

Gender representations and reading plan in Chile: literary corpus study for early childhood

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the gender representations contained in six literary texts suggested by the Chilean Ministry of Education for transition levels I and II of Preschool Education and the first year of Primary Education, and their possible implications in the construction of children's identities. The research design is framed within the qualitative approach and proposes an interdisciplinary analysis to identify the semiotic resources that could shape a discourse that maintains and promotes gender stereotypes. This analysis integrates conceptual frameworks that look at literature as a means of transmitting and creating identities; studies of gender representations in symbolic, visual and discursive works that shape the social position of men and women; and developmental approaches that study subjectivities in childhood. The results show that some of the literary texts studied contain recurrent signs and differentiated identification codes for girls and boys, which are constructed from a traditional, antagonistic and binary gender perspective, and some others tend to subvert this conventional order. In conclusion, some texts propose reading options that tend to sustain conventional gender roles and other texts open up new forms of representation.

Keywords: Gender representations; identity construction; narrative literary texts; reading promotion plan; children's literature; early childhood.

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Representaciones de género y plan lector en Chile: Estudio del corpus literario para primera infancia

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Resumen

El propósito de este trabajo es analizar las representaciones de género contenidas en seis textos literarios sugeridos por el Ministerio de Educación para los niveles transición I y II de Educación Parvularia y primer año de Enseñanza Básica, y sus posibles implicancias en la construcción identitaria infantil. El diseño de la investigación se enmarca en el paradigma cualitativo y propone un análisis interdisciplinario para identificar los recursos semióticos que podrían configurar un discurso que mantiene y promueve estereotipos de género. Este análisis incorpora marcos conceptuales que abordan la literatura como medio de transmisión y creación de identidades, los estudios de representaciones de género significadas en elaboraciones simbólicas, visuales y discursivas que modelan la posición social de hombres y mujeres; y enfoques del desarrollo que estudian las subjetividades en la infancia. Los resultados muestran que algunos textos literarios estudiados contienen signos recurrentes y códigos de identificación diferenciados para niñas y niños, los que se construyen desde una perspectiva de género tradicional, antagónica y binaria, y otros que tienden a subvertir este orden convencional. En conclusión, algunos textos proponen opciones de lectura que tienden a sostener roles de género convencionales y otros textos dan apertura a nuevas formas de representación.

Palabras clave: Representaciones de género; construcción identitaria; textos literarios narrativos; plan de fomento lector; literatura infantil; primera infancia.

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Introduction

Reading literary texts in a school context: a way of reproducing and/or constructing culture, gender representations and identity.

In Chile, literary reading has been significantly emphasised and has been assigned an important role in the formative process, particularly at the levels of Preschool Education, or early childhood, and Basic Education. In this sense, the National Reading and Book Policy shows an extensive development dating back to 1993., date on which the Book Act no. 19.227, was enacted, whose guidelines establish objectives and actions to bring the population closer to reading. At the school level, the National Reading Plan and the “Primero Leo” programme (2018) have implemented the development of reading spaces that stimulate fruitive and interpretative reading, in order to generate critical and reflective skills in students about their knowledge of themselves and of the spaces of cultural interaction.

In particular, the vast academic development of Children’s and Young Adult Literature (Petit, 1999; Colomer, 2005; Lluch, 2012; Guíñez & Martínez, 2015; Munita, 2017) suggests that literary reading collaborates with the worldviews that children construct of themselves and their environment, through the distinction of “situations that generate a model of identification subscribed to the text”. (Martínez et al., 2021, p. 186). Thus, the resources that constitute the literary work could configure a discourse that promotes and perpetuates representations, or facilitates the construction of multiple possibilities of self-recognition in the child reader, offering horizons for the configuration of their identities.

In this context, this paper study raises a problem that arises in attention to the possible impact of gender stereotypes and roles in children’s literature on the identity processes involved in the reading experience, which originate mainly in the school context. This research thus reviews a selection of the proposed literary corpus for Chilean children, considering relevant the free availability of the texts for students, since they are accessible in school classroom libraries. Therefore, the study asks whether these texts contain representations that can identify girls and boys differently through reading? To that end, the paper analyses the representations of gender contained in six literary texts suggested by the Chilean Ministry of Education for the transition levels I and II of Preschool Education and the first year of Primary Education, and their possible implications in the construction of children’s identities.

Gender, binarism, stereotypes and gender roles

Gender representations as social configurations, mediated by cultural and historical processes, have potentially influenced the construction of children’s identities. Gender has been defined as a set of dispositions by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity (Rubin, 1986). According to Scott (2008), gender is a constitutive element of social relations based on sexual difference, as well as a primary form of power relations. The author argues that gender is shaped by symbols, normative systems, institutions and organisations, and subjective identity. In the Latin American context and from the decolonial critique, gender is understood as a construction that defines men and women from a binary, dichotomous, antagonistic and hierarchical point of view (Lugones, 2008), while it has also been conceptualised as a category of analysis that shows how dominant and hegemonic representations organise diverse worlds such as sexuality, affects and social roles (Segato, 2018).

Through the process of gender socialisation, expectations, forms of relationships and socially accepted behaviours are conveyed according to the sex/gender system (Rubin, 1986) of each culture and historical moment (Rubin, 1986). Throughout this process, gender stereotypes are installed, defined in Western culture as binary and hierarchical oppositions that assign feminine behaviours and characteristics to women and masculine ones to men (Segato, 2018). However, despite the fact that gender stereotypes are transmitted from one generation to the next and are identifiable from an early age (García-Prieto & Arriazo-Muñoz, 2020), they do not remain static, since as social roles change, some stereotypes lose validity, new ones appear or those that were once assigned to men may be assigned to women in another (Castillo-Mayén & Montes-Berges, 2014). Even so, from these socially shared belief frameworks, sex-differentiated social positions and performance spaces are configured, with different privileges and valuations.

Some research reveals that children's and young adult literature could be a source of transmission of sexist stereotypes explicitly or implicitly (López & Moreno, 2003; Perriconi, 2015), and has also revealed the existence of representations that entail gender discrimination, despite deliberate efforts to produce less sexist texts in recent years (Lluch, 2012). From its origins, Márquez (2017) argues children's literature has been a social-historical product, conditioned by a series of pedagogical, philosophical and cultural factors. The author also points out that all the values, attitudes, hierarchies and beliefs appropriate for children appear in stories and that they have served to transmit and maintain sexist, racist and classist social prejudices, through characters that girls and boys imitate.

However, some studies have shown that social advances in gender equality have led to significant changes in the representation of gender stereotypes. This is revealed by the research of Salido-López and Salido-Lopez (2021) who, based on the analysis of children's books published in the Hispanic media between 1980 and 2020, conclude that sexist stereotypes have been reduced in recent decades and that pictures, in addition to their great educational potential, reflect social evolution in terms of gender roles and stereotypes. Similarly, in a multimodal semiotic study of album books, Cañamares-Torrijos and Moya-Guijarro (2019) conclude that the texts analysed present new locations in their structure, allowing women to move from interior (home) to exterior (public) spaces. In this sense, a dialogical openness to gender equality and social integration is established, based on a progressive message that repositions the female figure.

Cultural relevance for the construction of identities

In order to understand the importance of literature in school educational practices, as a space for socialisation and identity construction (Berger & Lukmann, 2001), it is necessary to consider different conceptions of reading. From the semiological paradigm of the literary text, literature is conceived as a series of texts that present a double code: a linguistic and a non-linguistic one, in which various cultural systems converge and through which the components that make up the models or representations of the cultures are transmitted (Lotman, 1970; Mignolo, 1986). Therefore, literature has the potential to convey and create culture (Carrasco, 2005, 2008, 2009; Mansilla, 2006; Lotman, 1970) insofar as culture is transmitted through literature, as a cultural discourse, while literary discourse itself creates culture (Carrasco, 2005). For this reason, when reading processes are carried out in school contexts, cultural representations are communicated that influence the identity processes of the children. (Valenzuela, 2020).

In the space of literary reading, infants construct identification options based on interpretative traces that collaborate with the perception of themselves and with the ways of signifying the cultural environment (Guñez & Martínez, 2015). The text, as a cultural mediator,

becomes a medium that allows the construction of social imaginaries and structures that shape identity (Colomer, 2005; Lluch, 2012; Munita & Pérez, 2013), whereas, in books, the representation of experience framed in the actions children undertake in their immediate contexts is encoded through words and pictures (Petit, 1999; Colomer, 2005; Munita & Pérez 2013; Guíñez & Martínez, 2015). The text opens a dialogue with the cultural designs of readers. (Rabanal, 2021a), thus forming a web of possibilities and experiences in which literary proposals are confronted with forms of actualisation (Jauss, 1975) triggered by each reading.

Literary reading as a process of citizenship education

In educational praxis, it is possible to consider that citizenship emerges as a scene of discussion that needs to be enabled, where individual and collective rights and belonging to a community are related in multicultural and democratic spaces positioned in participation. (Soriano, 2007; Bisquerra, 2008; Redon, 2010). Therefore, the different positions that participate in a suggestive dialogue find in literature, and in the experience of reading, a territory to explore.

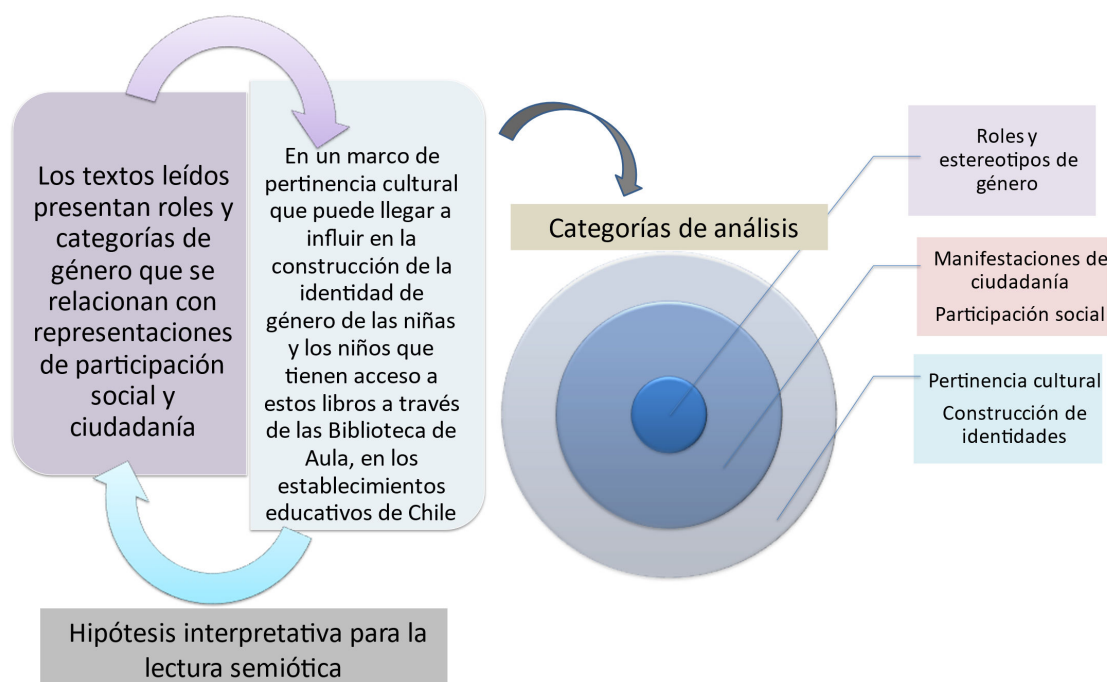
In this sense, citizenship and literature form a means of access to discussion and a segment open to meanings that allow the voices of those who interact in the shared experience to be made visible. The creativity that literature brings is, in turn, a stimulus to the creativity of readers, to become, in turn, writers of their citizen biography and to put it on stage to socialise it with others. According to Giardinelli (2007), reading, in recent years, has especially become a form of resistance and reading communities have diversified (Chartier, 1994) with different orientations.

Literature and its reading have made the walls of libraries and educational establishments porous to collectivise public space. In this sense, the act of reading and the approach to literature, with a citizenship perspective, are intended to be a practice and a policy for the construction of society and critical subjects who discover new possibilities for building communities and horizons of nationhood.

Methodology

This study incorporates the methodology of text semiotics, which integrates linguistic and graphic (picture) language, with the aim of identifying textual structures, or semiotic resources, in order to analyse the representations of gender in the selected literary corpus. It specifically follows the interpretation proposal presented by Umberto Eco (1992, 1995), whereby semiotic or critical reading is conducted on the basis of the *intentio operis*, i.e. the intention of the text (not of the author or reader). The research involved reading 60 works included in the classroom libraries for the transitional and first levels of Primary Education, distributed in 2020 by the Chilean Ministry of Education .

The analytical procedure included the review of the 60 works based on the codes of interpretation evidenced in the texts, which show representations of gender linked to social roles and identity traits constructed in the plot of the literary proposals. From this starting point, a first reading was conducted, according to Eco's (1995) proposal, to search for coherent textual references to these codes, which allowed the selection of a corpus of 50 texts. Secondly, an interpretative/critical hypothesis for semiotic (in-depth) reading was developed, whereby the texts read present gender roles and categories that are related to representations of social participation and citizenship, within a framework of cultural relevance that can influence the construction of the gender identity of girls and boys, who have access to these books through classroom libraries in Chilean educational establishments (figure 1).

Figure 1. Methodological matrix for the analysis of literary texts

Source: Prepared by the authors.

This interpretative hypothesis is constructed on the basis of three categories of analysis that emerge from the conceptual theoretical framework presented in this study. The first one relates to the roles, functions and stereotypes represented for men and women, which are identified through the recognition of expectations, forms of relationships, and socially accepted behaviours according to the sex/gender system. The second one identifies the manifestations of citizenship and social participation, from a gender perspective, according to the inclusion of children's voices in decision-making within their communities. The third one refers to the cultural representations visualised in the ways in which children's socialisation processes and adult behavioural modelling are presented, identifying elements, actions, interpersonal relationships, among others, that signify aspects of cultural relevance for the construction of identities, from a gender perspective. In the third instance, we chose to identify those literary works that presented the most symbolic elements related to the reading hypothesis and that were representative of the corpus of texts. Therefore, a content analysis was used to identify the recurrent symbolic elements in the textual references, according to the degree of frequency in which they appear in the texts in written and visual form, based on the reading hypothesis and the categories of analysis. In this article, due to the length of the work and in order to achieve greater analytical depth, the results of the study of two texts per educational level are presented (figure 2).

Figure 2. Study corpus under analysis

Transition Level I Preschool Education	Transition Level II Preschool Education	First Year of Primary Education
<i>I'm a girl!</i> (Yasmen Ismail)	<i>Du Iz Tak?</i> (Carson Ellis)	<i>Pequeña Historia de un desacuerdo</i> (Claudia Fuentes)
<i>Cielografía de Chile</i> (Floridor Pérez)	<i>Las rayas del tigre</i> (Simonetti-Ilabaca)	<i>Cuentos del mundo en décimas</i> (Eustaquio Pérez y Marcelo Escobar)

Source: Prepared by the authors (based on the works included in the classroom libraries for the transition and first primary education levels, distributed in 2020 by the Ministry of Education in Chile).

Analysis of the results

The results of the critical semiotic analysis of six literary texts organised according to school level are presented below. This analysis is approached on the basis of the reading hypothesis and the categories of analysis emerging from the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study: gender roles and stereotypes/ manifestations of citizenship and social participation/ cultural relevance and construction of identities.

Books for Early Childhood Education: from adult-centric and traditional views of gender towards less stereotypical social roles

First of all, for transition level I, [Yasmeen Ismail's \(2016\) *I'm a girl!*](#) is a clear example of the re-signification of the socio-cultural parameters that delimit the characterisation of the feminine and masculine in the context of childhood. Both the story and the pictures configure a discourse that vindicates the normalisation of conventional gender roles, which ascribe individual physical and psychological (behavioural and emotional) characteristics in a differentiated manner to girls and boys. It is important to consider this type of texts in school classrooms, since, as [García-Prieto and Arriazo-Muñoz \(2020\)](#) argue, stereotypes associated with masculine and feminine do not remain static, as they vary according to the social roles assigned to men and women depending on the socio-historical contexts. In this sense, it is possible to highlight that the actions of enjoyment and autonomy presented in the text, which can be accessed by children who read it, are related to individual capacities and places of belonging, but these are delimited by an adult-centred environment.

The characterisation of “The Girl Rabbit” as the main character, in blue as opposed to the pink or pastel shades that traditionally represent girls, is interpreted as a resistance to identifying with socially assigned roles for differentiated behaviour between girls and boys. Signs related to the perception of their identity are described on the basis of the recognition of abilities, skills and actions of taste and enjoyment. As the main character states: “a veces soy dulce, tierna y educada”, “otras soy rebelde y algo descarada”. Thus, it is possible to interpret the presence of a contrast between the characteristics and behavioural aspects that a girl should, by sociocultural modelling, manifest and those that seem to be typical of boys. In other words, traditional gender

roles and categories are redefined, giving children the opportunity to construct more complex and contemporary interpretations of gender through the reading of this text.

Similarly, the rabbit sees herself as aware of her personal worth, which she evidences through the satisfaction she perceives in her skills: “mira voy a toda velocidad”, “¡Soy una niña!”, “Soy la más valiente, esa es la verdad”, “Soy muy espontánea, me gusta improvisar. Y cuando lo hago, ¡lo paso genial!” In this context, the exploration of the world, under the perspective of the identification of their skills, channels the perception of achievement as an operator of behaviour and self-validation: “Está bien querer ser bueno en las cosas”, “Me gusta ser la mejor”, which demonstrates an identity positioned in the security and confidence of her “girl” self (Miras, 2001; Martínez et al., 2021) (figure 3).

Figure 3. Selected scenes from “I’m a girl!”



Source: Yasmee Ismail, 2016. Editorial Corimbo.

The girl rabbit’s experience of social participation is shown in everyday life. The text is constructed on the basis of symbols that strengthen her participation as an autonomous person, independent of the adult’s vision, mainly in terms of her capacity for self-definition and reflection on herself, her abilities and actions. But there is also the presence of adults and children who codify the identity of the rabbit on the basis of a naturalised social parameter that ascribes their actions to roles assigned to children: “tengo el libro perfecto para un niño como tú”, the librarian says, or “las muñecas son para niñas”, says a boy in a collective play space. The girl’s constant questioning of all dogmatic, adult-centric and traditional referents reveals her participation and her conception of herself as a child, a citizen and a builder of culture, as manifestations of her identity.

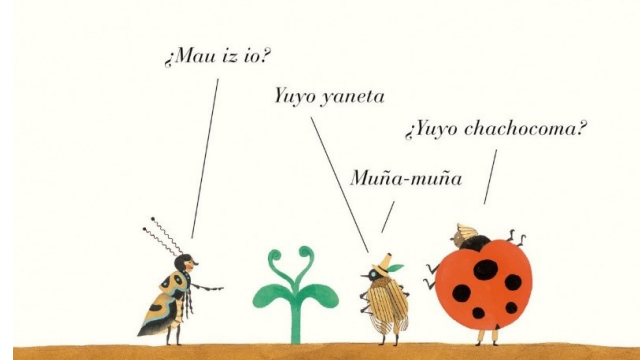
Secondly, the book *Cielografía de Chile* (2017) by Floridor Pérez proposes, from the cover, a twist on conventional conceptions of gender. In it, we can see an aeroplane ridden by a girl, dismantling the conventionally male relationship with technology. In this case, the graphic gesture functions in the book as an epigraph where the woman is positioned as an interpretative key represented in the illustration of the text, breaking the passive role traditionally assigned to the feminine, as well as its lack of prominence.

The graphic elements form the expressive fabric of the text, with a clear link to the style of muralism. These are designed with features mostly linked to women’s participation and, in

addition, they reveal a style that details a feminine enunciation. In this sense, most individuals in the book from the graphic arts are female, making the narrative of national culture directed from the mediation of women. Potters, weavers, girls, teachers and teachers, all make the graphic components dynamic while the “School Bell” tolls: “Señora muy gorda/ columpiándose en una viga, / es de bronce su garganta/ su voz es clara y amiga”, and the “Caracolas a vela/ navegan/ por el cielo/ de los puertos” in the poem *Gaviotas*. For this reason, *Cielografía de Chile*, beyond being a publication that presents certain postcards of what can be understood as national culture, also shows an impetuous look at the participation of women on different levels and in different contexts, demonstrating an intention to highlight social participation as a mechanism to make women visible. This participation opens up space for the construction of citizenship, as women are part of the public space, overcoming the private space linked to family care and domesticity, typical of the traditional construction of gender, where the public is linked more to the masculine (Rubin 1986, Segato, 2018).

For transition level II, in *Du Iz Tak?* (2017) by Carson Ellis, the text-image interaction is essential when reading a narrative constructed from a story that uses its own linguistic codes, which are different from those of the mother tongue. In this case, the text invites us to experiment and imagine, from these codes, the potential of meaning visualised in its graphics. It is necessary to consider that this opportunity for multiple readings makes it possible for children to construct modes of generic identification based on their own codes. In this sense, the text is configured as a key pedagogical material to investigate the codes with which children identify gender and, on the other hand, to construct other modes of gender identification through creativity (figure 4).

Figure 4. Scene from *Du Iz Tak?*



Source: Carson Ellis, 2017. Barbara Fiore Editora.

The insects, characters in the story, develop the tale through a fictionalised written language and a plot that takes place in the visualisation of pictures. These characters have human features and use artefacts that allow the projection of the symbolisation of gender stereotypes, through the differentiation of aspects such as: clothing, the tasks performed by the female/male characters and the actions that define their behavioural patterns, evidencing the frameworks of belief socially shared in a traditional and patriarchal culture. Thus, the male insects carry heavy material for the construction of an architectural work that will host all those involved, and the female insects do the lighter work. The male insect delights in a violin performance dedicated to a butterfly that dances to the melody. The oldest insect, a male centipede, reads in a relaxed manner and guides the work of the collective.

Although the text presents civic participation in relation to the collective and in a shared space between genders, the roles are clearly differentiated for each group. From a cultural identity projection, the development of a collaborative work meaning in the participation of all insects is relevant and valuable; but, in spite of showing a collective action focused on common welfare, the organisational logic is projected in a conventional way and from a binary perspective made visible in socially differentiated roles.

In the second book, *Las rayas del tigre* (2018) by Marcelo Simonetti, we can identify the transit experienced by a tiger from its place of origin, the jungle, to the urban world visualised in technological and economic development and in the organisation of the masses, as signs of human lifestyles. In its characterisation: “El tigre era curioso y noble, sobre todo noble”, allows it to explore the unknown; that is, the instantiation of a global world in constant mobility, but which becomes fragile and vulnerable. In its “noble” condition, it helps, protects and contains the socio-emotionally helpless “animals” (human beings).

When considering this last dimension, in Simonetti’s literary proposal, the tiger is permeated by patriarchal traits, associated with hegemonic masculinity and the mandates of care that construct the traditional social imaginary and that associate men with certain social responsibilities. Girls, women and the elderly are presented in the book as characters that the tiger must protect, which allows us to interpret, in the text, the presence of a system of symbols that identify in the male role responsibilities of protection and care, but in a public space. Although these “protection and care” performances can be linked to women in a maternal role, they operate in the private space. In the case of this work, the plot is visualised in the public space.

In summary, the analysis of the selected texts from this level of education has allowed us to identify a favourable variety of works to dismantle traditional gender categories. The selected texts move from traditional and binary representations, symbolised in an adult-centric positioning, with respect to the construction of gender categories, towards works that reverse this traditional order to re-signify conventional stereotypes.

Identities shaped by civic participation and the recognition of otherness: the signs of reading in the first year of primary school.

Claudio Fuentes’ *Pequeña historia de un desacuerdo* (2017) can be considered as a new text linked to recent Chilean literature that deals with school imaginaries (Rabanal, 2021b), from a child’s point of view.

The plot of the text is constructed on the basis of an event that questions the conservation of and respect for natural heritage, on the one hand, and the sustainability of human progress and development through the urbanisation of spaces of interaction, on the other. The dilemma arises when, in a playground, a monkey-puzzle tree -representing the millenary natural heritage- must be cut down to allow the construction of a building -that represents development, progress and innovation-, which shocked the students: “Aquel lunes cuando regresamos de las vacaciones, en el colegio nos esperaba una sorpresa”, “Una inmensa grúa cruzaba los aires y unos paneles de madera bloqueaban el patio”. In the narrative, this situation triggers the students’ discussions, who take a position on the event. Therefore, the analysis of the text allows us to interpret a treatment of gender identities linked mainly to the construction of citizenship and social participation.

Thus, Developers and Millennials, groups that are created to defend their points of view with respect to the situation narrated, deploy their ideas to give rise to each of the positions presented in the text. Adults are simultaneously looking for ways to work on conflict resolution as part of a learning experience. In this case, the headmistress says that “lo mejor para resolver los problemas es conversar y escucharse”, while the history teacher proposes a debate to encourage civic education. Therefore, the adult voice, symbolised by these characters, guides the students’ political initiatives and leads the possibilities of debate, favouring the development of citizenship.

The text proposes a polarised discussion that reveals binary and stereotypical positions of gender roles. In this sense, progress is introduced in the voice of a young spokesperson, while the Millennials are represented by a student who channels her ideas. A symbolic synthesis can thus be seen that reproduces patriarchal and androcentric conceptions, since progress, technology and development are equivalent to the male position and enunciation: “los Desarrollistas mostraron sus argumentos con firmeza”; while Millennials are described as a collective that channels its views from a position permeated by emotionality: “los Milenarios encendieron el corazón de muchos”. In this way, the disposition of the narrative leads to a struggle between rationality and emotionality, as a story that stages national socio-political spaces that place progress against commitments to nature and the legitimisation of ancestral knowledge (figure 5).

Figure 5. Selected scenes from “Pequeña historia de un desacuerdo”



Source: Gabriela Lyon, 2017. Ediciones Ekaré Sur.

In short, *Pequeña historia de un desacuerdo* tends to operate a gesture of conventional and binary gender reproduction: emotional women and rational men. It also has a hegemonic component represented in the experience of adults as conflict mediators, who assume a civic and professional role that promotes discussion as a pedagogical and educational purpose.

Secondly, in Eustaquio Pérez and Marcelo Escobar’s *Cuentos del mundo en décimas chilenas* (2016), the authors present ten traditional tales from the West, updated from contemporary imaginaries. In this sense, it is possible to find a creative proposal that features, for example, Rapunzel as a rapper, Little Red Riding Hood as a young girl in a polo shirt and jeans, or an indigenous Cinderella, among others. This then generates a shift from the original literary proposals of these texts to a new version more closely linked to the potential reading skills and approaches of today’s readers. The symbols assigned to gender roles are updated on the basis of the changes in socio-cultural codes that have developed in recent years.

It could be said that the editorial proposal and the construction of some stories in tenths present less hegemonic possibilities for the understanding of gender constructions, in terms of amplifying the identity panorama, despite the fact that conventional and naturalised stories persist with respect to the representation of female and male roles in the stories. In this sense, for example, the tenth “La rapera Rap-unzel” is about a girl rap singer “que podía rimar todo”. From the beginning of the text, the position of the girl as the centre of the story is emphasised, but, as we know, she is not the princess who throws her hair down the tower, but a talented street artist who, through music, “le rapeaba al universo/ vivencias, sueños, detalles” (figure 6).

Figure 6. Picture of La rapera Rap-unzel from “Cuentos del mundo en décimas chilenas”



Source: Marcelo Escobar, 2016. LOM Ediciones.

Rapunzel is presented as empowered and aware of her musical abilities and convictions: “Eres la luz”, is mentioned in one of the verses, while it is commented that “la niña, con su talento, / grabó discos, fue famosa”, establishing success as a consequence of her artistic talent, as well as her humility. The singer defends rap as her expressive place, because she has, in song, a place and a voice that she uses to understand the world, to create and sing, to make imaginaries porous and dismantle conventionalisms, because “la rima siempre perdura/ y busca su forma y modo/ nace del oro o del lodo, / de lo divino a lo pagano”. This tenth shares an essential key that articulates creation, enunciation and music, as the rapper does not expect to be rescued from the castle, but to sing a future encoded in musical notes. Therefore, a gender construction linked to cultural relevance is found, preserving tradition, but manifesting updated gender codes.

Discussion and conclusions: cross-referencing the corpus under study

From the semiotic analysis of the six texts selected for this article, it is possible to verify the veracity of the interpretative hypothesis, broken down from the three categories of analysis, which allowed us to go deeper into the interpretation of the texts in relation to their possible influence on the construction of children's identities.

On the basis of the corpus under study, it is possible to identify a number of paths that are articulated in Early Preschool Education. Thus, from the perspective of gender representations, texts such as *Du Iz Tak?* and *Las rayas del tigre* from transition level II constitute a conventional reading path. By taking these texts as reading options, children will find interpretative paths that tend to reproduce heteropatriarchal gender spheres; moreover, they establish literary proposals that do not politicise gender as a key to reading, render the characters neutral, make children of them and position them as *naïf* individuals.

Reading and enabling conventional reflexive forms will result in standard projections for children's constructed identity choices. This further complicates the opportunity to amplify and promote divergence and the support of diverse voices and identities on the part of students. In a historical and political moment where the tendency is towards opening up and legitimately constructing difference, to have a panorama of mostly conventional books seems contradictory, especially if we understand the influence that the experience of literary reading has on children. However, in some cases the uniformity of the literary proposals is broken down, making the dimensions of genre reproduction more diffuse.

In the case of literary options that rethink conventional representations of identity, it is possible to consider *Pequeña historia de un desacuerdo* as a work that is positioned in a transitional space, because, although there are initiatives and actions that aim to give extended voice to the characters, these voices are mediated by a conventionally patriarchal practice where, for example, women are related to their ability to affectively project their socio-political positioning, and men achieve their status as promoters of technological development, circumscribed to the rational. However, it is noteworthy that it is a book that allows for the construction of a transit in the catalogue of books, in order to build a bridge between conservative views and more diverse literary productions.

On the other hand, publications such as *I'm a girl!* and *Cielografía de Chile*, in Transition I, or *Cuentos del mundo en décimas chilenas* in First Year of Primary Education, present different imaginaries and representations that point to other possible paths with which to advance in the construction of identity and approach signs that allow us to understand the world from other points of view. Undoubtedly, this possibility of offering a literary experience that amplifies

languages and ways of understanding the world elaborates a new responsibility, this time educational and pedagogical, centred on those who carry out the processes of mediation of these texts.

Readings that deal with and legitimise diversities need mediators who are capable of reading these codes with which the different is constructed and, therefore, of being able to design reading experiences that attend to these versions that escape reproduction. *I'm a girl!* Is text in which the main character wishes to legitimise her identity in the face of adult-centric/conservative voices, will reveal its emancipatory meaning once the children participate in an experience of mediation that allows them to understand that diversity in which the girl enjoys doing “boy things”, even when adults insist on habitual practices of play and happiness belonging to the masculine gender. If the aim is to move towards a society of extended rights, where children have a play a key role, it is important that initiatives such as the classroom library of the National Reading Plan also dialogue with this motivation and delimit crossings with citizenship training plans.

The power of reading and the influence of reading experiences that legitimise diversities are necessary to challenge the reproductive policies and practices that circumscribe subjects and collectivities to identify with certain homogeneous and even monological human groups. Under these circumstances, aiming for dialogue based on the reading space is to establish a territory of divergence and to advance in the construction of views and practices of integral reflection from early childhood, projecting a future with broad paths, where everyone finds a sign, a language that allows them to say “I” and also to say “other”, dismantling the limits with which individual and collective identity is usually given meaning. *I'm a girl!* Is - in turn - multiple girls who also want to participate in territory, community and citizenship.

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