

Clapping Games on You Tube: A Construction Tool of Gender Violence and Other Types in the Child Stage

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Abstract

This article uses virtual ethnography to analyse the children's repertoire of 382 versions of Clapping games in Spanish as a popular activity transmitted by the girls themselves on YouTube and seen around the world. Examine the themes related to violence in their narratives through a categorical semantic analysis with Atlas-ti 8. The results show the relevance of girls as active agents in the co-construction of violence and the importance of Clapping games as a popular agent.

Introduction

Boys and girls have the ability to subtly interpret their environment and position themselves critically with respect to ways of life, as thinking subjects and participants in the production, planning and circulation of knowledge [1]. Through imaginative play, children become an active role in cultural construction, such as violence or gender [2]. It has been described in the literature [3,4] that boys and girls play representative games of adult activities with a taboo nature (murder; death, abuse, weddings, sex, rituals...). Under a presumably innocent framework- "it's just child's play"- that avoid responsibility for actions, death, violence, sex and gender identity coexist in many of them, testing the limits of the norms hegemonic of our society and offering alternatives (Riera, 2015). Among these discourses, violence is one of the most exploited. Clapping games are evidence of this function. These are motor songs in which two or more participants stand opposite each other-or in a circle if there are more than two-and hit their hands or other parts of the body, sometimes interspersing descriptive gestures. In them, there is a cyclical choreography that is repeated while the lyrics of the song are sung (Casals y Aurota, 2021). In general, girls between 6 and 10 years old are the usual protagonists, although it depends on the historical moment and the cultural framework in which it takes place [5,6].

This cultural product is constantly changing and adapting according to the sociocultural context. In its repertoire, traditional music, fairy tales, the record industry, commercial products and the Internet are mixed; continuously transforming and reconstructing

the songs that children use to play [7]. Previous research on English Clapping games highlights the ability to use singing to experience the limits of their social life as well as the power relationships that appear into the game [6]. Knowledge about the co-construction of identities is also provided [8], as well as the subversive character that appears in narratives and gestural play [4] and the construction and maintenance of transmission [9]. In addition, its repetitive transmission pattern and the emotional charge associated with the speech of the lyrics, make the learning process easy to establish (Berger & Luckman, 2003). In relation to its rhythmic-melodic-gesture structure we highlight the recent study by Casals and Aurota [10]. Social networks have become increasingly important as an oral transmission strategy in current childhood [11] and potentially influence the construction of identity of children and adults (Burn,2010). Virtual ethnography is an increasingly used tool in the quantitative and qualitative paradigm in the field of social sciences [7,12-15]. Since 2005, YouTube is the digital platform for viewing and uploading videos on the Internet par excellence worldwide [11]. [7] used YouTube to make a netnography on the transmission mechanisms of two Clapping Games. [12] studied ways of learning, playing and creating through English Clapping games uploaded to this platform. As of June 1, 2016, there were almost 50 million total views of the videos that were part of this study, demonstrating the importance of this context in children's oral transmission of Clapping games. Despite the international importance of these games in the social development of the participants in the networks, in the forms of stereotypes, violence,

gender and other elements of the cultural context that are built in them, until now there has not been carried out any comprehensive analysis of the thematic content of Spanish Clapping games. Due to the remarkable role of Clapping games in individual and social development as a testing ground for understanding and modifying discourses related to violence, this article aims to: Analyze and describe, for the first time, the categories related to the subject of violence that appear in the texts of the Spanish Clapping games that appear on YouTube from 2014 to 2019.

Methods

A thematic analysis is carried out for data collection, based on the method of Vázquez (1994) and Gómez Mendoza (2000), complying with the following phases: a) pre-analysis, b) coding and c) categorization of the units thematic. Microsoft Excel 2010 is used for data collection and Atlas-ti 8 for the coding and categorization process.

Clapping games corpus

382 versions of Clapping games are analyzed, concentrated in 141 videos that followed established criteria. Of which, 11 videos are from the year 2014, 22 videos from the year 2015, 34 videos from the year 2016, 29 videos from the year 2017, 23 videos from the year 2018, 24 videos from the year 2019. The videos can be played at any time, which explains that not all views must have been made in the same year as the video upload to YouTube. Some of the videos obtained few views (the least viewed video was from 2019 with eight views), others obtained many (the most visited video with 3,855,995 views, in 2016). The average number of views was 117,168 views per video. The number of participants per video ranges from 1 to 6, most are between 2 and 3 participants. Although boys also appear, it is not usual (only in 6 videos of the 141 total). By the fact of being popularly transmitted, there are several versions of a same Clapping game (with textual, melodic or gestural changes). Despite this, certain versions are categorized as the same song in order to facilitate the analysis in this research. The most reproduced were the following: Chocolate (along with versions of it, called: Mariposa, Chocofresa, Elefante, Sacapuntas with 55 playbacks. Don Federico with 21 playbacks; Homero (other versions: Picachu, Martillo, Simpson, La muerte, Al revés) with 17 playbacks; Frutillita (other versions: Fresita, Hueso Obama, Hueso duro, Helado de cereza, Gelatina de cereza) with 13 playbacks. Barbie (other versión: Don Pepe) with 13 playbacks; Pepito fue a la China (other versions: Ayer fui a la China, Yo me fui, Pepito nació en París) with 13 playbacks.

Results

Among other categories, violence is one of the most prominent (It appears in 40% of the 382 versions of Clapping games). In the study, we found the following sub-categories: gender violence, structural violence, child abuse, animal abuse, misogyny, racism, punishment for failure. Among them, the action of killing appeared in 17%.

Gender violence

Gender violence is presented by men towards women, and in some cases, it ends with murder, always male to female: "Don Federico killed her wife, made her into mincemeat and put her in the frying pan. The people passing by smelled of roast meat, it was Don Federico's wife." (Song: Don Federico). In some cases, they give an explanation related to economic aspects: "Don Pepe and his belly killed his wife because she had no money to pay for a train." (Song: Don Pepe y su barriga). Other times it is justified by bad behavior of the woman according to the hegemonic role of her, that is contemplated in the love relationship: "I bring a mini skirt; my boyfriend scolds me. He asks me some questions and I answer him like this: Oh daddy!" (Song: Me subo a la moto). There is a sample of abuse exercised by men towards women: "Last night I went to the party and a boy kissed me. He slapped me and it was all over." (Song: Frutillita). In other versions of the song, the same abuse appears but the woman rebels, punishing him for it and subverting her hegemonic role: "Last night I went to a party and a boy kissed me, I slapped him, and it was all over." (Song: Frutillita)

In some videos, the girls show sad gestures (facial expression, shaking their fists as if they were wiping tears) at the words "and it's all over". Which would express an attribution of the action of the slap and its consequence, showing guilt about it through tears? Another explanation would refer to a strategy within the game of seduction. In others, they show a determined attitude towards the resolution of their rebellion without a facial expression that leads to sadness or seduction.

There is an isolated case of family violence in which the woman appears killing the man. It is not about her husband or her love relationship, but about her father: "Doña Margarita daughter of a Moorish king, who killed her father with a golden knife." (Song: Doña Margarita)

Structural violence

This violence appears subjecting women to a role that, according to the text, goes against their own interests. This role is related to the position of passive women in domestic care in the private sphere at home in front of the outside sphere, linking her to marriage and motherhood. The woman reveals herself to this by instrumentalizing violence to transfer into her the anger and injustice that she feels at the imposition of that role.

"I have to iron; I have to wash (...) and I have to kill my husband." (Song: Un marinerito)

"I'm not marrying that animal; I'm going to throw it away." (Song: Un marinerito)

"Prick, vaccine, the child is in the crib baptized by the priest. The child in the trash ¡Rotter! " (Song: Teresa quería ser). In an isolated case, the text of a song expresses that "children do not cry" and that doing so is shameful for being a crying child. In the song there is a kid who has been beaten and has ended up crying. But the

importance is not in that first emotion (crying) before the slap but in a second emotion that appears before the first: shame expressed with tears for the very fact of crying. "The kid was crying in his neighborhood (...) because they slapped him, and he couldn't bear to be made to cry." (Song: El chavo)

Child abuse

Child abuse is almost always generated by women, so childcare is directly related to this category. These women are mothers, although in some isolated cases they are caregivers or other relatives (aunts). In the same way that happens with gender violence, abuse is sometimes justified:

"I break the bottle, my mother hits me, I hit her." (Song: Me subo a la cama)

"Don Pepe and his belly killed his wife because she had no money to catch the train. There was a girl on the train and the girl had a baby. The baby fell off and the girl fainted. Don Pepe picked it up and the girl thanked him." (Song: Don Pepe).

After the phrase "and the girl thanked him" normally the participants kiss each other twice, while holding hands and saying "kiss, kiss". In the latter case, the girl thanks him for Don Pepe picking up the baby that she herself has dropped. At the beginning of the song Don Pepe has killed his wife to catch a train and in that train there was the girl. They meet her when she drops the baby. She thanks him by giving him a kiss next. One possible interpretation is the chance meeting of the girl and Don Pepe; another would be based on the intentions of both Don Pepe in helping her and the girl with Don Pepe, instrumentalizing violence towards the baby, in order to allow herself to be seduced by him. She takes advantage of the passive role and the lack of skill assigned by the hegemony to achieve her goal (Don Pepe) by making her believe that she needs the active attitude and the skill of the man to solve her problems.

In other cases there is no direct explanation for the abuse. What can be assumed aggressiveness as a norm, by discipline or by the condition of submission of childhood with respect to adulthood:

"When I was a child, they beat me." (Song: Cuando yo era)

"The second (daughter) was Lisa, mistreated by her mother, she goes to school as a young girl (Song: Simpsons)

Other times, child abuse is shown as abnormal, associated with mental illness:

"My sister had a son and the crazy woman killed him. She made it into mincemeat and then she ate it." (Song: Frutillita)

An example of mistreatment by a father towards his son is one of the few cases in which mistreatment is exercised by a person of the male gender:

"The first was Bart, mistreated by his father." (Song: Simpsons)

There is a last case of violence linked to gender discourse: misogyny.

"Candela died because of how beautiful she was." (Song: Se murió Candela)

Other types of violence

Animal abuse occurs from people to domestic animals (cats and dogs) and farm animals (cows):

"An old woman killed a cat with the tip of her shoe. Poor old woman, poor cat, poor tip of the shoe." (Song: En la calle 24). "A witch killed a cat, on the shoe count." (Song: En la calle 24). "The other day I came across a cow. I shot her twice / they killed her" (Song: Albaricoque). "In the yard of my case there is a dead dog. He who bites five eats it dead." (Song: En el patio de mi casa). As can be seen, the female roles as animal killers stand out: the participant, the witch or the old woman and other cases without a defined murderer. Racism appears only in a Clapping game, being the participant the murderer. Although there are many songs that refer to other nationalities (Chinese, gypsy, etc.) there is no violence between them. This is the same song in which the misogyny appears: "Bogotín, Bogotá. There is a Moorish in the city. Let him take off, let him take off, they are going to run him over. By the A, he is already leaving; by the E, he already left; by the I is already here; by the O he already died; by the U was you." (Song: Se murió Candela). The punishment for failure is given most of the time at the end of the song as part of the game. The punishers are the participants themselves or animals considered dangerous (spider, snakes) towards the losing participant. "If you repeat me, you will lose." "Whoever laughs or moves, I'll give him a pinch or a smack." "The spider goes up, the knife sticks you in, the blood goes down and gives you the chill." (Song: American Tomatoes)

"In the field there is a snake that bites us, if you leave it will chase you." There are cases of post-mortem action. In the following example, the doctor prescribes a drug to Don Ramón once he is already dead.

"They killed Don Ramón. They shot him in the heart. The doctor prescribed to him: orange, pineapple and lemon." (Song: Naranja, piña y limón). Another example of post-mortem action: "When I was dead, dead, dead, I sucked, sucked, sucked." (Song: Cuando yo era). Finally, we found a unique case about food-related death. We can see the use of a hyperbole to exaggerate of meaning: "Little Orange, you go through a half dining room. Don't kill it with a knife, kill it with a fork." (Song: Naranja).

Discussion

Violence is one of the most common themes in Clapping games. [16] emphasized the messages that the popular and traditional song contains, legitimizing violence, physical or verbal abuse, in an open and explicit way, or in a hidden way. As can be seen, Clapping games follow the same pattern, in many cases relating love with violence. In fact, [13] discovered that love, constructed as an intense and irrational feeling, justifies the existence of intense emotions expressed in violent practices, such as jealousy, blackmail and marital control. [14] has already highlighted death

as a common topic in Spanish romance, highlighting its importance in the concern of the collective social imaginary on this subject [17,18]. This article also highlights other types of violence that appear in Clapping games which are structural violence, misogyny, animal abuse, racism, punishment for failure, post-death actions and food-related death.

Conclusion

This article shows for the first time a categorical analysis of thematic content, linked to violence, of the Spanish-speaking Clapping games that appear in South America and Spain, through 382 versions uploaded on YouTube (2014-2019). Clapping games are a clear example of the active role of girls in the construction of violence through a hegemonic treatment or its subversion.

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