning during the snake attack were very happy because it died.

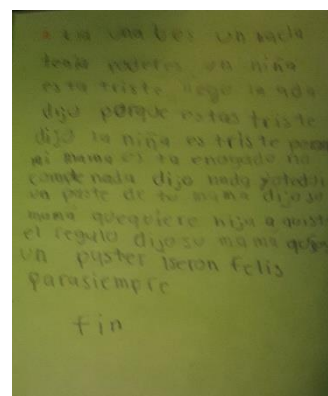
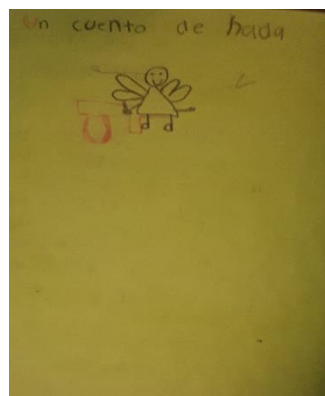
As it was explained above, the events are no coherent enough and the sequence of the events is not exactly chronological; however, this boy tries to give more action to his story, by adding a new character that has similar strength. The end of the story is a happy ending, he wrote ‘then, the children were happy’.

This story is different from the others; in this case, the principal character is ‘bad’, something that may cause danger. However, it needed to be disappeared because it was ‘bad’ and just a character with similar characteristics could be the one who killed the villain, that is why he decided to add the rex dinosaur. The story written by Emiliano is decidedly gendered, there are huge and strong characters that are not real (the writer could be influenced by some movies) and there is also a villain that was vanished. However, the ending is asexual, because there are no more adventures for the dinosaur, which is a common ending among young boys (White, 1990), but the children lived happily after the snake disappeared, and probably for him, that was the main point of the story.

According to Chaurra and Carrasco (2011), male children tend to enjoy violent episodes of movies and stories, they become aware that those kinds of scenes should not affect them just because of the fact that they are men, and they get used to violent, strong and huge characters that disappear the weakest ones.

On the other hand, there is his girls' story. As he mentioned during the interview he wrote about a fairy. The name of the story is as simple as the boys' story 'the fairy'. He also gives it a cover for the title and tried to draw a fairy. He uses spare ideas about the described events and he tries to meet his audience needs in every moment.

He used 'once upon a time' to start the text and he mentioned that this fairy has powers and she helps a little sad girl whose mum is angry at her. The mum did not buy a cake for the girl's birthday. The fairy gives a cake to the mum and she gives it to the little girl and then, they were happy forever.



**Figure 23. Emiliano's girls' story**

He does not use as many drawings as in the boys' story, he just focused on accomplishing the task, but the interesting thing is that he actually wrote for a female audience because he used a common female phrase to start the story, he involves just females characters that actually share their feelings. Kendall & Tannen (2015) mention that women are more likely to share and describe what they feel, and Emiliano, without knowing this, paid attention to it.

Another point that makes different both stories is the ending. When he writes for a male audience he writes ‘the children were happy’, and when writing to the female audience he says ‘and they were happy forever’. In one and the other story, he definitely considers the audience and he writes about what he thinks each gender would like, what he expressed with the oral language he did it with the written one.

### **4.2.3 Girls’ stories**

The girls also followed the same instructions and process to collect data from the interviews and their stories. It is observed that most girls’ stories were more extensive than boys’ ones and with more details about their characters or the contexts and plots they wanted to develop.

Their writing is more creative because most of them wrote fully new stories, without retelling some well-known tales from famous movies they have already seen. Some of them decided to include familiar characters, but the stories were new, related to other experiences.

It was interesting that all the girls decided to write the story for the female audience first.

The stories will be described one by one below.

#### **4.2.3.1 Adriana’s participation during the interview**

Adriana was in a specific position about what boys and girls like to read, she mentioned that she did not like horror movies, she did not even consider the possibility ‘*no, a mi no me gustan* (no, I don’t like them). When asking her what kind of stories boys and girls like, she mentioned explicit examples ‘*sí, las de princesas, las de hello kitty, de barbie y de fantasmas* (yes, those of princesses, hello kitty, barbie and ghosts). She refers to ‘ghosts’ because during

the interview another child was saying that girls are afraid of ghost and she responded *‘A mi también me gustan y no me dan miedo mmm, pero a los niños también les gustan las de animales furiosos, y súper poderes, mmm con súper poderes, que destruyan todo, o también de zombies (I also like them and I'm not afraid of mmm, but boys also like those of furious animals, and superpowers, mmm with superpowers, that destroy everything, or zombies too) .*

She definitely establishes a position about the fact that she may like boys stories, she mentioned to have experienced something that she just did not like, but that does not imply that she could never do it *‘un día yo vi una película de zombies, con mucha sangre, no me gusto, me puse nerviosa (one day I saw a zombie movie, with a lot of blood, I didn't like it, I got nervous).*

When one of her classmates mentions that girls do not like action in the stories or that girls just like romance stories, she instantly gives a response *‘¡claro que no, Pocahontas está llena de acción también, no miss, no todas son de amor, la de hello kitty no es de amor, ni bob esponja (¡of course not! Pocahontas is full of action too, no miss, not all are love, hello kitty is not love, nor Spongebob).* In the end, she agrees with some other of her classmates that both, boys and girls could enjoy the same kind of stories, without having any problem with this argument that could affect gender identity. She says *‘sí, no pasa nada (yes, nothing happens)’.*

As demonstrated, Adriana has precise likes about what to read or watch, and she gives reasons about the male arguments that unable girls to certain preference, by providing examples and bringing back her own experience with those examples.

She has an evident idea about what kind of stories each audience prefers and she agrees with the notion of sharing the same preferences, so let us see if she alleges that in her stories.

#### 4.2.3.2 Adriana's stories

It is necessary to mention, since this point, that most girls were able to write in a more explicitly way. Most of them wrote in chronological order and the facts were more detailed.

Adriana as the other girls also began writing her story for girls. She also paid special attention to her title page. She uses colors and a different kind of fonts to present it.

The story is about a girl called Pam, who is a princess and she is stolen by a witch; this is fairly typical of girls' writing (Graves, 1984). Adriana appeared to run out of ideas quickly. The story is sparse because there a lot of gaps that do not tell the reader what happened in some situations. However, she presents an orientation, a complication and a resolution in her story (Bhatia, 1999), and this is a signal that she is a structured writer.

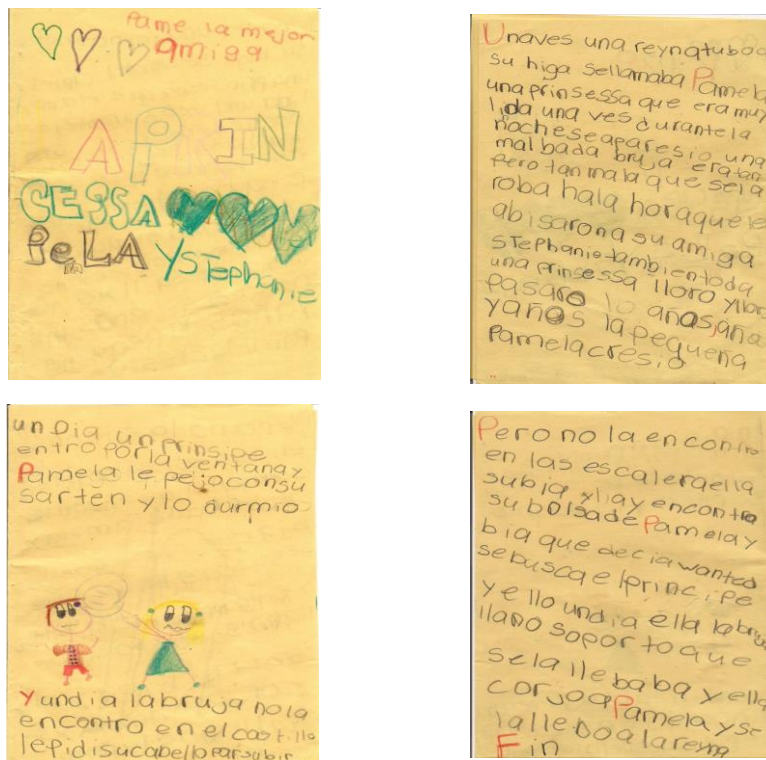


Figure 24. Adriana's girls' story

The story is based on the Rapunzel tale. The words and description she uses are a very common girl writing. She summarizes the whole story with her own words and gives another name to the main character, in this case, it is Pamela.

Adriana sets the story within the tradition of fairy tales. The text conveys a domestic world, Pamela, the character lives with her mother and she also mentions a castle. There is as well, a best friend who is Stephanie, and even when this last character is just mentioned once, and does nothing else, she is an important part of Pamela's life, because her name is even on the cover page. O'Neill (2002) claims that females use to include the symbol of friendship in almost all the contexts in which they develop because for them it is important to build meaningful relationships, and these relations must be shown and boasted to the rest of the people as a signal of belonging to the society.

One interesting thing and indicator of her answers in the interview, and how she defended her position about liking the same things that boys do, is that the prince in this story is not the elegant gentleman who saves the innocent and helpless princess from the wicked witch. She mentions that Pamela hits the prince with a pan, and in a later passage, she realized that the prince is not a really good person, because he is wanted by the kingdom's guard. All of these details are evidence of Adriana's gender schema and identity. She likes reading and writing about fairy tales, but she stills exhibits her female self-sureness in her story.

Then she decided to write the boys story. This story is also based on a popular video game. She also gave a special page to her title. She used a different kind of font, but she did not draw anything on it. The title page seems to be for boys, because there is no colour on it, and the

title looks strong by itself, so she is trying to catch the males audience by paying attention to these details.

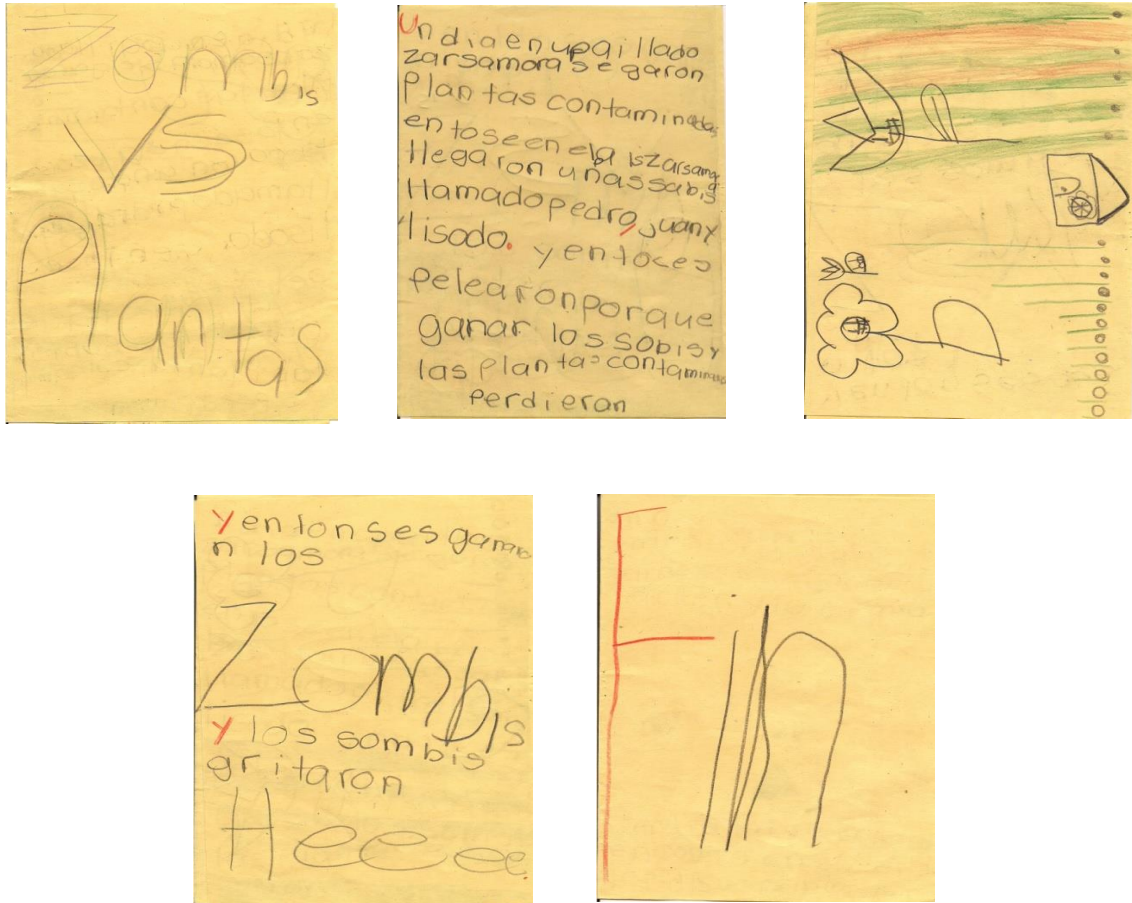


Figure 25. Adriana's boys' story

The story is about some zombies whose names are Pedro, Juan y Lisodo, who fight against some contaminated plants, and the zombies are the winners. Even when she used many pages to develop her story, she did not write many details about it, as she did with the girls' story, a sign that could infer that she was not as excited as she was with her girls' story.

In many ways, her text could be written by a boy, except that she introduces emotion into the plot in a way boys rarely do (Marsha, 1998) 'y los sombis ganaron y gritaron heeee (and

*zombies won and screamed heeee)*'. Also, she fails with the common characteristic of continuing with new adventures, because there is not any signal that zombies would continue fighting against other enemies.

Nevertheless, Adriana made a brave attempt to appeal to her audience because she used the characters she mentioned during her interview. She did not change her mind about what boys actually like reading. The characters of this story are strong and they fight, consequently the action, she was sure male stories should have, is there.

#### **4.2.3.3 Regina's participation during the interview**

Throughout the interview, Regina sets up a position of validation about the fact that both genders could like the same kind of stories. She accepts that boys have particular likes '*los hombres sólo quieren muerte en sus historias, que haya malos, muy malos (men only want death in their stories, with bad, very bad guys)*', nonetheless she also declares that even when there are stories that could be aimed for girls, there are boys with certain characteristics that could enjoy them '*mmm tal vez fue hecha para niñas, pero hay niños tiernos también y como los juguetes nos gustan a todos pues es para los dos (mmm maybe it was made for girls, but there are cute children too and as we all like toys, it is for both of us)*', in this case, the 'cute boys' are the ones who enjoy girls' tales, and that is a great argument, not all stories are made for both genders, but there are exceptions.

Almost at the end of the interview, she asserts that nobody should mention what kind of stories boys and girls should read '*yo digo que no debemos decir cuáles, mejor que cada quién escoja lo que le guste. Si yo fuera escritora, pues escribiría historias que pudieran leer los dos,*

como Madagascar o Garfield (I say that we should not say which ones, it is better for everyone to choose what they like. If I were a writer, then I would write stories that both could read, like Madagascar or Garfield). She is sure that the stories could match for both audiences and she exemplifies her words with well-known cartoons. However, when she needs to give examples for each audience she answers without hesitation what could she write about 'si, de princesas y cuentos de hadas y los niños historias de football y monstros (yes, of princesses and fairy tales and for boys, football and monster stories).

#### 4.2.3.4 Regina's stories

Regina decided to write the story for a female audience first. She also gives a cover for the title and it includes drawings related to the main characters of the story. Unlike many of her classmates, her writing is chronological and logical. There are many details about the events and her writing is coherent.

This is Regina's girls' story:

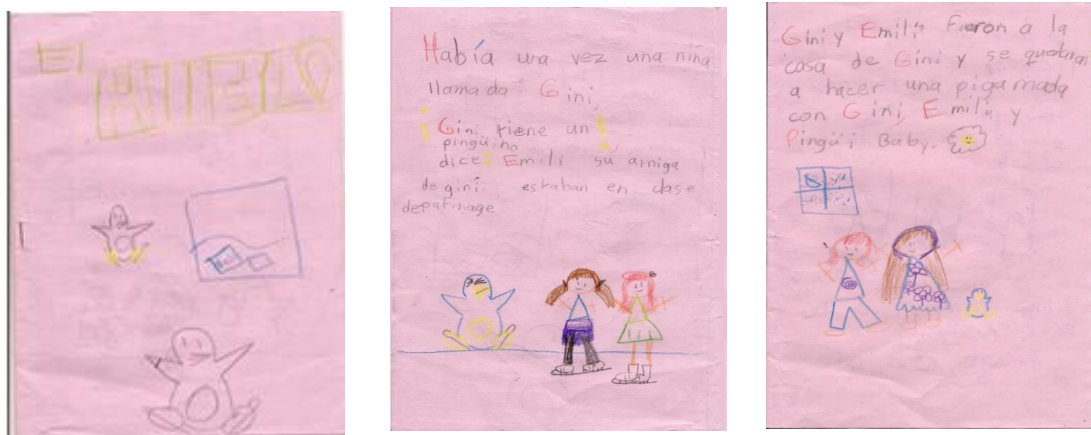


Figure 26. Regina's girls' story

se durmieron y dijeron  
helado que es hielo.  
dijo Gini, Emili y pingüi  
baby quisieron descubrir  
el hielo y como hacen  
el helado.  
Un día en la mañana  
se despertaron y  
investigaron que es el  
hielo en la computadora  
en el diccionario, en los  
libros y también en las  
enciclopedias.  
Y descubrieron que  
el hielo es hielo: agua  
congelada que se  
convierte en hielo.



**Figure 26. Regina's girls' story**

The story is completely different from the others. There are not good or bad people, nor superheroes or princess. The characters are two good friends Gini, her pet baby penguin and Emili. They decided to plan a sleepover when they suddenly want ice cream, and then, the problem of the story comes, how the ice cream is made, but most importantly what is ice. They spend the next day researching on the internet, books and dictionaries and they come to the conclusion that ice is frozen water.

Definitely, she is writing for a female audience, because the signal of writing for women is that she is using female characters and she adds a cute character, the baby penguin. The plot is not about fairy tales or princess. The whole plot is about a real experience or a new answer that probably she just discovered during her classes and she considered a good idea to write about it. The story is entirely original because there are not hints of using the characters or the events from other stories, it is just about friends performing a quest about something that is part of their daily lives. As Kaufman and Rodriguez (2001) stated when a child writes, the text shows data about a new concept, and it has to be considered as a real piece of knowledge that she acquired in previous lessons.

Regina's story stands out because it was an original plot which is trying to show that she learnt a new concept, she is trying to connect her experiences, knowledge and environment with the story, but at the same time, she attempts to meet her audience's needs.

However, when she writes the boys' story she decides to write about a well-known video game, instead of an original story as the one she created for the girls' story. She also pays attention to give an appropriate cover to her story, and it is very colorful and catchy. The cover shows all the characters that are mentioned in the story and the name 'Mario Bros' with a different font, so she did not give more importance to these details, but the same attention to both stories.

Her writing is coherent, although there are some moments that she suddenly introduces new situations to the plot, nevertheless, it is chronological and coherent. This is Regina's story:

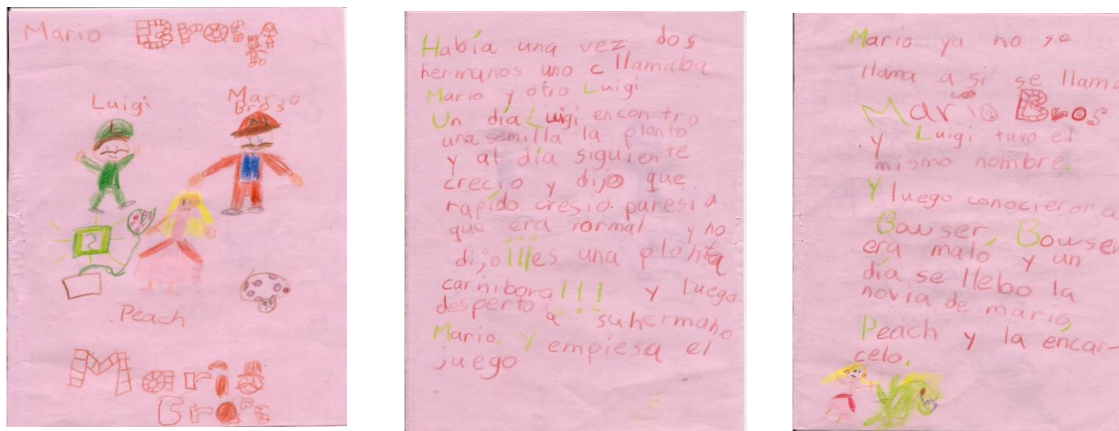


Figure 27. Regina's boys' story



**Figure 27. Regina's boys' story**

The story is about the Mario Bros' game, the plot and characters are the same. She starts the story with the typical beginning of 'Once upon a time', and as it was previously mentioned it is very representative of girls' writing. She introduces the main characters 'Mario and Luigi' who find a seed and the next day they realize it is a carnivorous plant.

It is clear that she is describing the video game, more than creating a story because she mentions 'and the game starts, and Mario is not Mario anymore, but Mario Bros'.

She skips some details of the story, because after this change, from Mario to Mario Bros, she mentions a new character 'Bowser', who is the villain and kidnaps Mario's girlfriend 'Peach'. When this happens, Mario and Luigi have a great adventure ahead.

Regina does not describe the adventure she mentions and suddenly she says that Mario and Luigi were able to find Bowser's hiding place, to save Peach and the great ending is that they actually save Peach.

She illustrates all her words with representative illustrations, and that is something that only she did among all the girls. Even when she was not as creative as with the girls' story, she tries to meet her audience's needs.

The story involves villains, a character that she considers necessary for a boy's story, but she also respects her own opinion about writing something that both audiences could enjoy, because she also includes a female character, and even when she did not make it up, she remembered to include it. Her gender skewing is shown when the story does not imply that Mario and Luigi could have more adventures, the purpose was to save Peach, and they actually did it and that was it.

#### **4.2.3.5 Stephy's participation during the interview**

Stephy has the idea that it is not necessary to have stories that are focused on just one kind of audience. She mentions that stories should be for both, and the stories should avoid being bloody or super violent. For her, the action is needed, otherwise, the story would not be interesting, and women also may have powers, but they are not necessary: *'pues yo pienso que las mujeres aunque no tengan súper poderes, también hacen bonitas historias, no todo debe ser con sangre o que maten a todos a su alrededor (well, I think that women, even if they don't have superpowers, they also make beautiful stories, not everything should be with blood or that they kill everyone around them).*

Then, she gives a series of examples that according to her, they are stories for both audiences, where violence is not really part of the plot *'si, no debe haber mucha sangre para ser divertida una historia como la de Garfield o Toy Story (yes, there should not be much blood to be funny a story like Garfield or Toy Story)'*. However, when it was necessary to provide a list of examples for each audience, she does it without any hesitation *'yo escribiría para niñas, cuentos de hadas como Rapunzel, Pocahontas, la mujer maravilla y para niños Batman y Spiderman (I would write for girls, fairy tales like Rapunzel, Pocahontas, Wonder*

Woman and for boys Batman and Spiderman). Her gender schema is evident, and she knows what stories she can consider for each audience.

#### 4.2.3.6 Stephy's stories

Stephy also decides to write for the female audience first. She uses a page for the cover and writes the title with a different font in a big size, draws the main character, Kitty.

Stephy shows to be a confident and enthusiastic writer, however, her text is not detailed and the events are not really sequential, though it is chronological because she mentions de activities from different days in consecutive order. She uses the characters of a widely known tale, Hello Kitty.

This is Stephy's story:

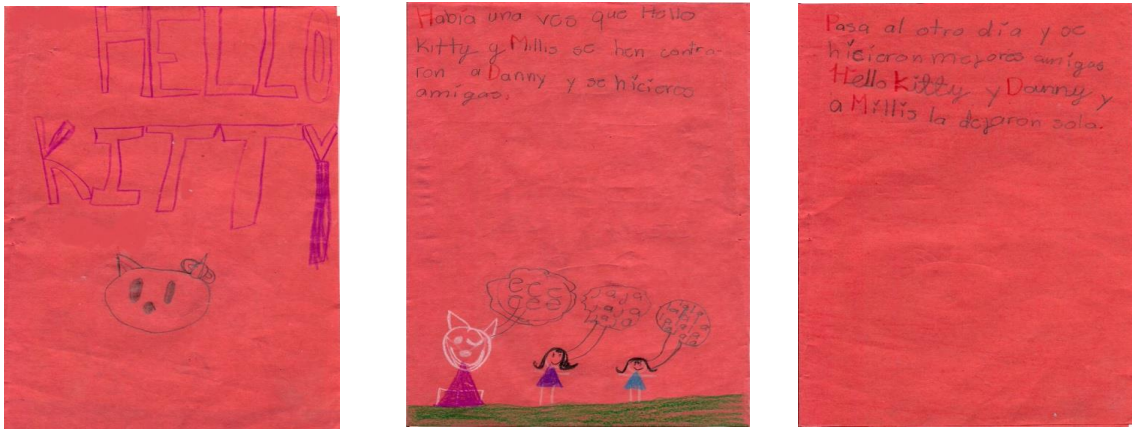
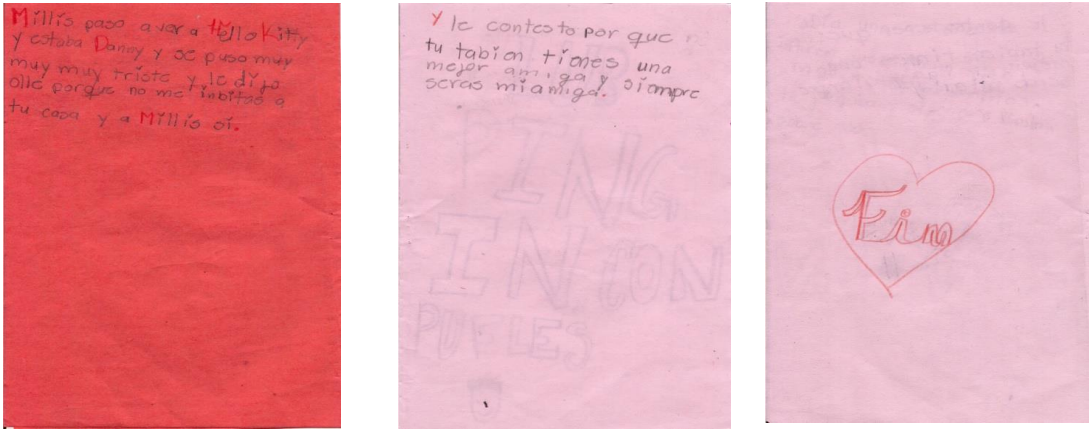


Figure 28. Stephy's girls' story



**Figure 28. Stephy's girls' story**

As it is demonstrated, she tries to meet her audience needs by using characters that are part of a female community. The main topic of the tales is friendship and the plot is a common situation that involves women when they are trying to bond friendship, and this happens when girls are meeting new people and many times they tend to put aside their old friends. However, it must be stated that the plot is very original, even when she uses well-known characters and probably she is describing a situation that she was living at the moment of writing or she previously lived.

The ending is a happy one because the three characters are going to try to keep their friendship and there is also a pet, the cat, who is not part of the argument, but it is part of the whole story, and that is a sample of a domestic world that girls try to achieve for the future life (Marsh, 1998).

When Stephy writes the story for boys, she also uses her creativity to write a whole new story, the title is 'Club Pinguin with Puffles'. She gives a cover to the story, used colorful letters and draws a single striking drawing of a boy.

This is Stephy's boys' story

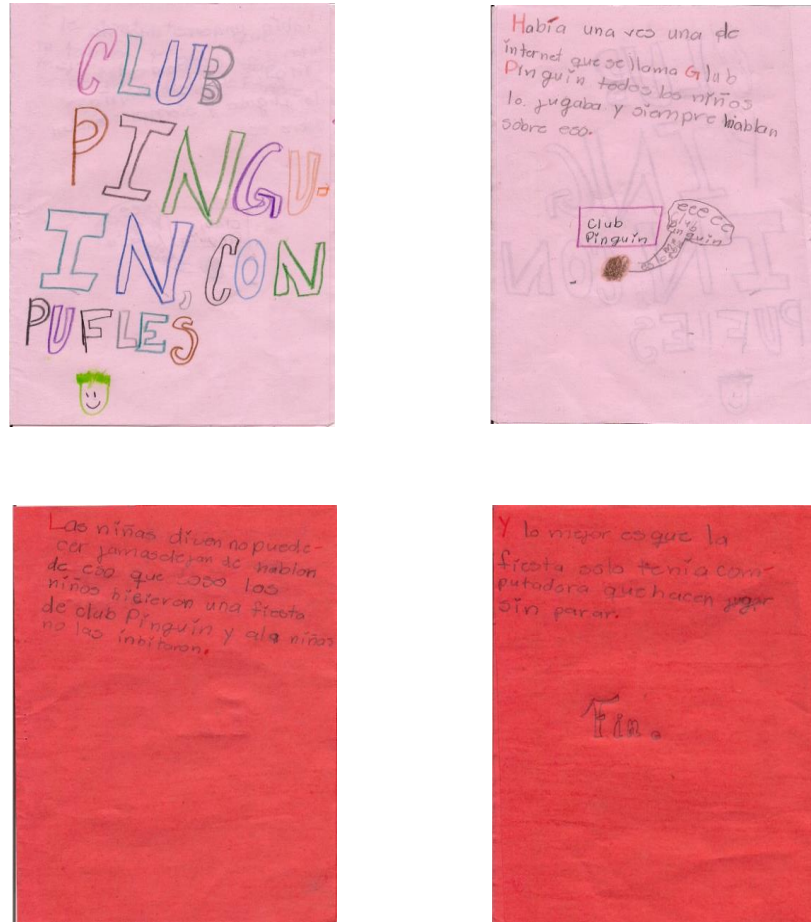


Figure 29. Stephy's boys' story

The story is sequential, there are not characters with a name. She decides to use the typical beginning 'once upon a time', and she describes an internet page that all boys play, its name was Club Pinguin. Boys were talking about it all the time, and the girls complain about it, because they do not have another subject to talk about than just Club Pinguin, and they are fed up.

The children have a party, but girls are not invited, also, the party was about playing because they had a supercomputer that made boys play without stopping.

She is sure about accomplishing her male audience's needs because she talks about boys and their unique and special club. Women are not allowed to be part of this adventure, and it is here where she is excluding women, the story is just for men because women are not part of the

plot, they are even excluded from the big ending. She thinks that with this characteristic is accomplishing one of the requirements.

The story does not have any signal of violence or aggressive language, but her gender schema is present when in the story she includes the girls to judge boys to talk about the same topic once and again, and she even expressed feeling '*qué oso*', that is phrase that describes something that should be considered shameful.

To sum up, Stephy's manages to recreate original and creative stories, she meets both audiences' needs but her gender identity is present to express her feelings about the subjects matter she decided to include in her stories.

#### **4.2.3.7 Ximena's participation during the interview**

Along with the interview, Ximena demonstrated a very unusual position, because none of the other children expressed that men and women have the same capacities and abilities to be part of a story, she even mentioned an example where a female character seems to be better than the male one: '*los súper héroes también pueden ser mujeres, con súper poderes que puedan destruir todo, como por ejemplo Shrek. Fiona es más inteligente que Shrek, ella pelea mejor, y los defiende de todos* ('*super heroes can also be women, with super powers that can destroy everything, such as Shrek. Fiona is smarter than Shrek, she fights better, and defends him from everyone*)'.

She also maintains a position where nobody can tell her what kind of stories she should watch or read; '*sí, por eso somos libres, yo puedo leer lo que a mí me gusta* (*yes, that's why we are free, I can read what I like*), though she can perfectly give examples about what kind of

story each gender could like: *'no se miss, algo bonito para las niñas y algo lleno de terror para los niños, de carros, animales, dinosaurios y para las niñas, mmmm la cenicienta, blanca nieves y como las de Disney con castillos (I don't know miss, something beautiful for girls and something full of horror, for boys, cars, animals, dinosaurs and girls, mmmm Cinderella, snow white, like the Disney ones, with castles)'*

With these kinds of answers, she manifests a very clear gender identity, but for her women should not be considered weak, they can also be superheroes without any problem and for her, there should not be differences between both audiences, although she perfectly knows that most of them have preferences.

#### 4.2.3.8 Ximena's stories

Ximena's stories were a surprise because even when she decided to write for the girls first, her boys' story was completed and more detailed.

Her story is named *'La niña primavera (the spring girl)*. She also gives a cover page to it. She does not use different letters for the title, but she draws a little girl on it.

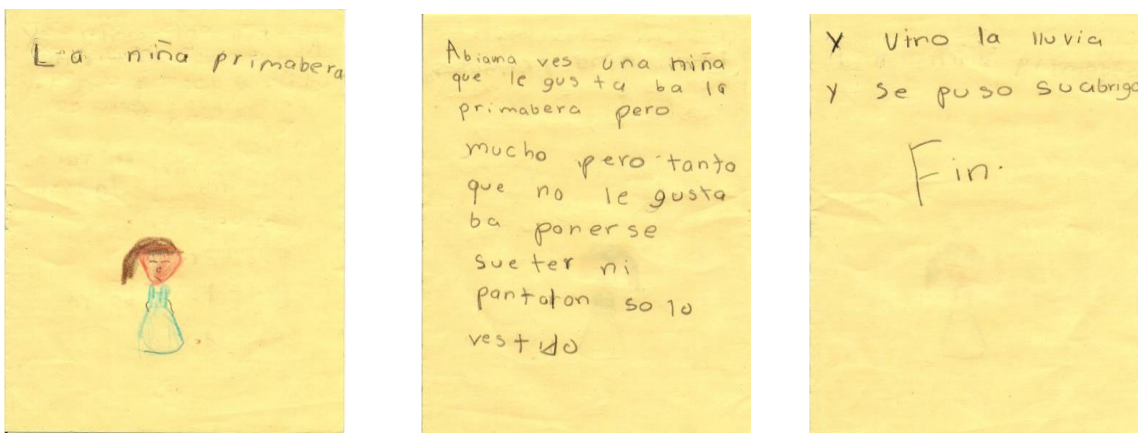


Figure 30. Ximena's girls' story

The story is about a girl who really enjoys the spring, and she does not like to wear a sweater or pants, she always wears dresses, but one day it started to rain and then she had to wear a coat.

It was a surprise this story because it did not match with Ximena's opinions during the interview about stories for a female audience. She mentioned that women are strong and powerful, and none of these characteristics was included in this story. In fact, even when it is an original and creative story, there is not a climax or a problem that has to be solved, like most of the other stories that were read. She shows to have a deep logical, and she is trying to demonstrate that even when you like something a lot, there will be situations that will not allow people to continue with those preferences.

On the other hand, there is the boys' story. She is more careful with the cover page, at least the drawing is more attractive and bigger than the one she did with the previous one. The text is coherent, with sequential events, of course as it happens with children of these ages, there are many details that are missing because she jumps from one activity to another, but the story can be understood as a whole.

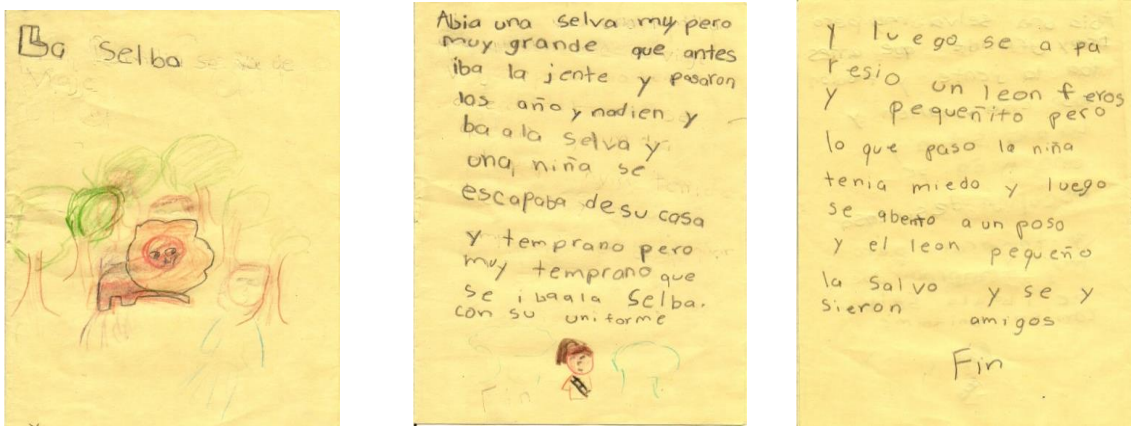


Figure 31. Ximena's boys' story

It was also a surprise to read the story for the boys. The story is about a big jungle that used to be visited by people, but with the time it was abandoned. One day, a girl escaped from her house very early in the morning and went to the jungle wearing her uniform. A fierce lion suddenly appeared, but also a lion cub. The girl was afraid and she threw herself into the water well, but the little lion save her and they became good friends.

She definitely demonstrates what she stated during the interview. For her, the stories should not be for a specific audience and women are as capable and strong as boys. Her boys' story was intended for a male audience, but she did not accomplish the task because the only signal of a male characteristic was the context, in this case, the jungle and the male character was the fierce lion, however, the main ones were a girl and a little lion.

She mentioned during the interview that she can read whatever she wants, and the stories can include intelligent and courageous women and boys would be able to enjoy them if they include certain kind of action and masculine circumstances.

With her texts, she represents her feminism and strong character. She accepts the idea of having different likes between boys and girls, and she knows exactly what to expect from each kind of story. Nevertheless, she denies the idea of just including male characters when talking about action and she did not take into account her audiences' needs, she wrote what she wanted to express as an author and shaped her thoughts into stories.

#### **4.2.3.9 Gina's participation during the interview**

Gina had active participation throughout the whole interview. She mentioned many times that both audiences could have the same taste for some stories, but there are limitations with those tastes: *'a mí sí, si me gustan [referring to scary movies], me gustan, bueno no*

*mucho, pero si me gustan (I like them, I like them, well not much, but I do like them)’, and when one of her classmates mentions that girls are afraid of everything, she immediately replies ‘¡claro que no!, si nos gustan, es un poco de terror, pero si nos gustan (¡of course not!, we like them, it is a little scary, but we do like them.*

She accepted that it can be scary, but girls still enjoy horror stories without any problem, and this was not the only moment that she did not agree with one of her classmates’ comments. One of them made fun about girls like prince charming and Gina replied: ‘¿y qué? a mí me gustan las de príncipes (so what? I like charming princes stories) and not she just defended her likes, she also established a point ‘y la de iron man también pero algunas son muy aburridas sólo se matan y se matan ( and I also like ironman, but some stories are boring, they just kill and kill)’. She likes ‘ironman’ even when many people could consider that story just for a male audience, but she also accepts, that some male stories are boring for her because they just show violence, and she does not like that, and she reaffirms it when she says ‘esas no son sólo de niños, yo también las veo y soy niña, las que son sólo para niños solo matan y matan (those are not just for boys, I also see them and I am a girl, those that are only for boys only kill and kill)’. It is interesting that for her a story for a male audience should imply killers on them because she mentioned it twice.

She also indicates other characteristics that could make that a story could be for a male or a female audience: ‘las crónicas de Narnia está llena de acción y de amor, y es para niñas y niños, entonces yo creo que si son de acción y matar, son sólo para niños y si también hay de amor son para los dos (the chronicles of Narnia are full of action and love, and it is for girls and boys, then I believe that if they are full of action and kill, they are only for boys, and if

there is also love, they are for both). For her, male stories mean to be violent, and if there is romance, then both audiences can enjoy the story.

Her final conclusion is that children should decide to read whatever they like, without mattering what is the story about: *'Mmm, si cada quien ve lo que le guste, que lean lo que les gusta (mm, yes, everyone sees what they like, they can read what they like).*

#### 4.2.3.10 Gina's stories

Gina is a very confident writer. Her ideas are comprehensible and coherent and like the rest of the girls, she wrote the story for the girls in the first place. The cover page is very attractive. She uses a different and big style of font and her drawing is related to nature, it is a striking drawing because it covers the complete page. This is Gina's story.



Figure 32. Gina's girls' story

The story starts with the girls observing the environment, they liked the flowers, clouds and butterflies, they thought everything was ok. The girls are Regina and her friend Ana Karen, who liked to be called Ana, and she loved nature. They found two boys on their way and showed and talked about all the experiences the girls had.

Time passed and some witches appeared and bewitched the world of nature. Regina and Ana got powers and fight a lot until they defeated the witches. They threatened with coming back and make them feel sorry.

Her position about accomplishing her audience's needs are present because she sets the story in a fairy tale context as there are witches and the girls have powers to defeat them. However, she also tries to include the male audience by mentioning two boys and sharing with them the nature experiences. The heroines are not in a domestic environment and the narration has the potential to turn into a great adventure when the girls get powers and villains appear, and in this case, the villains do not take advantage of them as they usually do in fairy tales.

The ending is not a usual one either, because even when the girls defeat the witches, the story not just ends in a happy ending but the story may continue if the witches come back again to look for revenge.

Ginas' story showed that stories for women can also contain a lot of action, and the main characters who are strong, intelligent and powerful do not necessarily have to be men. The little girls showed they can defeat the villains and the female identity and scheme are confirmed when they describe nature and what it gives.

Then, Gina decides to write the story for the boys. In the cover page, she chooses to use big letters without adding any drawing, although she added some of them later. Her writing is sequential, coherent and does not have as much action as described in the girls' story. This is her story:



**Figure 33. Gina's boys' story**

Gina writes another title and it is 'the soccer boy'. It is thought this is another title because after writing it, she starts the story with the line 'long time ago'. The story is about a boy who meets another boy and both enjoy to play soccer a lot. The children play and play until they get tired and they once played a real match.

As it can be noticed, the boys' story is not as detailed as the one that was written for the girls. Gina is trying to meet her male audiences' by using as the main topic the soccer, however, she does not include any other particulars about the children than just enjoy playing soccer other time. The gender schema is represented when she includes another boy who has the same passion for soccer as the first child. She is not interested in giving names and according to Ochoa, Parra y García, 2006, avoiding the names of a character of a specific gender represents sexism, because that means that the person or people are not the important part of a story, but the plot and that is a way of sexism.

#### **4.2.4 Parents interviews**

After collecting all the stories and analyzing the boys and girls participation during the two interviews, it was decided to interview the parents to know more about two of the children's gender background to see if their gender schema and their social context has a relation and influence to what they wrote in their stories and answers during the interview.

##### **4.2.4.1 Diego's father interview**

Diego's father seems to be a very self-confident man who gave direct answers. He never hesitated about his words and he used to think about his answers before speaking out, he mentioned he has three sons.

He demonstrates to be a worried man who cares about gender equality. He mentioned he considers himself as a man who is committed to his partner, his children and his work. Someone who participates in any daily activity that family life demands.

He also claims that a mother and a father have the same responsibilities, these responsibilities may look different but is just the way they perform them. However, as a man, he

needs to take care of basic survival needs, to help with the educations his children, especially because he just has male children, he said they must become reliable, respectful and hard workers men, men that women could respect and trust.

When we got to the part of what children should watch or read, he declared that his house is a male world, his wife. a woman who shares similar tastes also likes to watch the same programs and movies, at least she has never complained about it, so they prefer to watch soccer games, or in general sports programs, cars or superhero movies, but also about war.

He declared that two of his children are regular readers, but he does not enjoy doing it. Nevertheless, he buys books about cars, superheroes, zombies and even when her wife likes to read gossip and beauty magazines, and he is the one who buys them, they never read them or try to read them, just his wife.

Diego's father shared that his youngest son is a child that likes to play videogames and he is very tough and mischievous. He does not have female friends, but he knows that he has to be very respectful, not only with the girls but with everybody.

To sum up, after analyzing and observing the two interviews and Diego's stories, it is comprehensible why he could not achieve his female audience's needs. Diego does not have a lot of contact with women, consequently, even when he has a clear knowledge about what a girl should read or watch, he does not really know what are the elements that characterize a girl's story, because he does not have a connection with those details. Despite he has his mother's role, that is also a role that is more masculine, since she enjoys to watch the same kind of programs that all men in her family watch.

#### **4.2.4.2 Ximena's mother interview**

Ximena's mother is a very self-confident woman. She is a single mother and Ximena is her only child. When she answered the questions, she responded directly and immediately. Her answers were very detailed.

She declares to be an independent woman, who is in charge of her house. She is the one that provides the basic necessities and even when it has been hard sometimes, she is trying to give a message to Ximena, and that message is that she can do everything she wants whenever she wants if she is honest and respectful.

She mentioned that in a house, father and mother should be committed with their children and perform their roles in the most honest and reasonable way to help them to become great people, so they could feel confident and provide them with a lot of tools to survive in this jungle named life.

When we got to the part of what children should watch or read, she declared that she did not have a specific selection of movies or texts. She watches and read whatever she finds interesting without taking into account the topic. She stated that she does not need more limitations in her life, there are many things that people have told her not to do because she a single mother or a woman, to consider to bound children to read or watch specific things.

Once she talked about Ximena, she said that it was her obligation to raise an independent woman, a woman who will know that there will be things that she will not be able to do, but after trying it many times, without giving up, until it is the last option. According to her, her daughter is very confident, nobody fools her and she is responsible for her decisions and she knows how to face the consequences of her actions.

Putting it briefly, after analyzing and observing the two interviews and Ximena's stories, it is comprehensible why she decided not to include a boys' story, or to write for them with a female character as the starring role. Her mother described her as an independent woman, and Ximena proved to be already one since the interview when she said stories must be for everybody and not just for one kind of audience, but also she reinforced that thought when she wrote her stories, a woman can be as powerful as a man.

### **4.3 Conclusions**

Most of these children were able to assess the needs of boys and girls in relation to the content of stories. They were clear about their audiences' preferences. The assessment appears to come from their own interests, which are based on popular culture and are therefore highly gendered. In their stories, the children were clearly attempting to meet the perceived needs of their audience in terms of content.

The majority chose subjects for their stories that correlated to their list of the interests of girls and boys. All the children made a great attempt to write about those subjects as far as they could, however, there is clear evidence of gender skewing in the children's writing, which corresponds exactly with the results of Marsh (1998) research.

Similar patterns were seen in all the children's stories. It appears that gendered worlds are constructed very early on in our lives and influence us for many years.

## **CHAPTER V: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This final chapter presents a summary of the research project presented in this thesis. The chapter begins with a summary of the findings and their relation to the research questions and the study aims. The chapter continues with a discussion of study implications both for practice and research. It also includes a personal reflection related to the research project and my role in it. The chapter ends with the study limitations and suggestions for further research, and final comments on this work.

### **5.1 Findings of the study and recommendations**

This study has shown a clear testimony of gender skewing in the children's writing, which corresponds with the results gotten in Marsh' study that was carried out in 1998 with older children, and it is impressive how the influence of the gender schema and society still contribute in the children's decisions not only about writing but about every aspect that has a division between male and female. It gives the impression that gendered worlds are constructed since a very early stage of our lives and influence us for a lifetime.

Despite many years of feminist research and campaigning about finding equality in all aspects between men and women, society still propagates gender divisions which are based on stereotypes. Schools are part of this process and it should be part of the program to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of gender to promote, expand and guide the integration/application of gender in their everyday classes. Schools should work to ensure that

gender equality is promoted day by day and provide children with opportunities to deconstruct their highly gendered worlds.

Because of their importance as teaching material, the stories used in a classroom should show men and women as human beings, with qualities and defects, limitations and potentialities, without privileges of one sex over the other, because children have the right to learn since childhood, it is not sex but individual talent and personal interest, which determines their life model.

## **5.2 Implications for research**

The analysis performed and the results suggest that the gender schema that children live inside their homes and their everyday contexts have a great influence in their decision about differences between boys and girls, and it is showed not only in their choices about what to write to each audience but to consider and to take for granted what their audiences would like to read.

It is important to recognize that even when the children are aware of what their audiences' needs and likes are, there is always the influence of their own gender. However, their role models at home and school should consider as an important matter to encourage equality in all kind of decisions, activities and beliefs to start to promote the idea that the fact of being a boy or a girl is a limitation to decide on different experiences.

## **5.3 The reflective account**

With this study, I have learnt that even when I already knew that gender differences are endorsed by our society, our parents' beliefs and education and all the background that our

friends and family have about this, it was surprising to see how these differences in seven-year-old children are already shaped in their personalities.

To explore and spot those differences in a closer way with an activity that is not very common for children to do, because they are used to write texts, but they are not familiar with the decision of taking into consideration an audience needs, allowed me to see that even in these days, it is very noticeable to distinguish someone that stands out, just because the words, the topics or the way of presenting a text does not match with the stereotype of being a man or a woman.

Children's stories, despite their importance in the development of children's language, provide discriminatory information about human beings by different conditions (sexual, age, social class, religion, ethnicity, physical condition, etc.). For this reason, it is necessary to take actions of a different nature to unveil and eradicate this reality in all areas.

Aware of this commitment as a teacher, this research showed me that children's stories contain - in particular - sexism (discrimination by sex) from all those attitudes and behaviors that introduce inequality and hierarchy, in the treatment that individuals receive about the basis of differentiation by sex. In the country, there is a very little history of studies on children's stories from a critical gender perspective. During the research, very little research was found and there are few published references on the subject.

It is important to reflect on children's gender identities. Analysis and action are needed in order to generate substantial changes within children's rights approaches, and I consider to help to develop the idea that men and women are equal in most aspects, must be a work that we should start since our classrooms. It is understandable, that this work will not be a change, but it is a beginning.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

It was not possible to interview all children's parents, and it would be extremely useful not only to know their opinions on gender issues to recognize to what extent their influence on the gender schema promotes the children's beliefs about how different or similar are boys from girls.

It is also considered a limitation to the fact that this research was conducted in a private school, probably due to the children's background the results from a public school could be different.

#### **5.5 Suggestions for further research**

Related to the above limitations, the next step is to increase the number of exemplars and to test out the model in a different setting. Another area of possible research would be testing out the interview protocol to understand less than exemplary behaviour.

Finally, other possible research should include the analysis of the children's drawings and compare them with what they are writing, to know more about how they represent their gender beliefs through their drawings.

#### **5.6 Final comments**

This line of investigation should be explored more deeply because it will help writers to consider other aspects and needs of an audience. Even when this is something that most publishers know, it would be interesting and productive to focus on children's differences, needs, likes and behavior to promote not just writing and reading, but equality with the books professional writers produce to start vanishing the idea that girls and boys must like different topics.

Understanding in a deeper level our students believes can lead to more meaningful teaching-learning outcomes. I believe that neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and the elicitation gender protocol can shed light in many other paths that are unexplored but that can potentially be used in our field and others.

It is surprising to know about the effects of reading fiction to children on their social performance. It has been found by scientists that children who have had contact with story reading find it easier to understand other people, they show more empathy and have better-developed theory of mind (the ability to understand that other people have different thoughts and feelings to us, which is essential for understanding and predicting other people's thoughts and conduct). (Ukachoke, 2008).

In sum, stories have a very important role in the educational area, because they endorse co-responsibility in both domestic and public spaces, so that little by little, we will promote and socially and culturally build social equality between men and women.

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## Appendix A

Interview with Emiliano, Daniel, Adriana, Gina and Diego.

001	Ana	Ok niños, vamos a suponer que ustedes son famosos escritores de historietas, ¿ok? Bueno, pues díganme primero ¿qué tipos de historias creen ustedes que les gustan a los niños y a las niñas?
002	Emiliano	Las de terror.
003	Daniel	Sí, las de terror.
004	Ana	Ok, las de terror, entonces a todos les gustan las historias de terror, ¿a niños y a niñas?
005	Adriana	No, a mí no me gustan
006	Daniel	uuuuhh le dan miedo
007	Gina	A mí sí, sí me gustan, me gustan, bueno no mucho, pero sí me gustan.
008	Diego	Es que a las niñas no les gustan las historias de terror, porque gritan y chillan y a los hombres nos gusta que haya mucha acción
008	Ana	Y ustedes ¿qué dicen?, ¿están de acuerdo?, ¿qué opinan?
010	Emiliano	Pues las de terror, las de carros, las de dinosaurios
011	Diego	¡Las de héroes y piratas!
012	Daniel	Si como las de spiderman, batman, iroman
013	Gina	Si, pero también qué les gusta a las niñas, ¿verdad maestra?
014	Ana	Así es, también díganme ¿qué historias les pueden gustar a las niñas? O ¿creen que a las niñas también les gustan las de terror, carros o dinosaurios o súper héroes?
015	Emiliano	No, a ellas les gustan las de hadas, y blanca nieves, y la sirenita
016	Diego	A ti también Emiliano, te gustan
017	Emiliano	Si, unas son chistosas
018	Diego	(Laughing) Entonces eres niña.
019	Emiliano	Pues tú también, porque también te sabes los nombres.
020	Diego	No (angry and frowning) a mí no me gustan esas. Mi hermana las ve, por eso sé.

021	Ana	Ok, ok, pero síganme diciendo
022	Adriana	Si, las de princesas, las de hello Kitty, de barbie y de fantasmas
023	Diego	A las niñas no les gustan los fantasmas, son bien miedosas.
024	Gina	Claro que no, si nos gustan, es un poco terror, pero si nos gustan.
025	Adriana	A mí también me gustan y no me dan miedo mmm, pero a los niños también les gustan las de animales furiosos, y súper poderes, mmm con súper poderes, que destruyan todo, o también de zombis
026	Daniel	Sí (with feeling) de zombis, que se coman todo, y luego vivan y caminen así (imitating a zombie's walk)
027	Adriana	Un día yo vi una película de zombis, con mucha sangre, no me gustó.
028	Ana	¿Y por qué no te gustó?
029	Adriana	Me puse nerviosa.
030	Gina	Sí miss, unas son muy feas
031	Ana	Ok, pero entonces, ¿ustedes creen que a los niños les gusten los mismos tipos de historias que a las niñas o no?
032	Adriana	Pues sí, pero sólo algunas, porque a mí no me gustan la de dinosaurios.
033	Gina	No, yo no creo, ellos sólo hablan de football y eso sería aburrido para una niña, que leyera sólo football todo el tiempo, sería muy, pero muy aburrido, pero hay historias que son para los dos.
034	Emiliano	Sería una historia chida, no de princesitas (changing the voice tone), con su príncipe azul y bailando un vals, (laughing), como la de transformers o iron man.
035	Gina	¿Y qué? a mí me gustan las de príncipes, y la de iron man también pero algunas son muy aburridas sólo se matan y se matan
036	Daniel	No es cierto, hay historias de niños que son llenas de aventuras sin que maten.
037	Adriana	¿A ver, cuáles?
038	Daniel	Las de Phineas y Pherb, los padrinos mágicos
039	Gina	Esas no son sólo de niños, yo también las veo y soy niña, las que son sólo para niños solo matan y matan.
040	Diego	Pues si, deben estar llenas de acción y no cursis como las de las niñas.

041	Ana	Entonces ¿creen que las historias de niños deben ser de acción y las de las niñas cursis y de príncipes y princesas?
042	Adriana	Claro que no, Pocahontas está llena de acción también
043	Diego	Y es cursi, amor, amor, sólo amor
044	Gina	Las crónicas de Narnia están llenas de acción y de amor, y es para niñas y niños, entonces yo creo que si son de acción y matar, son sólo para niños y si también hay de amor son para los dos.
045	Ana	Las historias de niñas ¿deben ser de amor, entonces?
046	Adriana	No miss, no todas son de amor, la de hello Kitty no es de amor, ni Bob esponja.
047	Diego	Si son para niñas, deben ser cursis y si son de niños con súper poderes y súper armas.
048	Ana	¿Están de acuerdo todos los demás?
049	Gina	No miss, no me gustan sólo de amor, Phineas y Pherb también me gusta y no hay amor, ¿verdad?
050	Daniel	Yo creo que a las niñas les gustan las de príncipe azul
051	Emiliano	A mí me gustan de terror y carros y a ellas de caperucita roja y como esas, con hadas.
052	Gina	Ay pues nos pueden gustar cualquiera, aunque sea de niños.
053	Diego	Mmm sí, hay algunas niñas que les gustan los carros y el football ¿no?
054	Ana	Ok, ¿están de acuerdo con lo que dice su compañero o no?
055	Adriana	Pues si.
056	Emiliano	Ajá.
057	Gina	Mmm, sí, cada quien ve lo que le guste.
058	Ana	Y tú ¿qué dices?
059	Daniel	Mmmm no sé, a mi no me gustan de princesas, como los cuentos de niñas son algo aburridos tal vez ellas se aburran y pues vean las películas de niños, pero yo no vería películas de hadas.
060	Diego	Yo nunca leería una historia de niñas
061	Gina	Por eso que cada quien vea lo que sea

062	Adriana	Sí.
063	Ana	Ok, entonces ustedes dicen que los niños eligen lo que quieren leer, ¿aunque la historia sea para el género opuesto? Es decir, si la historia es de niños, ¿las niñas las pueden leer, y si es de niñas, los niños la pueden leer?
064	Adriana	Si, no pasa nada
065	Daniel	Pues si miss, los niños pueden leer historias de amor alguna vez, aunque yo nunca lo haría.
066	Ana	¿Alguna otra opinión?
067	Gina	No, que lean lo que les gusta
068	Ana	¿Alguien mas? (no response) ... ¿No?, ok entonces muchas gracias, les pido por favor que nos dirijamos a sus salones.

## Appendix B

Interview with Ximena, Regina, Norberto, Stephy and Roberto.

001	Ana	Ok niños, vamos a suponer que ustedes son famosos escritores de historietas, ¿ok? Bueno, pues díganme primero ¿qué tipos de historias creen ustedes que les gustan a los niños y a las niñas?
002	Ximena	Yo escribiría historias que les gusten a los dos.
003	Ana	¿Ah sí? ¿Cómo qué tipos de historias crees que les guste a los niños y a las niñas?
004	Regina	Yo sé, yo sé.
005	Ana	Ok, a ver dime.
006	Regina	De animales, como Madagascar, esa les gusta a los dos.
007	Norberto	Si, también de osos, o de animales, o de súper héroes que sean hombres y mujeres.
008	Ximena	Si, porque los dos tienen sus propias capacidades.
008	Ana	¿Sus propias capacidades? ¿cómo?
010	Ximena	Los súper héroes también pueden ser mujeres, con súper poderes que puedan destruir todo, como por ejemplo Shrek. Fiona es más inteligente que Shrek, ella pelea más mejor, y lo defiende de todos.
011	Roberto	Ah pero Shrek es diferente, no es un súper héroe y por ser ogro ya todos le tienen miedo, aunque sea medio tonto.
012	Regina	Es muy menso.
013	Ximena	Si todos los súper héroes no quieren decir la verdad.
014	Ana	¿No quieren decir la verdad?
015	Ximena	No siempre mienten, nadie se debe enterar.
016	Roberto	Pues de eso se trata, sino cómo vencerían a los malos.
017	Stephy	Pues yo pienso que las mujeres aunque no tengan súper poderes, también hacen bonitas historias, no todo debe ser con sangre o que maten a todos.
018	Roberto	Pues no sería divertido.

019	Stephy	Madagascar no tienen sangre y es bonita historia, y hay malos y buenos y nos gusta a los niños y a las niñas.
020	Roberto	A mí no.
021	Ana	¿Por qué no te gusta?
022	Roberto	No hay acción
023	Stephy	Si hay acción, sino cómo sería historia, ayyy.
024	Ana	Ok, Norberto, ¿tú qué piensas?
025	Norberto	Pues yo creo que a las niñas y a los niños nos gustan casi el mismo tipo de historias. Porque a mí me gusta Shrek y la era del hielo y también a las niñas les gustan esas historias, tal vez a ellas no les guste mucha sangre.
026	Stephy	Si, no debe haber mucha sangre para ser divertida una historia como la de Garfield o Toy Story
027	Regina	Si miss, los hombres sólo quieren muerte en sus historias, que haya malos muy malos.
028	Norberto	No, como la de Perry, ahí hay malos pero no se mueren y a mí me gusta esa caricatura.
029	Stephy	Sí a mí también me gusta Phineas and Ferb, porque Perry es muy tierno.
030	Roberto	A algunas niñas les gustan de robots, porque a Pau le gusta transformes es su película favorita y también la mía, yo digo que a veces nos puede gustar lo mismo. Porque si no en el cine diría películas para hombres y películas para mujeres.
031	Ana	¿Y tú crees que eso sería correcto?
032	Roberto	Sí, así las mujeres no gritarían cuando vean morir al malo.
033	Norberto	Yo digo que no, cada quien ve lo que le gusta.
034	Regina	Si, no pueden prohibir la entrada a los niños o a las niñas.
035	Roberto	No, porque Paulina no podría haber visto transformes o yo no podría haber visto Toy Story.
036	Ana	Entonces, ¿consideran Toy Story como una historia sólo para niñas?
037	Regina	Mmm tal vez fue hecha para niñas, pero hay niños tiernos también y como los juguetes nos gustan a todos pues es para los dos.

038	Ana	¿Sólo a los niños tiernos les gustan ese tipo de historias?
039	Stephy	No, porque a mi hermano si le gustó y el no es tierno, sólo le gustan las películas de terror y donde haya mucha sangre, por eso no sólo les gustan a los niños tiernos.
040	Norberto	No deben ser tiernos los niños para ver esas películas. Cada quién escoge lo que quiere ver.
041	Ximena	Si por eso somos libres, yo puedo leer lo que a mí me gusta.
042	Ana	Ok, ¿alguien más tiene otra opinión? (silent) Bueno, entonces, por último, díganme entonces como conclusión, ¿qué historias serían para niños y qué historias para niñas?
043	Norberto	Para niñas, de la sirenita, de la cenicienta, de todas donde haya princesas. Y para los niños de football, fantasmas, zombis, carreras y monstruos.
044	Regina	Yo digo que no debemos decir cuáles, mejor que cada quién escoja lo que le guste. Si yo fuera escritora, pues escribiría historias que pudieran leer los dos, como Madagascar o Garfield.
045	Roberto	Si, yo también, para que fuera más rico, porque todos leerían mis historias
046	Stephy	Yo escribiría para niñas, cuentos de hadas como Rapunzel, Pocahontas, La mujer maravilla y para niños Batman y Spiderman.
047	Ana	¿Y tú qué opinas?
048	Ximena	No se miss, algo bonito para las niñas y algo lleno de terror para los niños.
049	Regina	Si, de princesas y cuentos de hadas y los niños historias de football y monstruos.
050	Ximena	De carros, animales, dinosaurios y para las niñas, mmmm la cenicienta, blanca nieves y como las de Disney con castillos.
051	Ana	¿Algo más que quieran agregar? ¿No? Bueno, muy bien niños, muchas gracias por sus respuestas. Ya podemos regresar a su salón.