SEEING, READING AND LISTENING TO GENDER INEQUALITY/EQUALITY IN VIDEO CLIPS

Arminda Sousa[1], & Filomena Teixeira[2]
[1]Escola Secundária de Emídio Navarro, Viseu (Portugal)
[2]Escola Superior de Educação do Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra e Centro de Investigação Didática
e Tecnologia na Formação de Formadores da Universidade de Aveiro (Portugal)

Abstract

Sexuality pervades the media, an important tool to access information, in the promoting dialogue and in non-formal education for adolescents and young people (Andrelo & Almeida, 2015; Gallego, 2000). As much as objectivity in communication is proclaimed, the messages conveyed by the media are hardly neutral, developing regimes of authenticity with multiple conflicting meanings about sexuality and gender. Many media narratives, from a consumer perspective, are constructed from successful formulas, acting as proposals for the interpretation of reality and social behaviours, present in stereotyped forms of socially dominant values, norms and behaviour models (Andrelo & Almeida, 2015; Belloni, 2005; Lobo & Cabecinhas, 2013; Teixeira et al., 2010). Music has a prominent place in the media and music videos play a relevant role in its dissemination. During their educational training adolescents and young people should be alerted to certain types of social constructions and video clips may be the means to do so. So, starting from the didactic approach of the following video clips: "As Long As You Love Me ft. Big Sean," "Try," "*Havemos de lá chegar,*" and "Scratch My Back" carried out by 65 7th and 12th year students, whose thematic axes focus on affectivity (paternal, parental, erotic and sexual , friendship) and on love, on interpersonal relationships that are established in the work environment and on violence in affective and/or romantic relationships. The discourses analysed found that stereotyped conceptions about the feminine/femininity/being a woman and the masculine/masculinity/being a man persist.
The discourse presented also refers to: i) psychological differences and personality characteristics; ii) moral attributes of behaviour and personal skills; iii) placing women in a situation of dependency and inferiority; iv) perpetuating the roles traditionally attributed to men and women and unequal relations of power; and v) promoting heteronormativity.
The idea that it is necessary to work on the issues of sexuality and gender conveyed in the discourse contained in video clips is corroborated, so that they are not received passively, because the discourse is fraught with subjectivity.

Keywords: Sexuality, gender, media, gender equality, video clip.

1. Introduction

Learning to be a citizen implies developing skills, attitudes and values that help each person to know their rights, responsibilities and duties, enabling them to play an active role in the community of belonging. Active and multiple citizenship implies that each of us is endowed with social and civic skills to know how to relate to the other (Vieira et. al, 2010).

School should be a privileged space for learning, living and exercising citizenship in a wide range of dimensions, of which we highlight, in the study presented here: education for gender equality, education for the media and education for sexuality. Knowledge of self and of the other is interpenetrated with gender and citizenship issues, which must be an integral part of curriculum development from the first years of schooling (Cardona, Piscalho & Uva, 2011). School should be a space where students, in addition to acquiring technical and scientific knowledge, should express, among other things, "the human qualities of responsibility, solidarity and respect for others" (Fonseca, 2012, p.5).

The media are part of our daily lives and are an important tool in accessing information, in promoting dialogue, in the development of essential analytical skills, in the training of informed and critical citizens, and can play a relevant role in the non-formal education of adolescents and young people (Andrelo & Almeida, 2015; Gallego, 2000). It is important not only to access the media, but also to

understand, comprehensively and intensely, the realities they present, the techniques they use to construct these realities, their narratives and the underlying values (Manovich, 2001; Warnick, 2002).

The media are neither innocent nor impartial; they are workshops of positive and negative representations whose discourse is influential and, as such, must be used in the construction of a culturally inclusive citizenship. Adolescents and young people in being educated should be alert to certain types of social constructions, and video clips may be the means to do so. Many video clips are loaded with sexual content, sexuality being the vehicle of promoting an identity and/or attracting different audiences.

Taking into account that video clips facilitate the learning of content and values, it is important to promote the critical analysis of the discourse conveyed by them, so that all people can enjoy the benefits they can provide in a consciously and profitably.

2. Design

2.1. Investigating what and what for?

Considering that Education for Citizenship, Sexuality and the *media* constitute an unquestionable challenge for the teachers' educational practices, our intention was to know the following using a set of video clips as an object of study: "From a didactic approach to the video clips most viewed by adolescents and young people, what images of sexuality and gender do they gather?"

Having identified these images, it was also important to understand:

– What gender roles and stereotypes are emphasized in the video clips most viewed by young people?

– How are gender differences and (in)equality expressed?

This study focused on two main aims:

i) To analyse the repertoire of representations of sexuality and gender present in the discourse of four specific video clips;

ii) To integrate into the researcher's professional skills, as a teacher of elementary and secondary education, a didactic approach to audio-visual media in common use in young people's daily lives.

Because it is understood that video clips constitute privileged means of capturing young people's expectations, and that, as such, they influence their behaviours and attitudes, the following specific objectives emerged from the central question formulated to guide the research process:

1. To contribute to improving professional the researcher's skills, in approaching critical and reflexive reading of the media's discourse in the context of the classroom.

2. To analyse gender stereotypes that appear in the video clips most viewed by students in the 7th and/or 12th year of schooling.

3. To determine whether the students identify with the models that the protagonists of the video clips present and with the values they promote.

4. To promote the knowledge of these "products" to female and male "consumers" as well as to teachers.

5. To identify possible contributions from video clips to gender (in)equality.

6. To raise awareness, based on the contributions of the video clips analysed, of the existence of the values of gender equality.

7. To promote the creative and responsible use of media to express and communicate ideas and to use them effectively for civic participation (MEC, 2011, p. 50943).

2.2. What were the stages of the research?

This study was developed in 5 distinct stages:

Stage I – Extensive survey of the literature to establish the theoretical framework regarding the issues of education for citizenship, for the media and sexual education, sexuality and gender in the media and to constitute the methodological framework.

Stage II – Approaching the phenomenon of video clips watched by adolescents and young people, designing and applying a questionnaire survey to students of the 3rd cycle of elementary education [years 7 – 9] and secondary education. In addition to the initial exploration of the video clips, which enabled an approach to the phenomenon, the video clips most viewed by the adolescents and young people involved in the study were selected.

Stage III – Content analysis of the most viewed video clips in order to find elements that are conducive to identifying gender stereotypes and designing of visualization scripts.

Stage IV – Visualization of the video clips in class, applying the visualization scripts.

Stage V – Analysing, taking conclusions and developing theoretical implications.

2.3. Investigating with whom? Where? When?

The study involved students of the 3rd cycle of elementary education [years 7 - 9], (27 students in 7th year of schooling) and secondary education (38 students in the 12th year of schooling), attending an elementary and secondary school, in the Centre-North Region of Portugal. The choice of this group of students was related to the levels/years of schooling attributed to the teacher. It was therefore a group with wide age range (from 13 to 18 years), which had differences inherent to their stage of development, was heterogeneous in its composition, in its interests and concerns.

To implement this study, the teaching unit dedicated to the Education for Health and Sexual Education project as defined by the respective Class Councils' guidelines, was favoured.

3. Methodology

This study falls within the scope of the interpretative paradigm since it is intended to understand and deepen the knowledge of a given situation in a given context (Carmo & Ferreira, 1998; Coutinho, 2011). Subjectivity is an inherent characteristic of a study of this nature, since when working on questions of sexuality and gender, with a strong idiosyncratic connotation, the researcher/teacher will try to interpret and understand aspects related to each of the participants' way and of feeling.

The research was intended to combine the two views on the topic under study: the researcher/teacher's analysis and the perception that participants (adolescents and young people) have as viewers of video clips.

To this end, the researcher used techniques and research instruments of an essentially qualitative nature (video analysis guides and reports) and used qualitative and quantitative questionnaires in order to select each of the video clips in the study.

The techniques and data collection tools used are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Data collection techniques and instruments.

Techniques	Data collection instruments
Survey	Questionnaire applied to the students
Observation	Researcher's records
Documentary	Visualization guides
Analysis	Reports of the researcher/teacher

Each guide, based on the methodology of Díez Gutiérrez (2004), presents a set of activities, divided into four big blocks: "learning to look" – exercising the critical eye to help construct a certain perspective of reality, "understanding and analysing" – to deconstruct meanings, "interpreting and evaluating" – to activate intentional critical judgment and to give voice to one's own words about the reality being analysed and to evaluate, and "transforming" – by elaborating alternative proposals to the stereotyped messages.

4. Analysis of the discourse delivered by video clips

A careful analysis of the discourse conveyed by each of the video clips allowed us to identify affectivity (paternal, parental, erotic and sexual, friendship) and love, interpersonal relationships established in the work environment and violence in affective and/or amorous relationships as the main thematic axes.

It was found that, from a linguistic point of view, "As Long As You Love Me," "Try" and "Havemos de lá chegar" approach the theme of affective relationships, more specifically, love. Overall (image, lyrics and music), "As Long As You Love Me" is a teenage love song, in which the one who is in love speaks of the troubled relationship with the person they are in love with. "Try" brings up violence in the context of interpersonal relationships, more specifically in intimate relationships and "Havemos de lá chegar" addresses the theme of love, it talks about people, relationships, encounters and disagreements, fights, getting back together and a whirlwind of emotions. As for "Scratch My Back," the narrative focuses on interpersonal relationships in a work context.

In the video clips, there is kissing, caressing (touching of bodies, hugging, holding hands) and games of seduction in projecting sexual images (Teixeira & Marques, 2016).

The in-depth knowledge of each video clip allowed a connection to be established between the social events portrayed and the apprehensions, expectations and behaviour patterns followed by the youths involved in the study. They were also able to recognize and identify gender stereotypes associated

with physical and psychological traits and roles conveyed by the female and male characters, placing the woman in a situation of dependency and inferiority.

It is observed that the discourse expressed, implicitly or explicitly, places the body in the centre of the visual attention. It standardizes patterns of beauty and attributes unequal visibility and appreciation to it according to whether it is a man or a woman, making it out to be a central place in constructing femininity (Natt & Carrieri, 2016) and masculinity (Díez Gutiérrez, 2015).

It is up to women to be young, lean, beautiful, sensual, to meet the requirements of contemporary beauty and physical attraction (Mota-Ribeiro, 2002a, 2002b; Castro, 2003; Campos, Cecílio & Penaforte, 2016; Teixeira & Marques, 2016). Wearing skirts and dresses, tight and intimate clothes, is part of their language of seduction (Teixeira & Marques, 2016).

Men should be tall, thin, young and muscular. If they intend to appear powerful, they must wear suits or long-sleeved shirts, since clothing must be "commensurate with business know-how" (Natt & Carrieri, 2016, p.120).

The discourse conveyed confirms women as the main victim of gender inequality, ratifies the subordination of women in affective relationships, love and work and women as victims of violence, as indicators of inequality. It also makes the unequal visibility and valorisation conferred on men and women explicit. It alludes to the vertical segregation to which women are subject to in relation to their hierarchical position and reinforces the idea of the existence of male and female professions.

It is recognized, therefore, that the discourse presented in the video clips analysed, especially in terms of images and verbal and non-verbal interactions, accentuates gender inequality and attests to the (re)production of stereotyped views of sexuality and gender.

5. Final considerations

This study helps to corroborate the idea that there is an urgent need to deconstruct issues related to sexuality and gender conveyed in the discourse of video clips in the classroom, so that they are not received passively, enabling adolescents and young people to have a more informed, critical and responsible intervention. The National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination – Portugal + Equal argues that the issues of equality between women and men, of violence against women and domestic violence, of sexual orientation, of gender identity and expression, and of sexual characteristics should be integrated into both the materials and the educational frameworks.

The video clips analysed do not exhaust, nor do they explain, in their entirety, the gender issues brought to the fore. The analysis of the discourse conveyed by these video clips, and so many others, reflects each person's way of being and feeling, which consubstantiates its inherent subjectivity. Each of the participants interpreted the message conveyed from their own filters and their emotional interference, which may have led to changes in their perception of a given reality (Moran, 2007). As Moran (2007) argues, new experiences require deep analysis, so that one does not fall into the error of standardizing, fixating, crystallizing and stereotyping contents (Shaffer, 1994 cited by Nogueira & Saavedra, 2007), relative to previous experiences.

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