

VERBAL AND VISUAL STRATEGIES TO REPRESENT BULLYING. A SYSTEMIC-FUNCTIONAL AND MULTIMODAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a multimodal approach to children's picturebooks encompassing the series starring Willie, by Anthony Browne. Children who are being bullied are advised by most antibullying protocols to tell someone, preferably an adult (a teacher or a family member) so one would expect that this solution be reflected in these books. These books are commonly recommended as antibullying readings and we want to analyse how bullying

and the importance of the family in this type of processes is presented in the texts and illustrations of this sort of readings. A close reading was performed of these books, and special attention was paid to how Anthony Browne presents the gender of Willy in terms of physical factors, personal interest and other criteria. There is a hypo masculine gender role in Willy's characterization and his portrayal seems to be the bullying's risk factor.

KEYWORDS: Bullying, Anthony Browne, picture books, multimodality, gender role stereotypes.

ESTRATÉGIAS VERBAIS E VISUAIS PARA REPRESENTAR O BULLYING. UM ESTUDO SISTÊMICO-FUNCIONAL E MULTIMODAL

RESUMO

O artigo examinou a apresentação do bullying nos livros Willy the Chimp, de Anthony Browne. As crianças que estão sofrendo bullying são aconselhadas pela maioria dos protocolos antibullying a contar a alguém, de preferência um adulto (um professor ou um membro da família), então seria de se esperar que essa solução fosse refletida nesses livros. Esses livros são comumente recomendados como leituras antibullying, e queremos

analisar como a família e os parentes são apresentados nos textos e ilustrações desses livros. Uma leitura atenta foi realizada desses livros, e atenção especial foi dada a como Anthony Browne apresenta o gênero de Willy em termos de fatores físicos, interesse pessoal e outros critérios. Há um papel de gênero hipomasculino na caracterização de Willy e seu retrato parece ser o fator de risco do bullying.

Palavras chave: Bullying, Anthony Browne, livros ilustrados, multimodalidade, estereótipos de papéis de gênero.

La literatura no puede cambiar el mundo, pero sí a las personas, y estas, con sus acciones, pueden ayudar a hacer un mundo mejor, más solidario, libre y justo.

(Pedro C. Cerrillo, In mem.)

1 INTRODUCTION

Picture books are inherently multimodal, usually comprising at least two semiotic modes; image and written language, creating meaning through these. Both modes have different potentials for meaning making. The interplay between them have been widely noted in the literature on picture books (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2000; Nodelman, 1988, inter alia). Between text and illustrations may be different relationship:

Agosto (1999, p. 269) distinguishes between the illustrations that argue the text (extending or completing it) and those that contradict it. Unsworth (2007, p. 1175) argues that between these two codes may be an expansion or projection relationship. In the first case, *expansion*, interrelation between text and illustration, is constructed because one develops the other and, in this sense, the interaction can be characterized by redundancy, complementarity or connection (Unsworth, 2006, p. 60). In the second case, *projection*, there is a reactive interrelation between text and illustration, in which one code projects the other (citing, illustrating or denouncing it), that is, appealing to a response from the reader: realize a pseudo interpersonal relation of direct involvement at a personal level with a demand for a response (Unsworth, 2006, p. 64). Díaz (2008, p. 46-51) established that between text and illustration can be dependency relations (redundant, added or interdependent), contradiction or substitution (even dispensing with the text). Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) propose five categories to describe the interaction between words and pictures: symmetric, enlargement, complementary, counterpoint and contradictory. Starting from these previous studies, Cañamares (2006, p. 299-330) distinguished cooperative illustrations that objectified text (objectifying illustrations) or developed it (extensive illustrations), operant illustrations in a contextual sense that transmit new relevant information of the story and non-operable illustrations that are antagonistic or independent structures from the text. Lawrence Sipe uses the concept of *synergy* to explore the relationship between words and illustrations. Between text and pictures, there are a synergistic relationship in which “the total effect depends not only on the union of the text and illustrations but also on the perceived interactions or transactions between these two parts” (Sipe, 1998, p. 98-99).

Bullying prevention themes are among the different topics dealt with in the picturebook, as shown by the research from Kreidler (1996), Beane (2005), Henkin (2005), Flanagan et al. (2013), Freeman (2010 and 2014), Jalongo (2004), Cañamares and Navarro (2015), McNamara and MacNamara (1997), Ross (1996), Wiseman and Jones, 2018 or Vlachou et al. (2011). Cañamares and Navarro (2015), for instance, offer some guidelines to consider how selecting books for children and youth to prevent and manage bullying. They believe that literary fiction, and more specifically children’s literature, can be a great resource not only to help children who are

experiencing this type of behaviour, but also to promote a critical reading response, especially from young people in schools, about these serious events. However, although the mentioned papers have shown positive research results in the classroom concerning the use of literature for this aim, further research is required to determine whether the usage of children's literature can cause measurable changes in the attitudes of children and youth.

Even though there are no specific behaviours that necessarily provoke harassment, different research has highlighted the risk factors that seem to be related to a higher incidence of cases of bullying. In modern societies violence has become a "novo estigma aos indivíduos que participam dela, seja como vitimados ou como executantes" (Cabral, Mendonça & Rodrigues, 2021, p. 3).

As a starting point, we assume that any child can be involved in this type of behaviour, but it seems to be that children with certain physical features or psychosocial characteristics are more likely to suffer this sort of aggression.

- a) Physical factors: being small, weak, clumsy, obese, and unattractive or suffering from a chronic illness (Gerard, 1991; Rickert et al., 1996).
- b) Academic factors: achieving a lower or higher performance than the average in the school, being representative of a minority in school because of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or belonging to a 'different' type of family, such as being the son or daughter of homosexual parents (Neumark-Sztainer, et al., 1998, Sweeting and West 2001).
- c) Psychosocial factors: not having friends or family and/or social support, having a bad reputation, low self-esteem or insecurity (Craig, 1998, Hawker and Boulton, 2000, Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999, Kaltiala-Heino et al. 2000, Salmon et al., 1998). The fact of having suffered harassment or having behavioural problems seem to have an impact as well, since on occasions, the victims become, in turn, aggressors (Craig, 1998, DuRant et al., 1999 & 2000, Vossekuil et al., 2000). It should be noted in this regard that:

Crianças e adolescentes tendem a reproduzir no âmbito social o mesmo comportamento que vivenciam em casa. Ao chegar à escola, seu segundo grupo de desenvolvimento, acaba refletindo um comportamento agressivo contra colegas e professores e também sentimentos de frustração e fracasso escolar. Demonstrando desta forma a falta de capacidade dos mesmos de resolver as questões enfrentadas. (Cabral, Mendonça & Rodrigues, 2021, p. 7)

For many years, some children's books present situations in which bullying is a reality that affects the protagonist or another character. On many occasions, these violent situations were anecdotal. Nevertheless, with the changes in the topics of children's literature in recent years, bullying has become a core issue (Wiseman and Jones, 2018). In children's literature, bullying has been portrayed for very young readers from a quite stereotyped point of view. Particularly interesting are those books in which the characters involved are represented by humanized animals and the school environment is extrapolated in the forest (Fox by Wild and Brooks, for example). Others deal with bullying by means of animals that attend school (Chrysanthemum by

Henkes, for example). At the end of these stories, most of them have a happy ending in which the problem is eradicated (see Cañamares and Navarro, 2015).

Similarly, little research has been carried out hitherto to identify the verbal and visual strategies used in picture books to generate a discourse on bullying that escapes from stereotypes often associated with victims and bullies, as strength, courage or shyness, characteristics commonly related to the male figure in the classic stories (Kortenhaus and Demarest, 1993, Wiseman and Jones, 2018). Reading picture books exceeds the mere contemplation of its illustrations and the reading of the text that accompanies them. Sometimes it is forgotten that in picture books' conformation (and its reading), other paratextual elements intervene. This paratextual information must be taken in mind when decoding its message. Reading picture book (especially those with metatextual or metafictional plays as Willy books), attention has to be paid to the support, that is, another element that make up the picture book. Book's materiality, the choice of the cover, the paper, or the cover pages are very important in picture books because they add a significant dimension and can even acquire a narrative role (Van der Linden, 2015, p. 10).

In this research paper, we intend to identify the verbal and visual strategies used by Anthony Browne in four picture books starred by Willy the Chimp. The series started in 1984 with the publication of *Willy the Wimp* (1984) and continues with *Willy the Champ* (1985), *Willy and Hugh* (1991) and *Willy the Wizard* (1995), although the processes represented do not necessarily follow a temporal sequence.¹ Willy is a "young chimpanzee of an indeterminate age, doing his best to survive in a gorilla's world" (Doonan 1999, p. 41). Willy is a chimp, but his clothes, behaviour, hobbies and entertainment activities are more linked with human than with primates. Browne transforms human into zoomorphic characters in his artistic vision. The trend began with *Gorilla* in 1983 and continued in Willy books. His use of humanized primates as characters leads us to search for some hidden poetic principle (Perrot, 2000, p. 12). Browne relates his view of the gorilla to his childhood attitude toward his father, who encouraged Browne and his brother to participate in active sports, while at the same time nurturing their sensitive side by writing poetry and drawing with them (Perrot, 2000, p. 13; Doonan, 1986). From the premature death of his father who suffered a heart attack at a relatively young age, Browne derived his view of the gorilla who was also vulnerable, as in Willy books. Choosing a chimp as character is not casual in Browne who thinks that chimps are tender and vulnerable primates.

Willy the Chimp breaks with the gender stereotypes established in most traditional children's narratives: "*Willy the Wimp* and *Willy the Champ* play with and subvert social constructions of gender by way of ironic inversions of masculinity" (Bradford, 1998, p. 79). Stephens (1992, p. 144) goes farther and establishes that Willy is also "a playful carnivalizing of a traditional narrative in order to interrogate and invert a paradigm of masculinity". Willy's hypo

¹ Another Willy picture books as *Willy the Dreamer* (1997), *Willy's pictures* (1999), *Willy's stories* (2014) or *Willy and the cloud* (2016), are not part of this study because these picture books are structured very differently from preceding Willy books. The last Willy books recreate some Anthony Browne's favorite authors and artworks from museums around the world, and dedicates *Willy's stories*, to "all the great writers and illustrators who have inspired me to make picture books".

masculine gender condition makes him the target of bullying or situations of rejection. Juvonen and Graham (2014) argue that children who identify as LGTBQ experience higher incidents of bullying. Willy presents characteristics such as sensitivity, appreciation of the world of art and weakness, lacking features such as courage, decision-making capacity or strength, typically associated with male characters in traditional narratives.

This article is structured in the following sections. After the introduction, section 2 describes the theoretical framework that supports this research. Section 3 presents materials and methods. Section 4, the study of the analysed picture books, focusing on the risk factors associated with bullying, with special emphasis on how bullying is portrayed in these picture books. The article concludes with section 5, in which the results of this research are set out, and it is discussed whether Willy picture books break with the beliefs associated with bullying or reinforce them, and a special attention is paid to analyse factors that help to solve the problem.

2 BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

2.1 Multimodality and Social Semiotics

To shed light on the verbal and visual strategies used by authors and illustrators in picture books to reflect bullying related issues, we analyse these literary works making use of the visual model of Moebius (1986) and Nikolajeva and Scott (2001). Our theoretical framework is based on intersemiotics by Unsworth (2007) and Kress and van Leeuwen's Social Semiotic Approach (2006), that partially proceed from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic (2004), and later developed by Painter et al. (2013). From this perspective, text and image present the facts in a realistic or abstract way (representational function), showing the established interaction between author and reader (interactive function) and constituting "a coherently organized and clearly recognizable type of message in a specific context of communication (compositional function)" (Moya and Pinar, 2007, p. 24). This theoretical framework has already been used by Lewis or by Moya to lay the foundations of the analysis of picture books and to show the meaning that arises from the interplay between text and illustrations.

We are particularly interested in analysing the representative and interactive functions. In relation to the representative function, which reveals how text and illustration express our internal and external experience of reality, we will focus on the participants assigned to the processes (type of participants, attributes or qualities that characterize and identify them, role played in processes and circumstances represented and setting where they interact). Concerning the representative function, we analyse the status changes suffering by the main characters of Willy picture books and to establish relationships between those characters and the main 'actors' in a given bullying situation. To this effect, we study the patterns of transitivity that predominate in the sample both verbally and visually, that is, if the actions carried out by the characters are 'transactional (transitive) or 'non-transactional (intransitive) (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). Halliday (2004), regarding patterns of transitivity, distinguishes between different types of processes (material,

mental or relational), the participants² involved in them, the attributes ascribed to them (the qualities and characteristics of the participants) and, the circumstantial complements related to the processes. Thus, we check if the analysed characters develop active or passive roles according to their gender and condition. Specifically, if they are characterized by responding to masculine or feminine gender roles, if they are always kept in the same scenarios or if, on the contrary, new locations are introduced in next illustrations, producing changes in context (interior or exterior ones) and if this new location is related to possible changes in personal or social status. We place particular emphasis on those processes directly or indirectly related to bullying.

The interactive meaning refers to the established interactions between author and readers as well as to affect and evaluative judgement established between represented participants and reader (Unsworth, 2006, p. 68). In the interactive function, the narrator and illustrator's point of view acquires a great relevance, especially in Willy picture books, whose illustrations play with this narrative convention and sometimes transform a heterodiegetic story into autodiegetic (Nodelman, 1991). Sometimes "who speaks" is not "who sees": the words are in the third person but some illustrations seem to be in the first.

Compositional meaning refers to how the text is constructed and organized. In this sense, formats and frames among other paratextual elements acquire great importance. While framing stresses the individuality and differentiation of an element, the absence of framing makes it part of a group. The lack of frame lines and empty spaces between the represented participants may also join elements together.

2.2 Overview of Gender conformity

According to West and Zimmerman (1987, p. 127), "gender is the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category". Coyne (et.al. 2014, p. 417) define gender stereotypes facing up masculine vs feminine, as "collections of gender-specific attributes or traditional norms that differentiate typical feminine behaviour patterns from typical masculine behaviour patterns in society". We recommend talk about gender variance or gender nonconformity that is not to match masculine or feminine gender norms.

Several studies have investigated the unique influence of gender role orientation on aggression (cfr. Reidy et al., 2009, Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Wiseman & Jones, 2018), and results indicated that masculinity was positively correlated with expression of anger as well as verbal aggressiveness, whereas femininity was negatively correlated with both. "Gender role orientation represents the extent to which a person conforms to masculine or feminine norms associated with the respective gender by demonstrating socially prescribed attitudes, beliefs, and behavior congruent with being "masculine" or "feminine" (cfr. Reidy et al., 2009, p. 231). Some of the

² The participant associated with material processes are the actor (who acts intentionally) and the goal (a participant affected by the action). The participants associated in a mental process are the sensor (the one who feels) and the phenomenon. The participants associated with relational processes are the identified (bearer of attribute) and the identifier.

characteristics use to determine being “masculine” or “feminine” were used to portrayed male and women in children’s literature: active or passive, found outdoors or indoors, defend or be defended, subject or compliance, etc. Although men and women who demonstrate gender role violations are at increased risk for violent victimization and men who adhered to a patriarchal ideology responded violently to what they perceived to be a violation of gender roles (Reidy et al., 2009). This point is very important in our study because the main character, Willy, presents hypo masculine condition and men’s gender role violations.

In most cultures, the most important and effective way of transmitting values and attitudes is through storytelling, and in literate cultures this process includes children’s books (Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993). There is no doubt that the characters portrayed in children’s literature mould a child’s conception of socially accepted roles and values and indicate how males and females are supposed to act (Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993). Boys were characterized far more often as instrumental and independent, while girls were made to look passive and dependent. Boys were still shown engaging in active outdoor play as often as girls, while girls are portrayed in a nurturing role. These characterizations provide children with a strong message as to the gender appropriateness of active and passive roles (Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993; Singh 1998). Moreover, in the opinion of Oliveira & Ferreira (2021, p. 9): “o gênero na Educação Infantil pode ser identificado como um sistema hierarquizado de poder, percebido, por exemplo, na segregação entre meninos e meninas e no processo de categorização feito pelas crianças sobre o que é considerado feminino e masculino”. According to the social role theory of sex differences and similarities, the more frequent positioning of Willy in female-dominated roles will lead to their assumption of female characteristics.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 *Willy the Chimp* picture books, by Anthony Browne

In this study, we analyse four picture books starring Willy, a chimp that presents hypo masculine gender condition and, for that reason, is a focus of violence by other apes. These picture books break with traditional gender stereotypes established in the more traditional children narratives³. The selection criteria in order to elect the corpus were the following:

- a) All of them are part of the well-known literary series starring Willy.
- b) They are outstanding books in the publishing scene, since they are considered classics and have been translated to another languages.

³ In the early 1970s, feminists criticized fairy tales and children's literature because they reinforced traditional gender roles. The feminist movement of the late 1960s onwards promotes a gender-neutral and progressive type of literature than outpoint traditional gender roles and norms. From the 1970s, neorealist tendencies appear in children's literature (Zipes, 2006, p. 130) and this social realism addressed different sexualities and genres. From the 1980s to the 1990s, this social realism in children's books continued and allowed the children to "get involved in society and be independent in themselves" (Adams, 2016, p. 10).

- c) Dual audience, which appears to be involved in all discourse incorporated in children's literature (Shavit, 1986 and 1999). Willy's stories are picture books targeted to a dual audience of children and adults, that is, an audience of very young children, those considered as 'first readers', who cannot read yet and hence need the adult reader's help. This leads to, in some cases, winks are sent to the two readers involved, children and adults. Some winks sent to adult readers are intertextual play, metafiction (Arizpe, 2010; Nikolajeva, 1988) and the irruption of some topics that could be considered taboos for children as death. The intended target audience of all these stories is children approximately aged 5-8 (institutions as Book Trust (www.booktrust.org.uk) recommend Willy's books to Key Stage 1 that covers children between 5 and 8 years).
- d) Written and published in the eighties and nineties: the oldest is *Willy the Wimp* (1984) and the most recent is *Willy the Wizard* (1995).
- e) All of them are editorially 'alive', that is, they are currently edited, available and accessible to readers in libraries, bookstores, etc.
- f) Accessible in English because they were originally published in English.
- g) Renowned author: Anthony Browne is one of the laureate authors of children's literature⁴.
- h) They are suggested antibullying Readings for Children. Willy books have been repeatedly recommended from the so-called bibliotherapy to stop behaviours associated with violence or bullying.

In these selection criteria, literary quality and representativeness of the antibullying discourse in children's books has prevailed. Since the publication of the first books in the series starring Willy, it is common to include them in selections of children's works to prevent and stop bullying, as in *The bully free classroom* (2005) by Beane, which includes a selection of more than 50 works for children and strategies to keep classrooms free of bullying. This series was also included in *Confronting bullying: literacy as a tool for character education* (2005) by Henkin, and in McNamara and McNamara's *Keys to dealing with bullies* (1997). Similarly, some web pages, such as AntiBullying Alliance or Best Children's Books which promote the reading of children's works as an instrument to prevent and stop bullying, include in their recommendations the works of the Willy's series by Anthony Browne⁵.

⁴ He won the biennial international Hans Christian Andersen Award in 2000, the highest recognition available to creators of children's books. From 2009 to 2011, he was Children's Laureate. Browne won two Kate Greenaway Medals from the Library Association, recognizing the best children's book illustration of the year (in 1983 with *Gorilla* and in 1992 with *Zoo*). For the 50th anniversary of the Medal (1955–2005), *Gorilla* was one of the top ten winning Works.

⁵ We can also find references to Willy's picturebooks in other recommending reading list as: *Suggested Bullying Books for Children*, gathered by New Castle County Library (Delaware, USA); *Bullying Resources locate in the Curriculum Lab*, developed by Elihu Burritt Library (Connecticut, USA); *A School Climate Approach To Bullying Prevention* prepared by the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (Ontario, Canada); *MSLA AntiBullying Summit*, created by members of the Massachusetts Reading Association (Massachusetts, USA); or *Bully Prevention and Creating Safe School Climate*, a plan carried out by Huron Intermediate School District (Michigan, USA).

In this article, we are considering Willy books stories from the first decade of Anthony Browne's body of work. This body of work is unified "by his distinctive style and theme, with stories about social relationship, having generally domestic settings, and with personal resourcefulness as a constant value" (Doonan, 1999, p. 30). In the second decade, Browne continues with his stories of social relationship, but he changes his interest to the folk-faire tale genre and develops complex ways of metafictional plays and intertextual process, using surrealistic visual elements and varying the relationship between words and images.

As we affirm previously, Willy the Chimp has his origins in Browne's relationship with his brother when they were boys, responding to their father's role model of a sporting man. *Willy the Wimp* (1984) has allusions to the adverts for a 'Charles Atlas Bodybuilding' from the comics Browne read when he was a child. Therefore, the idea came to him that Willy wanted to transform himself in a stronger primate. Eventually Willy does transform himself until his daydreams lead him into collision with a lamppost. *Willy the Champ* (1985) shows Willy trying and failing in all sporting fields. However, like an archetypal loser who achieve greatness, Willy floors the local bully, Buster Nose and Willy has his blushing moment of glory. *Willy and Hugh* (1991) shows Willy lonely at first but then he meets Hugh Jape and they become friends. *Willy the Wizard* (1995), Willy loves soccer, but he does not have any boots. He cannot afford them. A kind of a fairy godmother comes to help him. Willy meets a spectral stranger dressed just like Stanley Matthews (Doonan, 1999, p. 42); the stranger takes off his boots and gives them to Willy. Wearing the old boots Willy plays soccer fantastically and he practices every spare moment. Willy is picked for the soccer match, but he forgets his boots. It does not matter because Willy does not need magic boots, he makes magic happens for himself.

Willy books were closely read and examined using criteria related to the portrayal of bullying and traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Referencing images can also become problematic because what one researcher gleans from an image may be different than what another researcher or a child might infer. The first criteria include represented participants' physical and psychological characterization and their portrait in pictures and text. Second, linkage of the characters with agents in a bullying situation: bully, bullied, bystanders, etc., were examined. Third, special attention was paid to the gender roles assumed by the characters, mainly by Willy. A related fourth criteria examined was the presence of humour, metafiction and carnivalesque interplay, in the picture books analysed. These criteria were applied to each book separately because the stories contained in these books do not necessarily follow a temporal sequence. The criteria were tracked using extensive notetaking during the close reading process that were analysed and revisited after the reading process were completed.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS.

4.1 Information in the verbal component

The representational metafunction is concerned with the representation of participants, processes and circumstances in the text or image. This involves choices in the system of transitivity, which explores who is doing what, to whom and under which circumstances. In this system Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) distinguish between different types of processes (actions, states, events, types of behaviour) typically carried out by an actor and distinguish also between the number and type of participants involved in them, the attributes ascribed to them, and the circumstances of place, time and manner related to the processes themselves. (See Table 1)

Table 1. Representational macro function in the verbal mode: participants and processes.

Processes	Meaning	Example	Participants
Material	To do, to happen, to cause and to transfer Transitive Intransitives	<i>Willy tried bike racing... He really did try</i>	In many processes Willy is the agent and the goal at same time
Mental	Affection, cognition or perception	<i>He [Willy] liked to read... and listen to music...</i>	Willy is the senser
Relational	To be, to become, to seem, to have	<i>Willy didn't seem to be any good at anything.</i>	Willy is the carrier
Behaviour	To look, psychological states	<i>Nearly everyone laughed at him – no matter what he did.</i>	Willy is the goal
Communicative	To say, to ask	<i>"Oh, I'm sorry," said Willy, "are you Alright?"</i>	Willy is the sayer
Existential			

¹ Examples retrieved from *Willy the Champ*.

In Willy picture books, the mental processes that are used mainly to present the tastes and interests of the protagonist are usually highlighted at the beginning of the narrations: "He liked to read... and listen to music... and walk in the park with his friend, Millie" (Browne, 1994). Likewise, it occurs to talk about the main character's feelings and affections: "Willy was lonely. Everyone seemed to be Friends. Everyone except Willy. No-one let him join in any games; they all said he was useless" (Browne, 1991). Even about his narrow circumstances: "Willy loved football. But there was a problem, he didn't have any boots. He couldn't afford them" (Browne, 1995).

In the development of the story, the material processes share leading roles with the relational ones, while the verbal one's focus on expressing the (few) dialogues between the characters: "Willy went eagerly to the practice sessions every week. He ran and chased and harried, but no-one passed the ball to him. He was never picked for the team" (Browne, 1995).

It is important to emphasize the importance that Willy is given by the verbal mode, since he appears as the subject who performs the represented actions: he is the agent, the senser, the carrier, the sayers, but in the case of the behaviour processes, he is the target: the victim of the looks and laughter of others. At the end of all the stories the message the author wants the audience to get, is usually highlighted: the value of friendship, the importance of being oneself and resilience.

The interactive metafunction in the text conceives the sentence as a communicative and service exchange. In this sense, as stated by Jesús Moya (2016a and 2016b) based on the studies of Halliday (2004), the modality system distinguishes two options: indicative sentences (those with a subject and a finite verb) and imperative sentences (characterized by the absence of the subject). In turn, the indicative structures can be declarative (when the subject precedes the verb) or interrogative (if the verb is the one preceding the subject). In the works analysed, plenty of declarative indicative sentences occur (close to 60%), in which Willy is usually the object of the narrated events.

In relation with the narrator voice and the focalization in the verbal mode, there are a prevalence of omniscient narrator in third person in Willy books. The use of an omniscient narrator, who tells the story in the third person focusing on the protagonist, aims to create a distance between the reader and the facts presented (cfr. Moebius, 1986).

4.2 Information in the visual component

The visual analysis presents very interesting features. In the visual component, the information is showed through narrative illustrations, which, in most cases, represent developing actions located in a determined context, usually transactional ones, that is, the represented characters appear connected to other participants characterized by means of motion vectors. They are dynamic images in which the actions consequences narrated in the text are shown in some illustrations in an exaggerated way. For example, in *Willy the Champ* we can see Willy being shoot out of the football field when he tries to stop a penalty. Browne's stories are in line with metafiction in order to serve to intertextual play and humour. Exaggeration, excess and humour mechanism are used in Browne's books in order to tribute to comedy genre. Browne exaggerates the situation, the language or the action because "While making children laugh, Browne does serious work for children in a complex and challenging form" (Doonan, 1999, p. 54). Another fact to keep in mind is the represented participant's portrayal: they are anthropomorphism primates, that allows reader distancing from the story and build a mirror from which to observe critically humans (Klibanski, 2006, p. 12). Browne exposes painful issues for children such as bullying or poor relationships between children: rejection, hurt the feelings or loneliness. The focalization of the story on a chimp lets the reader to take more distance than if the focalization were on a child character. In *Willy the Wimp* we find two identical illustrations: in one of them Willy is attacked by three suburban gorillas and in the other Millie is the victim. The reader easily relates these two illustrations recognizing a scene many times repeated in action movies.

When non-transactional narrative illustrations are used, they tend to describe the protagonist, encouraging a series of reactions in the reader (pity, empathy, etc.). Sometimes, non-transactional narrative illustrations are showed as conceptual images, because vectors of movement and these types of illustrations are just limited to representing the participants in their timeless essence. These narrative images are not located within a specific context and highlight the most characteristic qualities of the protagonist -they are 'analytical' images (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)-. For example, the first illustration of *Willy and Hugh* presents the protagonist with a depressed and sad look; with his half-closed eyes looking down, the corners of his lips curved downwards, and the body posture also strengthening these feelings: fallen shoulders, hands in the pockets and standing. Willy is not located in a specific context in this illustration. Anthony Browne is only centred in the character and, most of all, in Willy's feelings reflected in his body posture. This illustration pretends to encourage pity and empathy in readers.

We want to pay special attention to the images related to risk factors associated with bullying, which are represented in these illustrations. As for the physical appearance, Willy is represented in the illustrations as a small, weak, clumsy and unattractive chimp. He also appears performing activities that denote a high academic accomplishment: painting, reading, studying or visiting the library. Additionally, in the images he does not appear surrounded neither by friends nor by supporting relatives, on the contrary, he appears with a low self-esteem and insecure. Besides, we must add a crucial fact in the description of the character: he is radically different from the rest of the male-apes represented in the stories. In *Willy the Chimp* books the male characters were represented strong, self-confident, fighter and protective; on the contrary the females were showed passive, submissive, fragile, insecure, dependent, sentimental, emotional, tender, sensitive and fearful. Willy has the appearance and psychosocial and behavioral characteristics associated with females and this hypomasculine gender condition seems to be the cause of all his problems. Furthermore, the contexts in which the represented participants are located are crucial. While male characters are represented doing sports in open spaces as street, swimming pool or, football pitch, Willy usually appears at home, alone, with a 'homey' aspect and performing sedentary activities.

The interactive macro function takes place between the represented participants, and also between the represented participants and the reader. On many cases, illustrations appeal the reader and intend to cause some reactions in him. Sometimes represented participants looked directly the reader in order to promote the reader's commitment (in *Willy the Champ* cover, for example). Other times represented participants avoid looking the reader with the purpose of take pity, sorrow or charity on the represented participants (the first Willy's picture from *Willy and Hugh*, for example). These illustrations demand from the reader a critical position; they places the reader as an observer, but not as silent witness, because the represented events forcing him to take sides with the victim. Intimidations, threats and attacks suffered by Willy, promote different feelings in the reader except impassibility. In *Willy the Wimp*, the reader, witnesses the blow he receives on the street, feels it when Willy is held by the gang of gorillas, lives the sarcastic smile of is boxing trainer or is aware of the hyperbolic insignificance of Willy's body among bodybuilding

gorillas. However, when the protagonist becomes or believes himself strong, his shadow scares the gang. In *Willy and Hugh*, the reader contemplates Willy's loneliness and sadness that contrasts with the joy of the people who enjoy the park. The reader identifies with Willy when those who do not let him play despise him with hurtful smiles. The ferocious appearance of Buster Nose is completed with the face on Buster's cap that plays on the smiley face, a counter-culture symbol. On Buster's cap there is an "angry" smiley face. The reader sees from behind Willy, a big ape that hovers over an insignificant Willy.

In *Willy the Champ*, Willy flew out by the impact of a big forward's shot while he is the goalkeeper. Likewise, the reader feels tiny when he is shaken by the gang of gorillas by the pool, or when they laugh at him in the cinema, while he cries. Or, again, Buster Nose appears with a smiling emoticon this time, on his cap, which dwarfs Willy even more.

Especially interesting in this regard is an illustration of *Willy the Wimp*, who represent Willy look his body in a wall mirror. When reader look at the mirror, there in not the reader, and nor is Willy, there is a muscled and satisfied Willy, which contrasts radically with the appearance, expression and body language of Willy's photography on the chest of drawers. The reader is behind Willy and look Willy's new appearance in that mirror. Reader is looking at what Willy sees in a very important moment of self-satisfaction and first-person focalization. The reader is putting himself in Willy's shoes and look through Willy's eyes, the new appearance of Willy. Willy's body in the mirror is an illustration mediated and focalized that causes empathy between Willy and the reader. Perhaps, these resources utilized by the illustrator encouraging supportive interactions between Willy and the readers.

Use of colour is an important key in Browne's picture books. Generally, there is a relationship between colours and represented participants' feelings: when participants are sad or lonely they are represented in cold colours (green); when participants are happy or excited, they are represented in warm colours (red). There is a contrast between richly saturated warm (red) and cold colours (green). Willy's clothes are mainly green. His trousers are green, and his multi-coloured wool vest changes its colour depending of Willy's feelings. When Willy is plenty of self-confidence and self-satisfaction, his wool vest is richly saturated warm colours (mainly red). For example, when Willy is doing weightlifting in *Willy the Wimp* a double page picture shows Willy in a temporal sequence: four different moments in which Willy is increasing in size and, at the same time, his weightlifting clothing's colours are changing from a light pink to a richly red.

Similarly, it is important to highlight the use of perspective to show the degree of power among the represented participants. Sometimes perspective is using to emphasize Willy's weakness, submission or helplessness. In these cases, aerial views are used in which the reader's point of view is above Willy's one. Sometimes the reader's point of view is behind the represented participants but sometimes these participants disappear, and the atmosphere seems to involve the reader and make him participant. For example, in *Willy the Champ* when Willy meets Buster Nose, Buster looks directly to the reader with an intimidation intention. The next picture shows Willy between the brick wall and Buster Nose. There is no possibility of escape, and the reader observes the scene peering over the buster's shoulder.

Brigitte Andrieux (1999, p. 33) refers that each Anthony Browne's illustration offers an infinity of possible readings. His precise, clean, detailed technique, inherited from his experience in medical illustration, never let appear the slightest stroke of the brush, and offers an even illustration, in which the eye likes to walk around to explore its richness of content, to discover the humour, the poetry and the questions asked to children and adults.

4.3 Interrelation text-image

The facts portrayed by the illustrations are usually highlighting the facts narrated by the verbal mode. Returning to the risk factors of bullying, text and image reinforce each other to show that, in fact, Willy is weak, small, clumsy, unattractive and unskilled in sports. He is a chimp in a world of gorillas. At the beginning of the series, in *Willy the Wimp* (1984), Browne presents the character as timid, respectful of people 'incapable of killing a fly'. Anthony Browne adds a higher academic performance in the Willy's characterization in *Willy the Champ* (1985). Achieving a higher performance than the average in the school is an academic risk factor that some investigations related with bullying (Neumark-Sztainer, Story & Faibisch, 1998, Sweeting & West, 2001). There is another factor that, in our opinion, it is the main risk factor in Willy picture books: his hypomasculine gender condition. Willy's special sensibility and his preference to sedentary activities as reading, art or cinema, are more related to females than with males in Willy the Chimp books.

The first time Willy suffers harassment is by verbal bullying: the neighbourhood gang calls him "Willy the Wimp". Willy "hated that name". The verbal bullying takes place in the street, in the neighbourhood, in a familiar environment, and comes from the group. The harassment takes verbal shape according to the forms, and according to the substance. The intent of the person who acts seeks to provoke and ridicule. To deal with the situation and be stronger, he resorts to a book and begins doing sports. Willy start with sports traditionally associated with women as rhythmic gymnastics and the verbal mode included: "where he feels ridiculous". Then Willy tries sports traditionally restricted to girls as boxing or bodybuilding. When Willy practices these stereotypical male sports, the visual mode showed Willy dressed in a ridiculous manner with pink weightlifting clothes. His physical change causes the gang of gorillas to flee and becomes Millie's timid hero. The scene, in which the "new" transformed Willy saves Millie from the suburban gorillas, has a double climax. First is a conversation, if it can be called that, which parodies the conventional romantic outcome of the masculinity fantasy (Stephens 1992: 146):

"Oh...Willy," says Millie.

"What, Millie?" says Willy.

"You're my hero, Willy," says Millie.

"Oh...Millie," says Willy. (Browne, 1984).

Second, this scene is represented in a parodic picture that show a timid Willy with blushing cheeks. Willy puts his arms behind him while Millie hold him strong and kiss Willy and again (several lip print kiss is leaving on Willy's cheeks). Millie's yellow hat, adorned with flowers until this

moment, changes in this picture: a red heart appears in the middle of the hat to express the love that Millie feels for Willy.

In *Willy the Champ* (Browne, 1985) the reader gets to know other characteristics from Willy that shape his personality: he is no good at football, but he strives; neither is he fit for cycling, he cycles slowly and lets cycling squad away. Willy is not competitive. He is not a Champ. He does not mind to lose or win. He only wants to train, be stronger and stop being wimp. When he goes to the swimming pool he suffers a new aggression from a group of gorillas; this time, the illustration anticipates that they will end up throwing him into the water. This is a physical harassment because bullies turning verbal bullying into actions against Willy.

He goes to the movies with Millie –where a Lassie movie is shown—. Willy gets pretty emotional. The chimp crying excited by Lassie movie while everybody laughs at him. The cinema preferences of Willy and mainly his remarkable sensitivity are linked with his hypomasculine gender condition. In this picture book, Willy suffers again intimidation and ridicule by a group of bullies.

Next, the action back to be settled on the street: while Willy is talking with a group of primates, Buster Nose appears scaring the group and facing Willy. Primates go away, hide behind a corner and left Willy alone. Primates act as bystanders do in a bullying situation: they feel fear towards the bully and do not intervene even though they are against this situation. Browne resolves this situation by a metafictional mode. Going along the line of classic comedy films, Willy comes out victorious by accidentally knocking down Buster, who goes home with his mother. When making this reference to the mother, the author relativizes the figure of the aggressor showing his weakness.

In *Willy and Hugh* (1991), Browne emphasizes Willy's loneliness: "Everyone had friends. Everyone except Willy". The author adds a new feature to Willy: he is useless in the eye of others, who do not let him participate in their games. However, Willy makes a friend, Hugh Jape, whom he bumps into while walking in the park. His new friend is strong and sensitive: he asks for forgiveness and sits next to him on the bench. Again, the character of the previous book, Buster Nose, appears to take revenge. Hugh, Willy's new friend, plays the role of a defender.

In *Willy the Wizard* (1995), Browne adds a new element: Willy does not have the money to buy some football boots and highlights the psychological bullying when nobody wants to pass the ball to play football, or when he is left out of the team. In this picture book, a 'magical' character appears to give him his boots, someone who seems familiar to him, dressed in an old football kit, like his father's, who played very well. His gorilla teammates are always huge, compared to the chimp that is crushed between them. When training with the new boots, Willy is fantastic and, finally, becomes part of the team. However, he forgets his boots and is lent others; the crowd laughs at him when he goes out into the field, but he gets angry and performs a great game: he was a wizard. Willy manages to overcome that pressure and is acclaimed.

Willy has very few friends, but throughout Willy the Chimp books he expands his group of friends: in *Willy the Wimp*, he manages to help Millie who becomes his 'friend' (in the illustrations,

it is insinuated that there is something else). In *Willy and Hugh*, he becomes friends of Hugh, who defends him before Buster. As for Willy's family, we know nothing. The role of the family is relegated to the utmost silence. Only in *Willy the Wizard* is Willy there is a reference to some relative, when the magical character appears carrying his father's old kit. Close friendships, belong to a group, or have many friends are strategies to reinforce and stimulate the bullies and stop the harassment by offering an environment in which everyone feels safe and loved. Children who have a lot of friends are less likely to suffer harassment than those who are lonelier. The bystander can play a pivotal role in reducing or ending bullying behavior (Ansary et al. 2015).

5 CONCLUSIONS

There is a long tradition of children's literature being used to study the social attitudes of a particular time as depicted through books (Norton, 2011). We do not know whether Browne intended in the 80s when he began the Willy series to create a literary work merely to entertain children or if he was willing to go further and offer an explicit speech to those children who were exposed to bullying situations. Throughout thirty years, children of all condition, have approached the pages of Willy in search of entertainment or consolation and, in most cases, have managed to reach their goal (Campbell, 2003 & 2007). Children who participated in instructional conversations about these texts have found benefits in book discussions (Chinn et al., 2001; Oppliger and Davis, 2016) and achieved better self-rebalance.

Besides, the message contained in these works is striking. Although offering the conveying message that it is ok to be who you are, which is frequently settled in many children's picture books, Willy does transform himself in a stronger chimp... or does he? He continues to be himself. He is bullied sometimes, but he puts up with it until, one day he responds (unintentionally) to the biggest bully, the terrifying Buster Nose. Again, the metafictional play has a very important role in the story because, surprisingly Willy is victorious and Buster Nose is humiliated. Willy successful response to the bullies strengthen him. At the end, when the story is finished this picture book show the real moral teaching that is related with resilience: even if things are not going well, Willy feels proud of himself and gets to be a real champ.

In the analysed books, Willy's hypomasculine gender condition, detached him from gender stereotypes associated with his pretended masculinity. As Clare Bradford (1998, p. 79) refers: "Anthony Browne's picture books are justly celebrated for their playfulness, which manifests itself in several ways [...] Nowhere is the playfulness of Browne's work more striking than in his representation of gender, and particularly in his treatment of masculinity".

At the beginning of the stories, Willy is in home or interior scenarios doing sedentary activities as reading or painting. In these stories, Willy abandons these interior scenarios and goes into open spaces in which aggression or intimidating treatment usually occurs, but it is also in these spaces that he finds his allies, Millie or Hugh. Open spaces are new locations where Willy lives his adventures and where he does things with other people. But above all, open spaces are a challenge to Willy to overcome certain tests. Once Willy overcomes them, by more or less casual and comical

means, Willy is again located in these open/interior spaces but there are some changes in Willy's personal and social status. The aim of the stories is always positive, although directly or indirectly Willy overcoming bullying or not, Willy is happy being as he are.

According to the critical literature, it is always advisable to have the support of the family or at least of adults when the behaviours of bullying appear. It draws our attention that in these picturebooks that are targeted to children under 6 years of age, one of the best-known series, starring Willy, the role of the family in the resolution of this problem has so little entity. That is, in books about bullying or exclusion anyway, once and again it is the kids (or anthropomorphized animals) the ones who solve the problem themselves.

The study detailed in this paper is important because the readers of Willy the Chimp books are impressionable. Reading Willy books is a perfect way to find solutions and ideas to face with bullying. After a close reading of these books, we can affirm that the facts presented, even if not to contemplate the help of the family, can be using to face readers to serious facts as bullying. These books allow readers to empathize with Willy (the bullied) and maybe these picture books forces readers to stop bullying situations or at least be on the bullied side.

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