

GENDER-BIASED TOYS: A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER ROLES PORTRAYED IN CHILDREN'S DOLLS

Brinquedos Sexistas: Uma Análise Multimodal dos Papéis de Gênero Retratados em Bonecas

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ABSTRACT: This paper discusses how toys reflect dominant gender discourses and enable children to enact these discourses through play. Specifically, we examine the Brazilian doll *Bebê Surpresa*, using Social Semiotics as conceptualized by Halliday (1985) and the Grammar of Visual Design developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) to understand how gender ideologies are conveyed through language and visual design. While the doll is marketed as a modern recreation of baby shower practices, our analysis suggests that it reinforces binary gender roles and their associated social functions, perpetuating gender stereotypes. By analyzing the design and discourse of *Bebê Surpresa*, we aim to contribute to a broader understanding of how gender ideologies are communicated through children's toys and play.

KEY-WORDS: Gender-biased toys; *Bebê Surpresa*; Social Semiotics; Grammar of Visual Design.

RESUMO: Este artigo discute como brinquedos refletem discursos de gênero dominantes e como eles permitem que as crianças atuem nesses discursos por meio do brincar. Especificamente, examinamos a boneca brasileira *Bebê Surpresa*, utilizando a Semiótica Social, conforme conceituada por Halliday (1985), e a Gramática Visual, desenvolvida por Kress e Van Leeuwen (2006), para entender como as ideologias de gênero emergem e se materializam por meio da linguagem e do design visual. Embora a boneca seja comercializada como uma recreação moderna das práticas do chá de bebê, nossa análise sugere que ela reforça

papéis binários de gênero e suas respectivas funções sociais associadas, perpetuando estereótipos de gênero. Ao analisar o design e a linguagem da *Bebê Surpresa*, nosso objetivo é contribuir para uma compreensão mais ampla de como as ideologias de gênero são comunicadas por meio dos brinquedos e brincadeiras infantis.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Brinquedos sexistas; *Bebê Surpresa*; Semiótica Social; Gramática Visual.

INTRODUCTION

Toys are representations of the real world and convey explicit and implicit messages reinforcing and building ideologies and social values (ALMEIDA, 2006, 2008, 2017, 2020). As Coulthard and Van Leeuwen (2001; 2002; 2004) suggest, toys construct knowledge about social practices such as motherhood, healthcare, education, and different professions. However, it is essential to acknowledge that toys are not neutral objects and are produced within specific cultural and ideological contexts. Kress (1993) highlights that even though seemingly innocent and mundane, toys can be ideologically saturated and construct knowledge about family and gender relations. Therefore, it is crucial to critically examine the messages and values that toys convey and promote inclusive and diverse representations. Toys are not ideologically neutral objects but convey specific messages and constraints through playing. Almeida (2020) suggests that toys can be analyzed as texts and provides examples such as toy packaging, websites, and social media campaigns. By examining these communication and advertising mechanisms, gendered marks and representations of social agents can be revealed, shedding light on the roles of women and men in society.

Considering the aforementioned, the purpose of this paper is to examine the gendered polarization that is evident in the Brazilian doll *Bebê Surpresa* through the lens of social semiotics¹, as outlined by Halliday (1985), and its application to the Grammar of visual design by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). The study aims to understand how gender ideologies are perpetuated through language and visual design. The following section provides a brief overview of the relationship between language and the perpetuation of gender ideologies and the grammar of visual design. The following sections present the methods used in the study and the subsequent data analysis. The study seeks to gain insight into the representation of gender in *Bebê Surpresa* and how it reinforces traditional gender roles and expectations.

GENDER REPRESENTATION AND IDEOLOGY

It is crucial to consider Brazil's social and political factors that underscore the significance of critically examining toys and the messages they convey to children from an early age. Specifically, the term “gender ideology” has garnered significant attention

1 Special thanks goes to Professor Viviane Herbele who offered us insightful feedback on an initial draft of this article.

in Brazil, particularly with statements made by ex-president Jair Bolsonaro during his political campaign in 2018. Brazil's ex-president expressed dissatisfaction with what he perceived as gender ideologies being taught in schools, arguing that such teachings would result in children having a misguided understanding of what a family represents. The term "gender ideology" has since been adopted by conservative parties to discuss sexual diversity (ASSIS; OGANDO, 2018). It is worth noting that Bolsonaro won the presidential election with the support of 55.13% of Brazilian voters, suggesting that a significant portion of the population shares his beliefs. This context highlights the importance of examining toys, such as the Brazilian doll *Bebê Surpresa*, and their messages about gender roles and expectations to children.

Bergvall and Bing (1996) argue that language and traditional social practices reinforce the boundaries between male and female biological features and that there is a concerted social effort to ensure these boundaries remain fixed in everyday life. This effort is not solely aimed at maintaining social order but rejects anything that deviates from binary standards of male and female (gender identity, sexuality, and affection). As a result, social norms and beliefs deny and make life difficult for individuals who identify as homosexual, bisexual, transgender, or non-binary (BERGVALL; BING, 1996). According to them, individuals who do not fit within the strict female-male dichotomy are either ignored or subject to boundary policing. Groups that challenge or extend the boundaries of restrictive gender roles are often considered taboo or labeled as aberrant.

Although the theme has a socially relevant outcome, further studies concerning gendered toys and language must be conducted. Authors such as Deborah Cameron (1985) have stressed the lack of feminist research on language and gender. In the same way, Coulthard and Van Leeuwen (2004), when studying the role of toys in society, mention the lack of this object of analysis among feminist researchers. Similarly, Bergvall and Bing (1996) raise concerns about the existing linguist research. Even when conducting linguistic research, there might be some accidental (or intentional) strengthening of gender polarization when assuming that a particular speech has more female characteristics than male, for example. These authors explain: "By accepting a biological female-male dichotomy and by emphasizing language which reflects the two categories, linguists may be reinforcing biological essentialism, even if they emphasize that language, like gender, is learned behavior." (p. 10).

In this vein, Fairclough (1989) posits that social conventions perceived as natural in society possess ideological power and the power to establish norms and regulations. As a result, individuals tend to internalize and promote the assumptions embedded in

powerful discourses because they are presented as everyday norms, such as how to behave and dress. Consequently, these conventions become perceived as normality that is validated by their frequent occurrence in daily life. In essence, individuals tend to accept and propagate these norms as they are commonly regarded a natural part of their lives.

GRAMMARING TEXTS AS VISUAL IMAGES

The Grammar of the Visual Design (GVD) framework, based on Halliday's social semiotic perspective and developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing visual syntax in terms of experiences, social interactions, and ideological stances. The GVD framework identifies three meta-functions: representational, interactive, and compositional that work together within a single text. Within this framework, texts are viewed as visual images that convey meaning on their own. Unsworth (2001, p. 72) defines the representational metafunction as "the nature of events, the objects and participants involved, and the circumstances in which they occur." This metafunction captures the relationship between the depicted participants in a visual image, the materials used in the surrounding space, and their contextual meaning. The visual images that fall under this metafunction can be categorized into narrative and conceptual representations, as identified by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 59) add that narrative representations portray unfolding actions and events, dynamic processes of change, and transitory spatial arrangements. The participants are typically linked by vectors indicating action lines. When a visual image portrays a single participant acting, the depicted action movement may be non-transactional. However, when participants interact with each other as actors or goals of the action, a transactional action is represented (UNSWORTH, 2001). Verbal and mental processes are also visually represented through speech and thought bubbles, respectively. In these representations, the participant is typically identified as the sayer or sensor.

In contrast to narrative representations, conceptual representations represent participants in generalized categories, such as class, structure, or meaning, as an attempt to describe, inform or classify (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006). Conceptual representation has three significant kinds of conceptual structures:

- Classificational structures arrange people, places, or things together in a given visual space to classify them according to the kind of relations they establish with each other.

- Symbolic structures are realized by symbolic attributes or overall symbolic relations between participants through used elements in the visual composition, such as size, color, and positioning. In other words, these structures are defined by a “carrier-attribute” relationship (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006).
- Analytical structures, which, instead of being constructed based on this carrier–attribute relationship, “relate participants in terms of a part–whole structure.” Kress and van Leeuwen explain that [t]hey involve two kinds of participants: one Carrier (the whole) and any number of Possessive Attributes (the parts)” (2006, p. 87).

Working simultaneously with the representational metafunction, there are two others: interactive and compositional. The first one has to do with the relationship between participants especially in relation to power distribution, being classified as offers or demands and there are five aspects used to analyze it: Interaction, Social distance, Attitude, Power, and Realism (UNSWORTH, 2001). In terms of compositional meanings, the second one refers to “the way in which the representational and interactive elements are made to relate to each other, the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole” (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006, p. 176). The compositional metafunction comprises three analytical aspects: Information Value, Saliency, and Framing. Information Value refers to the amount and type of information conveyed by a visual image, including the level of detail and the relationship between different elements within the image. Saliency relates to the visual prominence of some aspects within the image, which can be achieved through color, contrast, size, and placement. Framing refers to how the visual image is constructed and presented, including its size, shape, and orientation, as well as the use of borders and other visual cues that define the boundaries of the image (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006).

Due to the context of this research, it is crucial to examine the relationship between the discourses embedded in the advertisement of the doll and the pre-existing reality in which the discourse is situated. This analysis requires an exploration of the social subjects represented by the doll, both male and female, who are already shaped by a pre-existing reality that determines the rules they must follow and the side of the gender polarization they must adhere to from birth. Considering factors like this, it may be possible to understand how the doll advertisement reinforces and perpetuates societal norms and expectations surrounding gender roles and identity.

METHODS

Bebê Surpresa and the criteria for data selection

The best-selling toys in Brazil for 2020 were listed in a compilation that included three toys from each brand. Among these companies was Estrela, a Brazilian toy company with a rich history of over 80 years. In 2020, Estrela's three most popular toys were *Bebê Surpresa*, Super Massa Cozinha Criativa, and Fábrica de Borrachas². Our research is focused on analyzing the first top-selling toy, *Bebê Surpresa*, which had a significant impact on consumers due to its unique concept of providing children with a realistic experience of discovering the gender of a baby. According to the toy's description on Estrela's website, *Bebê Surpresa* is to recreate the magic of baby showers, where parents traditionally reveal the gender of their baby. The toy comes in a box wrapped in cloth, with its eyes closed. The child must remove the cloth to discover the sex of the baby based on the genitalia of the doll. Additionally, the child must remove the ink from the doll's eyes to reveal the color of its eyes.

PROCEDURES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Our research aims to analyze three images from the advertisement of the doll, which can also be found on Estrela's official website in the product's purchasing section³. Through the lens of representational meanings, we will examine the visual elements that convey gender stereotypes and reinforce gender polarization. Our objective is to provide a thorough investigation of these images to understand the potential impact on children's perceptions of gender roles.

DATA ANALYSIS

This section will delve into a deeper analysis of the images we call Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 2. Before this analysis, we also researched the feedback from customers who purchased the doll from Estrela's website. Upon exploring the comments section, we observed a polarized response from customers regarding the toy's gendered nature. Many positive comments highlighted the educational value of the toy, emphasizing

2 Retrieved June 14, 2023 from <https://www.epgrupo.com.br/fabricantes-listam-os-brinquedos-mais-vendidos-durante-a-feira-abrin-2020/>.

3 The three images are used with permission of Estrela ©.
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the importance of reinforcing traditional gender roles in children. However, negative comments were also present, often criticizing the gendered nature of the toy.

Congratulations to Estrela for this incredible toy, I found it very important for children because they can learn to differentiate boy is boy and girl is girl, the initiative of creating such a toy is great to develop the concept of men and women which is so distorted these days⁴ - (Customer 1).

As we can see, Customer 1's comment praises Estrela's toy for its potential to teach children to differentiate between genders and reinforce traditional gender roles, highlighting the perception of gender as a binary construct. The commenter values the toy's ability to reinforce the idea that there are differences between boys and girls and the importance of understanding these differences. This perspective assumes that gender is inherently linked to biology and ignores the complexity and fluidity of gender identity. Moreover, it reinforces the notion that there are fixed and predetermined roles for men and women, perpetuating gender-based stereotypes that can limit children's potential. While the commenter views the toy as an essential tool for children's development, this comment highlights the need to critically examine the impact of gendered toys on children's perceptions and attitudes toward gender. In contrast, another customer comments the following:

I received a girl doll with boy's accessories. However, my niece loved it and that's why I didn't change it. Still, I stand out that by sending an email to Estrela, I received a quick answer about the procedures to return the toy⁵ - (Customer 2)

The customer 2 expressed frustration over receiving a girl doll with what they perceived as boy's accessories. Although the comment suggests that the toy was not consistent with traditional gender roles, Customer 2's decision not to return it and their niece's enjoyment of it may indicate that the child did not see any issue with playing with a doll with accessories that were typically associated with boys. Furthermore, this comment reflects the complexity of gendered toys and how children can challenge gender norms through play. These comments highlight the controversy surrounding gender roles

4 Our translation. Original comment: "Parabéns para Estrela por esse brinquedo maravilhoso, achei muito importante para as crianças pois aprendem a diferenciar menino é menino e menina é menina, a iniciativa de criar um brinquedo como esse é ótimo para o conceito de homem e mulher que está tão distorcido nos dias de hoje".

5 Our translation. Original comment: "Recebi uma boneca "menina" com todos os acessórios de "menino". Contudo minha sobrinha amou e não larga a boneca, por isso não fiz a troca. Todavia, ressalto que, ao enviar um e-mail para a estrela, fui prontamente respondida com todo procedimento explicando como fazer a devolução do brinquedo".

in children's toys and the varying opinions on reinforcing them. Moving forward, we will analyze the chosen images to identify any visual elements that may contribute to this ongoing debate. Concerning the selected images for analysis, they are: (1) the box of *Bebê Surpresa*, containing a brief description of the toy and the apparatuses that come in the box; (2) an image containing some visual elements of the doll which reveal the sex difference if the baby is a boy or a girl; and finally (3) a representation of a girl playing with the doll.

The doll *Bebê Surpresa* displays some exaggerated features, such as its large eyes and the emphasis given to its genitals, which can serve to enhance its emotional impact, as noted by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996). Caldas-Coulthard & Van Leeuwen (2003) have also examined the relationship between children and their toys, highlighting how particular objects can elicit strong feelings and become closely associated with the image of a baby. This is similar to the role of *Bebê Surpresa*, as it encourages girls to care for the doll and imitate adult behaviors they have observed in relationships between caregivers (often women) and babies. In this way, the doll serves as a tool for young girls to learn about and practice caregiving skills and reinforce traditional gender roles by promoting caregiving as a predominantly female activity. However, the exaggerated features of the doll and its focus on gendered anatomy may also perpetuate narrow beauty standards and reinforce binary gender norms, ultimately shaping girls' perceptions of femininity and their role in society.

Figure 1: *Bebê Surpresa* box



Courtesy of Estrela©

Regarding representational meanings, the doll is the represented participant since it is the subject we speak about, look at, and write about. Considering the vectorial relations connecting the participants to the structure, the image constitutes a visual narrative process. In the image, there are two main participants, the baby doll and the stork, who are holding the baby, indicating that it will deliver the baby to the parent (child). Thus, the actor in this image is the stork holding the baby. Nonetheless, the stork is not looking at the baby; instead, it makes eye contact with the viewer, implying a demand rather than an offer. Other participants include the three images of the baby's faces, the Estrela symbol on the upper-left side, and another small stork on the right side.

Moreover, within this narrative, two verbal processes can be identified through the blue and pink plates on the right side of the box. The plates seem to suggest a conversation surrounding the baby's gender. One plate reads "Is it a boy?" and the other "Is it a girl?", indicating an unidentified actor inquiring about the sex of the baby. These plates reinforce gender stereotypes and binary thinking as if the baby's gender is the most important characteristic that needs to be identified and confirmed. This verbal representation also adds to the overall narrative of the doll and reinforces the idea that gender polarization is a crucial aspect of children's toys.

The colors adopted in order to describe this toy are also significant. Coulthard & Van Leeuwen (2004) highlight the influence of colors on gender meaning. Their research mentions the prevalence of pink in advertisements or the toys themselves when they are destined for girls and how this choice is associated with the social concept of femininity. Nonetheless, in *Bebê Surpresa*, we can see that the dominant color is light blue, even though there is a large amount of pink. It is possible to infer that both colors are put in a contrastive manner to establish that the main objective of the toy is the big question, "boy or girl?". However, the more significant amount of blue can be due to the background scenario that explains the stork since it is where they travel to deliver the babies to their families.

It is noteworthy to address the controversy surrounding the toy. On the one hand, it is suggested that children should develop an awareness of a baby's sex/gender from an early age. However, on the other hand, the toy fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities associated with having a child. The simplistic representation of gender roles in the toy may lead to reinforcing harmful stereotypes and limiting a child's perception of gender identity. Additionally, the toy does not acknowledge the numerous challenges and responsibilities associated with caring for a newborn, such as feeding, changing, and providing emotional support. It is crucial to consider the broader implications of toys that

promote gender stereotypes and examine the potential impact on a child's development and understanding of the world.

Figure 2: *Bebê Surpresa* advertisement



Courtesy of Estrela©

In Figure 2, it is evident that the image showcases a diversity of skin colors, which is commendable in terms of representation and inclusivity. However, it is essential to note that despite the diverse skin tones depicted, the image still perpetuates the concept of gender polarization. This concept suggests that a person's gender and associated traits are determined solely by biological sex. Moreover, the representation of gender through genitalia alone reinforces the notion of gender as a biological truth rather than a socially constructed concept. Thus, Image 2 realizes a Conceptual Process by representing a state of "how things are". The image composition represents the two genital possibilities and the two related gender-specific pacifiers linked directly to the baby doll in the center. The color of the pacifier depends on what kind of genitalia is displayed. If the baby doll displays a vagina, the pacifier is pink, whereas if it displays a penis, the color is blue.

The compositional meanings are given through the location of each participant in a center-margin layout, where the primary participant is the baby doll at the center. Regarding framing, the participants are separated by blank spaces and framed blue and red lines drawn around the circles where the two genitalia are shown. Saliency can be seen through the combination of the blue and pink colors and the amount of information

on both sides. Also, refer to the background division between pink and blue to reinforce the differences in terms of gender.

Regarding the relation between participants or elements, the image presents a single-leveled overt taxonomy of participants and explicit roles in the representational structures: one element is superordinately connected to two or more subordinates (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 1996, p.87). The baby doll occupies a higher hierarchical level in the center of the composition, playing a superordinate role concerning the other elements, the genital possibilities, and the textual information on both sides. In this relation, the subordinates present equal size and distance to the superordinate element, reinforcing the central role of the baby doll in the center of the composition. In the relation of the subordinates to each other, there is also a hierarchical level, where the textual information elements are subordinated to the genital possibilities elements.

Besides this classification attempt, the image composition can also be identified by their attributes, establishing between them a part-whole relationship through Analytical Processes. In this composition, there is a part-whole relation involving two kinds of Participants: the baby doll as the Carrier (whole) and the other participants as its Possessive Attributes (parts). The Possessive Attributes of the baby doll include the genitalia and the gender-specific pacifiers. These attributes are parts of the baby doll and are directly linked to its representation of gender. This relationship is established through Analytical Processes, as the attributes are analyzed concerning the whole entity of the baby doll. Additionally, the color of the pacifiers also serves as an attribute, as it is directly linked to the gender of the baby doll. The use of possessive attributes in the composition emphasizes the importance of gender and genitalia in the representation of the baby doll. It reinforces that these attributes are essential in defining one's gender identity.

Concerning the symbolic processes, the Carrier is the baby doll at the center. In this context, the genitalia is a Symbolic Attribute that will define gender. The following features highlight this gender issue:

- Its anatomically genital design is displayed on both sides.
- Its pink and blue colors are in the visual composition.
- The symbolic value with which the genitals and stains are commonly associated.

Pink and blue are the traditional marker of gender and sexuality in cultural models and the multimodal texts they inform, pink for females and blue for males. The verbal

texts below the genitals signal and reinforce cultural and social associations of pink and blue with stereotypically feminine and masculine characteristics, respectively, most likely derived from preconceived notions about gender.

Figure 3: An illustration of a child playing with the doll.



Courtesy of Estrela©

To further improve the image analysis of Figure 3, it can be noted that the girl in the image is represented as the primary participant, and the doll is the second participant. Additionally, the image can be analyzed through a material process, as the girl is physically holding the doll, representing the act of possession and care. This material process is reinforced by the girl's facial expression, who appears to be looking at the doll with affection and tenderness.

The image aims to create an emotional connection between the viewer and the toy, as it depicts a child interacting with it caring and lovingly. In other words, the participants in the narrative process are composed of one actor (the girl) and one goal (the doll). This image is also transactional since vectors connect the participants, as the girl is looking directly at the doll. Besides, we can infer that all the elements presented offer a coherent narrative of girlhood, because it attempts to tell a story where a child is the actor and the baby doll is the goal. The baby wrapped in the cloth bag indicates that the child is taking the baby out for a ride, which is a common activity between mothers and their children.

According to Natcharian (2016), children learn social practices and social values and develop a sense of empathy through playing. Caldas-Coulthard and van Leeuwen (2004) also explain that toys convey messages about the social world and social practices, and with toys, children learn to interact with other people. Dolls, in their turn, facilitate the reproduction of social norms that the child in an adult's behavior perceives. Natcharian (2016) highlights the importance of dolls and stuffed animals in a child's life as a source of security and comfort. In the early stages, these toys substitute for a parent's physical presence, providing the child with a sense of safety and comfort. As the child grows older, they may begin to imitate the behaviors and language of their parents towards the doll, essentially taking on the role of a caregiver. This behavior allows the child to both relive and share the feeling of being loved and to develop critical social and emotional skills that will benefit them in future relationships. Ultimately, the relationship between a child and their toy can be a powerful tool for emotional development and growth.

Playing with dolls as a way of nurturing and caring for them is typically associated with girls. This gendered association reinforces social roles and stereotypes for girls and boys, which may ultimately shape their development into women and men. When girls play with dolls, they are often encouraged to act as if they are the mother, which can increase their sense of motherhood and encourage them to imitate their mother's nurturing behaviors. However, this type of play is rarely seen among boys, perpetuating a misrepresentation of family roles and responsibilities. Specifically, the omission of a father figure in doll play reinforces the idea that nurturing and caregiving are solely the responsibility of mothers and does not accurately reflect the diversity of family structures, such as families with two mothers or two fathers.

CONCLUSION

Through the social semiotic perspective and its adaptation to the Grammar of Visual Design, it was possible to investigate the gendered polarization represented in the *Bebê Surpresa* baby doll. Even though the toy's purpose was a modern recreation of practices involving having a child, such as the baby shower, we were still able to find rooted concepts of stereotypes that support the binary social roles and their respective social functions, in this case, motherhood. As Coulthard and Van Leeuwen (2004) have already pointed out, the practices of domesticity are overrepresented in toys directed to girls, and the same does not happen with toys related to boys. The same could be noted in the analysis of *Bebê Surpresa*, where the presence of paternity was utterly left out.

As suggestions for further research, it would be pertinent to carry out a deeper analysis of the other elements available on the official web page for the toy, such as the video and the customer comments. Investigating other toys with the same proposal of *Bebê Surpresa* would also be interesting to look at. For example, analyzing other dolls representing several areas of adult life that are stereotyped or reinforce the domestic role attributed to women and girls. Another possible topic of analysis would be regarding dolls associated with prestigious positions rather than shoppers, ballerinas, mothers, and caretakers. Firstly it would be necessary to check the existence of dolls in this model; then, it would be interesting to see how they are portrayed.

In conclusion, this paper highlights the pervasive impact of gender ideologies on children's toys and how they reinforce gender roles in society. The analysis of the three images of baby dolls and their associated narratives reveals how these toys reinforce gender stereotypes and binary notions of gender. By promoting the idea that girls should care for dolls and boys should play with other types of toys, these toys limit children's understanding of their potential and restrict their ability to explore and express their gender identities freely.

While this study has provided valuable insights into the gendered messages conveyed through baby dolls, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. First, our analysis was limited to only three images of the same baby doll and, as such, may be different from the broader range of baby dolls available on the market. Additionally, we focused solely on the visual representations of the dolls. We did not consider other factors, such as marketing campaigns, packaging, or product descriptions, which may also contribute to gendered messages.

Future research could expand on our study by conducting a more extensive analysis of a more diverse range of baby dolls and including a broader range of factors beyond visual representation. Additionally, further research could investigate the effects of these gendered messages on children's attitudes and beliefs about gender roles and parenting, as well as potential interventions that could help combat these gendered stereotypes. By continuing to investigate and address the perpetuation of gender ideologies in children's toys, we can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

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