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Non-verbal language as a constructive element of female stereotypes in the situation comedy *Modern Family*

El lenguaje no verbal como elemento constructor de estereotipos femeninos en la comedia de situación Modern Family

Abstract

This research sought to study the stereotyping projected by female protagonists in the North American sitcom Modern Family through their non-verbal communication. This television series was selected both for its content and its temporal and topical criteria. The empirical section of this paper was performed by way of content analysis and carried out through identification of the main non-verbal behavioural patterns of the selected characters and their subsequent relationships with the different female stereotypes represented in the sitcom. As a consequence, the conclusion highlights that, despite being a series depicting an atypical American family showing different ways of everyday life management, it still portrays a highly stereotyped and clichéd image, especially with regard to female characters.

Resumen

Este trabajo de investigación se articula en el estudio de la estereotipación que proyectan los personajes protagonistas femeninos en la *sitcom* norteamericana *Modern Family* a través de su comunicación no verbal. La elección de esta serie de televisión responde tanto a criterios de contenido como temporales y de actualidad. La parte práctica de este artículo se ha desarrollado mediante la técnica del análisis de contenido y se ha llevado a cabo a través de la identificación de los principales patrones no verbales de los personajes seleccionados y su posterior puesta en relación con los distintos estereotipos femeninos presentes en la comedia de situación. De esta forma, se ha podido establecer como principal conclusión que, a pesar de tratarse de una serie que muestra una familia americana atípica en la que tienen cabida maneras muy diferentes de afrontar la vida cotidiana, sigue transmitiendo una imagen altamente estereotipada y plagada de tópicos especialmente en lo que respecta a sus personajes femeninos.

Keywords

Sitcom; non-verbal; stereotype; feminism; attitudes; coding

Palabras clave

Sitcom; no verbal; estereotipo; feminismo; actitudes; codificación

1. Introduction

The figure of women in the audiovisual world is greatly diminished nowadays. Their presence may become even non-existent, whatever scope it is analyzed. With regard to creative, authorial, artistic or interpretive issues, it is the male figure who stands out and prevails. Menendez reflects on this situation, stating that:

> Women, both in film and television products, are a minority who also lacks narrative relevance: there are hardly any protagonists and, when there are, they almost always appear stereotypically, occupying a secondary and even expendable place and often with an inappropriate or disrespectful treatment. (2018)

However, women's situation is undergoing a very promising change, where we must continue to work. This is a statement of intent and a very firm step towards equality. One of those global changes is the emergence of the #MeToo feminist movement, which has been a necessary speaker of what will eventually end up being defined as a new social awareness of respect for women. All these movements are having their impact, since the presence and decision-making capacity of women, in the different aspects of audiovisual creation, are becoming increasingly present. As Diaz (2017) points out, "the current series represent that variety by focusing on the millennials of 'Girls', the ladies of 'Grace and Frankie' or the difference of characters and personalities from 'Orphan Black's clones."

These advances are not alien to the format of the sitcom, since they have been being produced in this format from its origins. This progress has been reflected in the evolution of the figure of women in the roles she represents, starting with the figure of the housewife given to her family, to the independent woman, who seeks her personal and professional development. This image of women began to appear on the sitcom in the 1960s and 1970s, reflecting the search for new social concerns.

2. Theoretical Context: *sitcom*, stereotypes and non-verbal communication

2.1. S*itcom*. Definition and main features.

The word sitcom arises from the contraction of the words situation and comedy and denotes a television genre – considered minor by many authors – whose main function is to entertain. Its background is in the radio and film serials of the first decade of the twenties (Padilla and Requejo, 2010: 188). These are comedies that produce laughter and allow the viewer, overwhelmed by daily chores in a society projected towards absolute liquidity, to disconnect.

Since they began to be seen at the small screen, sitcoms are characterized by a theatrical staging, a three-act narrative structure that includes, as a hallmark, the reactions of the audience found on set during each chapter's recording. Besides, they are distinguished from the rest of the series by the prominence of visual gags and the freshness of their dialogues (Herrero, 2016: 6-7).

As established by Toledano and Verde (2007), López (2008) and Ríos San Martín (2012), the best way to understand the construction process of the sitcom, would be to set three development points around it: form, style and narrative.

Regarding form, it is important to note that the duration of each episode is usually from 24 to 30 minutes, with self-concluding narratives; so they often lack continuity between episodes. It is also important to note that it depends, to a large extent, on a repeating formula, a "standard" situation with changing events. However, within the formula, innovation is necessary to attract the audience and meet their expectations. In fact, they usually include irregular camera movements that capture those everyday scenes at a very fast pace (Henneberg, 2016).

Style is the second aspect that allows to build the sitcom, which is characterized by being recorded inside a studio with home setting decorations (usually indoors), where domestic or for situations are usually located. Besides, the number of locations used is limited and the staging is of a common character.

Finally, the narrative has as sitcom's main feature, that it rarely extends from one chapter to another, even in those that have narrative lines in progress, starting with an event or situation which is solved at the end of it. In addition, they are normally based on everyday situations which may occur in the work environment or in the family. In general, it can be said that, sitcom's narrative has a circular structure, starting from a break-even point, there is an event that generates an imbalance in that starting point, in order to finally return to the balance at the end of the episode. In the case of the analyzed sitcom, *Modern Family* (Levitan and Lloyd,2009), the textual analysis determines the use of the television frames to build and project different family types settled, that is, in strong traditional values (Fogel, 2013).

Following the established by Bonaut and Grandío (2009: 62) there are a number of differences that define this new sitcom:

- Narrative with a humorous purpose, can reach such a level, that the narrative becomes a mix of anecdotes.

- The mix of genres, such as comedy and soap opera, is all carried out in a documentary style, called Mockumentary.

- Humor undergoes an evolution. Elements already used in sitcoms such as *Senfield* (Shapiro, Wets, Seinfeld and Mamann-Greenberg, 1990) are increasing, becoming more and more absurd and crazy. That is, the construction of the characters is carried out reflecting an eccentric and bizarre personality. A clear example of this character evolution, can be found in Larry David, Senfield's producer and protagonist of the sitcom *Curb your Enthusiasm* (David, Garlin and Polone, 2000).

- The abandonment of the domestic ground to surf in politically incorrect situations and problems. Any type of situation can be used for comic purposes, from personal and family tragedies to reaching the professional world.

2.2. The depiction of stereotypes in the sitcom.

A stereotype consists of the exaggerated and simplified perception you have about a person or group of people who share certain characteristics. The objective pursued by the stereotype is to justify or rationalize certain behavior in relation to a social category, as pointed out by Malgesini and Giménez:

> Stereotype derives from the term *estereotipa*, used in typographic technology. Etymologically, it comes from the Greek words steréos, solid, and typos, mold. Its employment was introduced, more than seventy years ago, by the American journalist Walter Lippmann (1922), in his book *Public Opinion* (2000: 147).

According to Lippmann's definition (1922) the term stereotype has four main characteristics: being a simple concept rather than complex or differentiated; being more false than true; having been acquired second-hand rather than from direct experience and being resistant to change.

Nowadays, retrieving Lippman's definition and as a synthesis, we can say that the stereotype is the mental recreation of an image in relation to a group of people who share certain qualities and/or characteristics. In this way, extrapolating the concept to character building, the stereotype would be a cliché or what is called "type character".

It is necessary at this point to make a special mention of the stereotypes of women in television fiction established by Capdevilla (2010: 76) who, basing them on the taxonomy established by María Isabel Menéndez (2006), generates a list based on the topics' repetition, which are taken to the extreme in the sitcoms, since they are series based on comedy. In this way, we could find the following categories:

- The 'queen of the home', who starts from religious models, usually close to Christianity, who segregate women to roles centered on housewife, model wife and selfless mother. The rest of the feminine stereotypes start or are born from here, adding skills, whether positive or negative, to generate new models. As Capdevilla points out, "her natural evolution is towards the matriarch, a typically widowed woman who despite her age continues to serve as queen of the home." A basic example of this stereotype would be that of the character played by Lucille Ball in *I Love Lucy* (Ball, Arnaz and Oppenheimer, 1951). However, it is interesting to review Lacalle's in-depth study that determines the wide range of behaviours adopted by maternal style in television fiction (Lacalle, 2016). Fasciano (2013: 42-43), speaking of this stereotype in the sitcom notes that "In the early days of television production, (...) the "traditional woman" was described as foolish, irresponsible, impulsive and unable to take care of herself without the intervention and supervision of a man."

- The 'professional woman', for whom her career is above anything else. This stereotype has been very important throughout the sitcom's history, starting from characters such as Lucille Ricardo, in *I Love Lucy*, which already had certain elements belonging to this stereotype, until reaching great references such as Mary Taylor Moore, *Maude* (Parker, 1972), Murphy Brown (Jeffords, Heline and Heisler, 1988) in her homonymous series, or more recently Selina Meyer (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) in *Veep* (Luois-Dreyfus), 2012). As Capdevilla says:

These characters put their professional career before everything else, which negatively impacts their attitude in the personal realm. In essence, they will have to choose between having a life beyond work, or developing a brilliant career. They will choose the second (2010: 77).

Likewise, this stereotype of 'professional woman' has undergone a supposed evolution. Reflecting American society, the sitcom has brought these changes to its format. However, such changes are superficial, the figure of man remains essential, as Haijing points out:

American-style motherhood, according to the stereotype of 'good wife', values women who succeed in combining motherhood and their careers. Ideal motherhood is situated in a society that values independence but still reinforces the patriarchal structure of society by portraying it as historical and consequently, normal. This intensive motherhood imposes high standards on women who must strive to meet it, but despite all their efforts, the solution to their problem will inevitably be a man in their lives: a savior (2016:107-108).

- The stereotype of 'bad woman' which is very useful in the sitcom, since it allows to generate tension and comedy. He usually takes as an example the stereotype of the queen of the household and turns it around, being a character who does not care about domestic work nor family life. Here we find characters such as Sue Ann Nivens (Betty White) in the sitcom *The Mary Taylor Moore Show* (Brooks and Burns, 1970).

- The 'victim' woman who is characterized by having suffered some kind of abuse, so trauma absolutely conditions her attitude and makes it difficult to achieve her goals. This stereotype in the sitcom is muffled, but it still exists, as is the case with Amy Farrah Folwer's character, played by Mayim Bialik, in *The Big Bang Theory* (Lorre and Prady, 2007).

- "The 'male woman'. This type of character's features are typical of men, both in terms of physique and the ways of acting. In this section we would find characters such as C. C. Babcock (Lauren Lane) in *The Nanny* (Drescher and Landsberg, 1993). The 'feminist' woman who, as Capdevilla comments, is an:

Uncommon stereotype, which reduces the struggle for equality to a careless physical aspect and an irresponsible personality to the classic roles of the queen of the household; it is also especially intense overturned in her professional life when there is a case of sexism around (2010: 77).

- `The 'lesbian woman' where there are two archetypal models to play with because of their ambivalences at the narrative level. On the one hand, there would be the *Butch* model of androgynous and male features, where her gestures and mimicry are forced, forcing the stereotype to the male end. On the other hand, there would be the Femme model with very feminine traits with a tendency to hide her sexual orientation.

Despite the wide variety of feminine stereotypes used in sitcoms, the truth is that women's image linked to household chores continues to be perpetuated either exclusively or by combining them with work activities outside the home. In fact, around post-feminism, Scott (as quoted in Novoa) tells us about the trap that sitcoms have set around it:

Over the past fifty years, women and the way they have been seen in American society have changed. It is hoped, of course, that they will climb, occupy and manage positions previously reserved exclusively for men. (...) Currently, we find that women in TV comedies are typically represented in two basic life patterns: having jobs outside the house, while doing most household chores, or not having out-of-home jobs (2018: 71).

2.3. Non-verbal communication as a tool/support in creating attitudes and stereotypes

Within the context that has been exposed, it is vitally important to highlight the role that nonverbal communication plays in creating stereotypes through the construction of characters that peep into the stage of television fiction. Nonverbal communication can be defined as the exchange of non-linguistic signs (Fast, 1979: 5). More specifically, it could be said that it consists of the communication process where there is a sending and a receiving of information that does not require words (Wainwright, 1993: 194). This type of language serves five main functions in interlocution: it emphasizes verbal language, expresses feelings and emotions, replaces words, helps interpret oral messages and regulates verbal communication (and even contradicts it) (Argyle, 1978).

However, for this research purpose of study, the interesting thing lies in the great potential of the nonverbal channel assuming the impact of the characters' message observed in the case of the sitcom, as well as

the transmission of conduct codes associated with gender stereotypes. At this point it should be remembered that the potential for transmission of information by the nonverbal channel reaches 55% in the case of body language (facial and body gestures, postures and ways) and even increases to 93% if the qualities associated with voice (intensity, tone, timbre, duration, etc.) are added, as opposed to the 7% of information that comes to us through words (Mehabian , 1972).

There are several categories of nonverbal communication. Thus, although there is no agreement among experts, a total of five will be established in order to organize the gestural inventory responsible for the creation of certain stereotypes. In this way we can talk about kinesia (gestures, postures and ways), proxemics (distances between subjects), paralanguage (aspects related to voice qualities), physical appearance and appearance (physical complexion, costume, accessories, etc.) and environment (settings, colours, etc.) (Hernández and Rodríguez, 2010: 13 and next). In the case at hand, we will focus on kinesia and specifically on gestures that in their combination can create behavioural patterns associated with certain gender stereotypes in the female spectrum.

In this regard, kinesia comes from the Greek prefix kiné and means movement. As noted, it encompasses gestures, postures and manners. The latter category is discarded in this work since it deals with ways of greeting, eating, giving and receiving and walking movements that do not contribute to drawing gestural stereotypes by themselves. Gestures, on the other hand, are short movements of certain parts of the body that can be seen more clearly in the head and limbs allowing to achieve a degree of expressiveness and subtlety that does not occur in other nonverbal signals (Wainwright, 1993: 194).

The most interesting thing lies in their use to express emotions and attitudes such as frankness, qualm, willingness to do something, tranquility, frustration, trust, nervousness, acceptance, expectations, relationship type and mistrust (Nierenberg and Calero, 1973). If attention is now paid to the second category, it should be noted that posture is a mostly unintentional signal which is also involved in the communication process. In fact, the position of trunk and limbs, the way of sitting, standing, etc. reflect attitudes, emotions and feelings about herself and her relationship with the interlocutor. Thus, it is precisely in this aspect that a relationship between gestures and stereotypes can be established.

3. Analysis Methodology and research development

For the carrying out of this research, content analysis has been chosen as a research method primarily to meet the objectives pursued:

1. On the one hand, it is a method that allows the achievement of the first of the objectives proposed in this research, to evaluate the media image and stereotypes associated with the role of women in the *Modern Family* sitcom, which would fit with one of the five fields identified by Igartua (2006:195) as more convenient to apply content analysis, in particular, with the evaluation of social groups image;

2. On the other hand, this method allows us to achieve the second of the objectives, which materializes in scientifically examining both the meanings (thematic analysis) and the significant (analysis of procedures, conventions, formal traits) of the analysis unit (the message) as set out by Bardin (1986), Weber (1994) Wimmer and Dominick, (1996) (as quoted in Igartua , 2006: 76). This method also allows the quantification of the messages that has granted the numerical data obtained and further treated with statistical techniques in order to obtain verifiable and reliable conclusions or inferences that have helped their interpretation.

3.1. Categorization

Categorization is one of the most important parts of content analysis since it allows the researcher to clarify all the aspects that shape the observed reality in addition to finding new nuances and details that could go unnoticed in the previous observation. Thus, the most important part of all content analysis is the category system used to sort the quantified units representing the so-called communication symbols. Each of these categories are characteristic or aspects that represent what the text, even the audiovisual one, refers to.

Categorization can be defined as:

> The task by which a set's constituent elements are classified by means of differentiation based on certain criteria previously established. Thus, through this operation, we transform the writing into a cluster of parts susceptible to individualized treatment (Conde Berganza and Ruiz San Román, 2005: 217).

In this regard, the categories can be divided into two groups: the formal ones, including duration, broadcast date, etc.; and content categories, such as main topic and self-categories. In the case at hand, the category of non-verbal language. In this way, as established by Rodríguez and Hernandez:

> The set of categories used is called code, a concept that involves all categories according to logical criteria. Categories, in order to be properly defined, must include five characteristics: mutual exclusion, homogeneity, relevance, clarity and productivity (2009: 68).

However, before proceeding with the design of the analysis sheet, one more concept must be considered, that of the recording unit. It is the body of smallest content where the appearance of a reference is told, be they words, gestures or statements that we are interested in locating and counting (Conde Berganza and Ruiz San Román, 2005: 221). Finally, the classification unit is the basis on which content is classified or analyzed. Finally, we will keep in mind the enumeration unit that references the base on which a content is tabulated, which will normally be centimeters, minutes, seconds, etc.

In this case, two category types have been defined, the formal and content categories. Formal categories pay attention to duration and broadcast date. The broadcast day in this analysis of the Modern Family comedy covers seasons 1 to 9. So, it chronologically corresponds to the period from September 2009 to May 2018. The duration of each chapter is around 22 minutes.

With regard to the content categories, as can be seen in the analysis sheet on non-verbal language detailed in section 3.3., there are three groups of main variables on a first level: posture, bodily gestures (which includes hand gestures) and facial gestures (including mouth gestures and gaze). In turn, all the sub-variables that make up the main variables are categorized in a second stage. In the case of posture, 4 sub-variables were used; in the case of hand gestures, 17 sub-variables were used; in facial gestures with the mouth 5 sub-variables were included and finally in the gaze variable,11 sub-variables were used. The content of each of them can be observed in detail in the analysis sheet. Similarly, a color code has been assigned for each variable based on the emotional attitudes they represent. Thus, the variables that appear shaded in blue in the analysis sheet relate to attitudes close to extroversion, oranges would be aggressiveness instead, greens would be close to a spectrum of shyness and withdrawal, and yellow ones would be associated with neutral attitudes.

Finally, we will add that the classification basis would be each chapter of the *Modern Family* sitcom analyzed and the enumeration unit would be the different parts that they are made up: teaser, approach, development, outcome and tag. It is also important to note that an encoding tab was created for each of the observed characters.

3.2. Sampling

Chapters from seasons 1 to 9 have been chosen as units of analysis, and within each season,of the initial two, one central and the last two, because it is the most complete way to record the possible changes which may occur in the characters along them.

45 chapters have been displayed in total, so the database should have had 225 rows (45 chapters x 5 characters). However, in 15 chapters there was no presence of the two younger characters, so in the end 30 records (15 chapters x 2 characters) had to be deleted, leaving a database composed of 195 rows.

3.3. Coding

The analysis sheet for this work will focus on the Kinetic behavior of characters representing femininity who are: Gloria Delgado, Claie Dunphy, Alex Dunphy, Haly Dunphy and Cameron Tucker.

Cameron Tucker is included in the analysis because she assumes the role of the mother of the family, taking care of LiLy, her Vietnamese daughter, and household chores. On the other hand, we should point out that Alex and Haly Dunphy's presence is quite small in the units analyzed as they correspond to episodes where both are still very young.

Below is attached, in table 1, the analysis sheets that have been used in the study of the female protagonists of the series. It includes the three categories used, posture, gestures and facial expressions as well as the 37 variables that have served to define each of them, together with their meaning[1].

Table 1: Analysis Sheet

RESEARCHED ELEMENT	MEANING	POSITIVE, NEGATIVE OR NEUTRAL PROJECTION[2]	ATTITUDE
1. POSTURE			
Approach	Attention posture communicated by a forward tilt of the body	Su significado persuasivo es positivo puesto que denota atención e interés hacia la audiencia **POSITIVE**	Outgoing
Wihdrawal	It shows by leaning back or sideways	Negative persuasive meaning shows rejection towards the public. **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive
Expansion	Transmitted by the chest expansion, straight or tilted back body, erect head and raised shoulders.	It's a negative stance on a key to persuasion. Proud, smug, arrogant or contemptuous posture. Related to challenge, pride and highness. **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive
Contraction	It communicates through a rather sloping forward trunk with sunk head, dangling shoulders and sunk chest.	A depressive, cocky, dejected position. Negative meaning. Associated with depression and subjugation. **NEGATIVE**	Shy
2. BODY GESTURES			
2.1. HAND GESTURES			
Palm of the hand up (showing the palms)		Transparency, honesty. Dialogue skills. Tolerance. **POSITIVE**	Outgoing
Palm of the hand down		Immediate authority. Tyranny. Scarce dialogue skills. Intolerance. Rejection. **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive
Palm of the hand closed with pointing finger	Used when a person figuratively hits someone as a sign of submission or threat.	Extremism. Authoritarism. Intolerance. **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive

Closed fist/s raised		Threat related gesture, aggresiveness and anger. **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive
Both fists closed		Aggressiveness, anger, mixed feelings **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive
Clasped hands		Interpreted as a communication barrier. Self-defense that keeps the interlocutor away. **NEGATIVE**	Shy
Hands behind your back		Trust, superiority and power. It represents absence of fear. **POSITIVE**	Emotional balance
Hand holding wrist		Frustration and attempted self-control **NEGATIVE**	Shy
Hand holding arm		Anger and frustration **NEGATIVE**	Shy
Thumbs showing		Dominance, assertiveness or aggressive attitudes **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive
The ring gesture	To perform this gesture join the ring and index fingers forming a circle, leaving the rest of the fingers stretched upwards	In Spain, it means that everything is going well ("everything is OK"). Speakers who show the OK gesture while talking seem to offer an authoritarian but not aggressive image. Reflective and focused attitude. **POSITIVE**	Emotional balance
Covering the mouth with the hand		In the repetition gesture related to the rejection towards the arguments of the counterpart. Evasion and deceit. NEGATIVE	Aggressive
Self-adaptors Object language: (holding pens, microphones, sheets of paper, glasses or other objects)		They help to control tension and nervousness. Profesional image. **NEGATIVE**	Shy

Illustrators with the hands	Those movements used to make ourselves understood and to emphasize certain parts of the discourse. They appear simultaneously to the discourse and its function is to accompany and illustrate what is verbally said		Outgoing
Illustrators-canes / baton (example: swinging side palms, as if shaking a box) lo ha traducido literalmente, mira lo, María	They usually set the pace of the message with their hands	They are used to highlight some specific part of the discourse, to emphasize it. They should not be abused because a limited and repetitive CNV is offered that can become saturated. **POSITIVE**	Outgoing
Pointing illustrators	These are deictic movements that show something, addressing something or someone. They therefore serve to point out the spatial situation or to identify a person or thing	They can be threatening **NEGATIVE OR NEUTRAL**	Outgoing
Space Illustrators	They describe a space that is verbally mentioned; usually the size or shape of something	They use to illustrate verbal discourse **POSITIVE**	Outgoing

3. FACIAL GESTURES

3.1. MOUTH GESTURES

Smile of disdain	It causes a dimple in the lips corners	Contempt **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive
Sad smile	It's usually asymmetrical	There are negative emotions. It shows depression **NEGATIVE OR NEUTRAL**	Shy
Sadistic or cruel smile	Thinned lips and the upper lip rises	Cruelty **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive

Sneer	Lips rise mockingly and insolently	Mockery **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive
Fake smile	Asymmetrical, it only encompasses the lower part of the face, there are no folds in the eyes.	It hides true feelings. It is the liar's smile **NEGATIVE**	Aggressive
3.2..THE GAZE			
Lowering your eyes		Modesty, submission, omission of truth **NEGATIVO**	Shy
Looking up		Mercy, pretended innocence. Avoidance **NEGATIVE OR NEUTRAL**	Outgoing
Up and down look (Shielded eye))		Scrutinizing look, curiosity, contempt **NEGATIVE**	Aggresive
Side or oblique look		Recelo, timidez. Falsedad. Nerviosismo **NEGATIVE**	Shy
Firm and frank look	It is a sustained look at something	Interest, attention and intelligence. Dialogue and tolerant ability **POSITIVE**	Outgoing
Fierce look	Eyes remain wide open looking at the "victim" while frowning	Angry, astonished, contemptuous. Authoritarism **NEGATIVE**	Agresivo
Runaway look	When someone manages to match their gaze with ours and it's unpleasant, which is why they take away their eyes	Guilt, shyness, omission of truth **NEGATIVE**	Shy
Surprise look	Eyes opened to the end of the white area above or below the iris	Surprise, wonder, exaggeration **POSITIVE OR NEUTRAL**	Outgoing
Squinting		Contempt, disgust or disdain **POSITIVE, NEGATIVE OR NEUTRAL (see context)**	Aggressive
Bright eyes	These twinkling eyes present an overloaded surface by the secretion of the tear glands, due to	Emotion, pride, triumph. It causes sentimentality in the receiver **POSITIVE** Anguish, anger **NEGATIVE**	Shy

	an emotion that does not break into tears		
Blurred eyes	The individual looks at infinity	Tiredness, stress. It causes sentimentality in the receiver **NEUTRAL**	Emotional balance

Source: Compiled by authors

Data coding was carried out by three trained researchers and experts in data analysis. The items have been measured with a three point ordinal scale to measure the intensity of the use of the gestures according to their appearance frequency in each chapter (1= once - not very intense; 2 = twice – moderate intensity; 3 = three times or more - quite or very intense).

Subsequently, for data descriptive analysis, frequency tables have been made for each group of gestures (posture, hand posture and different facial gestures) and in each of the frequency tables the average weighted by the intensity of use has been made for each character and it has been graphically represented. In this way, not only the number of times the character performed the gesture has been collected, but also, the degree of the gesture's intensity.

Later on, and since they were not normal variables, several nonparametric contrasts have been made, in particular, Kruskal Wallis contrast and if necessary that of Mann Whitney's U, to see if there were differences in the use of groups of variables or gestures that denote an outgoing, aggressive and shy attitude, for each of the characters.
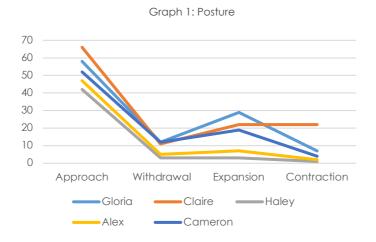
40 original variables were used: four identification variables (Id, encoder, protagonist and chapter) and 36 gesture variables were used. To these variables we must add three extra variables: extraversion, aggressiveness and shyness that were created by adding the scores of the related gestures, which were used for inferential analysis.

The Excel computer program has been used for data encoding and the Microsoft Excel package and the SPSS version 24 package have been used for data processing.

4. Results

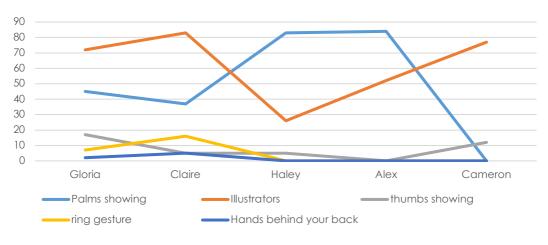### 4.1. Descriptive Frequency Analysis

The following are the specific conclusions resulting from each character's analysis: Gloria, Claire, Alex, Haley and Cameron based on the parameters collected during the chapter viewing.

Graph 1: Posture

Source: Compiled by authors

All characters with female roles are built with a high degree of positivity, as can be seen with the high scores that are achieved in both the approach posture and the expansion posture. The characters who exhibit the approach pose the most are Claire and Gloria in front of those characters who do so to a lesser extent that correspond to Alex and Hailey. In the middle ground you may find Cameron. The postural pattern in terms of expansion is identical, with Gloria and Claire being the most expansive ones, Cameron taking third place and Alex and Haley showing it the least often. Besides, retreat and contraction postures (associated with rejection and depression) are less important to all characters, although highlight the high values Claire takes in the latter variable.

As a general conclusion we can point out how the data obtained allow us to speak of positive and outgoing attitudes in postural terms. In fact, we observe very similar graphical trends in all cases. The closest and open to communication characters are Claire and Gloria. It draws attention however that Claire is also the character that most often shows a posture of contraction, a variable that relates to depression and subjugation. In this regard, it could be said that Claire, who represents the Middle American housewife, presents herself in postural terms as an emotionally extreme person, moving from joy to depression quite easily. In Gloria's case, her stance of approach and expansiveness relates to the sometimes exaggerated expressiveness of Latin cultures. She presents herself posturally as a close person, prone to physical contact and knowing of the attractiveness she displays among male gender. That is why, in the case of these two characters, the stereotypes of queen of the home and superwoman are confirmed, respectively. In this context, the most similar character to Gloria in postural key is Cameron, who is also a close, outgoing and positive person. The most measured characters in this regard are Claire's teenage daughters Alex and Hailey, who have a more monotonous postural repertoire where their closeness and communicativeness can be highlighted.
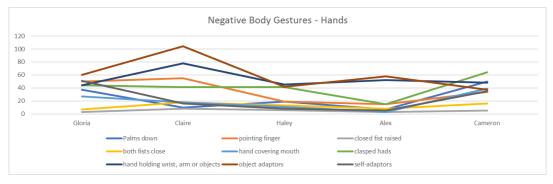
Graph 2: Positive Body Gestures- Hands

Source: Compiled by Authors

As for bodily gestures and focusing on hand gestures we can say that the biggest differences between characters occur in positive gestures. In this way, the characters that most variety of positive hand movements exhibit are again Gloria and Claire. However, if we get into detail, when it comes to showing the palms of your hands, it is Haley and Alex who do it more often, followed by Claire. It is striking that this is a non-recurring gesture in Cameron. It is a gesture associated with sincerity, transparency and having nothing to hide. Regarding the illustrating gestures, it is Gloria and Claire who best accompany their discourse of illustrators, gestures that serve to set the pace of speech, point out, show spaces, sizes or conceptualize ideas. They are therefore associated with open, expressive and outgoing people. However, it is Haley the most sparing with such gestures, appearing more inexpressive and even with a more abrupt character. Gestures called "thumbs showing" (superiority), the "ring gesture" (reflection) and the "hands behind your back" (authority) do not appear in the course of the chapters analyzed.

In establishing a general conclusion we can point out how, in terms of hand gestures associated with positivity, the characters who stand out if we attend to their variety of repertoire, are again Gloria and Claire with Cameron. All three use abundant illustrators to set pace, point out objects, define ideas, explain sizes and shapes, etc. However, it is evident that Gloria does so in a display of exaggerated

communicativeness in her communication to even draw attention to herself. Claire uses them to make herself understood in her family environment while Cameron shows them with some typical characteristics of the female gender. Haley and Alex are less expressive even though Alex uses more illustrators than her sister. Both of them stand out when it comes to showing the palms of her hands in a clear sign of candor and sincerity typical of their teenage stage.

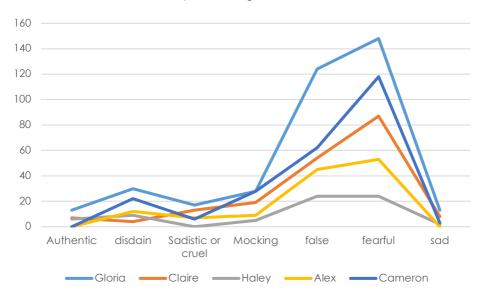Graph 3: Negative Body Gestures – Hands

Source: Compiled by authors

As the graph shows, virtually all characters show a varied repertoire of hand gestures that involve negative connotations. At this point, Claire stands out above the others again. She repeatedly appears grabbing all kinds of household objects (food, laundry, cleaning utensils, etc.), an aspect that, together with the high presence of the "pointing finger" in scenes scolding her children and husband, consecrates her as the typical housewife adjusted to the stereotype "queen of the home". This character also stands out for clasping her hands together on numerous occasions, a sign of repression and self-protection. For her part, Gloria also spends a lot of time with objects in her hands, however, these are usually gifts (luxurious) being the food utensils present to a lesser extent. The Latina actress also exhibits her hands clasped (repression), covers her mouth with her hand (rejection) and her palms are down (authoritarianism). Therefore, it is corroborated in the nonverbal dimension that Gloria has a strong character. She is materialistic and is also confined to household chores, since she loves to cook. Meanwhile, Cameron would seem repressed (if we pay attention to the "hands clasped") and slightly aggressive related to the presence of the "pointing finger". Alex also uses many objects, mainly books, notes, pens, etc., which provide an image of an extremely perfectionist teenager obsessed with her academic projection. Again it is Haley the flatter character at this point of the research.

The results obtained lead us to how the gestures performed that denote negative emotions clearly stereotype several of the female characters analyzed. Claire would perfectly fit with the queen of the home while Gloria would be a mix of this model and that of woman object. Cameron appears as a contradictory character, as she shares a very equal spectrum of negative and positive emotions if her hand movements are taken into account. As for Alex's character, she presents a non-exclusive stereotype of women, in this case they are called Geeks or Nerds, which, according to Guerrero and González:

> They have high study levels (graduate, masters, postgraduate), a complex vocabulary that proves their high level of education and are related to technological hobbies (video-games, computers, robots, etc.). However, it has a low level of social relationship that is reflected in the unusual displays of affection (2010:16).

Graph 4: Facial gestures- Smiles

Source: Compiled by authors

The smile types graph yields somewhat unexpected results. As can be seen, the prevailing smile in the five female-role characters is that of fear. A smile that hides positive feelings and relates to fear and surprise at unforeseen events. Gloria is the character who shows it the most, followed by Cameron, Claire, Alex and Haley. Similarly, the false smile that denotes feelings contrary to those shown, hypocrisy and cynicism also stands out. In this case it is Gloria who most exhibits it followed by Cameron, Claire, Alex and Hailey. The rest of the smiles appear to a much lesser extent, drawing attention to the low presence of the authentic smile (associated with candor) in all the characters analyzed.

The conclusions drawn to the point that although the characters often smile in the sitcom, they do not do so in a positive and authentic way. Quite the contrary, smiles denote falsehood and fear. The adult female role-playing characters (Gloria, Cameron and Claire) would be the ones who show it the most. They stand out as unsafe, fearful, cold and hypocritical people in much of the plot throughout all the seasons viewed.

Graph 5: Facial gestures – gaze

Source: Compiled by authors

The analyzed data regarding the types of looks show very similar graphic trends in all the characters with the exception of Gloria, Claire and Cameron. The most recurrent gaze in the five is the firm and frank one, related to candor and transparency. The one who shows this the most is Claire, followed by Gloria and Cameron. In this sense, Gloria stresses her aggressiveness by prioritizing her fierce gaze much of the time she is on screen. She looks surprised to a lesser extent, lowers her eyes (humility) and also does so sideways (suspicion). For her part, Claire is much calmer, showing more tranquility with her eye movements. Alex also stands out for the firm and frank gaze, the lowering of eyes (humility) and squinting (contempt). This last look is usually directed at her family when she shows disagreement with them. Cameron clearly stands out for the firm and frank look and Haley is again the flatter character in this regard.

All this leads us to a conclusion, through which data regarding the types of looks again confirm Gloria as a temperamental woman with falsehood hints and with high aggressiveness rates. They are traits that could allow us to speak of a stereotype related to the character associated with Latina women aware of the power of their physical attractiveness. Claire would be more balanced at this point by showing herself as a sincere and transparent woman just like Cameron. For her part, Alex would convey shyness and mistrust towards her parents and siblings, a typical trait for teenagers.

4.2. Inferential Analyses

In this section we will use the extraversion, aggressiveness and shyness variables, created, as it has been already noted, adding the corresponding gestures to each of them.

The Kolmogorov Smirnov test with Lilliefors significance correction (Table 2) verifying that all contrasts are significant, which shows that none of the three variables are normal, so non-parametric contrasts are chosen. In this case, there are 169 observations for each variable because there are protagonists who do not have punctuation in some of the variables in some chapters.

Table 2: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with Lilliefors significance correction

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
OUTGOING	0,088	169	**0,003**
AGGRESIVE	0,109	169	**0,000**
SHY	0,121	169	**0,000**

Source: Compiled by authors

Kruskal-Wallis H test are subsequently made for the three variables (Table 3) and only significant differences are found between the characters in the shyness variable. This shows that extraversion and aggression are present variables in sitcoms for all characters.

Table 3: Kruskal–Wallis H test

	Kruskal-Wallis H test		
	OUTGOING	AGGRESSIVE	SHY
Chi-Square	3,174	6,324	9,937
gl	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0,529	0,176	**0,042**

Source: Compiled by authors

However, in the case of shyness there are significant differences between several characters, specifically, there are differences between Claire, and Gloria, Cameron and Alex; showing that Claire's shyness is much greater than those of the other three characters.

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U Test

Variables	Mann-Whitney U test		
	Mann-Whitney U	N	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Claire -Gloria	750,000	44	**0,049**
Claire-Haley	408,500	30	**0,004**
Claire-Cameron	742,000	44	**0,031**

Source: Compiled by authors

5. Discussion and Conclusions

In global terms, it can be said that although *Modern Family* is a series that tries to portray an atypical American family where three marriages coexist, of which two are unconventional, it actually conveys a stereotypical image, at least in the characters who portray a female role. Claire's nonverbal behavior reveals a housewife overwhelmed by daily chores who behaves emotionally in an extreme way. She is expressive, compassionate and aggressive at the same time. She stays most of her time doing housework and in a permanent nervous breakdown. She perfectly fits into the "queen of the home" model. Meanwhile, Gloria symbolizes the stereotype of "object woman" interspersed with "queen of the home". Her gestures make her a woman with a strong and exaggerated character, typical of Latin cultures, very concerned with her physical appearance and who shows off the impact she has on male gender. Her nonverbal behavior is associated with tasks like cooking and being flirtatious. Meanwhile, Cameron's character is built on the stereotype of effeminate homosexual, expressive until reaching caricature and who, in nonverbal key, combines extroversion with some patterns of repression. Finally, the two teenagers have a lower prominence in the nonverbal dimension. Thus, while Haley is flat in all the variables analyzed, Alex is set up as a young woman obsessed with her studies, misunderstood by her family and isolated many times in her own inner world.

Therefore, we only have to add the concern generated by the perception that the audience of this type of series ends up having on issues related to gender and specifically about the stereotypes projected by the five characters analyzed. The two adult women take a role associated with household chores and family care or a high concern for physical appearance. Meanwhile the pattern of the homosexual character projects attitudes of effeminate and egocentrism. In addition, teenage girls move on the spectrum of puberty without the possibility of maturely interacting in establishing relationships with the rest of the group. *Modern Family* does not portray a modern, distinct or alternative family if you look at the stereotypes that emerge in their nonverbal behavior. If it were, Claire and Gloria would have a greater balance between their professional and personal lives, Cameron would be a character without effeminate traits and teenage girls would combine the typical puberty attitude with more mature reasoning.

6. Acknowledgment

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Notes

1. This analysis sheet has been reworked from the results obtained in: HERNANDEZ, M. (2008). Non-verbal communication in the media projection of the political image of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero during the political period 2006-2007 [doctoral thesis]. Madrid: Complutense University of Madrid. Available in https://eprints.ucm.es/8838/2/T30822.pdf. In addition, this analysis tool has been successfully tested in several scientific research and lays its foundations in the following research article: HERNÁNDEZ, M. and RODRÍGUEZ, I. (2009). Research in nonverbal communication: a model for the analysis of the Kinesic behavior of political leaders and for determining their strategic significance. Teaching Journal: Interuniversity Journal of Didactics, 27(1), 61-94.

2. A high degree of repetition is considered if the total percentage of the movement made is greater than 70%. The average repetition is set to a value between 30 and 70%. A low repetition covers the percentages between 1 and 30%.