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**LANGUAGE AND SOCIO-CULTURAL MODEL OF LEARNING: A  
DISCOURSE ANALYTICAL STUDY OF CHILDREN TV SHOWS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

There have been several studies that explore how the language employed in TV shows promote children's learning. (Brandsford et al., 2005; Grossman & DeGaetano, 2009; Jukes, 2008; Buerkel-Rothfuss et al, 1982; Hunt 2001 & Singer et al, 1980 ). Nevertheless, investigating children's learning using discourse analysis as well as learning theories is an area that needs further development. This research defines discourse analysis as its theoretical and methodological framework in order to investigate what type of linguistic resources in children TV shows can be identified into a sociocultural model of learning.

The present study has been made from a qualitative perspective. The data is composed by 13 children TV shows which were recorded from both cable and free-to-air channels and have been subsequently analyzed. According to the results of the analysis of these shows, seven categories were created to group instances in which discourse strategies are used to promote learning viewed from the sociocultural theory perspective. Each category has subcategories that explain how the constructs of the sociocultural theory are displayed in language. This study only benefited from a small sample for data analysis. As such, further research should be carried out in order to extend the knowledge regarding discourse strategies present in TV programs for children.

*Keywords:* discourse strategies, TV shows, children, sociocultural theory, learning theories.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Different attempts have been made to understand how humans learn. There are three major schools of thought that have gained special attention in psychology: behaviourism, cognitivism and sociocultural theories. They have been developed in different periods, providing different considerations and emphasis to explain learning.

Behaviourism started to prosper in the first half of XIX century when Pavlov studied the responses of his dogs when they heard the ringing of a bell. This theory was later expanded when Watson and Skinner provided new understandings of learning. The main point made by this theory is that all behaviours can be shaped and measured, and they are learnt by conditioning. However influential this school may be, it fails to account for what happens in the individual's mind, or how environments determine knowledge. In addition, it does not provide a complete and satisfactory understanding of how language is acquired by people.

After 1950, Cognitivism provided a turn of paradigms. This school of thought places its focus in areas related to the mind: how individuals think, construct knowledge, remember, perceive, etc. This theory compared the human mind to a computer, providing new models of cognition. Nevertheless, this theory has been challenged by authors who do not believe that all mental processes can be explained in a computational fashion. For instance, Searle (1990) argued that "syntax is not semantics", trying to imply that one may process symbols in a computational way, but it lacks an important part of understanding: semantics. Moreover, to truly comprehend learning, one has to take into consideration social factors that will be explained later. In other words, learning is not only about learning rules

to represent reality, but a more complex process which the Sociocultural Theory tries to examine considering context.

Vygotsky's fundamental vision in the Sociocultural Theory (from now on SCT), is that higher forms of human mental activity are “always, and everywhere, mediated by symbolic means” (Lantolf, 1994). These, as the physical tools, allow human organize their physical environment. In addition, Lev Vygotsky argued that symbolic tools allow people to control certain mental aspects, such as voluntary attention, logical problem-solving, and intentional learning. And one important tool -if not the most- that allows this is language. Moreover, symbolic tools are the instruments through which humans are granted to arrange and keep control over themselves, their minds, and their relation with physical activities.

But although Vygotsky developed his studies in depth, the SCT has not been very much discussed when it comes to its relationship with language learning and second language acquisition. But it is safe to say that SCT provides a whole new perspective towards language learning, different from previous theories. It establishes the relationship of language and thought, and that is how language is used and how it is learned.

The ultimate and final purpose of SCT is to understand how people use their minds in daily life situations, and these uses of the mind should be studied while being disturbed by external experiences (cultural environment). The latter, because Vygotsky stated that although the biology of the mind was important in his studies, it was more important to understand how the environment moulds the mind, therefore the social and cultural implications in everyday life.

In terms of previous studies regarding SCT by means of a language learning perspective, it can be stated that most of these studies have been primarily focused within

the classroom context, and especially in SLA. The objectives of these studies have been generally related to the contribution of the interaction in the process of language learning inside the classroom, and the strategies used by the instructor regarding this issue; being these strategies essential for children's language learning, due to the fact that they are directly connected to the practices of a cultural group that allows the individual to become a more competent member of his community (Donato & McCormick, 1994). In the case of this study, the main focus will be about SCT related to language learning and discourse strategies applied within the context of children TV shows, in which main concepts of the theory such as interaction and mediation will be essential tools for understanding how language learning is approached and what implication it has for language learning strategies beyond the classroom.

This study is essentially important because it may help us understand how the mind works within a context of interaction, which in this specific context is related to language learning through children's TV shows. Another field of study in which this research may provide new information, is related to other disciplines besides linguistics, such as biology or psychology, in order to find innovative facts about the human mind. Furthermore, it can be later applied to Second Language Acquisition programs in the classroom context, where teachers can use improved language learning strategies to see how children learn. It can also be helpful in discovering extra information to improve L1 and L2 learning in the household (through TV shows, for example); and in daily life, to develop interaction strategies rather than the basic mechanical hearing-speaking or repetition, among others. Moreover, this research may also help us to address issues regarding language learning from a different perspective, such as the case of choosing the appropriate tools used by teachers and parents

when being part of children language development, being able to learn how these tools can be applied in a more efficient manner when interacting with them.

This research is important mainly in the area of language acquisition, especially in sociocultural theory, where interaction among peers is essential in the learning process. This process is emphasized by means of discourse strategies, which act as a support for reaching the expected goal during the interactive instances. In addition, this study aims to help researchers and teachers who want to improve their teaching methods. This research might be of interest to three types of researchers. The first one are psychologists, due to the fact that they work with the cognitive development of human beings and they could take some advantages of this investigation, especially if they are working with children. The second kind of researcher that might consider useful this investigation are teachers, basically because the social factor is a key element that will provide support in the techniques used in a classroom where teachers focus their attention in developing new ways of teaching. Elementary teachers and language teachers will be the most favoured with this research, for the reason that they work with kids who are in the stages of cognitive development and language acquisition. Finding out new methods regarding how children will get more involved in the acquisition of their mother tongue or a second language is one of the major concerns for most of the teachers. In this sense, this research will provide concrete material of sociocultural theory applied children in the acquisition of a second language.

Taking these points into account, the organization of this research is the following: In the first section we will present the theoretical framework, taking into account some of the important learning theories and off course the socio cultural theory; after that, the second

section is dedicated to the methodology which is, after considering a the review of literature related to this language learning process, an examination in a detail way of the children TV shows. The third one will present the results of the analysed data, which was made from a qualitative point of view, since this research is concerned mainly on how discourse strategies in TV shows enhance language learning in children. The paradigm chosen is the sociocultural theory, as it has been said. The following section will be focused on the discussion of results, and it is hoped that they help to provide practical tools for teachers in classrooms. Finally, to close this research, a conclusion with the main findings and future suggestions will take place.

For further research, this study may be useful as a stimulus for continuing with the research on the implications of sociocultural theory for language learning as well as for Second Language Acquisition. This research highlights the importance of studying language learning in different contexts, not only in the classroom, but also watching television. In further research a different context than the one developed in this study may be taken into account or maybe the same context related to children, but it would be interesting to use data such as children's songs as a medium of language learning. These are also interesting topics in which the theory can be applied.



## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This literature review will focus on four main topics considered the basis for the development of this study. Learning theories, being the first area of study presented, will be developed in order to provide an overview of the main theories used in different settings during the process of learning. Later on, a more detailed study of the Socio-cultural theory will be shown, as this is the theory in which our research question is based on. Then, the topic of discourse strategies will be developed, explaining what they are and how they work, leading to the final issue of this study, which is how these strategies are found in children TV shows and their meaning in this context.

### **2.1 Learning Theories**

The problem of how humans learn has been present in the history of psychology and an important number of theories have tried to explain it through the years. Defining learning is not a simple task, and there are different ways to approach this issue. This is due mainly to the fact that we still cannot declare that we fully understand how exactly and to what extent environment, cognition and society influence knowledge. While some emphasize environment and regard learning as changes in either the form or frequency of observable performance (Ertmer & Newby, 2013), others see it rather as the product of social interaction -among other views-. The most important approaches in psychology that will be analysed here are behaviourism, cognitivism and sociocultural theory; bearing in mind that the latter is the one that will be selected in this investigation to explain, support and account for children's learning while watching TV shows.

In this way, the analysis will be made taking into account behaviourism, cognitivism and sociocultural theory from a historical perspective plus a characterisation of each; from an ontological and epistemological dimension and finally a brief explanation of how these theories are important for areas such as education or children TV shows.

We consider that it is relevant to analyse behaviourism, cognitivism and socio-cultural theory from a historical viewpoint because it helps the reader to place each theory within a frame of time and to be better introduced into the characterisation of learning theories.

To fully understand and/or describe learning, each theory has addressed questions that describe aspects of it and distinguish it from other theories. Schunk (as cited by Ertmer & Newby, 1993) proposes five questions and they are as it follows:

- (a) How does learning occur?
- (b) Which factors influence learning?
- (c) What is the role of memory?
- (d) How does transfer occur? and
- (e) What types of learning are best explained by the theory?

All these questions are going to be considered in the characterisation to provide a full account of each theory.

In addition, we consider that it is important to analyse behaviourism, cognitivism and sociocultural theory from an ontological and epistemological perspective because this helps the reader to place each view within a tradition of thought and worldview. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy concerned with studying why do we explore what we explore, what are the methods used for this purpose and the possible limits that this exploration may have.

Ontology, on the other hand, is a branch of philosophy that studies “what is real in the world, whether physical or abstract structures” (Schuh & Barab, n. d.) For this purpose we base this analysis in Schuh & Barab’s Philosophical Perspectives.

### **2.1.1 Behaviourism**

It was developed in the first half of the XIX century and was dominant through those years. Based on Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov’s conditioning model, and American psychologist John B. Watson, generally considered to be the founder and champion of modern behaviourism (Heidbreder, 1933; Hunt, 1993 as cited by Schunk, 2012). But there are some other important ‘behaviourists’ such as the American psychologists Edward Thorndike and John Watson.

Behaviourists believe that learning occurs when an individual acquires new habits through the experience of conditioning. Therefore, the emphasis is not in mental processes, but rather in behaviour. In simple words, behaviour can be defined as what people recurrently do, which is depicted as something measurable and observable (Mergel, 1998).

In behaviourism two types of conditioning can be found: Pavlov’s classical model of conditioning and instrumental conditioning. This theory implies an initial unconditioned stimulus that is used to provoke a response, once the response is achieved, this stimulus become conditioned because is causing a conditioned response.

Pavlov most famous experiment is the one that he carried out with his dogs. He realized that every time that his dog heard a bell it thought food was coming, so it started to salivate. This happened because it associated a repeated stimulus (bell) with a response (salivating).

The other way of conditioning is operant conditioning, developed by B.F. Skinner, which is based on reinforcement in order to create or modify a specific behaviour. Through this process and association is created between the behaviour and the consequence that it will bring. This consequence is materialized in a positive or negative reinforcement. The positive reinforcement is achieved if the behaviour is the desired one. The negative reinforcement comes when something undesirable is removed when the desired behaviour is achieved. The other way around are the positive and negative punishments to try to decrease some behaviour.

Thorndike also was a very important behaviourist who introduced experiments with animals to emphasize the need for “an accurate quantitative treatment of information” (Johcich, as cited in Mergel, 1998). He also developed the law of effect, which associated stimulus and response (Mergel, 1998). Similarly, Watson first carried experiments on animals and later became interested in psychology. His major contribution is that he considered “that humans are born with a few reflexes and the emotional reactions of love and rage. All other behaviour is established through stimulus-response associations through conditioning” (Mergel, 1998).

In basic terms, the language learning in behaviourism (and some other kinds of learning too) occurs when the desire performance has been “shaped” according to the stimuli associated with it.

### **2.1.2 Cognitivism**

It was born as a response to behaviourism during the 1950`s in America. Cognitivists distinguished between behaviour and the mental processes involved in learning, devoting

attention to the latter. Miller and Bruner, the founders of the Harvard Centre for Cognitive Studies, started to develop this learning theory taking into account Jean Piaget's work (Mergel, 1998).

As it has been said, cognitivism developed as a response to behaviourism. This is due to the fact that cognitivists considered that in the study of learning there are internal factors that influence it, such as the mind. In other words, not all learning can be explained in terms of environment, for there are genetical factors, previous experience abilities, etc.; that influence learning. An example of this is when an individual solves a problem only through observation before the process of a repeated experience.

If behaviourists thought that the mind was a black box that could not be accessed to, cognitivists considered it as their object of study, although they examine it by observing behaviour. They compared mental states to computers' because they thought that information received through the senses was captured in the short-term memory. In order to store this information in long-term memory, the learner has to encode it and attach meaning to it, based on previous knowledge (Bigus, n.d.). In this way, the role of the learner is much more active than in behaviourism, for they have to "acquire or reorganize the cognitive structures through which human process and store information" (Good and Brophy, 1990).

This theory sees the mind as something abstract that represents external elements by the means of symbols. Learning occurs when the mind processes these symbols through operations similar to those of computers. As one may infer, neither the context nor experience are taken into account in learning. The importance of a guide or cultural elements is also left behind in this analysis.

### **2.1.3 Sociocultural Theory**

It is the most recent theory and its origin is associated to the work of Vygotsky in early 20th century. Sociocultural theory was first developed by Vygotsky who criticised the actual state of psychology which seemed to have multiple objects of study and different ways to approach them, responding to both a humanistic tradition (psychoanalysis) and a natural science approach (behaviourism). Therefore, he decided to develop a unified theory that was not based on two different traditions and was totally original (Lantolf & Thorne, 2000).

“Vygotsky acknowledged that the human mind was comprised of a lower-level neurobiological base, but the distinctive dimension of human consciousness was its capacity for voluntary control over biology through the use of higher-level cultural tools (i.e., language, literacy, numeracy, categorization, rationality, logic.). These higher-level cultural tools serve as a buffer between the person and the environment and act to mediate the relationship between the individual and the social-material world” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

A more detailed explanation will be developed later, since this learning theory is the one chosen to develop this study.

### **2.1.4 Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives**

Behaviourism’ ontology is said to be objective, regarding world as real and outside the individual. According to Schuh & Barab (2007), its main analytical unit is behaviour and the stimuli that prompt it mainly because behaviourists did not consider the mind, since they believed that it could not be accessed to.

Cognitivism, on its part, derived from structuralists because mental states are compared to computational states. The individual is seen separated from the world but interacting with it. In this way, as behaviourism, cognitivism is considered to be objective, thus displaying that it shares aspects with it, although the former is based in empiricism while the latter in rationalism. The main unit of analysis in cognitivism is the individual's mind placing emphasis in its structure and representation.

Sociocultural theory believes that knowledge is an interpretation of reality, where the individual is highly influenced by society. From this, follows that knowledge is built and shared by a community. Therefore, its unit of analysis is individual and societal relationships constructing knowledge.

### **2.1.5 Importance of the consideration of Behaviourism, Cognitivism and Sociocultural theory for areas such as education and TV shows.**

Although there are insightful results from studying learning theories in the world of research, it seems that their application in language teaching is a domain that has to be explored more deeply. For instance McLeod (2003) refers to the lack of proximity, the study of learning theories and instructional design, where each domain does not always keep communication. This also happens in the study of children education and TV shows, which is the focus of this research.

The importance of this learning theory to improve children education is undeniable, several studies have been carried out in linguistics to prove it, and their applications are real and testable. Such is the case of Bransford et al. (2005) whose research establishes how Sociocultural Theory impacts television. They summarize how this theory can be

transcendental in the understanding and purposes of television. The simple act of imitation of what the characters on TV do, is a clear demonstration of the influence of television in the education of children and how this learning can be constructed not only collaboratively, but also with other resources such as TV.

## **2.2 The Sociocultural Theory**

The Sociocultural Theory is about the learning process involved in social activities that are mostly mediated by others and where interaction plays an important role for the development of it. If this is taken to the process of socialization which is the basis for this theory it is important to note that “humans are seen as creatures who have a unique capacity for communication and whose lives are normally led within groups, communities and societies based on shared ‘ways with words’, ways of thinking, social practices and tools for getting things done.” (Mercer, 2005)

This theory was driven between the 1920s and 1940s by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who believed that “although biological factors constitute the necessary prerequisite for elementary processes to emerge, sociocultural factors are indispensable for elementary natural processes to develop.” (Choul Turuk, 2008). Vygotsky stated that many processes involved in learning, such as memory and problem-solving thoughts, are best developed in a sociocultural environment, where “human activities [...] are mediated by language and other symbol systems” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). His work, however, was postponed until the late 1950s, and have ever since been very much developed by scholars, who have discussed the theory and have found many different traits to it, which makes it very diverse in terms of primary characteristics.

Vygotsky’s ideas were not completely developed at the time because his work was



not fully translated before his death, but now they have been further studied by scholars in Western civilizations, mainly in the United States.

The ideas that lie behind the basic principles are based in the interdependence between the individual processes and the social ones. Vygotsky then “conceptualized development as the transformation of socially shared activities into internalized processes” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996), contrasting previous ideas involving cognitivism and behaviourism. When these social activities endure in time, they constitute a culture.

The first stages of social development in humans begin with the connection and dependence on custodians and caregivers. It is in the transmission of knowledge and information by others in which the individual trusts. In this matter, Vygotsky stated that “every function in the cultural development of the child comes on the stage twice, in two respects; first in relations between people as an interpsychological category [...] All higher psychological functions are internalized relationships of the social kind, and constitute the social structure of personality.” (Valsiner, 1987)

In the first stages of learning, children will trust and depend on people who have more experience and who can help them get the information. But with time, they will surpass further stages that will allow them to be responsible for their own learning, and so it will not be completely dependent on a mediator. By participating in activities that occur in a social context, children are provided with the necessary tools to learn and observe how the environment works around them, which helps them to become part of the social structure. The experience of learning is going to be repeated several times through new challenges and habits, allowing children to finally develop skills that can be applied when connecting with other people in social contexts once again.

Sociocultural Theory is connected to language learning because the first hints of vocabulary acquired by a learner occur within this context where children and caregivers share knowledge. The initial relationship between both the learner and the mediators “form a basis for cognitive and linguistic mastery”, in which the process “whether in the classroom or elsewhere, includes transmission, construction, transaction, and transformation in a continuing complex interplay” (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996).

It is argued that the Sociocultural theory “has a holistic view about the act of learning” (Choul Turuk, 2008), meaning that all types of learning should involve a complex process rather than developing skills in an isolated environment. But the context is not the most important aspect of the learning process, as it is the learner who is expected to provide meaning and solutions to the new obstacles he is presented. According to Ellis (2000), the theory “assumes that learning arises not through interaction but in interaction.” meaning that the purpose of social interaction is to act as a mediator in learning rather than the main protagonist. Therefore, in the process of interaction, “the novice is not a passive recipient of sociocultural knowledge but rather an active contributor to the meaning and outcome of interactions with other members of a social group” (Wentworth, 1980). Furthermore, Ellis states that “interactions that successfully mediate learning are those in which the learners scaffold the new tasks.” There is a collaborative process where novices and more experimented individuals participate together and actively in the construction of knowledge, following “the Piagetian concept of the child as an active constructor of his or her own development” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). In this matter, “it is the socially situated use of language that enables the child at a later time to recapture, reflect on, and transform experience.” (Renshaw, 1992). Levina (1981), then, explained that “Vygotsky said that

speech does not include within itself the magical power to create intellectual functioning. It acquires this capacity only through being used in its instrumental capacity,”

It is this final instance to use speech as a way to make sense while interacting with other people that will lead towards a future individual skill development and functioning. This reciprocal relationship between symbols and human mediators, as well as learners and caregivers, has been thoroughly discussed, in addition to “the question of which elements of mediation are universal and which are socioculturally specific.” (Kozulin et al., 2003)

### **2.2.1 Constructs of the Theory**

Vygotsky, while continuing with the development of his work, specified that an important aspect of the theory had to do with psychoanalysis and the treatment of mental processes involved. These processes are concerned with “problem-solving, voluntary memory and attention, rational thought, planning, and meaning-making activity.” (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006) Vygotsky, then, called these the higher mental processes, which include the following principles.

#### **2.2.1.1 Mediation**

Inserted in the higher mental processes, there are tools which are useful to work as a bridge between the learner and his environment, acting as mediators. These tools can be, for example, language, the use of numbers, logic, etc.) The use of a tool as a mediator to relate to the material world can be beneficial as it does not spend as much energy from the learner, and also it does not change its shape while mediating. Still, “once humans select the appropriate tool, however, we are generally not completely free to use it in any way we like.

The material form of a tool as well as the habitual patterns of its use affects the purposes to which it is put and methods we use when we employ it.” (Thorne, 2003) It is the culture of the learner the one that builds these tools, and this culture inspires humans with new skills to relate to the physical world

### **2.2.1.2 Regulation**

Regulations is one form of mediation, and it refers to the capacity of children to regulate their own activity through linguistic means, this by participating in activities where “their activity is initially subordinated, or regulated by others.” (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006) To develop the final process of self-regulation, the learner needs to go through three general stages. The first stage, known as object-regulation, is explain as when children are mostly controlled by or by using objects found in their social-environment in order to think. The second stage, named other-regulation, exemplifies both implicit and explicit mediation, which involves a variety of levels including assistance, direction, and the well-known scaffolding) by other peers, parents, coaches, teachers, etc. Finally, the third stage is called self-regulation, and it is explained as “the ability to accomplish activities with minimal or no external support” (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). These three stages are “symmetrical and recoverable, an individual can traverse this sequence at will, given the demands of the task.” (Frawley, 1997) and are only achievable through the process of internalization.

### **2.2.1.3 Internalization**

Internalization is known as the process of making what was once external assistance a new resource that is internally available to the individual. Kozulin (1990) explains that

“the essential element in the formation of higher mental functions is the process of internalization.” Vygotsky (1987) captured the interconnection established by internalization in his general law of genetic development: Every psychological function appears twice, first between people on the inter-psychological plane and then within the individual on the intrapsychological plane. Internalization, according to Yaroshevsky (1989), accounts for the organic connection between social communication and mental activity and is the mechanism through which we gain control over our brains, the biological organ of thinking.

In spite of these three significant constructs, one of the most important enrichments that Vygotsky added to the educational segment of the Sociocultural theory has to do with the principle of the Zone of Proximal Development, which according to Choul Turuk (2008), is related to “the distinction Vygotsky made between the child’s actual and potential levels of development.”

#### **2.2.1.4 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

Vygotsky gave great value to the importance of getting to predict the future skills of a child, and so he created the concept of ZPD which he defines as “the distance between a child’s actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.” (Wertsch, 1985). In addition, he explains that ZPD is a helpful tool when determining the child’s future skills, which are not mature yet. Vygotsky finally claims that “the study of ZPD is also important because it is the dynamic region of sensitivity in which the transition from interpsychological to intrapsychological functioning takes place.” (Choul Tukur, 2008)

However one of the most important aspects of the Sociocultural theory, it is still not completely understood by scholars. One of the reasons why it seems difficult to understand is because Vygotsky used this notion in three different environments. In the first stage, the developmental context, ZPD is used for explaining the psychological skills and functions that are emerging in the learner. The second stage, the applied context, explains the contrast between the individual performance of the child and the performance when receiving help by others, both performances in the context of learning in a classroom. Finally, the third stage is explained as the instance where ZPD is used as a metaphoric space, in which concepts of the child that belong to his daily life meet “scientific concepts provided by teachers or other mediators of learning.” (Kozulin et al., 2003)

According to Vygotsky, the learning process arouses a wide variety of developmental methods within the individual that are going to function only when the learner is immersed in an interactive environment with other people and in cooperation with other peers, thus “learners have higher comprehension of input when they have the opportunity to interact with the person providing that input.” (Ohta, 1995)

#### **2.2.1.5 Scaffolding**

An important concept within the ZPD that appeared after Vygotsky's ideas on the importance of interaction during the different stages of development is scaffolding. This term, which was never used by Vygotsky, refers to the assistance between expert and novice to support learning. This will be applied until the learner is able to make the task without any external help; once this happens the scaffolding will be removed. The term was introduced by Wood et al. (1976) and they defined it as “those elements of the task that are

initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence." This assistance can be seen by means of interaction between two members or in a more collaborative way among different members of a group. In the ZPD, the socialization process is really important because when scaffolding occurs within a group of peers, all members of this group can collaborate and be part of their peers' learning development by contributing with their own individual strengths, "any peer with mature skills to contribute becomes an expert, even a peer who is weaker overall is expert when his/her strengths are contributed to help another learner." (Ohta, 1995) Thus it is possible to state that "the nature of human activity is that knowledge is shared and people jointly construct understandings of shared experience." (Mercer, 2005) assuming that besides this interaction per se "we 'interthink'" (Mercer, 2000) as a collective action. This is what occurs when "in particular encounters or through a series of related encounters, two or more people use language to combine their intellectual resources in the pursuit of a common task." (Mercer, 2005)

One of the typical examples regarding scaffolding and the ZPD, is the process of learning constructed between the interaction of a teacher, as a more capable person or expert, and the students which are going to be the novice who will need 'scaffolds' for going from their current ZPD to the next one; "the teacher helps the student master a skill that the student is initially unable to acquire it independently. The teacher offers assistance that is beyond the student's ability [...] only [helping] the student with tasks that are just beyond his or her current ability" (Rahma, 2012). In this sense it is important to notice that the scaffolding process cannot be performed by any person available to do it, but by someone who has more knowledge than the rest who wants to make a progress and go beyond their

current ZPD; for this reason it is relevant to mention that “scaffolding is actually a bridge used to build upon what students already know to arrive at something they do not know. If scaffolding is properly administered, it will act as an enabler, not as a disabler” (Benson, 1997).

The Sociocultural theory, as it was previously seen, deals mainly with the process of interaction among different participants during the learning process. This can be observed in different settings such as the classroom or other formal instances of learning with trained experts; in more informal settings such as the daily interaction parent-child or among friends who are in different ZPDs sharing different experiences and knowledge; as well as in informal educative instances such as children TV shows, which are the main concern of this study, where children's participation and interaction are essential for the development of the activities presented there that seek to stimulate and facilitate the learning process.

### **2.3 Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis has been of great concern among linguists. The way in which verbal signs are produced and their intentions are the major topics researched in several studies that have contributed to their deeper study and understanding. Most of the linguists do not refer to discourse analysis itself, because it is highly related to many other fields that are concerned with the study of language, such as psychology, sociology, or many others dedicated to language study such as semantics, pragmatics, grammar etc. But in general terms discourse analysis is concerned with the formulation of question regarding how language is used at a time and place and how meaning is conveyed. (Gee, 1999). In discourse analysis sociocultural context acquires a significant importance because from this



depends the method that has to be used in this kind of analysis. Analysts can get their data through open-ended interviews, focus group discussions, field observations and other means of data collection where talk is unconstrained by research protocols. (Baffour, 2013). The topics covered by discourse analysis are very wide. Emphasis has been put in discourse markers to what has been named by Longacre as “mystery particles,” because they are “verbal and nominal affixes and sentential particles that continue to defy analysis even at a relatively advanced stage of research”. (Longacre, 1976). Also, attention has been put in morphology due to “its function in conceptualizing and placing events in time”. (Brinton, 2003). And, to pronominal forms, because of “their anaphoric and referential functions which play an important role in discourse structuring”. (p. 143).

### **2.3.1 Interaction Among Participants**

The way in which discourse is produced has generated the interest of linguists for many decades. Much research has been carried out regarding the functionality of this production i.e. communication. But, the fact of communicating is not the mere action of talking or just the elaboration of well-constructed sentences. To communicate is to express meaningful ideas to a recipient or listener. For this reason, communication is only effective due to the interaction among participants. In the elaboration of theories regarding discourse strategies, Gumperz (1982) has focused on interaction and the importance of the diversity of participants from a sociolinguistic point of view. “Only when a move has elicited a response can we say communication is taking place”. (p. 1). Emphasis has been made on participant’s characteristics.

The differences among them regarding communicative conventions acquire an

important significance because they are very heterogeneous and uniformity in signaling cannot be guaranteed. This is why speakers should be able to deal with these kinds of differences in order to sustain effective communication. “Since speaking is interacting [...] It must account for the fact that being able to interact also implies some sharing. But we must not assume that sharing at all levels of either grammatical or social rules is necessary”. (p. 30).

As participants who interact are diverse, each of them carries out particular actions and has a determinate intention when communicating. For this reason, interaction has to be a coordinated activity. (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983).

### **2.3.2 Discourse Strategies**

Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) established the concept of strategy which is “the idea of an agent about the best way to act in order to reach a goal”. (p. 65). The same concept can be applied in the case of discourse: “strategies that are applied by language users in the production and comprehension of verbal utterances or speech acts of a natural language”. (p. 70). But, “There is no single goal, the goal is not a final state, nor is the goal well defined (we do not know if or when we have reached it), unless we take the act of production or comprehension itself to be the relevant global action whose final state-deciding that we have done enough toward producing or understanding the utterance-corresponds to the goal”. (p. 71). The main theory that he exposes is that speakers convey meaning from different stimuli which are surface structure, context, and cultural functions. Also he states that the basic unit for discourse comprehension is the production of sentences. For this reason sentence strategies and discourse should work coordinated and should not be considered independent

entities.

Much research has been carried out related to specific discourse strategies. Especially in studies that have been made during the context of classroom teaching where discourse strategies are usually employed to make the students participate and acquire knowledge. In classroom context, discourse strategies such as asking questions or provide silences and pauses have been topics of considerable attention and some authors' comments will be exposed below.

### **2.3.3 Questions**

In a study carried out by Zucher et al. (2009), it is referred that in classroom context, questions had a great occurrence. Questions, were most of the time, asked by teachers to students and that the most important part is that it is of great benefit for the children to be asked in an abstract and inferential way, because from this practice children responses would be more extend. This has to do with the kind of genre implied. They found that informational genres were the best option “informational genres appear to elicit inferential conversations”. (p. 79). Related to this, he also established that children responded with a larger amount of words when open-ended questions were formulated. In a language learning context, many scholars have suggested that it is very important the role of teachers and their questions, but, there is not much information regarding ESL students and the effects that teachers questions have among them. Kim (2010) studied this subject and he found that certain kinds of questions have a positive effect on children .Coaching, facilitating, and collaborating question helped teachers to achieve their instructional goals.

#### **2.3.4 Pauses**

The fact of providing silences is also a way of generating discourse strategies. They are occupied and distributed in different ways. Van Donzel and Koopmans-van Beinum (1996) identified three different types of pauses and each of them has a specific function. They are: silent pauses, filled pauses, and lengthening. They observed that in Dutch a pause is considered to be a silent if its duration is at least 150 msec. “This minimal length was to insure that closure times of stop consonants were not included”. Filled pauses are “elements in the discourse that do not have any lexical meaning, but they can indicate that the speaker needs time to plan the continuation of his/her telling”. And, “a speaker *can* use lengthening as a planning tool by sustaining a particular vowel or consonant within certain words”. (p. 1030). “Pauses perform multiple functions. Their occurrence is determined by several factors such as anxiety, emphasis, interruption, availability, breathing, etc.” (Oliveira, 2002). Pauses are considered element of great interest in discourse analysis, and their occurrences can be of different kinds.

#### **2.4 Children TV Shows and Learning.**

It is widely and commonly known that kids are like little sponges, since they absorb knowledge from everywhere. Nowadays, due to the increase in the workforce among women, along with other factors that has changed the culture through time, kids spend much more time in front of the TV than before, and of course this situation has consequences in the way children are educated nowadays. They do not only learn from what their parents teach them, or what they learn at school, but many times kids’ education is the result of many hours watching TV shows.

#### **2.4.1. Types of TV shows**

Some TV shows aim to teach children, using different learning strategies. Among those shows, many focus in particular subjects of education—mathematics, language, history, respect, friendship, among others—a few try to teach not only one but several of these subjects. On the other hand, a few programs are just created in order to entertain children leaving aside any educative interest.

The great influence that TV has over kids can be something positive, especially when regarding educative programs, even though some other shows can influence their behaviour in a negative way as well. According to Grossman & DeGaetano (1999) the violence in TV shows sells, and “the boundary between fantasy and reality violence, which is clear line for most adults, can become very blurred for vulnerable children”. Regarding that problem, Singer promotes parental control since her investigation brought that “heavier viewing of action-adventure programs had been found to relate significantly to children’s aggressive acts in nursery school”. This fact was repeated in “elementary school aged and adolescent children” (Singer et al, 1980). However it is parents’ responsibility to control what kids are watching in TV.

#### **2.4.2 Parental Responsibility**

It is important to highlight that television is a tool that can be very helpful for kids when dealing with learning. However, it is not a reliable method to be used as a main teaching tool, in others words, we must be aware that television cannot be used as the only or most trustable method to educate and teach children, but it is only recommended as a help to improve kids’ knowledge along with the regular teaching methods at school. Besides that,

it is considered as an advantageous tool since it offers stimulus for children so they can learn and have fun at the same time. This is interesting due to the fact that the standard method of education does not always achieve the decisive purpose of keeping children's attention.

In order to understand the multiple benefits offered by TV shows for children which aim is to provide education, evidence and examples from previous investigation will be presented about how children improve their knowledge in different areas through watching shows that use specific methods to accomplish this target.

According to Jukes and Dosaj (2006), children nowadays are very different from children from the past, since "today's YouTube Generation has grown up in a new digital landscape". This simplicity to access technology is also evidence that other methods unknown in earlier times could have "profound implications [...] for the future of education" (Jukes & Dosaj, 2006).

#### **2.4.3. TV Shows and Their Influence in Kids' Behaviour**

Several authors agree when they state that television has great influence in the way children learn, and that this is strictly related with the amount of time they pass watching TV. They all state that the more time children spend watching educational TV shows, the more positive results are seen in their amount of learning. (Buerkel-Rothfuss et al, 1982; Hunt 2001 & Singer et al, 1980)

According to recent studies, Television is used to reinforce attitudes already held by the children in social behaviour, take for example "family roles". Two main aspects can be taken from social learning theory to support this assumption. Firstly, the fact that children learn behaviour conducts based on the observation of models with no need of direct

reinforcement. Secondly, personal rewards are maximized by the kids, generally as the result of reinforcement for feeling identified with a model (Buerkel-Rothfuss et al., 1982)

In the study titled “Learning about the family from television”, as the title suggests, the main element analysed is how kids learn social roles from television models, although the results could be expanded to the learning of other skills. Another important fact that can be extracted from Buerkel-Rothfuss’ work (1982), is that television is a model to improve kids’ vocabulary and learn more complex grammatical constructions based on the “affiliative communication among family members” they were exposed to through the TV shows.

Hunt states that television shows serve as an example for what we teach kids at home. This means that when we tell kids orally certain things such as the existence of places, animals or people it is not enough because they need visual support. Television is an easy access to see other realities unknown for the kid in their immediate environment and it is also a visual mechanism that facilitates their understanding of reality.

Finally, Singer et al. (1980) lay out that the attitude that children observe from their parents toward TV shows play an important role in the way children learn. There are many concerns regarding how certain shows present roles and how children could reproduce those models. However, these views could be reinforced or rather rejected by the parents, who have a major role in kids’ perceptions.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The present research is concerned with the relationship between discourse strategies and learning theories in children TV shows. The main aim, then, is to relate this specific context to the most important concepts of the Sociocultural Theory, such as mediation and interaction with other peers, in order to comprehend the language learning process of children beyond the classroom.

In other words, the analysis of data is focused in Sociocultural Theory concepts that address children's learning. These concepts are generally manifested through different linguistic resources. An example of this is when the concept of inclusion of the audience is presented to children through the recurrent use of questions.

In this section, we will include more detailed information about the analysed data, as well as the analytical procedure used for this examination, to finally conclude with the method process that was followed.

#### **3.1 Data**

The data that was used so as to carry out our research embraces the analysis of twenty nine episodes of different children TV shows from the airing of both cable television and free-to-air broadcast networks. These twenty nine chapters make up a total of 822:67:00 min (13.71 hours). In addition, an 89:23:00 min movie was analysed, leaving a total of 911:09:00 min of complete data.

##### **3.1.1 Selection Criteria for the Data**

The collected data was selected from eight different networks addressed to children.



These networks were free-to-air ones such as Red, UCV and Mega, and cable broadcast ones such as Discovery Kids, Nick Jr., Disney XD, Cartoon Network, and Disney Junior. Free-to-air broadcast networks are not entirely intended for children to watch, as they have special schedules for the shows, generally on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Cable television networks, however, are exclusively designed for children.

<b>Red</b>	<b>Discovery Kids</b>	<b>Nick Jr.</b>	<b>Disney XD</b>	<b>Cartoon Network</b>	<b>Disney Junior</b>	<b>UCV</b>	<b>Mega</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>

**Table of TV shows per broadcast network**

From the twenty nine different TV shows, twenty are presented in English, their original language. These twenty episodes are broadcasted in all cable television networks. In addition, the movie analysed is also broadcasted in English. The remaining nine TV shows are performed in Spanish, as they are broadcasted in Chilean open television networks.

### **3.2 Analytical Procedure**

In order to analyse our data in an efficient way we decided to divide our team of six people into three pairs. These pairs had to watch one or two episodes per session of work and discuss them, to finally have time for the entire team to report and discuss the findings, which we consider a good methodology to reduce possible personal biases. After having collected all the findings, we classified them into categories that accounted for recurrent aspects in the shows. It is relevant to highlight that we focused only in concepts related to

Sociocultural Theory, meaning that we omitted any other concept related to other theories, because they go beyond the scope of this research. In addition, these concepts were examined through a linguistic perspective, which means that we present linguistic evidence that supports the presence of Sociocultural Theory concepts to promote learning.

Since the aim of this research is to examine Sociocultural Theory through a linguistic lens, our categorization of the data tries to account for the fact that learning is a complex process in which the child does not develop skills in an isolated environment. In the first learning stages the child strongly depends on people who are more experienced. Then, as time goes by, they will surpass further stages that will allow them to be responsible for their own learning, and so the learning process will not be limited to social intervention and interaction anymore. By participating in activities that occur in a social context, children are provided with a big amount of opportunities to learn and observe how the environment works around them, this way understanding and embracing their own culture. These experiences are going to be repeated several times through new challenges and habits, finally allowing learning to enable the development of individual skills that can be applied when connecting with other people in social contexts once again.

### **3.3 Data Selection Procedure**

That having been said, we created seven categories that relate to the concepts of Sociocultural Learning Theory, and each of these includes subcategories that relate to language:

1. Dialogical interaction
2. Semiotic resources

3. Diversity among participants
4. Inclusion of the audience
5. Collaborative Learning
6. Inclusion of the audience
7. Imagination and creativity

#### **4. RESULTS**

Many are the discourse strategies used by TV shows for children that encourage kids' cognitive development using participation and construction of knowledge through the interaction with a more capable peer as a basis in the learning process. Some of them have to do with the way in which the content is exposed to the kids for making their learning more friendly and easy. TV shows have different teaching purposes and because of that, different strategies to achieve them. There are specialized creative teams behind every children TV show who on one hand try to find the best way to teach their audience and on the other hand attempt to make the learning process fun and enjoyable for children. The strategies can vary in their form and function, and are capable to conduct extensive analysis.

In this section the findings are presented and divided into 7 categories in order to develop an analysis of the major results that this research yielded. The categories are dialogic interaction, semiotic resources, discourse strategies of interaction with the audience, collaborative learning, object mediation, use of common ground knowledge and use of imagination and creativity. These categories were analysed in a total of 25 subcategories with the respective discourse strategies found in them. These discourse strategies were marked and achieved by means of linguistic markers such as questions, pauses, pronouns or imperatives; or by means of objects, instructions, descriptions, conversational turn-taking, semiotic resources or certain modes that will be explained fully below. These strategies are depicted in the following table along with the corresponding TV shows used to exemplify them:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategories (Discourse Strategies)</b>	<b>TV Show</b>
<u>Dialogic Interaction</u>	Facilitator Using Questions	Caillou Mister Maker Sobre Ruedas
	Facilitator Using Instructions	Caillou
	Facilitator Providing Information	Handy Manny
	Facilitator Providing Conversational Turn-taking	Bubble Guppies
<u>Semiotic Resources</u>	Neutralizing Language with the diversity of the Physical Appearance	Plaza Sésamo Caillou The Backyardigans
	Diversity of Voices	Imaginary Movers
	Diversity in Both Physical Appearance and Personality	Mickey Mouse's Clubhouse
<u>Discourse Strategies of Interaction with the Audience</u>	Interaction Through Questions	Dora The Explorer Mickey Mouse's Clubhouse
	Use of Pauses	Bubble Guppies
	Use of Second Person Pronoun	Imaginary Movers Team Umizoomi
	Second Person Pronouns and Pauses	Team Umizoomi
	Inclusion of the Audience by Pointing the Finger at the Screen	Imaginary Movers
	Inclusion of the Audience by Using Imperatives	Plaza Sésamo

<u>Collaborative Learning</u>	Collaborative Learning Through the Inclusion of Ideas to Carry out a Task	Mickey Mouse's Clubhouse Team Umizoomi
	Collaborative Learning Encouraged Through the Use of the "We" Pronoun	Imaginary Movers
	Collaborative Learning in Order to Finish a Task.	Mister Maker Handy Manny
<u>Object Mediation</u>	Object Mediation for Specific Purposes	Caillou Plaza Sésamo Doc McStuffins
	Object Mediation as Complimentary to Discourse	Bubble Guppies Mister Maker
<u>Use of Common Ground Knowledge</u>	Places Also Found in Real Life	Caillou Handy Manny
	Real-life Places and People	Plaza Sésamo
	Common Places Mixed between the Real and the Unreal	Gumball
<u>Use of Imagination and Creativity</u>	Imagination	The Backyardigans
	Fantasy	Tinkerbell and the Great Fairy Rescue
	Creativity	Mister Maker

**Table of Categories, Discourse Strategies as subcategories and TV shows.**

## 4.1 Dialogical interaction

In most TV shows analysed it is common to see characters that play different significant roles with the purpose of achieving the main goal they pursue which is to educate. Following this thread, we can stand out among them the ones that appear as facilitators for this process. These are characters that are in charge of guiding the others and help them learn by themselves while working together. The facilitator's main function is to orient and support learners during the learning process by means of scaffolds. They use different strategies such as questions, instructions, providing information or conversational turn-taking encouraging the participation of learners through the assistance of a more capable peer. In all of these strategies the participation of the others plays a significant role for the construction of knowledge.

### 4.1.1 Facilitator Using Questions

In some TV shows the facilitator uses questions in order to encourage learners to participate in the construction of knowledge together. In *Caillou*, in the episode "Caillou's shadow", the character that appears as a facilitator in the children's learning process is the teacher who uses this strategy. In the following extract of the show, we can observe how Miss Martin (MM) introduces a topic with a doubt Caillou (CA) has about shadows; following this she states a question (line 2, "what do we know about shadows?") encouraging children to think about their basic knowledge about the topic. Once she has an answer she keeps making questions using them as scaffolds to help them answer according to the knowledge they already have. This is shown in the transcription below:

Transcript 1

- 1 CA why didn't i have a shadow when i went outside at lunch  
time?
- 2 MM let's all be scientist and try to solve this problem (1)  
first what do we know about shadows? ((showing the shadow  
of a dinosaur))
- 3 CA shadows are made when something is in front of a light
- 4 MM right and when we are outside that bright light is?
- 5 BO the SUN
- 6 MM exactly (1) now is the sun always in the same place in  
the sky?
- 7 GI when i get up early i can see the SUN rising (0.5) it  
comes Up behind the house across the strEET
- 8 CA and at NighT it goes DOWN again
- 9 MM NOW we are thinking like SCIENTists [...]

The use of questions by the facilitator can be seen as well in *Mister Maker Sobre Ruedas* (Transcript 2; lines 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 14). Here the main character, Mr. Maker -the only adult in the show- is the one in charge to guide and teach the children how to create new things from materials and imagination. Mr. Maker (MM) can be seen as a facilitator in the following example:

Transcript 2

- 1 MM I think we should make a big tropical holiday island(.) would  
you help me?
- 2 KI YEEEEAAAAAHH
- 3 MM fantastic! alright then(.) Morgan(.) Hope(.) Presvian(.)  
Amber(.)and Ben let's make it (2) now we are going to make a  
tropical island(.) are we?
- 4 KI YEEEEAAAAAHH
- 5 MM now what should it look like?



6 K1 eeeeeh a palm tree and some golden sand  
7 MM golden sand and a palm tree as well (.) should we paint that  
palm tree?  
8 K2 paint  
9 MM should we paint it?  
10 K3 yeeeeeah paint  
11 MM what colour what colour should we use?  
12 K4 brown  
13 K5 green  
14 MM fantastic! they'll be great colours (.) and what can go on  
that palm tree?  
15 K1 [coconuts]  
16 K2 [coconuts]  
17 MM coconuts that's right

As can be seen in the previous example, Mister Maker is a facilitator character due to the fact that he is the one that knows more than the kids about the subject, art in this case, and he guides the kids in order to make them answer the questions themselves. Mister Maker in this case is helping the kids to learn by themselves but not telling them the answers directly. He is not giving the kids all the information, but he proposes an idea to be developed in group by the kids and then through the use of questions he encourages them to participate, creating knowledge together.

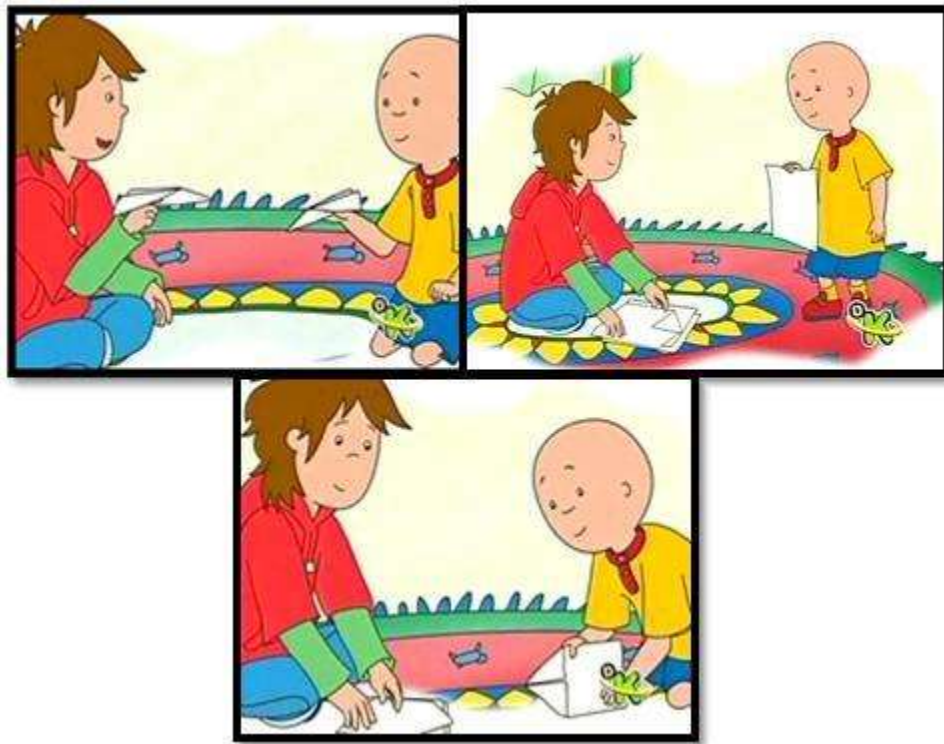
#### **4.1.2 Facilitator Using Instructions**

Another facilitator character who appears in the episode of *Caillou* "High Flyers" is Daniel (DA), Caillou's friend, who is older than him and seems to know more about things. He teaches Caillou (CA) how to make paper planes by means of instructions, showing him the steps he must follow in order to achieve the goal, in this case the finished plane. This shows the way children can learn new things with the help of a more capable peer within the

zone of proximal development, as it can be seen in Transcript 3, line 8 where Daniel is taking the role of instructor:

Transcript 3

1 DA what plane have you got?  
2 CA ahh i don't know  
[...]  
3 CA i don't have any sorry Daniel  
4 DA that's okay i'll make one ((taking a sheet of paper))  
[...]  
5 CA an AEROPLANE  
6 DA yeah watch this ((throwing the plane in the air))  
7 CA WOW ((a cat meowing)) wow can i make one?  
8 DA sure it's easy ((he passes a piece of paper to caillou))  
You just fold your paper like this ((caillou follows what his  
friend does)) and then on the other side (4.0) here look ((he  
keeps folding the paper to finish the plane)) see? all ready  
for take off? 13:59  
9 CA ready [three two one]  
10 DA [three two one]  
11 ((both make sounds while watching the planes fly))



**Figure 1: Daniel teaching Caillou how to create a paper plane.**

#### **4.1.3 Facilitator Providing Description**

The role of facilitator can take different forms such as the one presented here, as someone providing information. In *Handy Manny*, the facilitator is a person (Manny) and has bigger size than the other characters, which are tools. He is the one that determines the use of each tool and guides teamwork and participation in order to construct knowledge. Here the main strategy to point Manny as facilitator is a visual one, as we can see in the picture above. Nevertheless, his main contribution is the fact that he constantly provides information or clarifies important ideas.

In the episode “A Bunny in the Basement”, Mr. Singh wants Manny and his team to solve the problem of having a bunny in the basement. Here, Manny acts as facilitator several

times. The following example shows how Manny (HM), introduces and explains bunnies' nature (line 4) so the characters and audience can understand them. His intervention contributes to scaffolding knowledge, which is the most recurrent way in which his role as facilitator is assumed, rather than asking questions.

#### Transcript 4

1 MS well I don't find it very cute(.) not when it chews my tennis racket  
or my garden hose or Lila's mittens ((pointing at each object))  
2 SQ why would it do that?  
3 PA yeah(.) mittens don't taste very good(.) or do they?  
4 HM Rabbits chew on things to keep their dientes their teeth from growing too big

#### 4.1.4 Facilitator Providing Conversational Turn-taking

In some cases, the facilitator offers a different guidance when encouraging the participants to involve themselves in the construction of knowledge. In *Bubble Guppies*, Mr. Grouper, the big fish, is the facilitator. He introduces the topic naming three different characteristics from Egypt, making the mermaids who resemble children feel curious about them. He guides the participants allowing them to have enough time to speak and sharing knowledge by means of conversational turn-taking, without interruptions from him but only observing and reinforcing what the mermaids have already said, all of this in order to show that interaction among peers is an effective way of developing skills and knowledge. The transcript below exemplifies this during a dialogue between Mr. Grouper (MG) and the little mermaids Molly (MO), Jana (JA), Gil (GI), Oona (OO), and Nonny (NO):

Transcript 5

- 1 MO mr. grouper did you ever go to a place called egypt?  
2 MG egypt? wow no but i always wanted to go there  
oh i love to see the pyramids the river Nile and the sphinx  
3 JA hey what happened to his nose? ((referring to the Sphinx))  
4 GI nobody knows  
5 MO [that's the secret of the sphinx]  
6 GI [that's the secret of the sphinx]  
7 ((everyone laughs))  
8 GI but if we can figure out what's the secret of the sphinx  
we'll find its nose  
9 JA mysterious ((speaking spooky))  
10 MG oh yes the sphinx's missing nose is just one of the  
many mysteries of the ancient egypt  
11 OO what does ancient mean?  
12 NO ancient means very very old  
13 MG that's right nonny



Figure 2: Mr. Grouper constructing knowledge together with the little mermaids.

## 4.2 Semiotic Resources

When analysing the data, we found that some traits among the participants of the show share a common characteristic, which is diversity and heterogeneousness. This variety in some features of the characters is presented either as physical diversity or in terms of personality. Physically speaking, participants can be diverse in the sense that they show features which can distinguish one of them from the other. These features can be referred to skin colour, type of clothing, accessories, and so on. On the other hand, diversity related to personality is a rather subjective classification, although somewhat obvious since differentiation is fairly clear. A member of the cast can be called, for example, grumpy, nerd, or intellectual, if they present traits in their dialogues or actions that readily belong to those attributes. Both kinds of diversity allow young viewers of the shows to easily relate themselves with the different characters in the program, and to think that cartoons can act as regular people too. It is relevant to notice that the distinction between physical and personality diversity do not exclude each other. These characteristics play a non-verbal role in the discourse within the show important for the audience to recognize and become familiarized with the characters and, also, with some features present in the cartoons.

### 4.2.1 Neutralizing language with the diversity of the Physical appearance

In *Plaza Sesamo*, the aspect of the characters is very heterogeneous. This diversity is accomplished through a visual strategy, in which children coexist with puppets. Although they have different aspects, this heterogeneity is not an obstacle to enrich both learning and ties among characters. In the episode that we analysed, an example of this is a child who is trying to beat a record helped by his puppet trainer. This record involves cleaning and

brushing both his hair and teeth perfectly. Although the trainer is a hairy puppet, he totally gets along with the kid and completes his guidance to a successful mission. We can see how puppet and kid co-exist in *Plaza Sesamo*'s world without being noticed the physical differences on them.



**Figure 3: The trainer (puppet) interacting with the boy.**

Another example of the presence of physical diversity occurs in *Caillou*. We can see a variety of children participating in the construction of knowledge inside the classroom; all of these children have different characteristics in terms of the colour of the skin and hair, even the main character Caillou does not have hair at all. These characteristic help children to understand that everybody can participate and contribute equally and social constraints like race does not matter, especially when knowledge is acquired.



**Figure 4: Children sharing knowledge among peers in the classroom.**

In addition to the previous example, *The Backyardigans* also present this type of diversity. They is a group of friends who are all different in shape, colour and gender. They are almost the same age but their physical appearance is unique. They all represent different animals that are able to speak and interact with each other. In order of appearance in the photo, they are: Tasha the yellow hippopotamus, Tyrone the orange moose, Pablo is the yellow and blue penguin, Uniqua the pink character (unknown specie), and Austin is the purple kangaroo. Despite their physical differences and personalities they represent the typical kids who are neighbours and play together and meet every day.



**Figure 5: Picture of the five main characters of the show.**



#### 4.2.2 Diversity of Voices

Some participants of the shows are clearly differentiated from the others in the sense that they present themselves with dissimilar attributes in their identities. For example, in the episode “Fathers Know Best” from the TV show *Imaginary Movers*, the main characters are preparing a special celebration for Father’s Day. When each of their fathers arrives on the set, all four of them present very different characteristics which relate to their personalities. Through their identities (which also match their outfits), we can see that one father seems to be an explorer, another one a nerdy-like scientific, the next one the coach of a football team, and the final one an intellectual man. These distinctive traits may help children to understand that, even in imaginary worlds such as the ones presented on TV, people can be as normal as they are and also that they can relate characters to their own personal lives, in this case their parents. The four different personalities can be exemplified through the following picture:



**Figure 6: The four fathers matching their outfits with their personalities.**

### 4.2.3 Diversity in Both Physical Appearance and Personality

In some shows, the differences among characters are more reinforced than in others. While some shows include only differences in the physical aspect or in the personality of the participants, there are others that involve both characteristics. Mainly as a way of making clear that each character in the show has something special to contribute.

For example, in *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse* all the characters are diverse in shape, age and gender. The show is composed by two ducks female (Daisy) and male (Donald), two mice female (Minnie) and male (Mickey), and Goofy and Pluto who are two dogs the first one can speak and the second is considered a pet. Besides their physical differences, each of them have a personality which is distinctive from the others. The two girls, Minnie and Daisy seem to be very clever and are usually making useful contributions in solving problems or simply doing regular activities. Donald Duck is shown as a grumpy and moody character. Unlike Donald, Goofy is a very friendly character who always seems to be happy and sometimes even a little silly. While Mickey Mouse, who is the main character, shows an enthusiastic personality which often expresses leadership. Despite their diversity they form a group of friends that play and solve problems as a team.



**Figure 7: Picture of the six main characters of the Mickey Club House.**

### **4.3 Discourse Strategies of Interaction with the Audience**

In our data we also found some features that allow and encourage children to feel included in the TV shows. This category refers to all the instances in which the main characters of a show include the audience in their activity. This can be achieved by means of direct allusions, questions to the audience—giving some time and include pauses to answer some question—, pointing to the camera/TV, use of second person pronouns, etc. The main point of this strategy is to make the kids feel part of the show and create some sort of familiarity with the show and the characters.

#### **4.3.1 Interaction through Questions**

The use of questions is a regular strategy used in TV shows for allowing children to feel included in the development and outcome of the story being told in the episode. In *Dora the Explorer*, the main characters, Dora (DR) y Boots (BT), uses this strategy to include the

participation of the audience throughout the episode in order to help her to solve a certain problem. In the episode “Dora and the Stuck Truck”, the main characters also provide a space of silence in order to encourage the participation of kids and also give them some space to provide an answer to the formulated questions (Transcript 6, lines 3; Transcript 7, lines 1 and 3). This is shown below:

Transcript 6

1      BT      este es remolcador (.) tiene un gran ga:ncho (0.5) jala muy  
         bie:n  
         **This is tow truck (.) it has a big hoo:k (0.5) it pulls very**  
         **we:ll**

2            ((música)) ((pausa))  
         **((music)) ((pause))**

3            y saben qué clase de camión es este? ((pausa)) que camión es  
         este? ((silencio)) el camión de helados ((música))  
         **and do you know what kind of truck is this? ((pause)) what**  
         **truck is this? ((silence))the ice-cream truck ((music))**

3            ((aplausos)) muy bie:n  
         **((claps)) very goo:d**



Figure 8: Dora and Boots realizing that a truck has a problem.

## Transcript 7

- 1 DR que camión está en problemas?  
**which truck is in trouble?**
- 2 BT no sé dora (.) la imagen está toda borrosa ((sonido))  
**I dont know dora (.) the image is all blurred ((sound))**
- 3 DR pueden ver qué camión es?((música))((silencio)) sí: es el  
camión de helados  
**can you see which truck is? ((music)) ((silence)) ye:s it is  
ice-cream truck**
- 4 BT oh no::((música))  
**oh no:: ((music))**

The same strategy is used in the episode of *Mickey Mouse's Clubhouse* “The bubble bath of Pluto”. In this episode, the characters have to give a bath to their friend and pet Pluto. In order to do this, they have to work as a team and also include the audience to help them. The main character, Mickey (MC), asks questions to children in several occasions (Transcript 8, line 1). He provides questions and spaces for them to answer. He requests for help to do simple tasks such as mentioning a word, repeating a word or just to say yes or no. In this scene, Mickey asks the audience to show him where Pluto is. In order to do this, they show Pluto jumping and then it is expected that the kids answer Mickey’s questions:



**Figure 9: Mickey Mouse looking for Pluto.**

#### Transcript 8

1 MC where are you pal? (.) ((barking sound)) i can hear ya but i  
 Cant see ya (0.5) do you see pluto anywhere?  
 2 ((sound)) ((silence))  
 3 you do. where? ((barking sound))at the window? ((pointing))  
 4 ((barking sound)) ((music))  
 5 there he is.

#### 4.3.2 Use of Pauses

A common way in which the audience is included is through silence. Generally, a character provides a phrase which has to be completed by the audience. The silence that follows this phrase is intended to promote participation. In *Bubble Guppies* this is what Mr. Grouper (MG) does when he waits for the audience to provide answers to his utterances (line 2). This happens in the episode called “Only the Sphinx Nose”, in the following example when the characters are characterising Egypt.

Transcript 9

1 MG The people who lived in ancient Egypt got their water from A:  
2 ((silence))  
3 LF RIVER ((several little fish screaming at the same time))

### 4.3.3 Use of Second Person Pronoun

When addressing the audience, some TV characters use certain verbal expressions to emphasize the meaning of what they are saying or doing. In this instance, they use specific pronouns that encourage children to participate in the write-up of the episode. In *Imaginary Movers* (IM), children are regularly inspired to brainstorm through a song:

Transcript 10

1 IM all you gotta do is to think think think

These verses are continually repeated as the four main characters play instruments and dance to the song, underlying the pronoun “you” when being mentioned.

In addition, *Team Umizoomi* is constantly including their audience in their episodes. They use always use second person pronouns to refer to their audience, particularly, in its opening song in which the characters Millie (MI), Geo (GE) and Bot (BT) are directly inviting the audience and who consider that children’s help is as valuable as their own knowledge (Lines 1 and 2 “**you** can help us, **you** are so clever”; lines 3, 4, 5 “millie, geo, bot and **you**”):

Transcript 11

1 MI [we can better build it together

you can help us you are so clever]  
2 GE [we can better build it together  
you can help us you are so clever]  
[...]  
3 MI [there's nothing we can't do  
millie, geo, bot and you!]  
4 GE [there's nothing we can't do  
millie, geo, bot and you!]  
5 BT [there's nothing we can't do  
millie, geo, bot and you!]

#### 4.3.4 Second Person Pronouns and Pauses

There are also shows that mixed both subcategories in order to intensify the inclusion of their audience and, at the same time, keeping them connected with the show.

In the *Team Umizoomi* episode analysed, the characters Millie (MI), Geo (GE) and Bot (BT) are playing in the snow, and they invite the audience to play with them (lines 9 and 10). They give the audience the necessary time to give a response to their questions and activities (lines 9 and 21).

#### Transcript 12

1 ML hi is me (.) millie  
2 GO UMIZOOMI  
3 ML nice sliding (.) this is my brother geo  
4 GE hi  
5 BT wow wowwow  
6 ML and this is bot (.) our best robot friend  
7 BT hello hello  
8 ML we are really glad you came by because we are gonna play a  
game in the snow (.) do you like snow?  
9 ((silence))  
10 ML well we got a great snow game to play with you



11 GE come on let`s play  
12 ML geo and I are going to draw a picture in the snow (.) see if  
You can guess what we are drawing  
13 GE we will give three hints to help you guess  
14 MIL your first hint is he has two short skinny legs  
15 ((special sound))  
16 GEO your second hint is he`s got an antenna on it  
17 ((special sound))  
18 ML and your third hint is he`s got a belly screen  
19 ((special sound))  
20 GE who do we draw a picture of?  
21 ((silence))  
22 ML its bot our best robot friend

Then, they encourage the audience for joining them in their mission to help Andy  
(lines 1 and 3)

Transcript 13

1 ML we need your help (.) would you help us get andy`s plane  
Ready to go?  
2 ((silence))  
3 you will? umirrific!  
4 BT [yeah]  
5 GE [yeah]  
6 ML now you are in team umizoomi with us  
We`ll call you (.) umifriend  
7 BT hello umifriend  
8 GE welcome to the team  
9 ML let`s get our mighty math powers ready  
10 ((powers theme))

#### **4.3.5 Inclusion of the Audience by Pointing a Finger at the Screen**

Another alternative to embolden children to participate in the TV show they are

watching is through the physical act of pointing a finger performed by a character on TV. In a section of one episode of *Imaginary Movers*, one of the characters points to the camera with his index finger, addressing the audience as it is the children who ought to listen to the message of the song.



**Figure 10: Characters constantly addressing children by pointing the finger.**

#### **4.3.6 Inclusion of the Audience by the Use of Imperatives**

Imperatives are used as a suggestion, or an advice. In the case of TV shows for children, imperatives are used as an invitation to the kid to join and participate in something that will be helpful and joyful for them. An example of this discursive method is found in *Plaza Sésamo (Sesame Street)*. In this show the audience is included from the very beginning, as can be noticed in the opening song. They are invited to participate in the activities along the show by means of keywords present in the song that introduce the show which is repeated every time a new episode begins.

## Transcript 14

1      NA      ven a <jugar>(.)  
               **come to <play>(.)**

2              ven a <cantar> <sii>  
               **come to <sing> <yeah>**

3              [...]

4              <plaza sésamo>](.)  
               **<sesame street>] (.)**

5              vamos(.)  
               **let's go (.)**

6              [<plaza sésamo>] (.)  
               **[<sesame street>] (.)**

7              [...]

8              vamos todos a encontrar (.)  
               **let's all find (.)**

9              donde hay gran felicidad (.)  
               **where is great happiness (.)**

10             el <fantástico> lugar (.)  
               **the <fantastic> place (.)**

11             <plaza sésamo>](.)  
               **[<sesame street>](.)**

As can be noticed in the opening song (transcript 14), the kids are repeatedly invited to participate by using words as “vamos” let’s go (lines 1 and 2) and “ven” come ( lines 5 and 8). These imperative verbs can be read as an invitation to the kid to participate with the characters in the activities that will be developed later along the show.

#### 4.4 Collaborative Learning

In sociocultural theory, a very important aspect in the construction of knowledge is team work. This can be explained by the fact that diversity in participants help to enrich

learning because it helps to overcome possible biases and account for complex phenomena. It would help children to develop a sense of generosity and at the same time, realize that there are some tasks that need to be developed in a group, because all of us have different talents.

#### 4.4.1 Collaborative Learning Through the Inclusion of Ideas to Carry out a Task

The contribution of partners in conducting a certain task is an important activity in sociocultural theory because due to the interaction among participants, new perspectives can be applied in solving problems or in achieving a determined goal. An example of this issue can be seen in *Mickey Mouse's clubhouse* where all the activities they carry out are realized by most than one character and often they are working together as a group of friends. This is the case shown in the episode “The bubble bath of Pluto” in which Pluto is very dirty and they have to give him a bubble bath in order to make him nice and clean. The group of friends Goofy (GO) and Daisy (DA) arrive to Mickey's (MI) house because they heard about the bath of Pluto and they want to help to contribute in this task (transcript 15, lines 2, 3 and 4).

Transcript 15

1 MI hi daisy hi goof. what brings you two here?  
2 GO what else? Pluto's bubble bath  
3 DA if you going to give Pluto a bubble bath you are going to  
need a bubble bath bathtub  
4 GO **so lets pull the surprise switch and get one (.) everybody  
think bubbly bath**

In the case of *Umizoomi*, The Umizoomi team is trying to help Andy to get his plane

ready to go. And all of them are important to achieve this goal.

Transcript 16

- 1 BT it's the umialarm (.) that sound means someone needs our help  
2 ML when someone has a problem in umicity we fix it with our  
[mighty math powers (.) we are team umizoomi]  
3 BT [mighty math powers (.) we are team umizoomi]  
4 GE [mighty math powers (.) we are team umizoomi]  
5 BT we can see who needs our help right here in my belly belly  
6 ML [belly screen]  
7 GE [belly screen]

Bot, the robot, is necessary because through his “belly screen” they can communicate with Andy, the kid that needs their help, during the episode they make several contacts with him on the belly screen.



**Figure 11: Bot using his belly screen.**

Geo, with his mighty math power of his shape belt, he helps to put to build up the snow blower that clears out the airstrip.



**Figure 12: Geo using his shape belt.**

Millie, with her mighty math power of patterns of her dress, she helps to change the red light into green for letting the plane take off.



**Figure 13: Millie using her pattern powers.**

As it can be seen, the three of them were important and necessary to complete their task. Together, they did it, and if one of them had not use the mighty math powers, these probably did not work out, because every step is necessary to complete the task, that is the

importance of their team work

#### 4.4.2 Collaborative Learning Encouraged Through the Use of the “We” Pronoun

During the “Fathers Know Best” episode of this show of *Imaginary Movers*, there are two events occurring at the same time: the main characters are preparing a celebration off the set, while their fathers are waiting for them at their warehouse. Before the characters leave the set, they tell the audience that they will leave a note for their parents to know that they will be back soon. But when the fathers arrive, the mouse that lives in the warehouse takes the note away. This way they have to think about what to do to get the note back. Each of them seems to have an individual plan according to their own skills, but none of them work. Finally, one of the parents comes up with an idea:

Transcript 17

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | NF | you know that I do think that I can build something that will catch that mouse here with the notepad and the writing |
| 2 | EF | and I’m sure we can find everything you need in this Incredible amazing place  |
| 3 | NF | but I’m gonna NEED everyone’s help to put it all together  |

By addressing the rest of the parents through of the use of the “we” pronoun (transcript 17, line 2), the father designing the plan let them know—and the audience as well—that the plan is only going to work if they work as a team.

#### 4.4.3 Collaborative Learning in Order to Finish a Task

Team work can result in many ways, sometimes people contribute with ideas to

create something, or to find out an unknown answer, or as in this case, teamwork can be used in order to finish a task.

In *Mister Maker* the children work together to create new things using their imagination and creativity guided by Mister Maker, the one that supports the kid's ideas and provide the materials they need in order to achieve their goal.

In the present example, every child contributes to create a great figure between all working as a team, as can be seen in the following picture.



**Figure 14: a spaceman created with kids in specific positions and dressed in specific colours.**

The kids dressed up with different colours take their places to form a giant picture of an astronaut which could be seen from above.

Another example in which teamwork is emphasized to finish a task is in *Handy Manny*. In *Handy Manny*'s opening song all the tools help Manny to achieve goals and help



people. In the episode “A Bunny in the Basement”, all the tools help to solve the problem with the bunny inside the house, building a new one in the backyard. While they are working together to build the house for the bunny, they sing a song that emphasises and remarks “trabajamos juntos, we work together”. Moreover, each tool performs a different action to achieve a goal, depicting team work as something in which all individuals can use their abilities and talent to accomplish a complex challenge.



**Figure 15: Tools working together to finish a task.**

#### **4.5 Object Mediation**

This category refers to the presence of specific tools that mediate in the interaction and learning of the child while watching a certain episode of a TV show. These tools act as a visual strategy that facilitates the understanding of the main aim of the story which is sharing knowledge among the participants and with the children at home. The objects

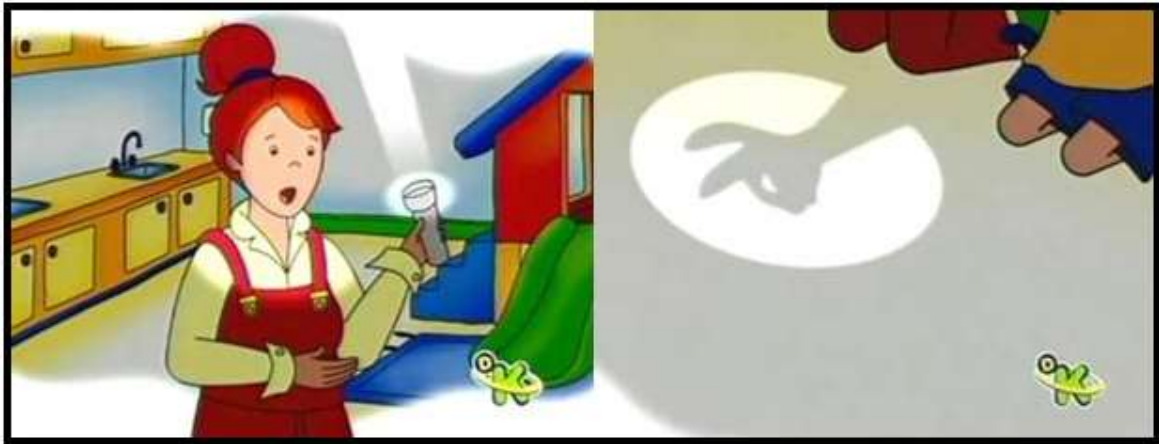
presented in these shows fulfil distinct roles within their primary function as mediators, covering different kinds of themes during the learning process. We can see that talking is not the only tool to generate discourse, but objects also provide a starting point for engaging talk; their principal function though, is related to talk, in this way objects usually contribute to the discourse.

#### 4.5.1 Object Mediation for Specific Purposes

The use of objects in TV shows can have different purposes. Some of these objects can be presented only to function as a visual aid, while others are part of a more specific intention i.e. using objects to regulate mental activity and within this the learning process. In *Caillou* the teacher, Miss Martin (MM), while teaching about how shadows are formed uses a flashlight in order to create shadows and explain in a more practical way the effects of light over the objects. With this object as a mediator she can achieve the goal of teaching the children about a phenomenon she wanted them to learn by means of observation, this can be seen in the transcript and images below:

Transcript 18

1       MM       we can pretend that this flashlight is our sun ((showing a  
                  flashlight to the class)) (0.5) who wants to make shadows?  
                  ((kids rise their hands laughing and start making shadows with  
                  their hands))



**Figure 16: Miss Martin using the flashlight for making shadows and a shadow made by a child with his hand.**

Besides the flashlight, she uses different toys which are familiar to children in order to create the whole effect and encouraging them to participate while learning.



**Figure 17: Miss Martin creating shadows.**

Another example of this can be seen in *Plaza Sésamo* (*Sesame Street*) where we can find different instances of object mediation. The most common and recurrent one is the object being used to explain an abstract concept, which is being healthy. In this way, different aspects of health are shown: taking a shower, brushing one's teeth, playing sports, going to the dentist, eating healthy, among others. This kind of object mediation is more complex and varied because it has to account for the multiplicity of aspects of a concept, therefore actions and things are shown to achieve this.



**Figure 18: Teaching how to eat healthy.**



**Figure 19: Teaching how to keep clean.**

This type of object mediation can be found as well in an episode of *Doc McStuffins*, where the specific purpose is to learn a new ability. One of the characters—Luca, a little boy—gets a splinter in his finger. Dottie, the main protagonist of the show, helps her mother, who is a doctor, to get the splinter out so Luca can find some relief. As the mother starts to look after the boy, visual scaffolding is present when she asks Dottie to get her the magnifying glass and the tweezers, which are presented to the audience like in the following

picture:



**Figure 20: Doc McStuffins' instruments.**

Later on, the objects are shown as the mother teaches Dottie how to use them to get the splinter out of the finger.



**Figure 21: The mother showing how to remove the splinter using the tools.**

#### **4.5.2 Object Mediation as Complimentary to Discourse**

In this subcategory the objects involved in the show are not necessary used for explaining new things, but to clarify or reinforce something already taught by other means.

The main idea is to use the object to specify what was already said in the show.

In the “Sphinx Nose” episode of *Bubble Guppies*, the characters are learning about Egypt, in this case, two characters are looking for specific supplies to take to their trip to Egypt. They are using a papyrus to ask for the supplies they need: a list with pictures, just as the ones used in ancient Egypt. The characters are not only discovering and talking about ancient Egypt, but also directly relating with it through the use of one of their characteristic objects.



**Figure 22: Bubble Guppies mermaids with a papyrus.**

Besides, they took this instance to teach the audience the name and shape of those specific supplies. Once they showed a draw and named the object, the supply is shown.



**Figure 23: The fan is put on the table.**

First, the need a fan, we can see a slide with papyrus shape in the back that is showing the specific supply. Once the answer is given, the character puts the supply on the table.



**Figure 24: The sunglasses are put on the table.**

The same happens with the sunglasses and the bottle of water; both appear as a draw on the back in the papyrus, and then, the object on the table.



**Figure 25: The bottle of water is put on the table.**

Another example where we can find object mediation is in *Mister Maker* where he names every material he and the kids will use and shows them to the kids at home, as can be seen in the following example. In this episode, Mister Maker (MM) helps Danny to create a “colourful super stripy picture” and before starting he says:

Transcript 19:

1 MM We'll need some things from the doodle draws  
wait here I'll be back soon  
a big piece of plain paper

As can be seen in the image, he names the big piece of plain paper at the same time he shows it. In that sense he is not only naming the materials needed, but also showing them to the audience in order to make clear what he is referring to.





**Figure 26: Mr. Maker showing the piece of paper.**

#### **4.6 Use of Common Ground Knowledge**

A further strategy found in our data is the use of visualized areas that are common to the child's mind. By picturing the development of the story occurring in a regular kitchen, classroom, or family room, among others, children are encouraged to think that these cartoon narratives, although artificial, can also happen in their everyday lives as well as knowledge.

##### **4.6.1 Places Also Found in Real Life**

Some shows developed their plot in places that are very common for children: schools, houses, transportation, everything within the normal boundaries and very similar to the real life ones. This makes kids believe that the characters are just like them and also have a "real" life.

In the episode of *Caillou* “Caillou shadow”, we can see the use of a place very common for children, the classroom. This episode is about the way shadows are formed and takes place in the school. The children, guided by Miss Martins, try to resolve some doubts about this process. The way it is presented is similar as children’s experiences in school, helping them to learn new things in a reliable environment.



**Figure 27: Miss Martin and the children in the classroom.**

The settings in *Handy Manny* also follow this pattern of being familiar to children. In “A Bunny in the Basement”, the settings are a house, a backyard, a street, all places where little children spend time.



**Figure 28: A house and a backyard as settings in Handy Manny.**

#### 4.6.2 Real Life Places and People

There are shows that for specific purposes included real life images (not cartoon images). This can be seen as a strategy to create a new bond of familiarity with kids, crossing the line between the invented world of TV and real life.

In the “Saludable” episode of *Plaza Sésamo* (*Sesame Street*) they are teaching kids to be healthy; this is why they recommend different healthy habits to reproduce at home. In this case, they are encouraging kids to exercise, and in order to do so they chose a girl with her family who are going out to the park riding a bike – a real life park with real people.



**Figure 29: Real life people in a real life park.**

Same happens when they encourage the habit of brushing teeth, they show a normal kid performing that action, in a real bathroom setting (considering that sesame street contains puppets and models and drawings mostly)



**Figure 30: Real kid brushing his teeth.**

#### **4.6.3 Common Places Mixed Between the Real and the Unreal**

In some specific instances, real physical places commonly recognized by the child are mixed with the unreal world in which the TV characters develop their stories. An example of this is *Gumball*, a show that narrates the everyday life of an animated regular family, but immerse in an environment where everything children see is real. It almost seems as if photographs of real houses, neighbourhoods and schools are used to give life to unreal TV characters. This way, the animated episode shows animated characters performing animated actions, but in a non-animated context, as shown in the picture below:



**Figure 31: Cartoons in a real life setting.**

#### **4.7 Use of Imagination and Creativity**

This category refers to the direct allusion for kids to use their imagination and creativity. This means that the shows include not only real-life stories and characters, but also invented stories and adventures (use of imagination) and magical characters (fantasy). Here, the presence of the main characters is relevant in terms of the encouragement the kids receive in order to create new things by themselves (creativity).

Creativity is discursively addressed through different forms; this way changing the general themes of an episode and controlling the discourse of the characters from a main point of view. As the use of discourse markers are not explicit in this category, the modes used in order to achieve creativity in a discursively way are explained in the following subcategories.

#### 4.7.1 Imagination

In this subcategory, we can find TV shows that encourage imagination through the use of invented stories, new worlds created in a normal basis and only by means of their characters' creativity. This also implies the use of the imagination of the children, in order to follow the lines of the stories created.

For example, in every episode of *The Backyardigans* the stories are product of their imagination, they are playing in the backyard and their stories become real through the product of their imagination.



**Figure 32: Backyardigans' yard.**

In this episode in particular, Uniqua (UN) and Tasha (TA) imagine they are princesses that need to escape from the tower of a castle. They have only two wigs, necklaces and a mirror that they pretend is magic and is going to help them to break out the castle.



**Figures 33 and 34: Tasha and Uniqua pretending they are princesses.**

At the end of the show, once their adventure has finished, they return home for their snack. All the costumes and castle disappear.

Transcript 20

- 1 UN You know sister (.) all this escaping has made me hungry (.)  
let`s have a snack
- 2 TA how about crepes crumpets
- 3 TY crumpets?
- 4 PA yeah!
- 5 UN after you my dear  
(everyone laughs))
- 6 TA magic mirror come in
- 7 AU snack is that way (.) over  
(everyone laughs))  
(castle fades out))  
(ending theme begins))

#### 4.7.2 Fantasy

In this subcategory, we can find shows and characters that are part of the fantasy world in the real life such as in the show. This magical feature is key to develop a new plot that is part of the magical genre that kids are used to listen in old fairy tales and that are crucial in their development of imagination.

In *Tinkerbell and the Great Fairy Rescue* there is a little girl named Lizzi (LI) who believes in fairies, but her father (FA) is a known scientist who only beliefs in real facts (transcript 21, line 5). Lizzi discovers that her imaginary world and creatures are real in her meeting with Tinkerbell, a little and friendly fairy. Lizzi shows Tinkerbell the pictures that she draws and the houses she built thinking that she would meet a real fairy someday. Her father does not realize that his daughter is very creative and that everything that she dreamed about was real.



**Figure 35: Lizzi showing Tinkerbell her  
draws.**



**Figure 36: Lizzi talking to her father  
about the journals.**



Transcript 21

- 1 FA lizzi (0.3) who are you talking to?
- 2 LI ouh am: (.) my fairy ((showing a fairy picture))
- 3 FA oh that thats nice dear (0.3) i brought you something i think you'll really enjoy (0.3) thi:s are some of my old few journals(0.5) i pick the ones i think will excite you the most (.)this one about rocks and minerals is particularly interesting.
- 4 LI is there a few journals about fairies?
- 5 FA ((laughs)) of course not lizzi (0.5) books like this are based on facts (.) scientific research (0.8) which is quite the contrary to your little figures and drawings
- 6 LI (it) is because you havent seen a fairy doesn't mean they're not real

### 4.7.3 Creativity

This sub-category refers to all the allusions in a show for kids using their imagination in order to create something new and concrete. These instances can be considered as an encouragement to kids' minds in order to be capable to create and develop new things by their own means.

One example of this is found in *Mister Maker*. The main goal in this show is to make children create new things mixing different elements together. One example where we can actually see this is in the Mister Maker's mobile which design resembles recycled elements. This is a clear example of encouraging imagination in kids since he is using elements that children can find in their houses, and that sometimes are considered garbage, to create a new element through a process that is not only creative, but also new and fun.



**Figure 37: Mr Maker's mobile.**

## 5. DISCUSSION

In this study we focused our attention in the different discourse strategies present in a variety of children TV shows. The different learning theories, particularly the socio-cultural theory, are very helpful to understand the diverse strategies used by some TV shows, all of this with the purpose of helping children to acquire an array of diverse knowledge.

Different instances were founded proving the importance of social interaction, proposed by Vygotsky`s model, such as his theory of scaffolding, present in some TV shows in different ways. Sometimes the knowledge is given by a facilitator, who is providing the necessary information, such as Manny from *Handy Manny*, who facilitates directly the information to the audience. Another way of providing information is through the use of questions, important for kids to practice. (Zucher, 2010). Open ended questions are present in shows as *Caillou* and *Mr. Maker*, where an adult help the kids, proving that kids have the ability to discover knowledge themselves. The facilitators only help, provide assistance. (Rahma, 2012).

As it can be seen in real life, children interact inside diverse groups. TV shows try to represent this type of interaction by showing a diverse community of participants who share experiences in order to carry out certain activities. Within our data, we evidenced many instances in which diversity among participants is seen as a way of portraying real life experiences. In the categorization established in the result section, we found that diversity, is used to reflect how TV shows create different characters based on distinctions. These characters are attached of singular physical features, in the same way real groups of people are composed in communities. We analysed this as semiotic resources. In the four TV shows analysed, *Plaza Sésamo*, *Caillou*, *The Backyardigans* and *Mickey Mouse*, the heterogeneous

group of characters interact with each other in a very normal way and communication is produced effectively; despite of the fact that some of them are even from different species. As mentioned above, Buerkel-Rothfuss et al (1982) suggested in their study that TV shows could help children to learn social roles regarding family structure. Our data reflects that it is applied in the identification of children with the social functions presented in the cartoons.

Children are constantly being included in TV shows. A strong evidence for this can be observed in TV shows such as *Dora the explorer*, *Mickey ClubHouse*, *Bubble Guppies*, *Imaginary Movers*, *Team Umizoomi* and *Plaza Sésamo*. The fact that most of the TV shows analysed provide different strategies to include their audience proves that learning together is important, and that learning occurs in interaction (Ellis, 2000). Pauses are particularly important in this respect. In the *Bubble Guppies*' episode analysed, the pauses are provided in order to give the kids the space to answer themselves, because pauses are "elements in the discourse that do not have any lexical meaning, but they can indicate that the speaker needs time to plan the continuation of his/her telling" (Donzel et al, 1996). Some other ways of including children are strictly lexical, such as the use of pronouns in *Imaginary Movers* and *Umizoomi*, or imperatives in *Plaza Sésamo*, making explicit reference to the viewers by means of language. Sometimes for younger audience the inclusion is by finger-pointing, as a way of demonstrating them that they are included in the group. The kid "is not a passive recipient of sociocultural knowledge but rather an active contributor to the meaning and outcome of interactions with other members of a social group" (Wentworth, 1980).

Within the current learning theory, teamwork is essential. In the analysed data, it is reflected through linguistic evidences. We found many instances in which discourse strategies are present during group activities in the selected TV shows. In some of them, it

was found that characters manifested their intention discursively in order to solve problems together as a whole. This fact was encouraged through the use of the “we” pronoun, which is also highly related to the facilitator character. In addition, the cartoons reflected that teamwork was motivated by the actions of participants, which is essential in order to fill out the teamwork task successfully. This fact correlates with what previously mentioned by John-Steiner & Mahn (1996) referring to Vygotsky’s thoughts who believed that sociocultural environment will improve any task achievement and this is only possible through language.

As the theory states, mediation is very useful when it comes to the learning process. There are different objects among the TV shows that were used in order to facilitate the understanding of the content of the TV shows. The use of objects in the shows was helpful to explain kids what was going on, like the use of a lantern in *Caillou*’s Shadow episode. Something that has not been analysed before is the use of objects to explain abstract concepts for kids. That is the case of *Plaza Sésamo*, in the healthy episode, using more complex devices to exemplifying kids what means to be healthy in different aspects. There is of course the direct use of objects to clarify a concept, like in *Bubble Guppies* or *Mr. Maker*, who demonstrates through objects the new vocabulary that is acquired simultaneously with naming/showing, and proving that “the material form of a tool as well as the habitual patterns of its use affect the purposes to which it is put and methods we use when we employ it.” (Thorne, 2003)

The physical environment that surrounds children is very important and is part of their culture. For this reason, TV shows try to take elements proper from the culture they are alluding to. Within the data, it was found that in many instances there was a big correlation

between the fantastic world of the cartoons and the reality that belongs to children. The settings of some TV shows resembled the common locations where children are immersed, such as classrooms or parts of a house. Also, some TV shows mix the real and unreal not only in terms of settings, as in *Gumball*, but also, they mix real people with unreal beings as in *Plaza Sésamo*.

One last category was established according to our data. This was the use of imagination and creativity. In the TV shows that establish the use of creativity as their main resource, such as *The Backyardigans*, it is portrayed a complete fictional world that relies on teamwork and cooperation. The whole story depends on what the main characters create in their minds. The analysed episode from *The Backyardigans* is a clear example of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and collaborative creativity. In *Tinkerbell and the Great Fairy Rescue*, there is also the presence of imagination applied to self-representation of fantasy. Fantasy and fairy tales are present in the popular knowledge which is encouraged by TV shows and books. As referred by Yaroshevsky (1989), it is in internalization where we get control over our brains with the purpose of thinking. In this kind of TV show, it is portrayed that a fantasy is internalized having creativity as a result. Similar to what is seen in *Mr. Maker* where individual creative art is valuable and encourages children's own imagination.

As it can be seen, there is a wide range of agreement between the studies already proposed and what we found in our study. Specially, what it is strictly related to the sociocultural theory and its importance in the construction of children's learning. The TV shows analysed demonstrated that there is a possibility of construct knowledge collectively (teamwork section), and by means of *object mediation* and *scaffolding*, proving that there is such a thing as *ZPD*. Objects are used for different purposes, and a new way of seeing this

theory can also be found, in our section: *Diversity among characters* and the section of *Places known by the kids*. It also proved the fact that learning process goes by different stages, including a process of internalization that according to our findings is motivated by the encouragement of the *use of imagination* in different children TV shows.

Regarding the discourse strategies involved in the TV shows in order to achieve knowledge; we can state that our study make a small contribution regarding the literature reviewed. It can be emphasized the role of the discourse strategies in the knowledge acquisition, particularly when it comes to language acquisition. *Interaction among participants through questions and pauses* are very well established strategies, together with the new classified ones: *Inclusion of the audience through the use of pronouns, imperatives and finger-pointing*. It is also remarkable the role of the facilitator in discursive instances, such as *using questions, providing instructions, and helping in a conversational situation with turn-taking*.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Educational TV shows for children use different strategies to discover the best way to teach the audience in order to make them feel comfortable and pleased with the activities presented by the show. Following that line, a great variety of discourse strategies are presented among the shows and used as mechanisms to teach different subjects in different contexts, each one developed within a different learning strategy. The results produced by this research reveal that the characters in the show can help children to reach knowledge using discursive strategies, such as the use of questions, imperatives, pauses, or specific pronouns. These are used in order to include the audience to participate with the characters in the shows or to exhibit the characters as an example to be imitated by the kids in their real life experiences with their friends or family. Besides that, it was noticed that the more familiar the show is to the child the better is his/her understanding of the content exposed in it; i.e. Kids get a feeling of proximity with the characters in the show if they resemble what they know in real life and in that way the learning becomes easier to be acquired by the audience. As far as the kids imitate the behaviour they can integrate those strategies into their everyday activities and therefore to develop a more simple way to learn from the world that surrounds them.

The analysis of the various TV shows reflected a great variety of content among them. Even though most of the shows were educational, there were some others whose aim was just entertaining. The former, which where the majority, shared some of the strategies described here using more than one in each TV show, and in some cases, most of the strategies presented in order to get their goal.



Studies within the same area of interest of this research can make great contributions to the way society view TV and education, and the results obtained from them can help people to understand TV shows as a way to educate, and not only to entertain children. The findings from this kind of investigations support or reject hypothesis related to educational issues. This research in particular reflects how children can learn from TV shows, being this practice very common nowadays, in a world where parents have every day less time to be worried about their children's education in a direct way.

The positive findings of this study provide society a powerful tool that if used in a fitting way can change how parents understand TV shows. With an appropriate parental control, kids can develop skills and acquire knowledge from TV, a situation that was unimaginable in the past, since old shows were aimed to entertain children. The perception of kids spending time in front of the screen as a terrible action and as a reflection of lazy parenting has changed with studies such as the one presented here where can be shown that television has also strengths regarding education.

This study could also be helpful to teaching programs since finding a way to keep children interested and entertained while learning has always been a problem, and the results show several examples of discursive strategies to achieve that aim. TV shows are presented as a different option complementary to regular education to teach formal signatures and also develop skills in order to acquire other type of knowledge useful to progress as a person, understand moral values, and improve social relationships, among others.

### **6.1 Limitations of the study**

Even though we focused our analysis within a variety of children TV shows, there

are still a series of factors that can limit this study. The amount of hours analysed in the results section are only a small part of the exhaustive material available for being explored by researchers when searching for learning strategies during the learning process, due to this situation, many other aspects might have been neglected. The same occurs regarding the channels from which these TV shows were taken which there were mostly obtained from cable TV, especially from two major TV channels for children (Discovery Kids and Disney Junior) paying more attention to them than to the free-to-air channels which might have given us a more local context, especially in the cases of children who are not able to watch cable TV and are using other interactive methods in their learning process.

Another important factor to mention can be the fact that we analysed only one sample from each of the shows selected which might lead us to cover only some learning strategies presented in the shows and not the whole of them. In addition, there are a series of sociocultural factors that can influence the children learning process that cannot be measured accurately by this study, such as the actual interaction between the children and the problem presented during the development of the show; the cultural interference that might appear during the interaction of the participants, considering for example that most of these shows are produced in the United States and much of their content can influence the local context of the children while they are processing new information; and finally, any environmental factor that can hamper a successful learning process, such as external noises or interruptions, especially if we take into account discourse markers such as pauses and questions to the audience that appear in many of the shows covered in this study and where a comfortable and focused environment is needed for the child in order to get a successful learning development while this interaction is occurring.

## **6.2 Suggestions for further studies**

Considering some of the limitations previously mentioned, we propose a series of questions that could be interesting to develop in further studies. Following the same line of investigation about the significance and influence of children TV shows in the learning process, it would be important to develop a comparative study in order to analyse whether there is any variation in the learning process when the input varies from national TV shows to international TV shows; do the language and the discourse markers used change in terms of relevance from one country to another? would we find a similar pattern in relation to the structure used in both kinds of shows? or, would it be different and somehow closer to the specific reality and context of the country in terms of the approach presented? The emphasis here would be put especially in the sociocultural factors influencing the learning process in relation to the reality of children exposed to different cultures, taking into account the type of shows and the lexical variety presented in each of them, and the effect that this exposure might have in their cognitive development.

Following the same thread, it would be interesting to develop a research only based on Chilean TV shows for children in order to discover the types of linguistic resources and strategies used in a national context, especially due to the fact that in the present study we did not include any sample of them.

Also, it would be relevant for the educational field to do a similar research than the one presented here, but focused in the context of children's songs which tend to be a commonly used tool for parents and educators for stimulating children's learning. Even though this resource was also present in most of the children TV shows analysed in the present study, due to time constraints and the sociocultural approach given to it, particularly

in terms of interaction and participation during the learning process, we did not focused in them.

Finally, as a way of giving continuity to this study we propose a more experimental study with the purpose to discover how the results gathered in this investigation are actually relevant, and to what extent they have an effect in the daily children learning process. It would be interesting to measure the real amount of knowledge that children acquire during this interactive process based on the sociocultural theory and if they are capable of taking this new knowledge and internalize it successfully thanks to the presence of the facilitators and the tools used in this kinds of shows. A mixed-methods longitudinal research is suggested in order to cover different aspects of this investigation.

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## 8. APPENDIX

### 8.1 Appendix 1

The present section gathers together all the transcriptions of the extract of each TV show used for this investigation and analysed in our results. The order is given alphabetically by the name of the show, and then by the name of the episode -if it is included in the episode-; with the code of the corresponding video.

#### *Backyardigans*, “Break Out” (DK20130108)

##### Transcript 20

1 UN You know sister (.) all this escaping has made me hungry (.)  
let`s have a snack  
2 TA how about crepes crumpets  
3 TY crumpets?  
4 PA yeah!  
5 UN after you my dear  
6 ((everyone laughs))  
7 TA magic mirror come in  
8 AU snack is that way (.) over  
9 ((everyone laughs)) ((castle fades out))  
10 ((ending theme begins))

#### *Bubble Guppies*, “Only the sphinx nose” (Nj20130114)

##### Transcript 5

1 MO mr. grouper did you ever go to a place called egypt?  
2 MG egypt? wow no but i always wanted to go there  
oh i love to see the pyramids the river nile and the sphinx

3 JA hey what happened to his nose? ((referring to the Sphinx))  
4 GI nobody knows  
5 MO [that's the secret of the sphinx]  
6 GI [that's the secret of the sphinx]  
7 ((everyone laughs))  
8 GI but if we can figure out what's the secret of the sphinx  
we'll find its nose  
9 JA mysterious ((speaking spooky))  
10 MG oh yes the sphinx's missing nose is just one of the  
many mysteries of the ancient egypt  
11 OO what does ancient mean?  
12 NO ancient means very very old  
13 MG that's right nonny

Transcript 9

1 MG The people who lived in ancient Egypt got their water from A:  
2 ((silence))  
3 LF RIVER ((several little fish screaming at the same time))

*Caillou*, "Caillou's Shadow" (DK20130119-7)

Transcript 1

1 CA why didn't i have a shadow when i went outside at lunch time?  
2 MM let's all be scientist and try to solve this problem (1) first  
what do we know about shadows? ((showing the shadow of a  
dinosaur))  
3 CA shadows are made when something is in front of a light  
4 MM right and when we are outside that bright light is?  
5 BO the SUN  
6 MM exactly (1) now is the sun always in the same place in the  
sky?  
7 GI when i get up early i can see the SUN rising (0.5) it comes up  
behind the house across the strEET  
8 CA and at NIght it goes DOWN again

9 MM NOW we are thinking like SCIENTists [...]

Transcript 18

1 MM we can pretend that this flashlight is our sun ((showing a flashlight to the class)) (0.5) who wants to make shadows? ((kids rise their hands laughing and start making shadows with their hands))

*Caillou*, “High Flyers” (DK20130119-7)

Transcript 3

1 DA what plane have you got?  
2 CA ahh i don't know  
[...]  
3 CA i don't have any sorry Daniel  
4 DA that's okay i'll make one ((taking a sheet of paper))  
[...]  
5 CA an AEROPLANE  
6 DA yeah watch this ((throwing the plane in the air))  
7 CA WOW ((a cat meowing)) wow can i make one?  
8 DA sure it's easy ((he passes a piece of paper to caillou)) you just fold your paper like this ((caillou follows what his friend does)) and then on the other side (4.0) here look ((he keeps folding the paper to finish the plane)) see? all ready for take off?  
9 CA ready [three two one]  
10 DA [three two one]  
11 ((both make sounds while watching the planes fly))

*Dora the explorer*, “Dora and the Stuck Truck” (UCV20130113)

Transcript 6

1 BT este es remolcador (.) tiene un gran ga:ncho (0.5) jala muy  
bie:n  
**This is tow truck (.) it has a big hoo:k (0.5) it pulls very**  
**we:ll**

2 ((música)) ((pausa))  
**((music)) ((pause))**

3 y saben que clase de camion es este? ((pausa)) que camión es  
este? ((silencio)) el camion de helados ((música))  
**and do you know what kind of truck is this? ((pause)) what**  
**truck is this? ((silence))the ice-cream truck ((music))**

3 ((aplausos)) muy bie:n  
**((claps)) very goo:d**

Transcript 7

1 DR que camion esta en problemas?  
which truck is in trouble?

2 BT no se dora. la imagen esta toda borrosa ((sound))  
I dont know dora. the image is all blurred

3 DR pueden ver que camion es?((music))((silence)) si: es el camion  
de helados  
can you see which truck is? yes it is ice cream truck

4 BO o no::((music))  
oh no

*Handy Manny*, “A Bunny in the Basement” (DJ20130109)

Transcript 4

1 MS well I don't find it very cute(.) not when it chews my tennis  
racket or my garden hose or Lila's mittens

- ((pointing at each object))
- 2 SQ why would it do that?
- 3 PA yeah(.) mittens don't taste very good(.) or do they?
- 4 HM Rabbits chew on things to keep their dientes their teeth from growing too big

*Imaginary Movers, "Fathers Know Best" (DJ20130109-03)*

Transcript 10

- 1 IM all you gotta do is to think think think

Transcript 17

- 1 NF you know that I do think that I can build something that will catch that mouse here with the notepad and the writing
- 2 EF and I'm sure we can find everything you need in this incredible amazing place
- 3 NF but I'm gonna NEED everyone's help to put it all together

*Mickey Club House, "The bubble bath of Pluto" (Dj20130116-2)*

Transcript 8

- 1 MC where are you pal? (.) ((barking sound)) i can hear ya but i Cant see ya (0.5) do you see pluto anywhere?
- 2 ((sound)) ((silence))
- 3 you do. where? ((barking sound)) at the window? ((pointing))
- 4 ((barking sound)) ((music))
- 5 there he is.

Transcript 15

1 MI hi daisy hi goof. what brings you two here?  
2 GO hat else? Pluto's bubble bath  
3 DA if you going to give Pluto a bubble bath you are going to need  
a bubble bath bathtub  
4 GO so lets pull the surprise switch and get one (.) everybody  
think bubbly bath

*Mr. Maker* (DK20130119-6)

Transcript 2

1 MM I think we should make a big tropical holiday island(.) would  
you help me?  
2 KI YEEEEAAAAAHH  
3 MM fantastic! alright then(.) Morgan(.) Hope(.) Presvian(.)  
Amber(.) and Ben let's make it (2) now we are going to make a  
tropical island(.) are we?  
4 KI YEEEEAAAAAHH  
5 MM now what should it look like?  
6 K1 eeeeeh a palm tree and some golden sand  
7 MM golden sand and a palm tree as well (.) should we paint that  
palm tree?  
8 K2 paint  
9 MM should we paint it?  
10 K3 yeeeeah paint  
11 MM what colour what colour should we use?  
12 K4 brown  
13 K5 green  
14 MM fantastic! they'll be great colours (.) and what can go on  
that palm tree?  
15 K1 [coconuts]  
16 K2 [coconuts]  
17 MM coconuts that's right

Transcript 19

1 MM We'll need some things from the doodle draws  
 wait here I'll be back soon  
 a big piece of plain paper

*Plaza Sésamo* (Red20130112)

Transcript 14

1 NA ven a <jugar>(.)  
**come to <play>(.)**

2 ven a <cantar> <sii>  
**come to <sing> <yeah>**

3 [...]

4 <plaza sésamo>](.)  
**<sesame street>] (.)**

5 vamos(.)  
**let's go (.)**

6 [<plaza sésamo>] (.)  
**[<sesame street>] (.)**

7 [...]

8 vamos todos a encontrar (.)  
**let's all find (.)**

9 donde hay gran felicidad (.)  
**where is great happiness (.)**

10 el <fantástico> lugar (.)  
**the <fantastic> place (.)**

11 <plaza sésamo>](.)  
**[<sesame street>](.)**



*Tinkerbell and the Great Fairy Rescue*

Transcript 21

- 01 FA lizzi (0.3) who are you talking to?  
02 LI ouh am: (.) my fairy ((showing a fairy picture))  
03 FA oh that thats nice dear (0.3) i brought you something i think  
you'll really enjoy (0.3) thi:s are some of my old few  
journals (0.5) i pick the ones i think will excite you the  
most (.)this one about rocks and minerals is particularly  
interesting.  
04 LI is there a few journals about fairies?  
05 FA ((laughs)) of course not lizzi (0.5) books like this are  
based on facts (.) scientific research (0.8) which is quite  
the contrary to your little figures and drawings  
06 LI (it) is because you havent seen a fairy. doesnt mean theyre  
not real

*Umizoomi, helping Andy (Nj20130114)*

Transcript 11

- 1 MI [we can better build it together  
you can help us you are so clever]  
2 GE [we can better build it together  
you can help us you are so clever]  
[...]  
3 MI [there's nothing we can't do  
millie, geo, bot and you!]  
4 GE [there's nothing we can't do  
millie, geo, bot and you!]  
5 BO [there's nothing we can't do  
millie, geo, bot and you!]

Transcript 12

1 ML hi is me (.) millie  
2 GO UMIZOOMI  
3 ML nice sliding (.) this is my brother geo  
4 GE hi  
5 BT wow wowwow  
6 ML and this is bot (.) our best robot friend  
7 BT hello hello  
8 ML we are really glad **you** came by because we are gonna play a  
game in the snow (.) do you like snow?  
9 ((silence))  
10 ML well we got a great snow game to play with **you**  
11 GE come on let`s play  
12 ML geo and I are going to draw a picture in the snow (.) see if  
you can guess what we are drawing  
13 GE we will give three hints to help **you** guess  
14 MIL your first hint is he has two short skinny legs  
15 ((special sound))  
16 GEO your second hint is he`s got an antenna on it  
17 ((special sound))  
18 ML and your third hint is he`s got a belly screen  
19 ((special sound))  
20 GE who do we draw a picture of?  
21 ((silence))  
22 ML its bot our best robot friend

Transcript 13

1 ML we need your help (.) would you help us get andy`s plane ready  
to go?  
2 ((silence))  
you will? umirrific!  
2 BT [yeah]  
3 GE [yeah]  
4 ML now you are in team umizoomi with us  
We`ll call you (.) umifriend

5 BT hello umifriend  
6 GE welcome to the team  
7 ML let's get our mighty math powers ready  
8 ((powers theme))

Transcript 16

1 BT it's the umialarm (.) that sound means someone needs our help  
2 ML when someone has a problem in umicity we fix it with our  
3 [mighty math powers (.) we are team umizoomi]  
BT [mighty math powers (.) we are team umizoomi]  
GE [mighty math powers (.) we are team umizoomi]  
4 BT we can see who needs our help right here in my belly belly  
5 ML [belly screen]  
GE [belly screen]

## 8.2 Appendix 2

### Transcription Conventions

(0.?)	pauses in seconds
=	latching (two utterances follow one another)
!	falling intonation
?	rising intonation
::	prolongation or stretching
-	cut off or self-interruption
WORD	loud talk
<u>word</u>	stress or emphasis
>word<	compressed or rushed
<word>	slowed or drawn out
hhh	hearable aspiration
((cough))	description of events
(word)	uncertainty on the transcriber's part
[word]	overlap