

Dissertação de Mestrado

Eleven things that girls love:
a systemic-functional and critical discourse analysis
of the representations of femininity in the comic book
Turma da Mônica Jovem

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ABSTRACT

Eleven things that girls love: a systemic-functional and critical discourse analysis of the representations of femininity in the comic book Turma da Mônica Jovem

by

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Advisor: Prof. Dra. Viviane M. Heberle

In Brazil, the comic books *Turma da Mônica* are very popular and widely read. In 2008, a new comic book from the same brand, called *Turma da Mônica Jovem*, was released. It presents the same characters eight years older, as adolescents, involved in several activities, ranging from supernatural to everyday-life ones. Considering gender issues in contemporary society and the impact media texts have in readers' lives, the present study aims at unveiling the representations of femininity linguistically construed as regards the female characters in *Turma da Mônica Jovem*. The issues selected are the ones delivered between August 2008 and July 2011 dealing with everyday-life experiences. The investigation involves a detailed verbal and visual analysis of one story in one of the issues, entitled *Eleven things that girls love*, and an intertextual analysis in which the other selected issues are also considered. The theoretical background supporting such analysis includes systemic-functional linguistics, grammar of visual design, critical discourse analysis, and gender studies. Deriving from the detailed analysis, four analytical categories regarding the representations of femininity in the comic book arose: (1) concerns about boys; (2) financial and emotional dependence; (3) concerns about social status; and (4) concerns about physical appearance. These categories are discussed and expanded to the other selected issues, which provide further textual evidence for the findings. It was observed that although there are some discursive changes in certain events in some issues of *Turma da Mônica Jovem*, the comic book in general reinforces several gendered discourses.

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RESUMO

Onze coisas que as garotas amam: uma análise sistêmico-funcional e crítica do discurso das representações de feminilidade no gibi Turma da Mônica Jovem

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Gibis da *Turma da Mônica* são bastante populares e amplamente lidos no Brasil. Tamanho sucesso permitiu que em 2008 fosse lançada uma nova publicação, a *Turma da Mônica Jovem*. Neste lançamento, os mesmos personagens são apresentados oito anos mais velhos, como adolescentes, envolvidos em diversas atividades, tanto sobrenaturais como também as chamadas aventuras do dia a dia. Considerando questões de gênero e o impacto que textos de mídia podem causar nos leitores, o presente estudo tem como objetivo investigar as representações de feminilidade linguisticamente construídas no novo gibi. Os números selecionados foram lançados entre Agosto de 2008 e Julho de 2011 em que os personagens lidavam com aventuras do dia a dia. A pesquisa envolve uma análise verbal e visual detalhada de uma estória em um dos números, intitulada *Onze coisas que as garotas amam*, e uma análise intertextual em que os outros números selecionados também são considerados. O arcabouço teórico inclui a linguística sistêmico-funcional, a gramática visual, a análise crítica do discurso, e estudos em gênero social. Partindo da investigação detalhada, quatro categorias de análise acerca da representação de feminilidade no gibi se revelaram: (1) preocupação com garotos; (2) dependência financeira e emocional; (3) preocupação com status social; e (4) preocupação com aparência física. Estas categorias são discutidas e expandidas para as outras edições selecionadas, que proporcionam evidências textuais para os resultados. Observou-se que embora haja algumas mudanças discursivas em certos eventos em algumas edições da *Turma da Mônica Jovem*, o gibi ainda reforça vários discursos engendrados.

Número de páginas: 93

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. PURPOSE OF THE THESIS	2
1.2. JUSTIFICATION OF THE THESIS	2
1.3. METHODS.....	4
1.3.1. <i>Criteria for selection of data</i>	4
1.3.1.1. Contextualizing the non-chosen <i>TMJ</i> issues	5
1.3.1.2. The chosen story for detailed analysis	8
1.3.2. <i>Procedures for data analysis</i>	9
1.3.3. <i>Research Questions</i>	11
1.4. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS	11
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	12
2.1. SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS	12
2.1.1. <i>SFL as theory: the strata of meaning</i>	13
2.1.2. <i>SFL as methodological tool: the transitivity system</i>	15
2.2. GRAMMAR OF VISUAL DESIGN	18
2.3. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS.....	23
2.4. GENDER STUDIES.....	28
3. DATA ANALYSIS.....	31
3.1. CONTEXT OF SITUATION: VARIABLE <i>FIELD</i>	31
3.1.1. <i>Describing the female characters</i>	31
3.1.2. <i>Contextualizing the twelve selected issues</i>	34
3.1.3. <i>Analysis of the story <i>Eleven things that girls love</i></i>	37
3.2. VISUAL ANALYSIS IN THE SELECTED STORY	38
3.2.1. <i>Representational and Compositional meanings</i>	39
3.2.2. <i>The representation of participants in the images</i>	49
3.3. VERBAL ANALYSIS.....	51
3.3.1. <i>Relational processes</i>	51
3.3.2. <i>Material processes</i>	54
3.3.3. <i>Mental processes</i>	55
3.3.4. <i>Verbal processes</i>	57
3.3.5. <i>Behavioral processes</i>	57
3.3.6. <i>Existential processes</i>	58
3.3.7. <i>The representation of participants in the verbal text</i>	59
4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	63
4.1. VERBAL AND VISUAL ANALYSIS IN <i>ELEVEN THINGS THAT GIRLS LOVE</i>	63

4.2.	DISCURSIVE AND SOCIOCULTURAL PRACTICES IN <i>TURMA DA MÔNICA JOVEM</i>	67
4.2.1.	<i>Concerns about boys</i>	67
4.2.2.	<i>Financial and emotional dependence</i>	74
4.2.3.	<i>Concerns about social status</i>	83
4.2.4.	<i>Concerns about physical appearance</i>	86
5.	FINAL REMARKS	92
5.1.	SUMMING UP: WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND MAIN FINDINGS ...	92
5.2.	LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS	93
5.3.	PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	94
6.	REFERENCES	95

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 2

Figure 2. 1 - SFL as theory	14
Figure 2. 2.....	19
Figure 2. 3.....	20
Figure 2. 4.....	21
Figure 2. 5.....	22
Figure 2. 6.....	23
Figure 2. 7.....	27

Chapter 3

Figure 3. 1 - Image #1.....	39
Figure 3. 2 - Image #10.....	39
Figure 3. 3 - Image #15.....	40
Figure 3. 4 - Image #41.....	41
Figure 3. 5 - Image #61.....	42
Figure 3. 6 - Image #71.....	43
Figure 3. 7 - Image #148.....	43
Figure 3. 8 - Image #116.....	44
Figure 3. 9 - Image #83.....	45
Figure 3. 10 - Image #140.....	45
Figure 3. 11 - Image #115.....	46
Figure 3. 12 - Image #148.....	46
Figure 3. 13 - Image #100.....	47
Figure 3. 14 - Image #159.....	48
Figure 3. 15 - Image #179.....	48
Figure 3. 16 - Image #119.....	49
Figure 3. 17 - Image #137.....	50
Figure 3. 18 - Image #28.....	50
Figure 3. 19 - Image #68.....	51

Chapter 4

Figure 4. 1 - Image #185.....	65
Figure 4. 2.....	68
Figure 4. 3.....	68

Figure 4. 4	68
Figure 4. 5	69
Figure 4. 6	70
Figure 4. 7	71
Figure 4. 8	71
Figure 4. 9	72
Figure 4. 10	73
Figure 4. 11	74
Figure 4. 12	76
Figure 4. 13	77
Figure 4. 14	77
Figure 4. 15	78
Figure 4. 16	79
Figure 4. 17	80
Figure 4. 18	82
Figure 4. 19	83
Figure 4. 20	84
Figure 4. 21	85
Figure 4. 22	85
Figure 4. 23	87
Figure 4. 24	88
Figure 4. 25	90
Figure 4. 26	90
Figure 4. 27	91
Figure 4. 28	91
Figure 4. 29	91
Figure 4. 30	91

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

Perhaps, what really matters is that whatever is written or whatever we write, whatever texts we read or analyze, whatever way we conduct ourselves, we never lose sight of our essence as human beings in search of a better self and a better world (Meurer, J. L., 1998, p. 144, cited in Menezes, V., 2010, p. 479)

Comics are a very popular genre in contemporary society. They are present in several media, such as newspapers, magazines, and in specific publications devoted to them – the comic books.

In Brazil, a successful brand of comic books is *Turma da Mônica*. It was created by the Brazilian cartoonist Maurício de Sousa and first published in 1970¹, having become one of the most popular comic books in the country. It is mostly read by children and also by adults, who are parents or simply fans.

The adolescent readers did not have a specific series devoted to them until August 2008, when *Turma da Mônica Jovem* (henceforth *TMJ*) was released. The new series was created with the objective of attracting that audience², who may have probably lost some interest in the classical comic books *Turma da Mônica*, after having read them in their childhood. It has been a success in sales, with a monthly circulation of 400.000 copies³. There is the official website⁴, which provides updated information about the comic book, the characters, downloads of the issues' covers, wallpapers and videos. Besides that, there are several blogs created by fans devoted to *TMJ*, and products portraying the characters may be found in the market. There is a *youtube*⁵ channel for

¹ Source: <http://www.monica.com.br/index.htm> Retrieved August 23, 2011.

² Source: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/ilustrada/ult90u429265.shtml> Retrieved May, 13, 2011.

³ Source: <http://g1.globo.com/Noticias/PopArte/0,,MUL1302371-7084,00-MAURICIO+DE+SOUZA+VAI+A+BIENAL+COM+UM+PE+NO+RIO+E+OUTRO+NO+MUNDO.html>. Retrieved May, 13, 2011.

⁴ <http://www.revistaturmadamonica jovem.com.br>. Retrieved June, 28, 2011.

⁵ *Youtube* is a website which conveys videos whereas *orkut*, *facebook* and *twitter* are online social networks.

the comic book, and participation at social networks on the internet, including *orkut* and *facebook* communities as well as the *twitter*.

Considering that “we construct our own identities out of the options afforded to us by our general positionality and our particular trajectory of experiences, encounters, options for action, and so forth” (Lemke, 2008, p. 21), comic books, being part of social life, accessible to the adolescent readers, may exert certain degree of power over their identity constructions. It is important to analyze such texts in order to unveil the representations that are being portrayed and which have the power of affecting the readers’ lives.

As the main character of the comic book is a girl, *Mônica*, much emphasis is put on her and also on her female friends, whose universe is explored in the series. Therefore, the present study focuses on analyzing such imaginary reality in order to unveil the semiotic constructions enfolding and construing the representations of femininity.

1.1. Purpose of the thesis

The objective of the present study is to investigate the representations of femininity in the comic book *Turma da Mônica Jovem* by analyzing the written and imagetic constructions found in the stories and in the female characters. As the main character is a girl (*Mônica*), I find it relevant to analyze how she and her female friends are presented in order to unveil possible ideologies behind the texts that may affect readers’ ideas and behaviors.

The rationale taken for this study encompasses Systemic-functional Linguistics (SFL), Grammar of Visual Design (GVD), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Gender Studies. This theoretical stance derives from my membership to the NUPDiscurso research group, which, among the possible approaches to discourse analysis, concentrates on the ones mentioned above as theoretical and methodological tools for analysis. This study aims at strengthening the contributions to the area of Discourse Analysis and providing some pedagogical implications, especially concerning critical reading.

1.2. Justification of the thesis

Several studies involving SFL, GVD and studies in multimodality, CDA, and gender studies have been carried out in Discourse Analysis at Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras/Inglês.

Few of them, however, deal with comic books, except Veloso (2002; 2006)'s, which investigate superhero comic books. Other studies related to the present one include: Ferreira (2003)'s, which analyzes text-image relationship in cover stories of the Newsweek magazine; Heberle (1997)'s and Figueiredo (1995)'s, both dealing with women's magazines; Ostermann (1995)'s, which analyzes specifically quizzes in teenagers' magazines; Böhlke (2008)'s, which investigates the representation of women in a specific TV advertisement; and Bezerra (2008)'s, which analyzes the representation of the main female character in a sitcom. In addition, among the few studies found in the area that deal with comic books, there is Cé (2009)'s, from Universidade Católica de Pelotas, which analyzes the representation of female characters in *shojo mangas*.

The investigation proposed for the present research relates to the studies mentioned above in the following aspects: (1) investigation of comic books, a genre which has not been much explored at Programa de Pós Graduação em Letras/Inglês, especially in the area of Discourse Analysis and in the research group I belong to, NUPDiscurso; (2) analysis of both written and imagetic aspects according to SFL; and (3) studies concerning the representation of women, specifically adolescents, in the media. For this study, the three foci mentioned above are put together, as the data consists of comic books directed to adolescents, and the analysis will cover both written text and images, which are the modes that constitute comic books.

Considering the popularity and the social importance of *Turma da Mônica* comic books in the Brazilian context, I find it relevant to investigate the possible ideologies underlying the representation of female characters. As adolescents, the target readers, are in processes of identity construction, they may look for references in order to help them position their own ideas and behaviors. The comic book, as any other media, may exert some degree of power over readers' lives. Therefore, I find it important to investigate the written and imagetic discourses portrayed in this comic book in order to unveil the messages that are being conveyed to the readers. Considering that the main character is a girl and, therefore, events surrounding her are the most emphasized ones, analyzing the comic book following a gender perspective appears to be a significant task. In addition, besides contributing to the area of Discourse Analysis, I intend to present some pedagogical implications concerning this research.

1.3. Methods

The present study is in the paradigm of qualitative research, as it involves interpretive analysis of texts. In order to carry out a visual and verbal analysis of the comic book *Turma da Mônica Jovem*, some methodological steps were taken. They include: (I) the collection of data; (II) the selection of corpus, which involved the establishment of criteria and organization of the collected data; and (III) the accomplishment of the analysis itself, which involved some procedures that are further explained.

In relation to data collection, as the present study does not involve field research, such step was conducted through the purchase of *Turma da Mônica Jovem* issues in order to select the ones to be investigated. The sub-sections below explore the other two stages, concerning criteria for selection of data and procedures for analysis.

1.3.1. Criteria for selection of data

The corpus consists of the comic book *Turma da Mônica Jovem*, which is released every month. The issues selected were the ones published between August-2008 and July-2011⁶ whose theme is related to everyday life experiences, such as going to school, going shopping, talking to friends, and engaging in varied daily activities of social life. In this period of time, some of the issues were related to supernatural adventures, but these were not selected for the analysis because of their unrealistic nature, as readers may not identify themselves with in the same way they would with the most realistic ones. In the sub-section below, I present a brief description of each of the non-chosen issues in order to justify their exclusion from the research corpus.

⁶ Departing from the initial proposal presented, which would cover the issues up to December 2010, I have decided to include 2011 issues for the three following reasons: 1) the analysis does not involve statistics, so that this inclusion does not interfere; 2) the discussion part, in which the additional issues are included in order to provide further textual instances of the main findings, started to take place after July 2011, when the issues had already been published; and 3) the addition of more (and recent) data would certainly enrich the final work.

1.3.1.1. Contextualizing the non-chosen *TMJ* issues

From August 2008 up to July 2011, the period that is covered by this study, 36 issues were launched (every month, a new issue is released). The issues that are primarily devoted to everyday life experiences, which are the focus of the present study, are further described and analyzed in Chapters 3 and 4. In these issues, features of supernatural happenings, although not totally absent, are not the main goal of the story nor its fundamental motive force. Because of the greatest possibility readers would have of identifying themselves with the characters in everyday life events, the issues that deal with these aspects were the ones chosen for analysis in this study. It is reasonable to assume that readers would find greater similarity between their own daily lives and the everyday life experiences issues rather than the supernatural experiences ones.

Among the 36 issues of *TMJ* published from August 2008 up to July 2011, twelve of them (issues #5, #9, #10, #18, #19, #20, #25, #31, #33, #34, #35 and #36) were selected for the present study. In order to justify the non-inclusion of the other issues in the analysis, I present, below, a brief description of the stories to show that their main focus was not on everyday life experiences, but, instead, on supernatural adventures:

- Issues #1 to #4: The first story of *TMJ* was published in four parts contained in the first four issues. It is about a supernatural adventure in which the four main characters (Mônica, Cebola, Cascão and Magali) travel to a magic dimension where they have to find four mystic objects in order to go back to real life and save the world from the control of the evil queen Yuka. The characters are presented dressing clothes of warriors, and they have to fight until they reach their objective. It is important to mention that in issue #4, at the end, Cebola and Mônica have their first kiss.

- Issues # 6 to #8: The second supernatural adventure takes place in three parts. It is about a trip the characters take to space, in which Mônica plans to think about her future. They go to Mars and there they find the, then evil, princess Mimi and her robot. The robot takes Mônica as the princess (because of the similarities between their big teeth) and seeks to accomplish all her wishes. When he finds out the mistake, he becomes her friend. Mônica, then, promises to convince the princess to stay with him, but asks him to take care of her friends while she goes to meet princess Mimi. Then, there is a battle between her and

Mônica, in which Mônica reveals her enormous strength. However, they end up becoming friends when Mônica tells the princess about how much the robot loves her majesty so that she should accept him. At the end, they are joined together, and there is a big celebration when princess Mimi is crowned the new emperor next to the robot.

- Issues #11 and #12: Divided in two issues, the story “To be or not to be” is about the school soccer competition, in which Cascão is the best player. The Colégio do Limoeiro (name of the school the main characters of *TMJ* study) team is classified to the finals, but some problems start happening with Cascão. He was being followed by some monsters, and was afraid of telling his friends about this fact, fearing that they could judge him crazy or a liar. At the final game, it is found out that the adversary team was compounded of robots. These robots were programmed to do the same movements Cascão used to do, which the robots that had followed him had copied. Such discovery disqualified the robots team, which made Colégio do Limoeiro the champion. In the story, while the boys are the ones who play soccer, the girls are cheerleaders. Besides that, there are several aspects related to the representation of the female characters to be analyzed, such as the character Titi’s disapproval of Aninha (his girlfriend)’s short T-shirt. However, as there is the presence of robots along the issues and a suggestive supernatural end (a robot watching Cascão playing soccer), the two issues were not analyzed.

- Issues #13 and #14: These issues present the two parts of the story “The world’s owner”. It is about a video game played by Cebola and the other friends. In the game, he takes the role of Captain C., who seeks to find the crown to become the world’s owner and, for this purpose, has to face several fights. He ends up losing this crown to another character, Lucília, whose secret identity he thinks to be Mônica’s. Although this story does not involve exactly a supernatural adventure, it was not selected for the corpus because most actions take place inside the video game, having, this way, an unrealistic nature.

- Issues #15 to #17: This story, “The ID monsters” presents an adventure in the minds of the characters so that their evil side would be revealed. They are supposed to win those weaknesses in their personalities by ruling their own lives, not allowing their interior monsters to take control. Although the story may be a metaphor, there are lots of supernatural happenings. The characters act in real fights and are supposed to capture the monsters in cards. At the end, after having

won the battles, it is concluded that these monsters would always act in some way because all people have some defects.

- Issues #21 and #22: These two issues were released by the time the film *Alice in the Wonderland* (2010, by Tim Burton) was on at the cinema. Mônica's friends were preparing her a surprise birthday party. When she arrives in the place, having been carried by Ângelo (an angel, their friend), they are no longer there, because they had fallen inside a magic book of the story of Alice in the Wonderland, and had been transformed into characters of the story. Then, Mônica enters there and needs to recognize each of her friends in order to break the enchantment and return to the real world with them.

- Issues #23 and #24: A magic notepad, originally possessed by the angel Ângelo, is found by Cebola, who keeps it and makes use of it in secret. It is the "notepad of laughing". After a person's name is written on page, this person starts laughing with no reason. Cebola gets tempted by the idea of controlling people's behavior and seeks to keep that secret. At the end, he is found and Ângelo restores the possession of the notepad.

- Issues #26 to #28: These three issues deal with Marina's 15 years old birthday party. Envious because her daughter had not been invited to the party, the evil witch Viviane tries to ruin the party by throwing some witchcrafts: she transforms some of the guests in cutlery, and captures Franja (Marina's boyfriend), transforming him in a big dog (which is the animal Marina fears the most). Mônica and her friends face the witch, get the support from her daughter, Ramona, who is a good person, and rescue Franja. At the end, in order to undo the transformations in Franja and in the guests, Marina had to kiss him (wearing a mask to cover her eyes, as she is afraid of dogs). Then, the problems were solved and all friends were happy again.

- Issues #29 and #30: The story is about a conspiracy that was to sell robots and control the world. A film had been released and had become a huge success. Mônica and her friends were also very fond of the actor who interpreted the main character in the film. It was a man who could get transformed in a robot, "Armadura Dourada" (Golden Armor). Do Contra (who has this name for being always in opposition to everything), one of Mônica's friends, had the feeling that there was something wrong behind that hero, and tried to prove his point to his friends. As he did not get to convince them by telling the truth, he decided to be ironic, pretending to like the hero and getting dressed like the robot. Then, there is a fight between Do Contra and Armadura Dourada, but they end up saving people by holding a roof that was

falling. At the end, the actor reveals the truth about the conspiracy and decides to work in other types of films.

- Issue # 32: In this story, there is the presence of robots. In this reality, it is possible to buy them. In addition, the owners' wishes could all become true. Cebola meets a robot, Brisa, whom he challenges in several things and she always wins him. She ends up being sold to participate in a fight of robots. Cebola, then, asks Mônica to help him save Brisa. Mônica goes there with him, pretending to be a robot, and they manage to save Brisa and the other robots.

The other issues, the ones selected for the present study, are described and presented in Chapter 3 with more details and theoretical support.

1.3.1.2. The chosen story for detailed analysis

Among the everyday life issues selected for the present study, one of them was selected for a detailed analysis – issue #5, which is the only issue that presents more than one story. The first story presented in it was chosen for a detailed analysis. Such detailed analysis involves a systemic-functional description of the written and imagetic elements (processes, participants and circumstances) that form the representations of femininity in the story. Considering time and space constraints, it was not possible to carry out the same analysis with all the selected issues. Nevertheless, they help provide textual evidence to extend the discussion of findings.

For the detailed analysis, then, the first story of issue #5 was chosen. The reasons supporting this choice are the following: 1) the emblematic and prescriptive title given to the story (*Eleven things that girls love*), which may call female readers' attention to something they are supposed to identify with and, in a certain way, to guide or prescribe the appropriate behaviors they should take in social life; 2) the strong presence of female characters, which are the focus of this study; 3) the feasibility for the present study, as it is a smaller story that does not occupy the whole issue; and (4) because it was the first everyday life experience story presented in the comic book series, which has a sense of novelty.

1.3.2. Procedures for data analysis

The data analysis is carried out in two parts: (I) a detailed verbal and visual systemic-functional analysis of one story; and (II) discussion of findings with the support of textual evidence also from the other selected issues.

The detailed descriptive analysis was accomplished in two parts: (1) the lexicogrammatical choices in the written text; and (2) the images. For the written text part, the following steps were taken: First, the story was typed. Then, the analysis following the transitivity system was carried out with the whole written text. By classifying the clauses (including the use of tables), it was possible to identify the processes (verbal groups), participants (nominal groups) and circumstances (adverbial and propositional groups) of each one. The processes were manually counted so as to provide a general view of the most recurrent ones. Concerning the criteria for the written text analysis, it was decided to consider the main process of each clause, and, in the clause complexes, which contain more than one verb, the analysis goes up to two levels at most. Due to time constraints, the analysis at the logical level, which would elucidate the transitivity analysis by clarifying the clause structures, was not carried out. However, the clauses were analyzed as a whole, with focus on the main processes of each, and then, in sub-ranks, the secondary processes were also analyzed.

In relation to the second part, involving the images, the analyzed story was scanned so as to be digitalized in *jpg* format in order to ease the researcher's job in analyzing the images⁷ by numbering the ones portraying female characters and then describing each of them according to the Grammar of Visual Design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Each image was referenced in a number, from 1 to 185. The images portraying just male characters, which are few, were not analyzed. Each of the selected images was described as a whole, following the frameworks for the analysis of representational and compositional meanings. In the representational meanings, they were categorized first by looking whether they were narrative or conceptual representations. Then, the portrayed processes were further identified and described. The analysis concerning the compositional meanings was

⁷ In fact, the scanned story was downloaded from the internet (<http://rapidshare.com/#!/download/339133/184053078/Turma.da.Monica.Jovem.05.rar|17903>, retrieved May, 3rd 2011), as the quality of the scan was good and it would ease the researcher's job.

carried through an investigation of three aspects: organization of information value, framing and salience.⁸

The choices in analyzing the written text according to the transitivity system and the images according to the representational meanings were made in order to fulfill the objectives of this study in identifying *what is going on*, the content and the representations being portrayed verbally and visually. Also in relation to representational meanings, participants were further analyzed as proposed in van Leeuwen (2008).

In relation to the other strata of meanings, the compositional ones, these were investigated for the visual part because of the crucial importance images have in the genre under investigation. As compositional meanings reveal aspects related to the constitution and organization of images, they were considered important for this work. Interactive meanings, which would reveal how text producers position themselves and the readers, were not investigated. Such analysis was not carried out especially due to time constraints. As the main purpose of the present study is to look at the representations of female characters, more emphasis was put on the analysis of representational meanings.⁹

Following the descriptive visual and verbal analysis, the main findings of both parts were categorized and interpreted according to CDA and gender studies from which some analytical categories arose. These categories, derived from the systemic-functional textual investigation of one story, were expanded to other issues, which provide textual evidence so as to illustrate the maintenance/change of these aspects along other issues¹⁰. The purpose is to unveil the textual constructions encompassing the representations of female characters so

⁸ The frameworks of transitivity, representational and compositional systems are explained in Chapter 2.

⁹ In the pilot study carried out by the researcher in November 2010, the analysis of interactive meanings, in comparison to the investigation of representational and compositional meanings, did not reveal many significant aspects to this study.

¹⁰ The issues used to provide further textual evidence are part of the corpus and they are described with the theoretical support of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) concerning the level that deals with the Context of Situation (Eggs, 2004; Meurer & Dellagnelo, 2008) in the variable *field*. The objective of this first step, done previously to the discussion of data, was to map the contents dealt with in the comic book and to offer a description of their general aspects.

as to carry out a critical discourse analysis with special attention to gender implications. As this expansion is at a broad level, the textual elements were not described in detail, but they serve to give textual evidence to support the observed features, which are connected and contrasted to findings presented in the literature on CDA and gender studies.

1.3.3. Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the following research questions were designed to guide the research:

(RQ1) – What representations of femininity are visually and verbally construed in the comic book *Turma da Mônica Jovem*?

(RQ2) – What are the values, beliefs and attitudes visually and verbally portrayed by the female characters?

(RQ3) – How do the female characters deal with social issues such as body appearance, relationships, school, family, and other aspects generally related to adolescents' concerns?

1.4. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized in five chapters. In *Chapter 1*, the present introduction, the study is contextualized, the purposes presented, the justification pointed out, and the methods explained. In *Chapter 2*, the main concepts of the theories used in the investigation are reviewed. In *Chapter 3*, the results of a descriptive systemic-functional analysis of one story from issue #5 of the comic book *Turma da Mônica Jovem* are presented after a brief contextualization of what goes on in this and in the other eleven *everyday life* issues considered. In *Chapter 4*, the discussions are carried out in a more interpretive and explanatory perspective, with the support of Critical Discourse Analysis and gender studies. Finally, in *Chapter 5*, the concluding remarks of the study are reported, including its contributions and limitations of this study as well as pedagogical implications and suggestions for further studies.

Chapter 2

2. Review of Literature

Grammar goes beyond formal rules of correctness. It is a means of representing patterns of experience ... It enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them (Halliday, 1985, p. 101, mentioned in Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006)

The theoretical framework for this study is provided by: (1) Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1985, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; van Leeuwen, 2008); (2) Grammar of Visual Design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006); (3) Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989; 1995; 2003); and (4) Gender studies (Wodak, 1997; Cameron, 1990; Heberle, 1997; Cranny-Francis et al, 2003).

2.1. Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) is a theory of language proposed by Halliday (1978) which views language from a **social semiotic** perspective. According to this theory, language is **semiotic** in the sense that it involves a set of meaningful choices within a set of finite options. Halliday & Hasan (1989, p. 4) consider semiotics “as the study of sign systems – in other words, as the study of meaning in its most general sense [and that] linguistics, then, is a kind of semiotics”. Therefore, the stance taken to define language is that it is “one among a number of systems of meaning that, taken all together, constitute human culture” (ibid, p. 4). In addition, language is **social** because the choices people make when using language are affected by three contextual variables: *field* (the topic going on), *tenor* (the relationship between the participants in the exchange), and *mode* (the channel of communication). These contextual variables are reflected on the construction of three types of meanings transmitted by any text (ideational, interpersonal and textual), which are derived from the concrete grammatical choices made by the speaker/writer (Halliday, 1985, 1994) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Besides being a theory of language, SFL is also a tool for textual analysis (Martin, 2000). The concrete grammatical choices realized by language users may be analyzed in order to unveil several

contextual aspects. The evidence provided by a detailed analysis of any text helps identify several issues, including those related to social life, such as representations, which is the focus of the present study. SFL provides the basis for such investigation by presenting grammatical systems that allow the researcher to look at the three types of meaning. Both dimensions of SFL, as a theory and as a tool, are explored in more detail in the next two sub-sections.

2.1.1. SFL as theory: the strata of meaning

In order to specify the theoretical stances taken for the present study, it is important to present the definitions of the terms used¹¹. SFL, being a theory of language, provides two important definitions for the present study besides the definition of language presented above: **text** and **context**, which are “aspects of the same process” (Halliday & Hasan, 1989, p. 5). Text is defined by the authors as “an instance of the process and product of social meaning in a particular context of situation” (p. 11). Unpacking this definition, a text is a product in the sense that it can be treated as an object, or as an output. At the same time, it is also a process because it is inserted in a system, being involved in a continuous flow of exchange, having, therefore, the role of constituting an environment. The phrase ‘social meaning’ indicates that texts have functions in society, which are to serve as vehicles of meanings that make sense in social life and, therefore, help organize social order. Finally, there is an important factor impacting texts, which is the context. According to Halliday & Hasan (1989), context is what comes with the text, including non-written information. It precedes the text and connects it with the situation it is inserted in.

In figure 2.1 there is a global view of the phenomenon of language from its most micro manifestation (in phonology and graphology) to the most macro level (context). The present study does not include the detailed investigation of phonological/graphological items in the text. The analysis goes from lexicogrammar to semantics to context – levels that are further explained below.

¹¹ It is not my intention here to exhaust these definitions, neither to discuss what there is in the literature about such complex and crucial terms, but to present the researcher’s theoretical stances taken when mentioning them throughout the work.

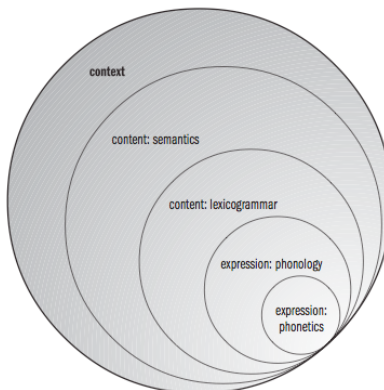


Figure 2. 1 - SFL as theory
Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 25

The context is what determines the text. For SFL, there are two types of context: context of culture, and context of situation. The former, which is broader, encompasses social structures and genre analysis (see Meurer, 2004; 2006). It is devoted to most macro issues. The second type of context, which is the most immediate one, is the context of situation. Three variables constitute this context, as mentioned above, field, tenor and mode. They are connected to three types of meanings that occur simultaneously in a text (ideational [experiential and logical], interpersonal and textual). Each of these meanings is linked, respectively, to three grammatical systems that are realized at the lexicogrammatical level (transitivity, mood and modality, and theme/rheme).

The analysis in the present study goes from lexicogrammar to context of culture. However, in order to explain and illustrate the terms, let us take the corpus of the present study as an example for a very brief explanation starting from the context of culture. *Turma da Mônica Jovem* is a media text from the genre comic book. A deeper analysis of the context of culture would involve analyzing the optional and obligatory elements that constitute the genre, how this media text impacts society and the social structures surrounding it. At the level of the context of situation, the three variables are looked at. As regards Field, it is a monthly publication distributed in bookstores and newsstands that costs R\$6,90 containing stories involving adolescent characters in several activities. In relation to Tenor, the producers are writers, drawers, designers, among other professionals from Maurício de

Sousa Produções, and the target public of readers is primarily Brazilian adolescents. A further investigation of this aspect would also include power relations and social distance. Finally, Mode is related to the channel of communication and the textual configurations of the text. In this case, it is presented in printed press, being composed of written texts and images. Moving to semantics, it is possible to look at ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings by simply reading the texts. In a quick look, it is possible to see that the stories in general deal a lot with friendship and love issues (ideational meanings). In relation to interpersonal meanings, in some moments the reader has the attention called, but mostly it is monologic. Finally, the textual meanings indicate the presence of squares in different sizes, and black and white images. However, in order to better access these meanings and investigate their implications to the cultural context, a detailed analysis of the lexicogrammatical features in the text is necessary. The linguistic realization at the lexicogrammatical level is a concrete part of language manifestation, which is analyzed according to the grammatical system each stratum of meaning has available. As the present study focuses on representations, the types of meanings under investigation are just the ideational ones. Therefore, the written part of the text was analyzed with the support of the grammatical system of transitivity, which is explained in the sub-section below.

2.1.2. SFL as methodological tool: the transitivity system

As the present research focuses on representation, the ideational meanings are explored at the lexicogrammatical level within the system of transitivity. The analysis takes place at the level of the clause, a clause being “a pattern of wording built up around a verb” (Unsworth, 2001, p. 27). The categorization of the clauses is done through the identification of participants (generally nouns and pronouns), processes (verbs) and circumstances (propositional phrases, nominal and adverbial groups), which elucidate the understanding of the experiential meanings being transmitted in the text.

In order to carry out such analysis, it is necessary to recognize the main processes of the clauses, and classify them as: a. *material* (used for concrete activities and events), b. *mental* (related to perception, cognition and affection), c. *relational* (attributing characteristics to something or identifying it with something else), d. *behavioral* (in between a material action and mental stimuli), e. *verbal* (related to speaking) and f. *existential* (to do with the presence/absence of

something). According to this classification, the participants are named as *Actor*, *Goal*, *Range* or *Beneficiary*, for material processes; *Senser* or *Phenomenon*, for mental processes; *Token*, *Value*, *Carrier*, or *Attribute*, for relational processes; *Behaver*, for behavioral processes; *Sayer*, *Receiver* or *Verbiage*, for verbal processes; and *Existent*, for existential processes (Martin, Matthiessen & Painter, 1997). The circumstances determine some factors surrounding the activity, which may be of location, time, cause, among other specifications that are not dealt with in this study. Such investigation helps us recognize the nature of the activities accomplished in the text. In the case of the present study, it supports the identification of the types of activities performed by the characters, the roles they take in each of them and the events surrounding.

There are some studies dealing with SFL in Portuguese (see Gonzaga, 2011; Lima-Lopes, 2001; Lima-Lopes & Venura, 2008; Gouveia & Barbara, 2003), but until the present moment there is not a specific grammar for this language. Therefore, some adaptations and considerations had to be done in order to carry out the analysis from the English grammar. One of these adaptations is related to emphasizing the meanings when the structure differs from the norm. For instance, in example 5 below “com a senhora”, this adverbial group, which would be analyzed as circumstance in the English grammar, was considered *Receiver*, a participant, because the use of the proposition “com” in this case is part of Portuguese language. Another point considered was analyzing the clauses as a whole, focusing on the main verb even when there are many verbs inserted. Therefore, the analysis considered two ranks of analysis so as to emphasize the meanings, such as in example 2 below. Another point considered is related to some phrases that contain a verb + a noun/adjective, which were considered processes, being classified as main process expansion (presented in example 7). (See Gonzaga, 2011).

In order to exemplify the occurrences of the process types, some instances taken from the data that are not discussed in the chapters dealing with the analysis description and discussion are presented below:

Example 1 – Material process

Tudo	começou	na saída da aula,	hoje...
Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance: location	Circumst.: time

Example 2 – Mental process

Não,	Magali...	eu	não sei
	Vocative	Senser	Process: Mental
o que		(eu)	tenho!
Phenomenon			
Attribute		Carrier	Process: Relational

Example 3 – Relational process

N-não!	(isto)	Foi	um ciúme... q-quer dizer... um cisco
	Carrier	P: Relational	Attribute

Example 4 – Behavioral process

Mônica?	V-você	está <i>cholando</i> ?
Vocative	Behaver	Process: Behavioral

Example 5 – Verbal process

Oi,	Dona Coisa!	(eu)	Já	falo	com a senhora!
	Vocative	Sayer		Process: Verbal	Receiver

Example 6 – Existential process

Será	que	tem	mais sorvete?
		Process: Existential	Existent

Example 7 – main process expansion - mpE

É	tão bom	dar um trato	no visual!
Pro: Relational	Value	Token	
		Process: Material: mpE	Circumstance

The participants in the written text are also further analyzed according to four among the ten aspects mentioned in van Leeuwen (2008)¹²: 1) genericization and specification; 2) nomination; 3) identification; and 4) overdetermination.

In relation to genericization and specification, participants “can be represented as classes or as specific, identifiable individuals” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 35). Example 8 portrays an example in which the

¹² For space and time constrains, emphasis is given to review just these aspects, which are the most recurrent ones found in the data analysis.

participants (‘garotas’ and also ‘jóias’) are referred to in a general way, not being specified. Specification occurs mostly in the way of nomination, the second aspect, specifically through the use of vocatives, as in examples 2, 4 and 5. According to van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 41, “nomination is typically realized by proper nouns”.

Example 8 – Genericization

Jóias!	Garotas	amam	jóias!
	Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon

In relation to the third aspect, identification, participants “are defined [...] in terms of what they [...] are” (p. 42). There are three types of identification: classification, relational identification, and physical identification. Classification is about the general way participants may be referred to, including age, gender and class. Relational identification, which was the most recurrent type in the analysis, has to do with the types of relation participants have with each other (parenthood, relations of friendship, for instance). Physical identification occurs when participants are referred to in terms of their physical characteristics.

As regards the last feature, overdetermination, it has to do with the engagement participants have in more than one social practice. For instance, Mônica and her friends are adolescents who once were little children.

Making use of categories similar to the ones described above, the participants in the images were also analyzed. These terms are explained in the next section, which presents a brief review of the second theoretical background used in this study – the Grammar of Visual Design.

2.2. Grammar of Visual Design

The present study has the support of the Grammar of Visual Design (henceforth GVD) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; 2006) in order to describe the imagetic part of the genre. The theoretical stance underlying the GVD is based on SFL, as the former is an extension of the latter for the analysis of texts that are realized through another

semiotic system: images¹³. The meanings investigated in the analysis of images are representational (in SFL, ideational) and also compositional (in SFL, textual). The representational ones are considered because of the focus of the present study, which centers on the representation of female characters in the comic book. The analysis of compositional meanings was also added to look at aspects related to the visual construction of the images. As interactive meanings (in SFL, interpersonal) were not explored in the present work, it is not reviewed in this section. The other two types are explained with the use of examples extracted from the corpus.

In the analysis of an image looking at representational meanings, the most salient type of representation is observed, whether it is conceptual or narrative. Most images encompass both types, but generally one of them prevails. After identifying the type of representation, a further analysis of processes, participants and circumstances is carried out. In narrative representations, the main process types that occur are action, reaction, verbal and mental. In these processes, there is the presence of vectors (Unsworth, 2001).

In figure 2.2, there are processes of action (the characters walking, carrying their school materials), reaction (Mônica is smiling, and her friends are staring at her, demonstrating surprise), verbal (there is Mônica's speech balloon), and a verbal or mental process (in a square at the top left, Mônica is telling the reader about the story in private away from the situation that is being depicted).



Figure 2. 2

¹³ For the present study, images are considered texts (following Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; 2006)

Processes of conceptual representations are also going on simultaneously in the same image. There are three process types in these representations: Classificational or Taxonomic, Analytical, and Symbolic. In figure 2.2, it is possible to find these three processes occurring. A taxonomic representation is related to the way the characters are distributed in the picture, which provides certain hierarchy to some of them. It is a covert taxonomy (because there are not labels classifying the participants, which occurs in overt taxonomies) in which Mônica and Cebola are the main participants in the event while Magali and Cascão are mostly peripheral. The image also presents an analytical representation (unstructured because there are no labels) as the participants are carriers of certain attributes, such as their clothes and hairstyles. Besides, although not much emphasized in this specific picture, there are symbolic processes by the presence of the characters themselves because of the significance they have in the Brazilian context. Image 3.3., on page 39, presents a more predominant instance of unstructured analytical representation, in which the character Irene is the possessor of some attributes (long blond hair and her smile, for instance).

An example of symbolic representation is in figure 2.3, in which the little monkeys contribute to metaphorically represent Mônica's embarrassing situation. In Brazilian context, there is the expression "pagar um mico" (mico being a kind of monkey), which is associated with going through a shameful situation. In English, there are the verbs "monkey around/about" and "make a monkey out of someone", which imply the same meaning – of being exposed to a ridiculous situation.¹⁴



Figure 2. 3

¹⁴ Definitions taken from the *New Oxford American Dictionary*

For the analysis of compositional meanings, the framework proposes investigating three issues: organization of information, framing and salience. As regards organization of information, Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) present three different ways in which images are generally composed in western society: as centre-margin (with the main element at the centre and peripheral participants receiving less emphasis), as it occurs in figure 2.2; as left-right, such as in figure 2.3, when the participant on the left generally appears as given information, i.e., as something the reader already knows, and on the right the novelty is depicted (in this case, Mônica's expression, which connects her with the given information); and top-bottom (when there is an ideal element on top and the real at the bottom), which occurred, according to the analysis, just once in the present corpus, in image #42¹⁵. In this image, on the top there are Mônica's memories of how things used to be in the past, and at the bottom of the frame (or page) there is the reality: the characters have grown up, she is no longer a child, and she is now suffering because of her passion for Cebola.

In relation to framing, the investigation refers to the presence or absence of borderlines in the images, that is, whether the participants are connected or not. Framings may be strong or weak depending on the density of the borders. In figure 2.4, for instance, the framings of the two squares presented are strong, as they are framed in two separate frames.



Figure 2. 4

As regards salience, this aspect points to the most emphasized element in the image, which consists of basically three features: size of the element, the amount of space occupied, and the plane in which it is placed. In figure 2.2, although the four characters are depicted in the same size and occupying same amounts of space, Mônica and Cebola

¹⁵ See appendix section

are the most emphasized ones because of the plane they occupy, which is foregrounded in relation to the other characters. In some other cases, in order to distribute salience equally, characters in first plane are depicted occupying the same or less space than the other participants, such as in figure 2.5. Dona Luisa is in first plane, in a larger size than the girls, but occupying less space in relation to them.



Figure 2. 5

The participants in the images from the data were also analyzed according to the framework proposed in van Leeuwen (2008) for categorizing social actors the same way it was done in the written part of the text. Participants may be excluded from the action, i.e., not depicted, which rarely occurs in the text analyzed. When participants are included, they may be presented in three different ways: (1) being agent or patient in the represented action; (2) as generic or as specific; and (3) depicted as individual or as part of a group.

In relation to the first feature, most participants are depicted as agents in the pictures. They speak, move, get involved in different actions. As regards the second feature, it has to do with whether they are depicted according to their specificity or if they refer to a group. Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 143) raises an important point in relation to this category, which has to do with creating stereotypes:

When people are photographed as desirable models of current styles of beauty and attractiveness, their individuality can seem to disappear behind what categorizes them—behind the hairdo, the makeup, the dress, the status accessories.

Therefore, at the same time each character is unique, it may project certain features that may prescribe social norms. The last category proposed by the author is related to the depiction of participants as individuals or as inserted in a whole group. In figure 2.6, for instance, the participants appearing at the back are not identified individually. They are depicted as a group of people that goes to the library (the only distinguished participant in this background is the seller, who is wearing an uniform, but it is still not specified).



Figure 2. 6

After having reviewed the aspects related to SFL and GVD, which are the tools for the descriptive analysis, the two following sections deal with the theories that base the discussions of data.

2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) provides important insights for investigating the impacts caused in and by social factors in any instance of language use. According to Fairclough (2003), the term *Discourse Analysis* involves the analysis of texts in their contexts, as language and social life are interconnected. The *Critical* part is used in the sense that CDA “is concerned with continuity and change” (ibid, p. 3). Therefore, it provides researchers with a basis to investigate what discourses have been reinforced (that may cause the continuity of certain social issues), and what are the ones that propose changes to society (either for the bad or for the good). Studies in CDA following the Anglo-Saxon perspective have been carried out at Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês at UFSC.

In Brazil, there are the studies by: Heberle (1997); Figueiredo (1995); Meurer (2005); among other scholars. The tri-dimensional

framework¹⁶ of discourse analysis proposed in Fairclough's works (1989; 1992; 1995; 2003) presents discourse as constituted of three parts: (1) text; (2) discursive practice; and (3) sociocultural practice. The first part, investigated by means of linguistic analysis, "can be called 'description'" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 73). The other two parts involve interpretation and explanation. Analysis of discursive practice, feature in between text and sociocultural practice, relates to text production, distribution and consumption. The analysis of sociocultural practice connects the investigated discourses with broader social issues, but being limited because, as signaled by Fairclough (1995), discourse analysts are not sociologist or cultural analysts.

Interpretation and explanation are guided by analytical categories derived from the descriptive investigation. They contain the most salient aspects identified in the text, which are further explored. As signaled in Fairclough (2003, p. 202), it is possible to see "how analytical categories and perspectives can be productively combined to enhance our capacity to see things in texts".

Also in order to carry out the discussion of data (involving interpretation and explanation), the findings derived from the linguistic analysis (the description part) are explored with the support of some of the questions proposed in Fairclough (2003), which serve as guide. They help in the investigation of discourses and representations of social events, as presented below (ibid, p. 193):

What discourses are drawn upon in the text? [...] What elements of represented social events are included or excluded, and which included elements are most salient? [...] How are processes represented? What are the predominant process types (material, mental, verbal, relational, existential)? [...] How are social actors represented (activated/passivated, personal/impersonal, named/classified, specific/generic)?

The answer to these questions is also related to the research questions of the present study, which are more specifically associated to the analyzed corpus. Those questions above, proposed in Fairclough

¹⁶ In the latest update of the tri-dimensional framework, some terminologies are changed and others added or further detailed. In the present study, both versions are considered and referred to.

(2003), are strongly related to the analysis of ideational meanings concerning the most predominant process types and the roles taken by participants as well as to the possible implications of such findings. Therefore, the interpretive explanatory analysis is accomplished with the support of these questions.

Media texts, including the one analyzed in this research, according to Fairclough (1995, p. 67) achieve “power and domination [through] consent rather than through coercion”, that is, not by forcing people to agree with them, but by convincing them through language. Therefore, language is a tool used by text producers to fulfill their goals, and the way it is arranged is a pivotal determinant for an effective accomplishment. The task of the discourse analyst is to unveil the ideologies that “reside in texts” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 88).

In addition to providing the basic framework and the guidelines for the discussion of data, CDA also bases the present study in the sense of encompassing the definitions of some of the main terms that give it support. In the next paragraphs, the definitions taken for the terms **ideology**, **discourse**, **representations**, **social structures**, **practices and events**, and **identity** are presented. Although not all these terms are used in the analysis, I find it relevant to briefly pinpoint them given their importance to CDA.

Fairclough (2003, p. 9) defines **ideology** as “representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation”. Considering that texts are present in almost all human activities and that ideologies may be present in texts, it is important to look at texts in order to unveil the ideologies they carry. Such awareness would allow people to be more powerful so as to decide whether they agree or not with what is presented to them. This way, they can get more freedom to think and act according to their individualities.

Some powerful institutions move people to follow their ideas and, specially, to consume their products. This is done mostly not by using physical strength, but through Discourse – which is permeated through the use of language and other semiotic resources, allowing the construction of beautifully elaborated texts that end up being very convincing.

In order to better scrutinize the definition of ideology, it is important to take a stance as regards the terms **discourse** and **representations**. As regards discourse, Fairclough (2003, p. 26) considers it in two dimensions: “abstractly, as an abstract noun, meaning language and other types of semiosis as elements of social life; more

concretely, as a count noun, meaning particular ways of representing part of the world”. Discourse is part of the social practice whereas discourses are a part of Discourse (figure 2.7 presents these terms in a more clear way).

In the world we live in there are certain **social structures**, of which languages are part. In human life, several **social events** take place, and texts are present in almost every human activity. What mediates social structures and social events, as pointed out in Fairclough (2003), are the **social practices**, and, respectively related to these three variables, what mediates language and text is Discourse. Furthermore, Discourse contains three dimensions, as mentioned previously, “genres (ways of acting), discourses (ways of representing) and styles (ways of being)” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 26). Ideologies are inserted into ways of representing (as its definition has been cited three paragraphs above).

Discourses are intrinsically related to representations. The definition of representations considered for this study is taken from Hall (1997, p. 61, cited in Caldas-Coulthard & van-Leeuwen, 2004, p. 13):

a process through which members of a culture use systems of signification to produce meanings. [...] objects, people, events in the world do not have a stable, final or true meaning by themselves. We, in society, are the ones who attribute meanings to things and to the world surrounding us. Meanings, consequently, will always change, from time to time and from culture to culture¹⁷.

Then, from what is depicted in a text to the events we experience in life, there are several meanings being (re)produced. Considering that every person experiences the world in a different way, the same event carries an amount of potential representations.

With the support of these definitions, it is feasible to assume that investigating a text allows one to find out the discourses going on and, this way, the representations that are being conveyed. These representations are contained in ideologies, which have a social impact

¹⁷ My translation for “o processo através do qual membros de uma cultura usam sistemas de significação para produzir significado... objetos, pessoas, eventos no mundo não tem em si mesmos qualquer significado fixo, final ou verdadeiro. Somos nós, em sociedade, que atribuímos significado às coisas e ao mundo que nos rodeia. Os significados, conseqüentemente, irão sempre mudar, de uma cultura ou período para outro”.

and, therefore, may exert social control. Figure 2.7 is an attempt to summarize the definitions presented in Fairclough (2003):

Social Structures	Language	genres (ways of acting)
Social Practices	Discourse	discourses (ways of representing) styles (ways of being)
Social Events	Text	

Figure 2. 7

Based on Fairclough (2003)

The present study aims at analyzing the comic book *Turma da Mônica Jovem* focusing on the representations of femininity. Therefore, it concentrates on the variable *discourses* (ways of representing) in order to unveil the ideologies present in the text. In order to do that, the social practices depicted in the text are looked at. A more definite definition of social practice is given in Fairclough (2003, p. 205): “By ‘social practice’ I mean a relatively stabilized form of social activity (examples would be classroom teaching, television news, family meals, medical consultations)”.

The ideologies and representations portrayed in the discourses contain several features, which the individual may relate to. In this situation, there is the issue of **identity**. Such construction is related to several aspects, such as: the social roles we are born with (as a family member, for instance) and the ones we choose (like our profession); and the issue of fears and desires, which are connected to the needs and the vulnerability of our bodies and, I would add, of our psychologies, too. As pointed out by Lemke (2008, p. 27), “the pains of adolescence and adult life are manifold, and most are related to socialization, to pressures to conform to particular identities”. We, humans in general wish to have friends, family, be useful to society, and fear being excluded from the groups we want to belong to. In childhood and adolescence, for instance, we want to participate in plays and talks, i.e., to be accepted by our age group. This concern may permeate our whole life.

In order to take part of a group, people generally need to conform to certain rules, sometimes institutionalized. People express their identities through several ways: what clothes they wear, what they talk about, what they eat and do, among other things. In the case of the present study, emphasis is put on gender identity. These expressions of

identity are investigated in the comic book as regards the female characters and how their feminine identities are construed.

2.4. Gender Studies

As the analysis is focused on the representation of female characters, another supportive theory is gender studies. This is a broad and interdisciplinary field that encompasses different strands and disciplines. Taking into account that this study is inserted in the area of language, the part of literature in gender studies reviewed for the present work and used as theoretical background for data analysis is the one on language studies in the area.

One of the main principles of gender studies is related to the differentiation between sex, a biological phenomenon, and gender, the social constructions of femininity and masculinity. These categories are not directly related, but society tends to impose them as so (Wodak, 1997). As pointed out by Heberle, Ostermann and Figueiredo (2006, p. 8), gender is “a socially constructed category, differentiated from the biological male/female opposition”¹⁸. In addition, this strong emphasis on difference helps to increase the generalizations regarding how women and men must behave (Cameron, 1990). These gendered discourses, which circulate in everyday activities, generate several naturalized ideas that end up influencing people, including the producers of media texts, who may not be aware of their sexism.

Despite the fact that gender is constructed and, therefore, individuals can make their own choices in relation to this (influenced by social prescriptions), the most favorable options available to belong to a group are related to the individual’s sex. Then, girls’ gender is feminine, and boys’ is masculine.

The term **femininity** refers to certain behaviors and characteristics expected of females. By performing in accordance with some prescribed features and (sometimes implied) rules, they are supposed to be better accepted in social life. The attributes that constitute femininity vary depending on cultural issues. The external differences between men and women in clothing or hairstyles, for

¹⁸ My translation for: “uma categoria socialmente construída, diferenciada da oposição biológica macho/fêmea”.

instance, construct the characteristics they are supposed to have, in a binary opposition. As pointed out by Cranny-Francis et al (2003, p. 198),

individual men, women, boys and girls develop notions of what each gender should properly look like (at any given age and from within a particular class) and maintain themselves accordingly – they fashion themselves a proper look. They become self-controlling, self-regulating subjects.

Such concern in conforming the norms makes individuals exert control over their bodies, behaviors and fashion. Concerning femininity, Cranny-Francis et al (2003) mention that these discourses inculcate the desire of being a beautiful woman. Such desire, however, is never fulfilled, so that women should be always consuming in order to get closer to this ideal.

Considering that the characters of the comic book are inserted in an urban area from a city in the southwest of Brazil, the attributes of femininity are mostly related to this reality. These features are investigated in the data analysis and related to what has been found in other studies.

Some characteristics of the idealized model of femininity may be stereotypically represented in the characters. A **stereotype** “is a radically reductive way of representing whole communities of people by identifying them with a few key characteristics” (Cranny-Francis et al, 2003, p. 141). And these characteristics are generally based on physical appearances. The fulfillment of certain features includes an individual in a certain group or vice versa, and belonging to a certain group generates a kind of prejudice that implies in a generalized way that s/he is constituted in a stereotypical way.

Studies in the area of gender and language encompass the investigation of different genres, such as advertisements (Böhlke, 2008), women’s magazines (Heberle, 1997; 2004; Figueiredo, 1995), teenagers’ magazines (Ostermann, 1995) and films (Bezerra, 2008). Among the studies found that deal with comic books, there is Cé (2009), who analyzes the representations of female characters in *shojo mangas*.

The results of the present study are compared and contrasted to other studies in the area, including the ones mentioned above. Such

discussion is carried out in Chapter 4. The objective of drawing such comparisons, which is part of the analysis of the sociocultural practice, is to check whether there is continuity or change in the discourses of femininity in the media under investigation.

After reviewing the main aspects of the theoretical background underlying the present study, the following chapter presents the descriptive part of the results.

Chapter 3

3. Data analysis

Through the analysis of micro and macro elements of different kinds of text, linguistic choices made by writers are shown to entail specific social meanings. (Heberle, 1997, p. 20)

In this chapter, the results of a detailed analysis of the comic book *Turma da Mônica Jovem* (henceforth *TMJ*) are presented with the purposes of: (1) contextualizing what is going on in the twelve selected issues and in the analyzed story; and (2) presenting the results of the detailed analysis of the story.

The contextualization of the issues and of the story is accomplished with the support of SFL, more specifically the part concerning the variable *Field* of the Context of Situation, which provides the contextualization of the issues (Halliday, 1978; Eggins, 2004; Meurer & Dellagnelo, 2008). The detailed analysis is achieved through a systemic-functional analysis of a chosen story, which involves a visual analysis of representational and compositional meanings in the images (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006; Unsworth, 2001), and a verbal analysis of experiential meanings in the written text (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In addition, the participants in both written and imagetic texts are investigated based on the description of social actors proposed in van Leeuwen (2008).

3.1. Context of Situation: variable *Field*

As in the present study the focus is on the analysis of the representations of femininity constructed in *TMJ*, it is important to take a look at the female characters portrayed in the comic book in order to get familiarized with them. Before concentrating on the results derived from the analysis, a brief description of these characters is presented in the next sub-section.

3.1.1. Describing the female characters

There are approximately (roughly counted) thirty female characters in the comic book *TMJ*. However, the main ones, i.e., those

who appear the most and whose presence are important and most constant in the everyday life issues to be analyzed, are basically the ten characters listed and briefly described below:

Mônica: The main character of the series. Cebola, Cascão, Magali and Mônica form the core group of friends. According to the descriptions conducted in issue #0¹⁹, the characteristics she maintains are: the physical and emotional strength; her big teeth; the leadership of the group; her teddy rabbit, Sansão, with which she uses to beat the boys only in certain occasions; the passion for Cebola; and the maintenance of the same friends. What has changed is that now, besides being older, she wears different clothes (no longer the famous red dress), is slim, and is concerned with her appearance. She appears to continue being very obstinate, friendly, loyal, charming, sometimes a little abrupt, but also very tender. She is present in all the issues and almost always has a central role in the stories.

Magali: Mônica's best friend (since childhood) – a very dedicated friend, always standing by Mônica. Magali is also slim, wears different and modern clothes, and, as in her early version, loves eating, but with the difference that now she is careful with her diet, because the concerns related to fitness have emerged. She dates Quinzinho (the same boy she used to date in childhood), but finds the biology teacher very handsome. She is a very delicate and talented girl, and is present in all the issues.

Denise: As opposed to the classical comic books, this character has frequently appeared in *TMJ*. She is a very extroverted person, who likes to show-off, to gossip and to find out information about what happens to the other people in the group. Especially because of this, she is not a very reliable friend in the group. Like the other girls, she is also concerned about clothing and fitness. She is single and it is not clear whether she is in love with any of the boys – she just thinks most of them are handsome. She is very close to Carmem, and in some stories the two of them appear as being somehow “evil” characters.

Carmem: She is not exactly the antagonist, because the role she plays is very peripheral and she generally does not participate much in the group. Her major concerns are related to appearances. In the classical comic books, she is called “Carminha Frufu”, and seems to represent the type of girl that is very attractive to the boys, who always

¹⁹ These results come from a pilot study produced for the course “Qualitative and Quantitative Research”, at PPGI, taught by Prof. Dr. Raquel D’ely and Prof. Dr. Josalba Vieira in the second semester of 2010.

get distracted and enchanted regarding her beauty. Because of this fact, many times the other girls envy her. All these characteristics persist in Carmem's new version.

Maria Cascuda: Cascão's girlfriend, as she used to be in the classical version. She is the main characters' friend, goes out with the girls, participates in the activities, but she does not appear much. Her participation is mostly attached to her boyfriend.

Marina: She is about one year younger than the rest of the group, and her participation in the stories is very frequent, especially in the supernatural adventures. However, she also participates a lot in the everyday life activities. She dates Franja (Franjinha, at the classical comic books, in which they already used to flirt), is talented for painting, and very friendly.

Aninha: At the classical comic books she is always presented as Titi's girlfriend. This state prevailed in *TMJ*, too, up to issue #31, when they break up. From this edition on, Aninha has revealed interesting characteristics (which will be better explored in the analysis).

Maria Mello: This new character (with no early version) did not appear in the first issues, but started to be present from issue #26 on. She is an anorexic girl, who is, therefore, extremely concerned about her weight. She is a secondary character, but her presence in the group has been very frequent. Her inclusion may have arisen as a way of bringing into debate at the comic book issues related to health problems that have been discussed in social life.

Isa: This character, another secondary one, and also absent in the classical comic books, first appeared in issue #33, and with prominence. Isa comes on the scene as a new friend in the group and gets along very well with all of them despite their prejudice towards her overweight. She is also present in issues #34, #35 and #36, which signals that she has effectively become part of the group.

Dona Luisa: Mônica's mother. She does not participate much in the issues, but in the #5, which is investigated in the microanalysis, her presence is very important. Mônica is her only child, to whom she is very dedicated. Dona Luisa is married to Seu Sousa, and in relation to her professional life, besides being a mother, she also works at home as a decorator²⁰.

²⁰ Source: http://pt-br.monica.wikia.com/wiki/Dona_Lu%C3%ADsa. Retrieved July, 5th, 2011.

3.1.2. Contextualizing the twelve selected issues²¹

In order to investigate the representations of femininity in *Turma da Mônica Jovem*, it is important to contextualize the stories presented in the issues that deal with everyday life experiences. Such description is carried out with the support of SFL concerning the Context of Situation variable of *Field*, in which the posed question is “what is going on?”. The main objective is to contextualize the stories in relation to the events and the characters’ participations. In Chapter 4, some textual evidence from these issues is provided in order to expand the analytical categories derived from the selected story.

The 36 issues released from August 2008 up to July 2011 (the period of time considered for the present study) were read and it was observed whether they dealt mostly with supernatural or everyday life matters. The ones emphasizing everyday life activities, on which readers would more easily identify with, were selected for the present study. They comprehend the amount of twelve issues.

In order to better organize the report of the *Field* description of the selected issues, the guiding feature will be the environments in which each event took place. The settings in which these experiences occur, coincidentally also twelve, are: (1) at school, including the classroom, the sports court, the corridors, the refectory and the info lab; (2) at the characters’ homes; (3) at the shopping mall, including the cinema and the food court; (4) on the streets, squares and playgrounds; (5) at parties and shows; (6) at a TV program; (7) at a bookstore; (8) at other people’s apartments, to take care of their pets; (9) at the beach; (10) at the hospital; (11) at a dancing class; and (12) on the internet. In all of them, the main characters, Mônica, Magali, Cebola and Cascão are engaged in some activities with the rest of the group.

In most of these everyday life issues, several activities are carried out at school, which is not only the setting where the characters attend classes, but mainly where they meet, talk, play sports, and, in issue #9, work on a play. Sometimes they are in the classroom talking or thinking of something else while the teachers are explaining the course contents. There is not much emphasis on studying, an aspect that is considered in issue #10, when Mônica observes how low her grades were. She had spent too much time helping her friends instead of studying for the tests and working on the courses tasks. In order to help

²¹ The individual description of each issue is presented at the appendix.

her, Cascão, Magali and Cebola prepared an “emergency program” of studying at Magali’s house.

The school is also presented mainly as a space of socialization, in which news about the characters’ status are shared, such as when Cebola and Mônica announce their recently established love relationship, in issue #34. The situations involving flirting, dating and falling in love are strongly present at school. Magali is in love with the sciences teacher, Mônica and Cebola argue and flirt, and the characters who have been dating since childhood (Marina and Franja, Magali and Quinzinho, Cascão and Cascuda, and Aninha and Titi) meet. It is also at school where new characters are introduced, such as Toni, in issue #9, and Isa, in issue #33.

However, in issue #31, when Aninha and Titi break up, the school is presented as a place where the characters may find opportunities to learn and get occupied. Aninha was very sad and went to the school info lab in order to stay alone. There, a teacher met her and suggested that she should get engaged in different activities, and said that there were many things to be learnt. She presented several options, including learning a language, taking courses on dancing, photographing, design and drawing. In this situation, the school was an environment in which the student could get involved in activities that would help increase her knowledge.

At the characters’ homes, a more private sphere, the main characters meet to study or to plan something, as in issue #20, in which they meet in order to count the money they had and decide what they should do to get more in order to go out. It is also at home where the characters talk about their personal lives and the events going on, in a confidential manner. In issue #5, in the story “The boys are all the same”, Denise, Magali and Mônica stand at Mônica’s bedroom talking about what had happened at school, what they thought the boys were doing, and other private topics. In issue #31, the girls meet Aninha at her home in order to comfort her, give her support. It is also at home where the female characters get ready to go out and show each other the clothes they would wear, as Mônica and Magali do in issues #18 and #35. Also in issue #18, in which Mônica was trying to win a contest to become member of the famous group “Start Starts”, Magali went to her house to help her practice several skills she was supposed to develop to get positive results, such as singing, dancing, giving interviews, and dressing in a proper way.

The characters frequently go to the shopping mall. It is a public sphere where they are engaged in socializing among themselves and

spending their leisure time. They go to the cinema together a lot, as in issues #5, #9, #20, #31 and #34. They also regularly visit the food court in order to talk, as it happens with emphasis on issues #19, #31 and #34. The topics of their talks are mainly the experiences they are living, their feelings, and problems involving friendship and love relationships. The strong presence of the shopping mall in the stories signals that the characters are inserted in an urban reality.

Outside settings are also strongly visited by the characters. In one of the stories in issue #5, the girls go camping in order to spy what the boys were doing. In issue #10, Cascão is presented practicing a new sport: *le parkour*, in which he performs several difficult acrobatic movements at the square and playground. In this same issue Mônica spends almost the whole story sitting in a square seat, looking at her computer, remembering the time she had spent helping her friends. In issue #33, the story starts with Marina photographing Maria Mello at the square. Another issue in which the events happen in outside setting is #25, in which the characters Felipe and Luisa, two famous roller-skaters, are challenged by Mônica to face a contest. She and her friends practice roller-skating at the square and playground, where the competition takes place.

The characters go to a party and to shows, as in issues #18, #19 and #36. The party (in issue #35) is a masquerade one, and it also involves a competition for choosing the best costume. In the issues dealing with the shows there are also competitions. In issues #18 and #19, there is a contest to find a new member for the pop band 'Star Stars', and in issue #36, to choose a champion band. In all these issues, Mônica's dream of getting famous is revealed. She even tries to hide her efforts from Magali, who is much more artistically talented than Mônica. However, Magali, a very sweet girl, always seeks to help her friend accomplish her dream.

Mônica also helped Magali, in issue #10, but on her manner: through her physical strength. Magali was going to participate on a TV program about food, and Mônica was chosen to be her duo at the competition. Mônica pressed the bottom, with speed and strength, and Magali, who knew all the answers, responded.

In issue #20, in which the main characters are seeking to gain money, two new settings appear: a bookstore, where the boys intend to sell some old comic books in order to get money; and the apartments of other people, from whom Mônica and Magali are paid to take care of pets. In the same issue, in the beginning, while Mônica is in the

classroom, she remembers what had happened on her vacations, some days ago, at the beach, where she and Cebola were flirting.

In issue #33, which deals with matters of weight and health, there is a part at the end in which Maria Mello, the anorexic girl, is taken to the hospital. It is also there that the characters find out about Isa's health problem, hypothyroidism. In this issue another different setting is presented: a dance class. Only the girls participate in this activity (the boys go there just to watch them). The objective was to stimulate Isa to lose weight by doing a fun physical activity. The other girls' main stimuli to do that were getting fit and showing off to the boys. There they met Aninha, who was working as a monitor in a part-time job. She was beautifully dressed with the dance costumes – Titi got hypnotized when he saw her. After having broken up with Titi, Aninha started working in several places (selling Cinema tickets, show tickets, and at a CD shop, for instance).

An additional setting in which the characters are strongly present, which is not physical, is on the internet. Denise, for instance, has a blog in which she publishes gossips about famous people and about what happens to the characters, and broadcasts videos on 'you-tubo'. The other characters also have blogs (Magali), websites (Cebola) and 'you-tubo' channels (Cascão), as shown in issue #10.

3.1.3. Analysis of the story *Eleven things that girls love*

The selected story for the microanalysis, *Eleven things that girls love*, is the first of the three stories in issue #5. It occupies half of the issue and takes place mainly in three different settings: (1) at school, where the problem emerges; (2) in Mônica's bedroom, the private sphere where the female friends meet to talk about intimate topics; and (3) the shopping mall, where female characters go in order to get distracted from the problem Mônica was going through concerning her feelings for Cebola.

At school, Mônica experiences some new sensations in relation to Cebola. She feels jealous because he was going to study English with another girl, Irene. Then, she finds herself in love with him, and runs away to her home. Magali, her best friend, comes after her and they talk in Mônica's bedroom about what had happened. Dona Luisa, Mônica's mother, joins the talk, and tells Mônica that at her age it is normal to be going through changes and discovering new feelings. As Mônica was feeling bad because Cebola had preferred studying with another girl, Dona Luisa tells her, Magali, and Denise and Cascuda, who arrive

afterwards, about the eleven things that girls love. It was a way of getting Mônica distracted from the situation she was going through. The first, second and third things girls love are accomplished at home: 'make-up', 'a gift', and 'friends'.

The fourth thing is 'to go shopping'. Therefore, they go to the shopping mall in order to buy anything, especially clothes. Dona Luisa calls her husband, Seu Sousa, in order to ask him for some money. The fifth thing is 'going to the hairstylist', the sixth, 'jewelry', the seventh, 'perfumes', the eighth, 'reading' (especially about fashion, beauty, behavior and dieting), the ninth, 'desserts', the tenth, 'flowers', and the eleventh, 'boys'.

At the end, when Mônica arrives home again, Cebola is waiting for her, holding flowers. She forgives him for what had happened in the morning and then they study English together.

3.2. Visual Analysis of the selected story

As reviewed in Chapter 2, the analysis of 185 images was carried out according to the Grammar of Visual Design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; 2006) with a focus on two types of meanings: representational and compositional. The analysis of representational meanings investigated the type of representation and the processes, whereas the analysis of compositional meaning concerned information value, framing and salience.

As regards representational meanings, narrative representations prevailed, especially action, reaction, verbal, and some mental processes. In addition, there is a verbal and mental process throughout the story, in which Mônica narrates the events. In some images, there were some conceptual analytical representations in which the characters portrayed their possessive attributes.

In relation to the compositional meanings, most images were composed as left-right representations and in some of them centre-margin. Framings were strongly present in order to segregate the space of written text from the images and to contour the pictures. In some parts, images were juxtaposed and connected, but generally each of them stood in a square. Considering salience, this aspect was many times equally distributed, and there were three features observed: plane occupied, size, and amount of space.

In order to illustrate the results of the analysis of the 185 images, 15 of them were selected to be presented in section 3.2.1. The

criteria supporting the choices are that they present different stages in the story and varied representations of the female characters' actions, reactions and conceptual portrayals.

3.2.1. Representational and Compositional meanings

The first image in the story depicts Mônica crying, sad, frowning, looking at the streets (reaction processes), disappointed with Cebola. There is also a speech balloon (verbal process) signaling that Cebola is calling her. The information value is distributed left-right, the speech balloon as *given* and Mônica crying as *new*. The framings are strongly marked, and the image is a close shot of Mônica's face, juxtaposed to image #2. Saliency is given to the tears streaming from her big eyes and her sad expression. Mônica is being represented as a girl who is crying, getting emotional.



Figure 3. 1 - Image #1

The second and third chosen pictures are presented as a flashback of what has happened to make Mônica sad.



Figure 3. 2 - Image #10



Figure 3. 3 - Image #15

In image #10 she is ashamed because of what she has said – that Cebola is handsome. There are three processes going on:

- 1) action (Magali is raising her fingers, Mônica is holding the notebook against her face, and the boys are holding their knapsacks);
- 2) reaction (Magali is looking up, patiently, making efforts to stand that situation, as it can be perceived in her sweating, while Mônica is expressing frustration with herself, and the boys are staring at her, astonished); and
- 3) verbal processes (the female characters' speeches).

In image #15, the same processes occur:

- 1) action (Irene is waving at Cebola and holding her notebook, Mônica is turning to Cebola, and Cebola is shrinking, holding the knapsack and the notebook with strained arms);
- 2) reaction (Irene smiles and glances back at Cebola while Mônica is very angry, screaming, and Cebola is grinning with embarrassment); and
- 3) verbal (the three characters speak).

There is, in addition, a conceptual representation of Irene: an unstructured analytical process, which may extrapolate to a symbolic one. She is the carrier of several attributes, such as long blonde hair, delicate movements, long eyelashes, mild smile and elegant clothes, which make her symbolize the stereotypical beautiful and graceful girl – the opposite of Mônica's behavior in the scene.

As regards compositional meanings, both images are organized as left-right. In image #10, the girls on the left and the boys on the right. In image #15, the roles of given and new do not match with the left-right correspondence, as Irene, which corresponds to the new information, is put on the left, and Mônica arguing with Cebola, which is something known/given, on the right. A possible explanation for such inversion

would be the attribution of emphasis to what appears on the left, which is the first element that guides the reading path.

In image #10, framings on the borders are weak while in image #15 they are strongly marked, having just some slight invasions of Cebola's hair and Irene's arm. As regards salience, in both images the participants on the left are more emphasized by appearing in the first plane and in a larger size while the amount of space is almost equally distributed.

In the fourth figure, image #41, Magali is presented as a very kind friend. She visits Mônica in her house in order to talk to her and help her overcome her sadness.



Figure 3. 4 - Image #41

In relation to representational meanings, both participants are engaged in three processes:

1) action (Magali is caressing Mônica's hair, sitting on her friend's bed, Mônica is also sitting on her bed and holding her face with her hands to emphasize the expression of sadness and disappointment);

2) reaction (Mônica is crying and looking below, Magali is looking at her friend, smiling in a sweet tone); and

3) verbal (Magali and Mônica are talking).

In addition, there is the verbal and²² mental process of Mônica's narration below. The organization of information value is centre-margin, with the two characters centralized and the elements in the bedroom as margins. The image is weakly framed, as it is limited to the page. In

²² The character's narration was considered simultaneously verbal and mental processes, as it presents an externalization of her thoughts

relation to salience, both characters are equally salient, as they have the same size, and occupy the same plane and amount of space.



Figure 3. 5 - Image #61

The fifth chosen image presents Dona Luisa, Mônica's mother, as a very attentive mum. In this narrative representation, the participants are engaged in three processes: action (Mônica is laying her head on her mother's chest, Dona Luisa is cuddling her daughter); reaction (Mônica is smiling and closing her eyes, Dona Luisa is smiling looking at someone, which can be inferred to be Magali); and verbal (Dona Luisa is speaking). In relation to compositional meanings, there is a centre-margin organization, as mother and daughter are the central elements. The image is strongly framed, and salience is equally distributed between the two characters, who occupy the same plane and amount of space, and have the same size.



Figure 3. 6 - Image #71



Figure 3. 7 - Image #148

The sixth and seventh selected images from the story *Eleven things that girls love* are part of images #71 and #148²³. In both cases, the participants are inserted in narrative representations. However, because of their posing, they may be analyzed as being inserted in

²³ The complete images can be accessed in the appendix section.

conceptual representations, depicting unstructured analytical processes in which these characters are possessors of several attributes.

Magali is exhibiting her slim body, the clothes, and is posing. The same occurs with Dona Luisa in figure 3.7, in which she is presenting herself as a very elegant woman. Analyzed in isolation, both figures present the characters as the salient elements. As regards the organization of information value, in figure 3.6, it is left-right: Magali on the left, her speech balloon and the ‘puf’ (which signals the transformation from image #69 to image #71) on the right. In figure 3.7, Dona Luisa is the central element, which points to a centre-margin organization.



Figure 3. 8 - Image #116

The same conceptual representation may also be perceived in the image portraying Denise, who is a very extroverted and exhibitionist female character. She is performing a narrative representation, being involved in three processes: action (one of her arms is on the waist, and with the other she is caressing her own hair); reaction (she is expressing some arrogance, looking at something, probably to Cascuda, to whom she is talking); and verbal (she is speaking). In addition, she is portraying herself as the possessor of attributes (her clothes, hair, slim body and behavior). The speech uttered by her (‘Simple is your style [sic], girlfriend!’²⁴) reinforces the arrogant attitude she portrays through the body movements and the facial expression.

In relation to compositional meanings, the image is organized as centre-margin, Denise being the central element. The image is

²⁴ All translations from the written text were taken from an English version of the comic book released on September, 2011.

framed, one of the borders being invaded by the participant's right arm. In relation to salience, the character is the only element, which makes her prevail.

The ninth and tenth chosen figures depict Mônica performing two actions related to the eleven things that girls love: putting make up, in figure 3.9, and scenting a perfume in figure 3.10.



Figure 3. 9 - Image #83



Figure 3. 10 - Image #140

In both pictures, the character is involved in two processes: action (moving the arms to put on her make-up, and holding a perfume bottle and smelling her wrist); and reaction (she is smiling, with the eyes closed, in both cases). In figure 3.10, there is also a verbal process and the mental or verbal process in a square above, containing her narration. As regards the compositional meanings, the image in figure 3.9 analyzed

in isolation (it is part of image #83) presents Mônica as the central and most salient element, with weak framings. The same analysis also applies to figure 3.10.

In figures 3.11 and 3.12, the characters Mônica, Magali and Cascuda are depicted performing two other features can also be identified among the eleven things girls love: going shopping and reading.



Figure 3. 11 - Image #115



Figure 3. 12 - Image #148

As regards representational meanings, in both images the participants are engaged in three processes: action (in figure 3.11, they are walking, holding shop bags; in figure 3.12, Mônica is sitting on the ground while Magali and Cascuda are sitting on the sofa, the three of them holding books and reading them); reaction (in both images, the three of them are smiling, and looking at each other); and verbal (they speak in both images). As regards compositional meanings, figure 3.11 is organized as centre-margin, with Mônica at the centre and her friends at the margins. Figure 3.12 is part of image #148, which is a left-right composition. However, analyzed in isolation the image may be considered as having a centre-margin configuration. In relation to salience, it is almost equally distributed among the three characters in

both images, because the three of them have the same size and occupy the same amounts of space. The aspect of framing diverges in the sense that image #115 is strongly framed while the framings in image #148 are weaker.

Another item in Dona Luisa's list about what girls love is 'friends'. Figure 3.13 presents the four girls embracing, representing union, joy and partnership.



Figure 3. 13 - Image #100

There is a narrative representation, with processes of: action (the four girls are holding each other); reaction (they are smiling, Denise is looking at Mônica, while the other three have the eyes closed); and verbal (Mônica and Denise speak). A conceptual representation may also be inferred: classificational covert taxonomy, without an explicit superordinate element. All the girls are part of the group of friends.

The image depicted in figure 3.13 is part of image #100. Analyzed in isolation, the compositional meanings are configured as centre-margin organization, with the four girls as centre, strong framings, and, in relation to salience, the four girls are equally emphasized, as all of them have the same size and occupy the same amount of space and plane.

In figure 3.14, Dona Luisa presents another thing girls love: 'desserts'. The characters are involved in three narrative processes: action (Dona Luisa is raising her arms; Mônica, Denise and Cascuda also move their arms); reaction (Dona Luisa is smiling, her eyes closed; the girls' eyes are popped out; Mônica is smiling, Magali's mouth is wide open; Denise is smiling with excitement; and Cascuda is opening her mouth); and verbal (Dona Luisa is speaking and the girls are saying 'awn', expressing astonishment).

In relation to compositional meanings, the image portrays the left-right organization, Dona Luisa on the left and the girls on the right.

The image is framed. Saliency is equally distributed among the elements – the characters and the table containing food.



Figure 3. 14 - Image #159

In the last part of the story, after having been distracted by going shopping and all the other ‘things girls love’, Mônica goes back home, where Cebola is waiting for her. She quickly forgives him for what has happened and they become friends again.



Figure 3. 15 - Image #179

The representational meanings include a narrative representation involving the participants Mônica, Cebola and the bouquet in three processes: action (Mônica is holding the bouquet; Cebola is holding her shoulder); reaction (Cebola is smiling, eyes closed, expressing joy; Mônica is looking somewhere, smiling, eyes shining, with a happy expression); and verbal (Mônica is speaking). In relation to compositional meanings, it is a centre-margin organization, with the two characters and the bouquet at the centre. The image is weakly framed and saliency is equally distributed among the

participants, who are on the same plane, occupying the same amount of space and having the same size.

3.2.2. The representation of participants in the images

The participants in the images are further analyzed according to the framework proposed in van Leeuwen (2008) as regards the categorization of social actors. The aspects investigated in the participants concern: (1) their involvement in action; (2) whether they are depicted specifically or generically; and (3) whether they are depicted individually or in groups.

As regards the involvement in action, most of the images depict the female characters in narrative representations. The roles taken by them are mostly active and, in very few cases, passive. One case in which there is a passive depiction occurs when Mônica is at the beauty salon, receiving professional treatment:



Figure 3. 16 - Image #119

Figure 3.17 presents the four adolescent female characters being the agents of some actions: dealing with a cell phone, listening to music and dancing.



Figure 3. 17 - Image #137

In relation to the aspect of specific and generic depiction, van Leeuwen (2008, p. 143) explains: “there is a difference between concentrating the depiction on what makes a person unique and [...] on what makes a person into a certain social type”. The characters in Figure 3.17 are depicted in general actions concerning what girls love to do. Therefore, the actions do not refer specifically to themselves, but to girls in general, which is the group they assume to be representing.

Although in some cases the characters are portrayed specifically (as in Figure 3.18, in which Mônica shows her notebook with Sansão on the cover), there are constant references between them and adolescents in general as it can be perceived at the topological analytical process in Figure 3.19, presenting what occurs when kids become adolescents.



Figure 3. 18 - Image #28



Figure 3. 19 - Image #68

Regarding the last analyzed aspect, the categorization of participants as individuals or as group, the female characters are often depicted as being part of a group in which each of them is different. However, despite the specific differences between them in terms of some psychological and physical traits, they represent a homogenized group.

3.3. Verbal analysis

In addition to the visual analysis, the written semiotic mode was also investigated with the purpose of identifying the representations of femininity. In order to fulfill that, the ideational metafunction was explored through a lexicogrammatical analysis according to the transitivity system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Instances of the six process types were found in the written text. In the next six sub-sections, the results are presented. Relational and Material processes were the most recurrent ones, appearing 125 and 123 times, respectively. Mental processes were realized in 64 choices and the Verbal ones in 28. Finally, Behavioral and Existential processes occurred nine and four times, respectively. It is important to mention that the complex clauses were analyzed up to two levels in order to provide a more complete view of the ideational meanings construed in the written part of the story.

3.3.1. Relational processes

Relational processes were further categorized as attributive or identifying²⁵. Among the 125 occurrences, 97 were attributive and 28

²⁵ Relational processes were specified just according to the modes of being, as attributive or as identifying. The analysis concerning types of relation

identifying. The stronger presence of this process type reiterates the assumption that the story is related to identity construction and on the ways the female characters relate to the external world.

Attributive relational processes were realized in order to refer to the characters' states.

Mônica?	Tá	tudo	bem,	filha?
Vocative	P: Relational: attributive	Carrier	Attribute	Vocative

The following clause is uttered by Mônica:

(você)	Sabe	quando	you
Senser	Process: Mental		Carrier
fica		estranhamente atraída	por alguém
Process: Relational		Attribute	Circumstance

In the part of the story in which the two instances presented above appear, Mônica is feeling confused about her feelings towards Cebola. At the end of the story, however, after having gone through the eleven things girls love, she felt better:

Agora,	(eu)	to	bem!
	Carrier	Process: Relational	Attribute

Relational attributive processes were also chosen to refer to the characters' physical and psychological features. The first instance below is about Cebola, when Mônica and Magali are talking about how he has changed from childhood. The second occurrence takes place when Dona Luisa is telling the girls about the natural changes that have happened in the shape of their bodies and the consequences derived from hormonal alteration.

Ele	era	um peste,	mesmo!
Carrier	Process: Relational attributive	Attribute	

(intensive, possessive or circumstantial) was not carried out due to time and space constrains.

E hoje,	(vocês)	são	mocinhas com... bom... transformadas!
	Carrier	Pro: Relational attributive	Attribute

Other relational attributive processes refer to objects and characters' possessions:

Menina...	bolsa de mulher	tem	tudo	mesmo,	né?
Vocative	Carrier	P: Relational	Attribute		

Ah... tá bom!	A idéia	foi	minha,	mesmo...
	Carrier	Process: Relational	Attribute	

In the first instance, Magali was saying that in the purse of a woman it is possible to find anything. The second clause was from Dona Luisa, who was saying that the idea of going shopping had been hers, so that she would pay for Magali's purchases.

Relational identifying processes, which had fewer occurrences, were mainly used to relate the characters, to some states or characteristics. The following clauses were uttered by Mônica and Irene, respectively:

Sim,	essa	sou	eu...
	Value	Process: Relational	Token

Então,	você	é	a famosa Mônica?
	Token	Process: Relational	Value

These processes were also realized in order to introduce the characters' names among themselves:

Ô, Mônica!	Esta	é	a Ilene... digo, Irene,	do Segundo A!
Vocative	Value	P: Relat.	Token	Circumstance

(meu nome)	É	Luísa! Dona Luísa!
Token	Process: Relational	Value

3.3.2. Material processes

The 123 material processes found in the written part of the story relate to a variety of activities performed by the characters without following a regular pattern. In 33 instances, the processes are classified in a second level of stratification, where mental or relational processes are the main ones. In the two clauses below, these occurrences are exemplified.

Bom...	quando	sua melhor amiga	vem	desde a infância,
	Circumstance			
		Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance
fica		difícil	esconder	alguma coisa...
Process: Relational		Value	Token	
			Process: Material	Goal

Numero um...	garotas	amam	se	maquiar!
	Senser	P: Mental	Phenomenon	
			Goal	Process: Material

Material processes also refer to some concrete actions that the adult characters, especially the adolescents' parents, are able to perform in benefit of their children.

Mas	(eu)	levo	vocês	até o número quatro!
	Actor	Process: Material	Goal	Circumstance

(eu)	Vou transferir	um dinheiro!	Boas compras!
Actor	Process: Material	Goal	

Material processes in which adolescent characters are the main participants differ when relating to boys and when relating to girls. While the ones that refer to girls point to actions they perform towards themselves or to events that affect them, those in which the boys are the main participants refer to actions they take in order to interfere in the external world (see Heberle, 1997). The four following instances refer half to girls and boys, respectively:

O que	acontece	comigo?
Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance

Antes de	sair	e	arrasar...	
Circumstance				
	Process: Material		Process: Material	
(elas)	têm	que	se	produzir!
Actor	Pro... Material		Goal	...cess:

Bom...	então,	(eu)	<i>espelo ter aceltado</i>	no buquê!	<i>Losas! Digo... rosas!</i>
		Actor	P: Material	Goal	

Eles	aprontam,	pisam na bola,
Actor	Process: Material	Process: Material: mpE

As a result of adolescents' differentiated register, in some cases material processes and participants conflate, forming a main process extension, a process that encompasses a verb + noun/adjective.

Só	quebrando o gelo,	Mô!
	Process: Material: mpE	Vocative

O que é que tá pegando?
Process: Material: mpE

3.3.3. Mental processes

Given the importance of mental processes in this story, they were further classified according to their four types. Among the 64 occurrences, 32 were emotive, 22 cognitive, 9 perceptive, and 1 desiderative.

The female characters experience all of the emotive mental processes, starting with the title of the story:

Onze coisas	que	as garotas	amam!!
Phenomenon		Senser	Process: Mental: emotive

Then, eleven things are presented: six of them following the similar structure ‘*Garotas amam... (something)*’; three being presented in interrogative mood ‘*Que garota não ama/gosta (something)?*’; and two of them in existential and relational clauses.

Besides the presentation of the eleven items and the emphasis given by the characters along the story to these items, some other emotive mental processes, related to the characters’ emotive state, were also presented.

The process *é a fim* was analyzed as mental. This choice was made because although its structuring resembles a relational process (and it could be analyzed as such), the meaning implied is to like/to be in love with, i.e., the process refers to a feeling.

Você	é a fim	do Cebola,	né?
Senser	Process: Mental: emotive: mpE	Phenomenon	

Alguém	já	está melhorando!
Senser		Process: Mental: emotive

Among the 22 occurrences of the mental processes of cognition in the written text, female characters are participants 15 times. Through these processes, Mônica expresses to Magali and to the reader, respectively, her little knowledge about what is going on in relation to her feelings:

Não,	Magali...	eu	não sei
	Vocative	Senser	Process: Mental: cognitive
o que		(eu)	tenho!
Phenomenon			
Attribute		Carrier	Process: Relational

(você)	(está) Entendendo	que	eu	não tava entendendo	nada!
Senser	P: Mental: cognitive	Phenomenon			
		Senser	Pro: Mental	Phenomenon	

The mental processes involving perceptive issues relate to the observation of events taking place:

(você)	Viu	como	é	bom	ter amiga palhaça?
Senser	P: Mental: perceptive	Phenomenon			
		P: Relat.	Value	Token	

Olha	o rosinha,	que meigo...
Process: Mental: perceptive	Phenomenon	

3.3.4. Verbal processes

The verbal processes occurred 28 times along the written part of the story, and the main participants were: the girls in general, 8 times; Mônica, 7 times; and Dona Luisa, 6 times. Some instances are presented below:

(nós)	vamos papear!
Sayer	Process: Verbal

“Cê”?! Como assim, Cê?	Só	eu	chamo	você	de Cê!
		Sayer	P: Verbal	Receiver	Verbiage

Meu instinto feminino	me	diz	
Sayer	Receiver	Process: Verbal	
que	o número dez	vai estar	na porta de casa!
Verbiage			
	Existent	Process: Existential	Circumstance

The other participants of this process type are the boys, 4 times, the reader, twice, and the thoughts inside Mônica’s mind, once.

3.3.5. Behavioral processes

The nine Behavioral processes found in the text are related, first, to Mônica’s emotions, as shown in the instances below, pronounced by Cebola and Magali to Mônica in two different situations:

Mônica?	V-você	está <i>cholando</i> ?
Vocative	Behaver	Process: Behavioral

Você	já	tá rindo!
Behaver		Process: Behavior

Such process type is also found in the imperative mood when a character asks another one to calm down, as when Cascão tells Cebola and, in the last clause, Magali tells Mônica:

Relaxa,	Careca!
Process: Behavioral	Vocative

Calma,	amiga!
Process: Behavioral	Vocative

3.3.6. Existential processes

Existential processes occurred in four moments, two of them at the end of story, when Dona Luisa says that the tenth item of the list will be at the house front door, and Denise asks if Ronaldinho (a soccer player whose team clothes are numbered 10) will be there.

Meu instinto feminino	me	diz	
Sayer	Receiver	Process: Verbal	
que	o número dez	vai estar	na porta de casa!
Verbiage			
	Existent	Process: Existential	Circumstance

o Ronaldinho	vai estar	na sua porta,	amiga?
Existent	Process: Existential	Circumstance	Vocative

The process also occurs when Magali asks whether there is more ice cream and when Dona Luisa describes the third item in the list:

Número três...	não há	nada melhor do que
	Process: Existential	Existent
dividir	bons momentos	com suas amigas...
Existent		
Process: Material	Goal	Circumstance

3.3.7. The representation of participants in the verbal text

In order to further analyze the representation of female characters, it is important to look at the participants that are represented in the written text and in what ways they are referred to. Among the ten aspects mentioned in van Leeuwen (2008) for the investigation of participants in written texts, four of them play central role in the analyzed text as regards the representation of the participants, which are: genericization and specification; nomination; identification; and overdetermination. The focus is given to these aspects because these are the most frequently recurrent ones in the text and strongly related to the issue of how characters are identified.

In relation to genericization and specification, i.e., whether the participants are represented according to their specific names or in a generalized way, both occurrences were found in the text. As regards genericization, it is present in the title of the story “Onze coisas que as garotas amam” (*Eleven things that girls love*). “As garotas” is a participant that includes girls in general. As the text does not specify which girls are these, it may be referring to all the existent girls or to the girls of a certain group. Throughout the text, this participant is constantly evoked as well as the one that refers to the opposite sex:

que **garota** não ama ir ao cabeleireiro?
what girl doesn't love going to the hairstylist?
 nós, **garotas**, lemos muito mais que os **garotos**
we girls will always read way more than the guys do!
garotas amam **garotos**
girls love boys

Both participants in the instances above represent the class of girls, of which Mônica, her mother and her friends are part, and the class of boys, which includes Cebola, Mônica's father and her other male friends. However, these classes expand to the readers' world, as the activities experienced by these characters also exist in reality (hairdressing, readings, love, friendship, etc.).

Other participants referring to things and people in a generalized way were also found:

bolsa de mulher tem tudo
a woman's purse really does hold everything
 não venha me dizer que **nós, adolescentes**, somos complicados
don't go thinking all stories about adolescents are complicated

amigas renovam a nossa energia
friends renew our energy

These participants do not specify which are the things (what is the *tudo/everything*) that a woman's purse contains. The subject *bolsa de mulher/women's purse* is presented as a given, i.e., as something the reader is supposed to be already familiarized with. In *nós, adolescentes/we, adolescents*, the narrator includes herself in the general group of adolescents, which does not necessarily include the reader. In the last sentence, the participant is also presented in a general way.

As regards specification, sometimes the participants are names of characters. In the two sentences below, the male characters are referenced specifically:

o **Cebola** foi estudar inglês com outra
J-Five is studying for that test with... someone else!
 o **Cascão**, agora, toma banho
Smudge is showering now

The female characters' names are not often included in the clauses as participants of processes. Rather, their names are mostly found in the roles of vocatives, which is one of the features of the following aspect to be explored, nomination. Vocatives are very recurrent in the text, as shown in the examples below:

Mônica? Tá tudo bem, **filha?**
Monica? Are you all right, dear?
 Ai, **Magali**...
Aw Maggy...
 Como assim, **Dona Coisa?**
What do you mean, Mrs. Something?

The character Denise, especially, uses a type of treatment with vocatives that evokes endearment. It sounds like a tender way of talking to people, but at the same time it demonstrates some arrogance, turning into something funny:

Ai... massageada eu não nasci, não, **amore**...
Oh... come to think of it, I wasn't born massaged...
 Crédito, tá, **Fófis?**
I'll be paying credit, hun!

Another instance of nomination found is related to Mônica's status. This character is referenced in a manner that places her in a higher rank when character Irene asks her:

então, você é **a famosa Mônica**?
so you're the famous Monica?

In relation to the following aspect, identification, the participants are mostly involved in relational identification, referring to the affective relations among them:

eu sou **a mãe da Mônica**
I am only Monica's mother
 sou eu, a Magali, **sua melhor amiga**
It's me, Maggy, your best friend
 a Irene é **só uma amiga**
Irene is just a friend
 Você é uma... **amigoona!!**
you're a... best friend!!!²⁶

The two last sentences were said by Cebola, the male character Mônica is in love with, at the end of the story. He was signaling that he considered her more than Irene, the girl he had been studying English with. All characters in the story have some affective relation with Mônica.

Finally, in relation to the last analyzed aspect, overdetermination, in which a given participant is engaged in two different roles at the same time, Dona Luisa presents herself as Mônica's mother (as shown in the first sentence of the previous analyzed aspect) and also as a woman who had been a girl before.

Eu sou **mulher!** E já fui **mocinha** também
I've just been there before! I was once a young woman too

In addition, the adolescent characters in *TMJ* themselves are already in between two different realities: at the same time that they represent the classical characters from childhood, they are in a different stage, facing other types of experiences. There are changes in the female

²⁶ In the English version, Cebola mispronounces some words when he is nervous.

characters' bodies, which are pointed out by Mônica and her mother in the story:

até ontem vocês eram **meninhas** ... e hoje são **mocinhas** com... bom, **transformadas!**

up until a while ago you two were just children... and today you two are young women with... well... 'transformations'!

In this part of the story, Dona Luisa is telling Mônica and Magali about the changes that had occurred to them and the new sensations they were feeling at that moment of their lives.

This chapter presented a contextualization of the twelve selected issues and the descriptive part of the detailed verbal and visual analysis of the story *Eleven things that girls love*. The verbal analysis of the story indicates the predominance of relational processes, which reveals concerns the characters may have in positioning themselves as regards their identities and attributions. In the visual analysis, action, reaction and verbal narrative processes predominate, as the text presents a story. However, there are conceptual processes embedded in the images, as the characters are constantly portrayed exhibiting several attributes. In the analysis of participants in both visual and verbal parts, the category of genericization is highly predominant in the story starting from its title (*Eleven things that girls love*). Such occurrences may point to a generalization provided in the text about what girls in general are supposed to like and to do.

In Chapter 4, the main analytical categories derived from the detailed analysis of the story are presented and textual evidence extracted from the other selected issues of the comic book are put forward so as to expand the investigation. In addition to this intertextual analysis, aspects of sociocultural practice are looked at and connected to findings from other previous studies in the area.

Chapter 4

4. Discussion of results

There is no such thing as an ‘objective’ analysis of a text, if by that we mean an analysis which simply describes what is ‘there’ in the text without being ‘biased’ by the ‘subjectivity’ of the analyst. (Fairclough, 2003, p. 14-15)

In this chapter, the data, analyzed and described in chapter 3 with the support of the analytical tools provided by Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2007) and the Grammar of Visual Design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), is discussed according to Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995; 2003) and Studies in gender and language (Wodak, 1997; Heberle, 1997; Cranny-Francis et al, 2003). The objectives are: (1) to generally discuss the results of the detailed systemic-functional analysis of the selected story; and (2) to carry out a discussion of discursive and sociocultural practices following the analytical categories derived from the analysis of the twelve selected issues by presenting textual evidence and making reference to other studies.

4.1. Verbal and visual analysis in *Eleven things that girls love*

In the verbal analysis, there was the predominance of relational, material and mental processes. For the present discussion, these process types were associated to three specific processes that signal how femininity is represented in the story, respectively: *being*, *buying*, and *loving*.

According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p. 210), relational processes “serve to characterize and to identify”. The participants in the story, which are mostly female characters, are involved in their identity construction processes. They are starting to know themselves in their new condition (as adolescents, whose bodies have changed). In the beginning of the story, Dona Luisa characterizes the phase Magali and Mônica are going through as normal, and contrasts their childhood, when “you two were just children”, with how they are now, “you two are young women”. The girls add by saying that now they are *beautiful* and *slim*, attributes that are put as important to their self-esteem (they smile when saying those adjectives). Therefore, being a woman,

beautiful, slim and transformed (no longer a child) describe the way female characters are and/or are supposed to be.

In the story, such identity construction is mainly achieved through the eleven items presented by Mônica's mother. Many of these eleven things (make-up, to receive presents, to go shopping, to go to the hairstylist, jewelry and perfumes) are related to consumerism, i.e., to the action of buying. Such observation coincides with what is pointed out in Cranny-Francis et al (2003, p. 200): "Femininity in general has come to be associated with consumption". The authors go further to say that "to Marxist theoretical analysis, production is generally configured as active and consumption as passive". Therefore, although female characters are acting (buying things), they are indeed seeking to be socially accepted, i.e., they are obeying the rules of prescribed behaviors.

The practice of shopping contributes also to improving the female characters' emotional state. After having experienced the *eleven things that girls love*, Mônica, who was sad in the beginning of the story because of a boy (Cebola), says to this same boy, at the end, "I'm fine now".

As regards mental processes, half of the 64 occurrences are of the emotive sub-type, being related to what girls love – which include the eleven things that are pointed out by Dona Luisa. The emphasis on the importance of doing the things they love in order to feel better serves to reinforce recurrent social practices – especially those presented in the eleven things girls love: putting make-up on, receiving gifts, having friends, going shopping, taking care of hair and nails in a beauty salon, buying and using jewelry and perfumes, getting informed about fashion, beauty, behavior and nutrition by reading, eating sweets with moderation, receiving flowers (performing a specific role in a relationship), and being attractive to men. These things are put as being loved by girls. However, this love may be questioned: would these items represent things girls in general really love because they do, or would they be forced to love these things in order to be socially accepted? Other questions may also be raised: Why are these items specifically related to girls? Couldn't they also relate to boys?

In the visual analysis, narrative representations were the most recurrent ones, as the analyzed text is a story, in which a set of events is presented. Despite that, the images also carry conceptual representations, especially portraying the characters as carriers in processes of attribution. One of these images, presented in figure 3.3, in Chapter 3, portrays an archetype of how a girl should be in order to be

attractive to boys, which makes Mônica envious and angry. Throughout the story, she seeks to reach such ideal by going through “the eleven things girls love” and, at the end, she manages to have Cebola in her company:



Figure 4. 1 - Image #185

In the beginning, Mônica is depicted crying, feeling sad because of Cebola (as presented in figure 3.1, in Chapter 3). In order to feel better and conquer Cebola’s love, she needs special treatments from her parents and friends, and to go through the eleven things girls love. Mônica is portrayed involved in all these activities. Each of them is shown to contribute to increasing her happiness, self-esteem and self-confidence. She no longer cries while learning about the eleven things that girls love; on the contrary, from the first item of the list on, she smiles in most of the images.

Most narrative processes of the characters are verbal, action (they jump, walk, hold things, pose, and move) and reaction, especially smiling and looking at objects and people – the female characters keep smiling throughout the story. The actions are portrayed especially towards themselves (as the material processes in the verbal analysis also show). They act upon their own bodies (trying jewelry and perfumes, putting make-up on, getting dressed, holding their shopping bags, among other actions). As regards the reaction process of smiling, which occurs in many images that are related to the accomplishment of the eleven things, it may signal an externalization of their joy. In addition, it may also reveal a behavior that is likely and also expected for girls to have.

In the verbal and visual analysis of participants, as it has been pointed out, the aspect of genericization is present from the title on. In the beginning of the story, Dona Luisa mentions the existence of three female groups: little girls (how the characters used to be), young women (how they are now and how she once was), and women (the group she belongs to, in which she has a husband, a daughter, other responsibilities and more experience in life, being able to give advice). There is, however, a bigger group, of *girls*, in which all girls, starting from adolescence, may be included. Sometimes the characters are also more specifically referred to, especially Mônica, who is the central one. However, although each character has some specificities (as all people are different), they have many things in common; they belong to the same group, of girls, who love those eleven things, and have similarities in the format of their slim bodies, with “big boobs” and showing their bellies. Such generalized group of *girls* in fact is restricted to girls of a certain socio-economical condition, age, body type, and from an urban reality. Besides, such generalization excludes from the group of *girls* the ones who may not *love* some of those items or who would elect different items for such a list, including the heterosexual prescription in the clause “girls love boys”.

In addition, the text makes use of a hortatory discourse (Longacre, 1992, mentioned in Heberle, 1997), a type of discourse which aims at influencing people’s behaviors to do something (something they already do or something new), and it is constituted of four main parts: 1) the authority of the text producer; 2) the configuration of a problem; 3) commands; and 4) the positive results of taking such conduct (Heberle, 1997, p. 91). These steps are found in the configuration of the analyzed story, as Maurício de Sousa Produções is considered as a respectable and reliable institution in Brazilian society. It participates in social programs and also supports other institutions. For instance, the character Mônica was elected Unicef ambassador in Brazil²⁷. As regards the configuration of a problem, there is Mônica’s disappointment with a boy, something readers may identify with. In order to overcome the negative impacts of such event, Mônica is introduced to the eleven things that girls love, which presents items that could help her forget about the problem – not to actually solving it. Finally, by following such advice she reaches happiness at the end of the story.

²⁷ Source: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/ilustrada/ult90u343546.shtml>
Retrieved March 1st 2012.

From the verbal and visual analysis of processes and participants, it was possible to observe how the three most recurrent process types (relational, material and mental processes), certain narrative instances together with the portrayal of attributes in images, and the genericization in the presentation of characters help to construe a given representation of femininity. In the story, the group *girls*, taken as including all girls in general, is presented as loving those eleven things. The members of this group's identities as well as their actions and emotive states are depicted as depending on the achievement of these eleven things. In order to be happy, girls are supposed to have those things present in their lives.

4.2. Discursive and sociocultural practices in *Turma da Mônica Jovem*

Based on the detailed analysis of the story *Eleven things that girls love* and on the analysis of context of situation in the twelve selected issues of *TMJ*, a discussion taking into account discursive practice and sociocultural practice follows the four major themes identified: (1) concerns about boys; (2) financial and emotional dependence; (3) concerns about social status; and (4) concerns about physical appearance. Each of these analytical categories is explored in the next subsections, in which textual evidence and reference to the studies reviewed in Chapter 2 are presented in the discussion of the findings.

4.2.1. Concerns about boys

A feature that was very recurrent in the analyzed story and in the selected issues in general is related to concerns about boys. In issue #5, both the analyzed story (*Eleven things that girls love*) and the second story, *Boys are all the same*, present events in which the girls' behaviors and mood are moved towards boys, as it happens to Mônica in relation to Cebola in both stories. In *Eleven things that girls love*, after her disappointment with him, all the subsequent actions are a result of this event, such as: her crying at school and at home (figures 3.1 and 3.4, in Chapter 3), the efforts made by her mother and friends to cheer her up (figures 3.4 and 3.5, in Chapter 3), and the joyful moment at the end, caused by Cebola's apologies, which she promptly accepts (figures 3.15 and 4.1).

In *Boys are all the same*, the title itself already emphasizes the central role boys play on girls' lives. In the story, their curiosity is

moved towards what the boys are planning to do, what they are thinking about and actually doing. In the story, the girls talk about how they should behave in order to attract boys, and express their beliefs in relation to them. At the initial part of the story, when they are in the classroom, Mônica does not pay attention to the class – neither does Denise, who is consuming a lollipop (figure 4.4), Magali, who is focusing on the teacher's beauty (figure 4.3), nor Cascão and Cebola, who are exchanging cell phone messages (figure 4.5). Mônica is observing Cebola, imagining whether he would be like the other boys (figure 4.1) and if he and Cascão were talking about her in the messages (figure 4.5):



Figure 4. 2



Figure 4. 3



Figure 4. 4



Figure 4. 5

Such concern in relation to what boys are doing makes the girls speculate on their actions hanging on the belief that “boys are all the same”, as when Mônica, based on this idea, says:

Aposto que o Cebolinha e o Cascão já estão marcando pra sair de balada com o Titi.²⁸

I bet Cebolinha and Cascão are already planning to take Titi out to party!

Such concern in relation to boys appears as a limitation in the female characters’ routines. For instance, the concern about what boys were doing interferes in Mônica’s participation in class. It may be assumed that such interference, in which school is put as not occupying a high rank in social hierarchy, could harm her professional future. Therefore, it can be assumed that this issue of boys occupying a central role in girls’ lives prevents girls from being more committed to other aspects.

Another feature having to do with concerns about boys is related to what Ostermann and Keller-Cohen (1998), in their article about quizzes in teenage girls’ magazines, consider ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ (a term coined by Rich, 1980). I understand this term as referring to the explicit demonstration and confirmation of the characters’ sexuality. Some textual instances, uttered by Mônica, provide support:

Se bem que o Titi é um gatinho - *Although Titi is handsome*
E garotas amam garotos - *And girls love boys*

The need for a male partner is also highly explored. In issue #34, before Cebola and Mônica start dating, there are several movements taken by the characters in order to get a boyfriend to Mônica

²⁸ The translations that are not from issue #5 are mine.

– as Cebola was not doing anything to make this happen²⁹. Mônica was being fought over by the boys (in a fake way, because she had planned with her friends) in order to see whether Cebola would do something. There is an imposed need on Mônica to have a boyfriend, and this is presented as a positive asset which many of her friends had (such as Cascão and Cascuda, Marina and Franja, and Magali and Quinzinho). These thoughts start in issue #33, when she finds herself alone, differently from her best friends:



Figure 4. 6

In issue #9, Mônica's need to get a boy to stand by her is presented through the presence of Toni, a new boy at school who appears to be a kind person. Different from Cebola, who has disappointed Mônica several times, Toni looks like the perfect guy who knows everything, is popular and nice. When he gets the role of Romeo for the school play, the girls get amazed:

Denise: Gentem! Quebra o ovo que eu tô chocada!

Magali: Toni, você está...

Mônica: ...perfeito! Um príncipe perfeito!

Denise: Folks! Break the egg 'cos I am hatched/ shocked!

Magali: Toni, you are...

Mônica: ...perfect! A perfect prince!

However, such prince was not perfect at all. At the end of the story, it is revealed that he wanted to play with Mônica's feelings, and

²⁹ This aspect related to who must have the initiative in a relationship is explored in section 4.2.2.

Cebola ends up playing the hero who is able to unmask who Toni really is and gets Mônica's love back. Despite her extreme physical strength (she beats Toni, in figure 4.7), which she used in order to solve some problems, Mônica needed Cebola to help her overcome Toni and to be by her side as a male partner on the play:



Figure 4. 7



Figure 4. 8

The characters Denise and Carmem are also very concerned about boys and in getting a boyfriend. They always try to show off in the events, comment on some boys' beauty, and, in issue #31, they flirt with them and Carmem dates Titi, who had recently broken up with Aninha.

Another feature revealed in this same issue (#31) is related to purity and monogamy. There is a concern in relation to being Carmem's first boyfriend:

Franja: Realmente... é mesmo uma grande responsabilidade namorar a Carmem assim ... Todos conhecemos a Carmem desde criança! Alguma vez, alguém aqui já viu ela namorar?

Franja: Really... it is a great responsibility dating Carmem ... we have all know her since childhood! Has anyone once seen her dating?

However, at the end she says she had already dated before, which gives Titi a huge relief:

Titi: Não preciso ter medo de ser insensível e magoar a Carmem! Não preciso ter medo de terminar!

Titi: I do not need to be afraid of being insensitive and hurt Carmem! I do not need to be afraid of breaking up!

The fact of not having been her first boyfriend turns Titi (morally, according to this belief) able to break up, i.e., if the girl has already dated, there is no problem in hurting her.

Monogamy, exclusivity in dating their first boyfriends/girlfriends is also a feature very present in *Turma da Mônica* comic books. The characters who date do so with the same partner since childhood, such as Magali and Quinzinho and Cascão and Cascuda. Titi and Aninha were also a couple since childhood, and the fact that they had broken up did not mean that they would not be together again. She did not get any other boyfriend, and Titi was still in love with her. Although he had dated Carmem for some time, their relationship is very short and even “fake”, because Carmem and Titi are not shown kissing. In addition, Titi’s feelings for Aninha are kept the same, which suggests the issue of “true love”:



Figure 4. 9

Text producers demonstrate, this way, preference for maintaining the same couples from childhood in the new comic book. It may be a way of keeping the connection between the characters from the classic comic books with the new one. However, the idea of romantic

love is recurrently present. When Cebola and Mônica break up at the end of issue #34, the feelings they had in relation to each other were also kept, and they even kissed after having broken up:

Cebola: Você não acreditou em mim antes, Mônica! Então, acredite agora... eu amo você! Eu te amo, Mônica! ... ninguém vai tirar você de mim!

Mônica: Eu vou confiar, Cebola! Eu vou esperar você!

Cebola: You did not believe me before, Mônica! So believe me now... I love you! I love you, Mônica! ... nobody is going to take you from me!

Mônica: I will trust you, Cebola! I will wait for you!



Figure 4. 10

The character Do Contra is also very interested in Mônica, which creates an atmosphere of suspense and competition in relation to who will get her. In addition, in specific moments in some issues, in order to overcome some negative impacts Cebola causes on her, Mônica uses Do Contra as a possible alternative. Therefore, *another* boy may serve as an external source for improving girls' self-esteem.



Figure 4. 11

However, the stories constantly remind us that despite their misunderstandings, Mônica and Cebola are still in love with one other, and that it has been like this since childhood.

As regards this issue of focusing on adolescents' sexuality, in their study Walton et al (2002, p. 674) emphasize "the centrality of romantic norms in their everyday conversations, such as monogamy, importance of romance, compulsory heterosexuality and compulsory romance (i.e. the need to 'always be in love')". These authors add that "such norms suggest a powerful acculturation into the classical romantic narrative that begins with fairy tales in early childhood".

Therefore, the issues found out in the present study coincide with the ones presented in the literature. There is the reinforcement of discourses portraying: (1) boys' central role in girls' lives; (2) compulsory heterosexuality; (3) the need for a male partner; and (4) purity, monogamy and romantic love, i.e., having a first and only partner. Such discourses shape the representation of female characters in the comic book. Such representations, constructed in the process of text production, help reinforce gendered discourses.

4.2.2. Financial and emotional dependence

The external sources observed in the issues on which female characters depend on are mainly: (1) the male characters; (2) consumerism and other distractions; and (3) other sources of external

motivation, such as contests, school programs and other events experienced by the group.

The feature of financial dependence on male characters was observed in the analyzed story, *Eleven things that girls love*, in the part Dona Luisa asks Seu Sousa for some money to go shopping with the girls:

Dona Luisa: preciso ligar pro Sousa! Ai, ai... Alô! Oi, queriiido!

Seu Sousa: Luísa? Não diga nada! Quando você vem com “oi, queriiido...”, sei que estamos em alerta vermelho! (eu) Sei! Sei! “Vermelho” Mônica! Tudo pela minha fofucha! Vou transferir um dinheiro! Boas compras! Sim, eu também te amo!

Dona Luisa: I'll have to call Mr. Sousa! Oh, boy... Hello? Hey, sweetie, pie!

Seu Sousa: Louise? Don't you start! I know that when you say “sweetie pie” it means we are in a full “code red” type situation! Oh I see! Ok! “Red” for Monica! Anything for my little girl! I'll transfer some money right away! Enjoy yourselves! Yep! I love you too!

In this specific passage, it is shown that Seu Sousa is taking part of a work meeting whereas Dona Luisa is spending her time taking care of Mônica. Okin (2008, p. 308), when discussing the dichotomy public/private sphere, presents that

Men are seen as connected to and responsible for political and economical matters whereas women would be related to domesticity and reproduction within the private sphere. Women have been seen as “naturally” inadequate to the public sphere, being dependent on men and subordinated to the family.

Although Dona Luisa was outside home, in a public place (at the shopping mall), her task was to take care of her child by entertaining her. The one financially supporting all of that was her husband, who was involved in a paid work. However, Dona Luisa has some power: she can drive, give advice, and lead the girls in the tour.

Other two features can also be identified based on that textual instance, which depicts the social practice of telephone talk (between husband and wife): (1) the male character does not let his wife talk much by saying “Do not say anything” and by speaking more, which may signal that he has the control; and (2) at the end of the conversation,

when he says “I love you, too”, the word “too” signals that the woman probably has said “I love you” before, which may mean that the affective part initiates from the woman.

Still in relation to financial dependence on men, in the story *Dad, lend me the car!* Cebola is the one who has the money for him and Mônica to go out – although Mônica is the one who has the initiative to ask him to go out:

Mônica: Oi, Cê! Vamos ao cinema, hoje?

Cebola: Lavei o carro e ganhei um t-tloco! Dá plas entladas e pipocas

Mônica: Hey, Cê! Are we going to the movies tonight?

Cebola: I washed my dad's car and made some money! Enough for tickets and popcorn!

There is also female characters' dependence on male characters' emotional positive response and support. The boys are have the power to impact their feelings and behaviors, both negatively and positively. Aninha is deeply hurt by Titi not only in issue #31, when they break up, but also in previous issues, as it happens in issue #5, when Mônica talks to her on the phone, and, afterwards, tells Denise what has occurred, that Aninha is feeling so bad that she has not even come to school:



Figure 4. 12

Mônica: Calma, Aninha! Também não é o fim do mundo! ... A Aninha! Ela surtou porque o Titi terminou com ela! ... e a coitada da Aninha ficou tão mal que nem veio pra escola!

Mônica: Calm down, Aninha! Trust me, it is not the end of the world! ... It was Aninha. She's throwing up a fit because Titi brok up with her!

Some other instances of the negative influence are presented in Figures 3.1. and 3.4 and the figures below as regards Cebola affecting Mônica:



Figure 4. 13



Figure 4. 14

However, despite his harming on her, Mônica forgives him very easily in the story *Eleven things that girls love*, as shown in Figure 3.15, when she readily accepts the flowers he gives her and his request for them to study English together. Therefore, the same way boys can negatively affect girls, they can also do it positively. In issue #34, when Cebola asks Mônica to date her, she accepts very happily:



Figure 4. 15

As regards emotional dependence on male characters, Bezerra (2008, p. 110), who analyzed the representation of women in the sitcom *Sex and the City*, argues that the female characters:

are independent, professional women, who pride themselves in being able to lead a life without being financially dependent on a man. However, this scenario changes when it comes to being emotionally independent, since all four female characters have their moments of absolute need for male companionship.

In Bezerra (2008)'s investigation, female characters are just emotionally dependent on men whereas in the present study there are both financial and emotional dependence. This may signal that emotional independence from men is harder to get than the financial one.

Male characters also give support to girls in difficult moments, such as in issue #19, when Magali is defended by Quinzinho in a difficult situation in which he appears in a very imposing way, being depicted as very strong and bigger than her, being able to protect her, who is sitting on the ground, shrinking, showing vulnerability:

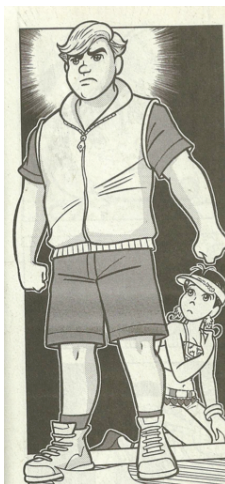


Figure 4. 16

This male protection is also perceived in Seu Sousa (Mônica's father) in relation to her daughter's clothes and behavior:

Seu Sousa: Mônica! Que saia é essa?! E essa maquiagem?! ... Comporte-se direitinho e... hã... e não fale com estranhos! ... não consigo deixar de me preocupar! Você por aí, longe da minha vista e nessas condições!

Seu Sousa: Mônica! Why are you wearing this skirt? And how about this make-up? ... Behave well and... uh... do not talk to strangers! ... I cannot stop worrying! You, there, far from my sight and under these conditions!

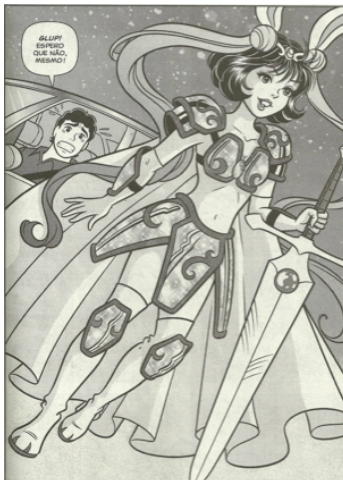


Figure 4. 17

This control over girls' lives is also observed in Titi in relation to his girlfriends' dressing. He says to Carmem:

Titi: Epa! Peraí! Não vai arrasar coisa nenhuma com essa saia!

Titi: Hey! Wait a minute! You're not going anywhere wearing this skirt!

And to Aninha:

Titi: E você aí de sainha curta, só na farra!

Titi: And you there, wearing this short skirt, fooling around!

As can be seen from the examples above, male characters exert some control over girls' emotions, mood and behavior. Such feature points to important implications as regards power relations concerning gender.

As regards the initiative to date, such enterprise is considered boys' responsibility. Magali tells Mônica to ask Cebola for them to go dating, which she justifies:

Magali: Pede o Cebola em namoro!

Mônica: Mas sempre que eu tomo a iniciativa... sempre que dou o primeiro passo ele foge! ... além disso, pega mal a menina ficar se atirando

Magali: Ask Cebola to date...

Mônica: I am the one who always takes the initiative... I give the first step and he runs! Besides that, it is not cool for a girl to do that.

Cascão: Vai, cara! Começa logo esse namoro! Os leitores estão esperando faz tempo...

Cascão: Go ahead, man! Start this date now! Readers have been waiting for a long time...

Although Mônica takes the initiative in some cases, such as giving Cebola their first kiss, in issue #4, this is limited to a certain point. Asking a boy to date is considered too transgressive even to a so called self-sufficient girl as Mônica – who is physically strong, a leader in the group and authoritative.

The fictional reason for Mônica and Cebola's breaking up is Cebola's obsession in winning her, i.e., getting strong and smart in order to be worth her love. For them to date again, Cebola is supposed to defeat Mônica. He tells Cascão why he has not asked her to date before:

Cebola: A Mônica não me respeita! Não vê minhas qualidades! E eu não aceito ser capacho de ninguém! ... quero estar à altura dela!

Cebola: Mônica does not respect me! She does not see my qualities! I do not accept to be anybody's fool! I want to reach her superiority!

Despite the fact of being extremely strong, Mônica demonstrates some psychological weakness. She even tells Magali about her doubts in relation to Cebola's feelings on her:

Mônica: Eu posso ser muito forte, Magali... mas não forte o bastante para isso!

Mônica: I may be very strong, Magali... but it's not enough for that!

The character Aninha is able to overcome the emotional dependence on her ex-boyfriend, Titi. When their dating is over, her friends give her support and invite her to go out. However, Aninha really overcomes her sadness with the support of some school programs and by going out to work.

These movements taken by her contribute to the superior position she is able to get at the end of the story by saying 'Eu não quero

voltar a namorar, não' (*I do not want to date again*), as presented in figure 4.18:

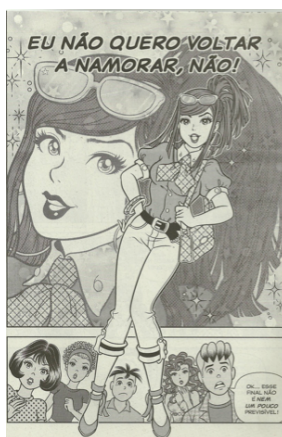


Figure 4. 18

Despite the financial and emotional dependence on men found in female characters of *TMJ* in general, Aninha is able to overcome that. However, in order to become self-confident, she goes after other sources of motivation, such as getting a job, participating in several school programs, and taking courses. Such activities give her strength to forget about her ex-boyfriend by being occupied with other things.

These external supports are also found in the analyzed story, in which the characters go out shopping in order to have some fun and distraction. It is there that Mônica forgets for some time the emotional problems she is facing in relation to Cebola. There is a part in the story in which Mônica says about going shopping:

Mônica: É... dá um 'up' na auto-estima

Mônica: It totally uplifts the self-esteem!

Therefore, as observed in the data, consumerism is strongly a source of emotional dependence for the female characters.

4.2.3. Concerns about social status

The characters are very concerned about their image among the others. In issue #5, in the story *Boys are all the same*, there is a passage in which Mônica has a video broadcasted on ‘youtubo’ showing her going through a shameful situation. She says:

Mônica: É o fim da minha vida social! Nunca mais alguém vai olhar pra mim!

Mônica: It's the end of my social life! No one will ever check me out again!

This concern in relation to the external world is also perceived in the disputes Mônica creates in which she tries to defeat the other characters. In issue #10, she and Magali participate on a talk show game against Denise and Carmem. While they are losing the game, Mônica gets very angry.

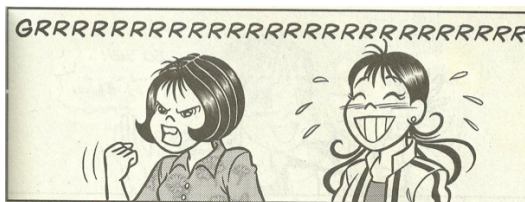


Figure 4. 19

This envy on other girls and anger of disputing things is also present: (1) in issue #9, at the ‘Romeo and Juliet’ school play, in which the role she wants, as Juliet, has been given to Carmem; (2) in issue #5, at the analyzed story, when the character Irene, who goes to study with Cebola, is presented to her; and (3) in issue #25, at the rollerskating contest. The following instances provide support:

Mônica: Carmem? Esse cabelo... essas roupas... Ferrou, Magá! Se eu perder o papel pra essa metida, vou ter que me mudar pra Timbuctu

Mônica: Carmem? This hair... these clothes... no way, Magá! If I lose the role for this girl, I will have to move to Timbactu



Figure 4. 20

Also related to the concern of social status there is Mônica's dream to become famous. This occurs with much emphasis especially in issues #18, #19, #35 and #36. In order to get what she wants, she even tries to hide her plans from her best friend:

Mônica: Mas se o prêmio do concurso é virar uma atriz de verdade, eu quero participar, Magali! Quero muito vencer! Me perdoa por não ter te contado! Mas o convite é para uma pessoa!

Mônica: If the contest award is to become an actress, I want to participate, Magali! I want to win! Forgive me for not having told you about it! But the invitation is to one person only!

In the story of issues #18 and #19, Mônica is very unfair with Magali, imagining her friend has betrayed her by winning the contest to be a popstar. She wrongly thinks to herself:

Mônica: Achei que fosse minha amiga! Como fui idiota! Magali! Nunca vou te perdoar!

Mônica: I had thought she was my friend! How stupid I was! Magali! I will never forgive you!

Mônica demonstrates some selfishness and impulsivity through her actions. At the end, however, she always regrets on what she does and apologizes.



Figure 4. 21

The matter of friendship is widely present in the issue, and the core group, formed by Mônica, Magali, Cebola and Cascão, demonstrates to be strongly united. There are some activities that only the four of them do together, such as in issue #20, when only the four of them go together to the cinema, which Cascão explains:

Cascão: Nós chamamos de a noite da turma clássica!

Cascão: We call it the night of the classical gang!

Issue #10 is especially devoted to the theme friendship. Mônica sees how special her friends are:



Figure 4. 22

Friends are also there in the bad moments, such as in the analyzed story, being one of the items in the list of *Eleven things that*

girls love. In issue #31, when Aninha is sad because of the end of her love relationship, the friends go there to give her support:

Magali: A Aninha vai mesmo precisar de um papo de menina!

Magali: Aninha really needs a girls talk!

Aninha: Meninas? Que bom que vocês vieram! Eu preciso muito de vocês!

Aninha: Girls? I'm glad you came! I need you so much!

This issue of the support friends have to give to each other is also present in issue #33, when Mônica and Magali decide to help Isa, their new friend. They are concerned about her health, because she is fat and eats sweets. When they decide to help her, Mônica says:

Mônica: A Isa tá no time certo! Vamos cuidar dela direitinho! Eu prometo!

Mônica: Isa is in the right team! We will take care of her! I promise!

Thus, an important feature that contributes to the characters' increasing social status and also to their identity construction is the membership to a group.

4.2.4. Concerns about physical appearance

This feature was recurrently found in the issues analyzed, especially in relation to (1) weight and fitness; (2) clothing; and (3) face and hair.

Concerning weight and fitness, in issue #20 there are two moments in which this aspect is emphasized: in Magali's speaking of her changed eating habits; and in Aninha's reinforcement of the importance of not eating too much:

Magali: Preciso manter minha silhueta, amiga! Meus tempos de comilona estão no passado.

Magali: I need to keep my silhouette, dear! My past eating habits are in the past.



Figure 4. 23

Issue #33 is especially devoted to the aspect of losing weight because of the presences of Isa, the fat girl, and Maria Mello, the anorexic girl. The text producers appear to try to do a ‘politically correct’ approach to this problem, emphasizing the health aspect. Isa’s friends are trying to help her lose weight, but at the end of the story they find that she has a problem of hypothyroidism. The character Isa, who already knows about it, says, at the end of the story:

Isa: Acabei me acostumando! Me aceitando como eu sou!

Mônica: Mas se você fez tratamento então seu metabolismo agora é normal! Você pode pegar firme na dieta! Resolver o problema de peso!

Isa: Mas que problema, Mônica? Não tenho problema nenhum com meu peso! Hoje eu sei que não preciso ser magra pra gostar de mim!

Isa: I ended up getting used to it! Accepting myself the way I am!

Mônica: But if you have treated your metabolism, then now it is normal! You can go on a diet and solve your weight problem!

Isa: What problem, Mônica? I do not have any problem in relation to my weight! Today I know that I do not need to be slim to love myself!

Maria Mello, on the other hand, suffers from malnutrition, and comments about Isa to Luca at the end of the story:

Maria Mello: Ela ainda precisa viver assim! Coitada!

Maria Mello: She still has to live that way! Poor girl...

That makes Luca get very angry:

Luca: A única coitada aqui é você! ... Sabe o que falta naquelas suas fotos, Maria? Confiança! Bem-estar! Alegria de viver! O brilho que a Isa tem nos olhos!

Luca: The only poor girl here is you! ... Do you know what is missing in those photographs of you, Maria? Confidence! Welfare! Joy in living! The shine Isa has in the eyes!

However, Luca is in love with Isa. The other boys, in previous parts of the story, laugh at Isa while she is dancing at the barbecue:

(not specified characters): Pra quem comeu cinco pratos, até que ela é bem ágil ... E se ela cai em cima do Xaveco? ... Alguém vai ter que raspar ele do chão...

(not specified characters): *For someone who has eaten five portions, she is very agile... What if she falls over Xaveco? ... Somebody will have to scrap him from the ground...*

This concern about their bodies is also present in issue #5, in the story *Boys are all the same*, when Mônica checks her belly:



Figure 4. 24

According to Figueiredo (2008), concerns about the body are related to feminine identity construction in contemporary society. The

author exemplifies this by presenting covers of women's magazines that portray slim women, which help reinforce the discourses of fitness. In order to be in accordance with the social norms of being slim, women submit their bodies to diets, exercising and, many times, to plastic surgeries. Diets involve "gratification/privation [and] an amount of suffering³⁰," (p. 179). In the microanalyzed story, the ninth item in the list of the eleven things girls love is the dessert, which is described by Mônica's mother as

o terror das dietas, o pesadelo das balanças, o algoz dos fins de semana...

the end of all diets, the scale's worst nightmare, the ruiner (sic) of weekends...

Despite the fact that it would cause several undesired "side effects", desserts are put as part of female characters' preferences. As Mônica was in a difficult situation, they would be allowed to eat it.

The concerns about clothing are implicitly present throughout all the issues, in which the female characters always appear dressing differentiated clothes (in opposition to the classical comic books, in which Mônica always wears her red dress and Magali the yellow one). In addition, some concerns are explicitly set out, as when Mônica says before she and Magali go to the 'Star Stars' show:

Mônica: Dia de ver show não é como outro qualquer, ora! É dia de super-produção! Dia de usar roupas diferentes e mais estilosas!

Mônica: A day of show is not like any other day! It is a day of super-production! It is a day for wearing more different and styling clothes!

Besides that, there are some passages in which the characters are presented performing activities related to taking care of their bodies:

³⁰ My translation to "gratificação/privação [e] uma dose de sofrimento"



Figure 4. 25



Figure 4. 26

A very important aspect not identified as gender based is related to the use of technological resources, which the female characters make use of very proficiently. They use cell phones, computer, play videogames, take photographs, record videos, and use the internet to publish news in blogs and in other websites. In order to demonstrate that, some imagnetic instances retrieved from the selected issues are presented below:



Figure 4. 27



Figure 4. 28



Figure 4. 29

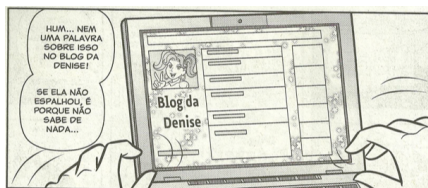


Figure 4. 30

After discussing the main points identified in the investigation for the present study, the final remarks are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

5. Final Remarks

There is no such thing as a complete and definite analysis of a text (Fairclough, 2003, p. 14).

The last chapter of this work encompasses three parts that comprehend its final remarks: (1) a brief summary of what has been done and the main findings; (2) the mentioning of some limitations and suggestions; and (3) presentation of some pedagogical implications.

5.1. Summing up: What has been done and main findings

The systemic-functional and critical discourse analysis of *Turma da Mônica Jovem* has revealed several features present in the comic book that contribute to the representations of femininity. The detailed systemic-functional investigation of one story, entitled *Eleven things that girls love*, with the support of the transitivity system for the written part and the frameworks for analyzing representational and compositional meanings for the imagetic part encompassed the first part of the research. The second part involved the identification of four analytical categories that contain the main features of the representations of femininity, which were further explored and expanded to all the twelve selected issues.

In the detailed verbal and visual analysis, it was found that: (1) the most recurrent process types realized in the story *Eleven things that girls love* are relational, material and mental; (2) narrative processes in the images are mostly present because they present a flux of events although conceptual representations are intrinsically depicted; (3) the features of framing, salience and organization of information appear to be equally distributed among the female characters; and (4) as regards participants, it was observed the feature of genericization highly present throughout the story starting by the title, in which the group ‘girls’ is represented as including all girls in a generalized way.

The most recurrent process types identified in the verbal analysis relate to states of being, possessions, actions and emotions performed by female characters. The mental process ‘love’ is present throughout the whole story, in which Mônica’s mother presents a list of eleven things that (the generalized group) girls love. Among these things, the action of going shopping is included as an item the characters

fulfill in a great amount of the story and which is also related to several of the other items (such as jewelries and perfumes). Therefore, most material processes relate to actions female characters take upon themselves in order to improve their appearance.

In relation to the images, female characters are the ones depicted in most of them, as they are the main focus of the story. In the beginning, Mônica is shown crying, but along the rest of story, after learning about the eleven things that girls love, she starts being depicted smiling, demonstrating the effectiveness of the presented things. At the end, she forgives Cebola for the disappointment. In addition, girls are depicted as being possessors of several attributes (their slim body, the privileged economical conditions, their clothes, etc.) throughout the story.

Moving to the second part of the research, the four identified analytical categories encompassing the representations of femininity are: (1) concerns about boys; (2) financial and emotional dependence; (3) concerns about social status; and (4) concerns about physical appearance. These features hold the main aspects that linguistically construct the representations of femininity in *TMJ*.

In relation to the answering of the Research Questions of the present study, the findings helped to identify: (RQ1) the representations of femininity that are visually and verbally constructed in the comic book; (RQ2) the values, beliefs and attitudes visually and verbally portrayed by the female characters; and (RQ3) how female characters deal with social issues such as body appearance, relationships, school, family, and other aspects generally related to adolescents' concerns.

5.2. Limitations and Suggestions

Due to time and space constrains, it was not possible to carry out a detailed analysis of all the stories in all the selected issues. In addition, the study was restricted to experiential, representational and compositional meanings, with greater emphasis on the first two. It would be relevant to investigate interactive meanings as well as carry out research with the adolescent readers in order to find out about the reception of the comic book in their social life.

In the present study there was also a limitation as regards the selection of corpus. It was assumed that concentrating on issues dealing with characters conducting everyday life activities would be closer to readers' identification. However, the inclusion of issues dealing with the supernatural events and also of issues in which female characters are not

the most emphasized ones would certainly provide more findings about the representations of femininity.

An additional suggestion would be to carry out a genre analysis in order to find out whether the comic book is inserted in the category of *manga*.

5.3. Pedagogical Implications

As the present study is inserted in the Applied Linguistics field, I find it relevant to pinpoint some pedagogical implications it can contribute with. Considering that the average age on which students leave school is 17 years old and that most readers of the analyzed comic book are adolescents, they are still present in the school environment.

The inclusion of different genres to the teaching/learning process enriches classes besides contributing to students' improvement of literacy skills – besides the motivation aspect. In contemporary society, information is spread making use of different multimodal resources, such as television, the use of images in different genres, the internet, music, etc. The works of some scholars emphasizing the importance of teaching students how to read multimodal texts include Christie (2005), Heberle (2006), Royce (2007) and the study I conducted in my monograph (Abreu, 2008).

As mentioned by Fairclough, CDA aims at contributing to social change. I believe that social change must start in the individual. Every person has to search for improvement, for freedom from oppressing ideas and for access to knowledge. The school is an environment in which every child is required (by law) to go to. In this place, opportunities may be available to them. We, as educators, as people who are aware of the importance of knowledge and of how it can make a difference in someone's life, have to do our part, which is to allow students to learn about it and access knowledge. We need to foster students' critical reading and thinking, stimulate them to create their own ideas, express appropriately, have their own opinions, decide by themselves what they want to do, learn another language, and how to read other semiotics besides written language.

6. References

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Appendix