

## Chapter three: methodology

This research is divided in two parts; the first part of this study consisted of a discourse analysis of a cartoon, the second part consisted of showing one of the analyzed episodes to a group of children and making them questions about what they saw in order to know children's perceptions about the cartoon. This section will present in Part 1 the methodology of the discourse analysis and in Part 2 the description of the participation of children.

### 3.1 Part 1 – Discourse analysis

The first part of this investigation consisted of analyzing the discourse used in the cartoon *The Fairly OddParents*, whose name in Spanish is *Los Padrinos Mágicos* and whose programs have been translated and dubbed into Spanish from English. This cartoon was chosen for analysis based upon the description provided by the network Nickelodeon, which describes it as follows:

A ballistic babysitter... Off-the-wall parents... Boring video games... What's a 10-year old to do? If you're Timmy Turner, all you gotta do is turn to your magical, mystical and totally messed-up Fairy Godparents for help. But when the fairies involved are as wacky as Cosmo and Wanda (and as cute as Baby Poof), you might get more "help" than you bargained for! (Nick, 2010).

The general picture provided by the television network suggests that the story of *The Fairly OddParents* narrates the life of a typical boy that turns to be more interesting and adventurous when he is with his fairy godparents. Taking into account this description, it would not be expected to find verbal aggressions as a form of interaction of such a show. However, the aim of the analysis of discourse is to see whether verbal violence is present or not and if so, what types of assaults are more common. In addition, this cartoon was selected because it is transmitted in Canal 5, a public television channel in Mexico, which might suggest that the number of viewers is higher because of the accessibility more children have to its programs, than those cartoons transmitted in private networks, and also because there would

be more possibilities that the participants for the second part of the study knew the cartoon already.

#### **1.1.1 Materials.**

The material used for this part of the research consisted of selecting certain episodes of the cartoon. It was decided that a total of 5 episodes would be analyzed.

#### **1.1.2 Data collection.**

The episodes to analyze were selected randomly using a random digits table and were taken from the website <http://los-padrinos-magicos.seriespepito.com/>. The episodes analyzed were: "Una magia bien pensada", "Madre naturaleza", "Un peligro en el espacio", "Un ataque de inteligencia", and "Abre y di aaagh". Each episode lasts about 12 minutes.

#### **1.1.3 Procedure.**

Once the 5 episodes were selected, each one was transcribed. When the transcriptions were finished, the texts were analyzed.

#### **1.1.4 Data analysis.**

The analysis of the collected data was conducted by taking into account the direct and indirect forms of aggression that have been mentioned by authors such as Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Sterman (1992), Crick & Grotpeter (1995), Owens, Dali & Slee (2005) (as cited in Lucas et al. 2008). In this research direct insults, mocking, name-calling, and wanting to hurt others, were considered as forms of direct verbal abuse. Ignoring, excluding, lying about others, or speaking badly of others, were considered as forms of indirect verbal abuse. The obtained data was classified according to the features they presented. Later, the gender of the aggressors and of the victims was examined, to see whether the indirect verbal forms of aggression were more common in females or males and if direct forms were more common for

males. Additionally, the phrases selected as being verbally violent were examined to determine if they presented any of the four contextual factors Potter and Warren (1998) used in their study to code violent acts, which were: consequences, reward or punishment, hero status, and remorse.

### **3.2 Part 2 – Group discussion with children**

As mentioned above, the second part of this study consisted of presenting one of the 5 analyzed episodes to a group of children. This part of the study was carried out in March 2011 at approximately 4:30 PM in a community in Cholula, Puebla.

#### **3.2.1 Materials.**

Once all the episodes were transcribed, the episode to be presented was selected, this being “Abre y di aaagh” due to the more aggressive plot it presented compared to the other episodes. A brief description will be provided in Chapter 4, in section 4.2.1. Besides, a list with several questions was needed in order to know what children would be asked to know the perceptions they had about the aggressive moments that were shown in the cartoon. The main interest of this part was to have a look at what children understand and think of the violence found in the episode and to see how the way they perceive the aggressions could relate to the violent behaviors children exhibit with their peers. The questions were formulated based on the violent situations the episode presented, see Appendix 1.

#### **3.2.2 Participants.**

The participants in this study were 6 children that belong to a community in San Andrés, Cholula, in the Mexican state of Puebla and who belong to a very struggling working class. To keep the identity of the participants anonymous their names have been changed. The group included three boys: Pedro and Luis who are 7 years old, and Juan who is 11 years old; and three girls: Sofi and Liz, 7 years old and Lulu, 5 years old. These children go to public

school in the morning and participate in an afternoon program through the local Catholic Church that offers different workshops once a week during the afternoon. Children from different workshops were invited to participate in an activity with the researcher; the participants in this study were children who volunteered to work with the investigator.

Also, one of the professors that participate in the workshops helped the research videotape the part where children where asked questions about the episode they watched.

### **3.2.3 Procedure.**

Once children that wanted to participate in the study were grouped together, they were taken to an office in the church. Children were given instructions for this activity. They sat around a desk and saw the episode “Abre y di aaagh” which was presented on a laptop. The episode lasted about 12 minutes. After they finished watching it, the professor that helped the researcher began to videotape the group discussion. In this part of the study, children were reminded of specific parts of the cartoon and then a questioned was asked, children were allowed to participate as they wished.

### **3.2.4 Data collection.**

As mentioned above, children were videotaped in the question section. A transcription of the conversation between the children and the researcher was made using Deborah Tannen’s convention (see Appendix 2). Once the transcription was done, the answers and comments children mentioned were reviewed.

In the next section, the results obtained from the research will be provided and followed by a discussion. This section that follows will also be divided in Part 1 and Part 2. The

first part will present the results of the discourse analysis and the second of the group discussion.