Language and gender in animated cartoons

A comparison of linguistic features in the Winx Club and LEGO Ninjago series

Språk och genus i tecknad film
En jämförelse av språkliga drag i serierna Winx Club och LEGO Ninjago

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Abstract

Even though numerous studies on language and gender have been carried out, the number of studies conducted in researching language and gender in cartoons is limited. The present study analyzes talkativeness and the use of questions and interruptions in two popular cartoons, the Winx Club and the LEGO Ninjago: Master of spinjitzu in order to investigate possible differences in language use between female and male characters. The present study concludes that there are more similarities than differences in language use of male and female characters.

Keywords: language, gender, talkativeness, questions, interruptions

Sammanfattning

Även om ett stort antal studier av språk och kön har genomförts, är antalet studier av språk och genus i tecknade serier begränsat. Den föreliggande studien analyserar pratsamhet och användandet av frågor och avbrytningar i två populära serier: Winx Club och LEGO Ninjago: Master av spinjitzu för att utforska eventuella skillnader i språkbruk mellan kvinnliga och manliga karaktärer. Denna studie drar slutsatsen att likheterna i språkbruk hos manliga och kvinnliga karaktärer är större än skillnaderna.

Nyckelord: språk, genus, pratsamhet, frågor, avbrytningar
1. Introduction and aims

There is a general assumption that women are more talkative than men. Women have also been found to use higher-prestige forms and politeness to a greater extent than men (Trudgill, 1972:180-183, Yule, 2014:278). While some argue that gender differences in speech usage is the result of biological variations (Bell, McCarthy & McNamara, 2006:1009, 1012), the general view is that differences in language usage are the result of social structures, conventions and norms (Leaper & Smith, 2004:1022, Mesthrie et al., 2009:218).

The ability to use language appropriately in a socio-cultural context is one of the main elements of human speech (Chambers, 2005:215). According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2010:333), “a major topic in sociolinguistics is the connection, if any, between the structures, vocabularies, and ways of using particular languages and the social roles of the men and women who speak these languages.” Many scholars have contributed to the study of gender and language, for example Milroy (1980, 1987), James and Clarke (1993), Cameron (1998, 2005, 2008), Mehl et. al. (2001, 2007), Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), Mills (2003), and Coates (1996, 2016) to name a few. Advocates of the biological theories maintain that gender oppositions and differences based on biological factors, such as neuroanatomy and neurochemistry or inherited biological traits, can explain differences in language use, for example superior verbal abilities endowed to female speakers (Ngun et al., 2010:227-235, Cameron, 2010:180f), and that men and women tend to maintain their different language style in any socio-cultural context; in other words, gender is not defined in connection to social contexts of interaction but is defined biologically (Tannen, 1993:165f). Most current language and gender researchers, like Leaper and Smith (2004:995f, 1022) for example, take a different approach and advocate the social constructionist theory. This theory defines gender in connection to social contexts of interaction and assumes that gender or biological sex does not naturally result in a specific fixed style of language use, but speakers change and adapt their style based on the social context of their interactions.

Even though numerous studies on language and gender have been carried out, the number of studies conducted in specific contexts is limited. This is especially true when it comes to researching language and gender in cartoons. Thompson and Zerbinos (1995, 1997) as well as Baker and Raney (2004, 2007) studied gender roles in cartoons including language usage. Barcus (1977), Forge and Phemister (1987), Beasich, Leinoff and Swan (1992), Hoffner (1996), Bongco (1999), and Aubrey and Harrison (2004) conducted research on children’s TV-programs but their emphasis was on gender roles and their influence on children’s social
development rather than language. Children tend to pick up on gender roles and communicative practices from media and entertainment and are rather susceptible to television, films, and video games (Baker and Raney 2007:27) because, here, behaviors, strategies and social rules are illustrated in a simple way. Therefore, there is an apparent need for studies like this one to further our knowledge of language usage in cartoons and other children’s TV-programs in order to determine and adjust the pedagogical role of television and media in children’s lives.

The main aim of this study is to investigate whether or not there are any differences in the language use of male and female characters in two popular animated cartoons. One cartoon (LEGO Ninjago) targets a boys’ audience and has mainly male characters and the other (Winx Club) targets a girls’ audience and has mainly female characters.

Based on earlier research on language and gender, the linguistic features that will be in focus here are talkativeness, questions, and interruptions. Do female characters use questions and interruptions more frequently than male characters? What form of questions and interruptions do male and female characters use? Are female characters more talkative than their male counterparts? This study hopes to provide some useful insights into language and gender in animated cartoons in order to pave the way for further research on gendered language use in cartoons and its the potential implications when it comes to children’s communicative behavior.

2. Background

As mentioned in the introduction, few scholars have researched the topic of gender differences in language usage in animated cartoons, and whether or not there are differences in the language use of male and female characters. This section reviews central concepts and perspectives in the scientific study of language and gender (Section 2.1), gender differences in language use (Section 2.2) and previous studies on gender differences in language use in cartoons (Section 2.3).

2.1 Language and gender

Before exploring the differences in male and female language use, it is important to define gender and sex (Section 2.1.1), as well as examine the various scientific and folk discourses on and approaches to language and gender (Section 2.1.2).
2.1.1 Definitions of sex and gender

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003:10) define sex as “a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential” while gender is “the social elaboration of biological sex.” The authors claim that identifying oneself as a man or a woman is a social decision based on personal beliefs and ideas about gender. Science – with its biological definitions and explanations about the gender’s biological functions – only helps the decision-making process. Contemporary language and gender researchers have begun to shift their thinking from the traditional binary gender difference to gender diversity (Cameron, 2005:487). For example, when the question ‘How are women different than men’ is asked, researchers reply ‘Which women and which men do you mean?’ (Cameron, 2005:487). Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015:313-319) argue that reference to sexuality is an essential part of any gender discussion because ideologies about gender, sex categories, and sexuality influence language use. In this study, gender categorization is based on biological sex; the characters in the scripts are categorized on the basis of the biological sex they are intended to portray, i.e. all boys and men are labeled male characters, and all girls and women are labeled female characters.

2.1.2 Scholarly approaches to language and gender

Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015:319) describe the linguistic aspects of discourse as “conventionalized sets of choices in language” and distinguish the discourse of heteronormativity as one of the most extensive. Heteronormativity assumes the norm that people fall into distinct and complementary genders – male and female – with natural roles in life and heterosexuality as their default sexual orientation (Harris & White, 2018:335). Heteronormativity includes many discourses about gender roles in heterosexual relationships and about masculinities and femininities; communication and speech are two of them. Another discourse embraces broader ideas about language as some sort of skill which is naturally possessed by women, while when equally performed by men is considered a form of achievement (Cameron, 2008:457). The gender preferential language discourse assumes that one gender prefers or is stereotypically associated with a specific way of speaking (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015:321). Whichever discourse one chooses, women’s role in language seems to be changing as does researchers’ view on how gender language use differences should be measured and examined. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015:232) refer to various early studies (Milroy & Milroy, 1978; Gal, 1978) in comparison to late studies (Cameron, 1998) to prove the point that many of the traditional differences in language usage between women and men do not exist anymore or are rather limited, maybe due to changed approaches in measuring differences and gender views.

Not only language discourses change but approaches to language and gender studies change as well. Coates (2016:5-7) reviews four different approaches: the deficit approach, the
dominance approach, the difference approach, and the dynamic or social constructionist approach. The deficit approach, prominent in the 1970s, established something called ‘women’s language’ which was assumed to be weak and deficient in comparison to the norm of male language. This approach is nowadays perceived as outdated by researchers in sociolinguistics. The dominance approach, common in the 1980s, builds on a view that male dominance and women’s subordination is reflected in language use. The difference approach evolved in the 1990s as a reaction to women’s oppression and also to the previous models and celebrates the dynamics of female linguistic strategies. This approach is controversial when applied to mixed talk, however. The fourth and most recent approach, the dynamic or social constructionist approach, is based on aspects of interaction in a social context and views gender identity as a social construct and not as a social category. A researcher may be influenced by several theoretical perspectives.

The present study is based on the categorization of gender based on biological sex, on the discourse of heteronormativity, and on the dynamic or social constructionist approach. The next section examines some of the gender differences in language use that previous studies have found.

2.2 Gender differences in language usage

Trudgill (2000:79) argues that the social differences between men and women are products of the social roles society itself imposes on them and explains that “language simply reflects this social fact.” This section examines previous empirical studies on three aspects of language use: talkativeness (Section 2.2.1), the use of questions, direct and indirect speech acts and interruption (Section 2.2.2).

2.2.1 Talkativeness

The idea that women speak more than men, supported by professionals like neuropsychiatrist Brizendine (Mehl et al., 2007:82) and fed by the mass media, is in reality unfounded according to linguistic research (Cameron, 2010:180-183). In her book, The female brain (2006), Brizendine describes how women’s brains and hormones can affect decision-making and behavior, including language style. In her book, she claims that women speak 20,000 words per day while men speak 7,000; she does not mention, however, how she came up with these numbers. Liberman questions the issue of talkativeness in the Language Log blog.¹ He uses data from linguistic transactions of 153 participants from the British National Corpus engaged during a period of two days. The total number of speakers recorded included 561 females and

536 males. By analyzing these tape-recorded daily conversations, Liberman estimated that men speak 6,073 words per day and women speak 8,805 words per day. Even though these results are somewhat problematic because it is unknown how much participants speak when the tape-recorders are turned off, they show that the difference between the number of words uttered by men and women is not as large as Brizendine claimed and cannot be generalized across all contexts.

A more reliable study than the two mentioned above was carried out by Mehl et al. (2007:82). They did a study on talkativeness with the help of an electronically activated recorder (EAR) (Mehl et al., 2001:517). Data from six samples based on 396 participants from five universities in the United States and a university in Mexico were collected between 1998 and 2004. Based on this, the researchers estimated that women speak an average of 16,496 words per day and men 15,669 words per day during 17 waking hours. Mehl et al. (2007:82) point out the limitation of the results due to the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants – they were all university students. Nevertheless, their analysis shows that there is no statistically significant difference in talkativeness between the genders. According to these results, the stereotype about female talkativeness is unjustified and lacks empirical support.

Krantz’s (1999) unpublished bachelor thesis which compared language and gender in comic books, calculated word count and sentence length in two comic books, one intended for girls, Betty and Veronica (1998:74), and one intended for boys, The amazing Spider-man (1999:6, vol. 2). The number of words in The amazing Spider-man are slightly higher than the ones in Betty and Veronica, namely 2,182 versus 1,976 respectively. When it comes to sentence length, the female characters appeared to use shorter sentences than their male counterparts in both comic books. The difference varied from 1.2 to 2.9 words per sentence. According to this study, there is a slight difference in talkativeness in terms of how this feature is depicted in the comic books between the two genders, with male characters doing more talking than female ones.

2.2.2 Questions, speech acts, and interruptions

Many language and gender studies focus on the way male and female speakers interact with each other in both formal and informal contexts. An early researcher, Lakoff (1975) investigated how female speakers use questions and other speech acts in comparison to male speakers. Her book Language and woman’s place became a classic which was highly influential early on, but also heavily criticized for its lack of scientific grounding. More recent studies on the use of questions have attempted to overcome these problems. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015:326) explain that women use questions as part of conversational maintenance while men use them primarily as requests for information. Of course, both the goal of communication and its context are variables that affect the usage and purpose of asking
questions. Freed and Greenwood (1996) who carried out a study of dyadic conversations and examined the use of questions and other features within three types of discourses concluded that “a gendered style cannot be adequately defined by counting individual speech variables removed from the specifics of the talk context” (Freed & Greenwood, 1996:1). The results of their study showed that women and men use these features with equal frequency and in comparable ways, even though the particular features have been previously regarded as a female speech style (Freed & Greenwood, 1996:1). Other studies, though, show that female speakers have the tendency to use questions – tag questions specifically – more than male speakers as a means of tentativeness (Mesthrie et al., 2009:225f), to initiate a conversation, to show concern about the listener, or to request information in a ‘softening’ way (Mesthrie et al., 2009:232). However, it is important to note that identifying different types of tag questions and their function is a challenge for researchers. For example, tags such as You bought this expensive present, didn’t you may request information, or it may serve to soften the speaker’s request (Mesthrie et al., 2009:232).

Another linguistic feature examined by researchers is speech acts, specifically direct and indirect speech acts. Yule (2014:278) reports that researchers have pointed to a preference among women for indirect speech acts rather than direct speech acts in same-gender groups, while direct speech acts are used more often by men in same-gender groups. Blum-Kulka (1987:131-132) studied indirectness and politeness and concluded that on-record, conventionally indirect requests are interpreted as polite. Leech (1983:108) showed that within the same propositional content, it is possible “to increase the degree of politeness by using a more and more indirect kind of illocution.” In other words, an indirect speech act is considered politer and it is more frequently used by female speakers because of their social status awareness and considerations for their listeners. Trudgill’s (1972:180-183) studies seem to confirm these reports.

Another feature examined in regard to language usage among male and female speakers is interruptions. Zimmerman and West (1975) are considered pioneers in studies on interruptions, even though their study is considered somewhat problematic today; upon reexamination of their study, many of the instances that had been counted as interruptions were found to be overlapping talk. More recent studies on interruptions have attempted to overcome these problems. James and Clarke (1993:268) examined why male and female speakers use interruptions in their interactions. They report that men and women interrupt other men and women equally; still, “a small amount of evidence exists that females may use interruptions of the cooperative and rapport-building type to a greater extent than do males, at least in some circumstances” (James & Clarke, 1993:268).
Regardless of these theories, the predominant view is currently that previous theories of gendered differences in language use emphasize differences rather than similarities, but there does not seem to be strong support for the vast differences described in early texts; moreover, researchers begin to base their studies on gender and language on similarities rather than differences in language use (Hyde, 2005:581).

2.3 Previous studies on gender and language differences in cartoons

According to Baker and Raney (2007:27) gender-role stereotypes in cartoons and children’s TV-programs help children understand the difference between being female or male as well as develop social behavioral habits – including language use – because TV-programs in a simple way illustrate behaviors, strategies and social rules. This section examines two studies on animated cartoons in relation to gender and language, one carried out by Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) and the other by Baker and Raney (2007). The results of these two studies will be compared to the results of the present study.

2.3.1 Thompson and Zerbinos

Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) studied the behavior, communication characteristics, and total talk time of male and female characters in 175 episodes of 41 different cartoons and compared pre- and post-1980 cartoons. Overall, there was a total of 106 lead and 127 minor female characters in pre-1980 cartoons and a total of 326 lead and 587 minor male characters in the post-1980 cartoons. The communication variables included asking questions, expressing opinions, answering questions, emphasizing tasks, interrupting, laughing at others, bragging, ordering/bossing, insulting others, threatening others, expressing disappointment and showing anger (Thompson and Zerbinos, 1995:661). The results showed that male characters dominated in all communication variables. Males were portrayed as more verbally and physically aggressive, asking and answering questions, while female characters were portrayed as more likely to show affection, emphasize relationships, and ask for advice or protection (Thompson and Zerbinos, 1995:659-662).

According to the authors, the comparison between pre- and post-1980 cartoons shows that male characters since 1980 have asked and answered more questions, emphasized tasks more, expressed more excitement, bragged less, and ordered or bossed others more. Female characters answered questions more frequently than they used to. Male characters since 1980 have talked significantly more than they used to, but the means for female characters were almost identical pre- and post-1980. (Thompson and Zerbinos, 1995:663)
Additionally, some behaviors did not exist in cartoons before 1980 but were present in cartoons after 1980, such as female interruption, female and male gossiping, and female insulting and bragging (Thompson and Zerbinos, 1995:663).

Thompson and Zerbinos (1995:668) concluded that these results indicate a consistency with traditional gender stereotypes; however, some characteristics have changed over time. It is interesting that the assumption that women talk more than is not supported in studies on language use in cartoons either.

2.3.2 Baker and Raney

Baker and Raney (2007) studied physical appearance, personality traits, physical behaviors, communicative behaviors, and superhero-specific characteristics of 45 male and 24 female superhero characters in 24 animated cartoons. For each character, twelve communicative behaviors were recorded and measured on a 5-point scale – from presence to absence of the behavior. The communication variables were similar to the ones Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) used and included asking questions, emphasizing tasks, interrupting, laughing at others, bragging, bossing others, insulting others, threatening others, expressing disappointment, showing anger, asking for advice and praising others (Baker & Raney, 2005:35). The results showed that of the twelve variables coded for communicative behaviors, only three exhibited significant differences. Female superheroes were found more likely to ask questions – the same result as in Thompson and Zerbinos’ study; male superheroes were more likely to threaten others and show anger – also results consistent with Thompson and Zerbinos’ study (Baker & Raney, 2005:34). Surprisingly, the rest of the variables showed no significant difference between the genders.

Baker and Raney had proposed the hypothesis that “male and female superheroes will be portrayed in significantly different and gender-role stereotypical ways” (Baker & Raney, 2005:35). They did not find that this was the case. Baker and Raney (2005:36-37) interpret these findings as proof that the gender-based stereotypes present in children’s cartoons have finally been broken down. They conclude their research by pointing to the need for further research on the prevalence of gender-role stereotypes, stressing that it is imperative to strive for a more understanding and equitable society (Baker & Raney, 2005:39).

Taking into consideration that Baker and Raney carried out their study almost a decade later than Thompson and Zerbinos, and that the cartoons the latter used as their data were contemporary while the former were from the 70s, the 80s, and the beginning of the 90s, the difference in results is not surprising after all. The results of Baker and Raney’s study are
consistent with the contemporary tendency toward greater gender similarities rather than differences in society (Hyde, 2005:581).

3. Methods

This section describes the material used in the present study (Section 3.1), the methods used for analyzing the material (Section 3.2) and the classification of the data (Section 3.3), as well as the limitations of the study (Section 3.4).

3.1 The cartoons selected

The cartoons analyzed in the present study are the Winx Club and the LEGO Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu. These cartoons are two of the most successful European cartoons, broadcast worldwide and with millions of fans. The Winx Club targets children, mainly girls, between the ages of five and ten and the LEGO Ninjago targets mainly boys of six years of age and up. These two cartoons provide excellent material for studying language and gender because their lead characters are mainly female and male respectively. Therefore, this makes it possible to investigate patterns in language used by the two genders and compare them to explore differences and similarities. The Winx Club series has been broadcast for eight seasons (year 2004 – currently) while the LEGO Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu series has been broadcast for seven seasons (2011 – currently).

The first season of both series will be examined in this study. The reason for choosing consecutive episodes of one season rather than a sample of episodes from different seasons is the effort to use the same characters as much as possible. The Winx Club series contains 26 episodes per season while Lego Ninjago contains 13 episodes per season. This difference in the number of seasons and episodes would inevitably affect the data due to the fact that new characters are introduced, and old characters vanish (mainly in the Winx Club due to the larger number of episodes), the plot of every season changes, as well as the ratio between male and female characters, thus making the results of the comparison of language use between the two genders less reliable. The theme of both series is similar (valiant heroes fight and defeat evil villains); however, the content of each episode varies.

The Winx Club was written by Iginio Straffi. It was first written in Italian but later it was produced in English as well. Any possible cultural differences between the two productions, however, do not affect this study because the present study examines only the English production. Season one consists of 26 episodes and each episode is approximately 24 minutes
long. It was first aired in Italy between January and March 2004, and later on in the USA between June and December 2004. Today the series has been broadcast in over 150 countries. In the first seven episodes of season one, 39 characters appear: 15 lead characters, ten female and five male characters, and 24 minor characters, 15 female, six male, and three animals. The main plot describes five fairies from Alfea fairy school who form the Winx Club, fighting against a trio of witches, the Trix, from Cloud Tower witch school. The plot involves romance between four of the fairies and four heroes from the School of Specialists. The cartoon also portrays teenage girls interested in fashion, music, technology, friendship, dating, school and family relationships.

The LEGO Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu was written by Dan and Kevin Hageman. Season one consists of 13 episodes of approximately 22 minutes’ length. It was first aired in the USA on Cartoon Network and in Europe on Nickelodeon (a Danish television network) between December 2011 and February 2012. In the first seven episodes of season one, 27 characters appear. Out of eleven lead characters, ten are male and one female. Of the 16 minor characters, there are twelve male and four female characters. The main plot has its focus on the four original Ninjas fighting against the evil snake Pythor. It involves training by a master teacher and the quest for the legendary Green Ninja. The cartoon also portrays teenage boys interested in gaming, competition, technology, dating, friendship, and family relationships.

3.2 Methods of analysis

A corpus of seven scripts from the first seven episodes of season one from the Winx Club as well as a corpus of seven scripts from the first seven episodes of season one from the LEGO Ninjago were compiled from two online sites (winx.wikia.com and ninjago.wikia.com). Videos of the same episodes were consulted whenever there was a problem of categorization. The titles of the episodes are available in Appendix 1.

The scripts were stored in two word documents, one for the Winx Club and one for LEGO Ninjago. Next, the utterances of male and female characters were separated and stored in four different word documents: one containing the female characters’ words from the Winx Club, one containing the female characters’ utterances from the LEGO Ninjago, and two other
documents containing the male characters’ utterances from each series. The six word
documents were used to manually examine the following discourse features: number and type
of questions and the use of interruptions. Quantitative measuring was also carried out to
calculate the total word count in each word document.

Finally, all six documents were stored in plain text format and analyzed with the help of the
computer software AntConc to calculate the total number of sentences, utterance length and
the total number of questions asked in each cartoon by the female and male characters
respectively.6, 7 The results of the analyses were categorized as described in Section 3.3 and
compared with the help of the Chi-square test to examine which differences in talkativeness
and in the use of questions and interruptions in the two cartoons were statistically significant.

The chi-square test is commonly used for testing relationships between categorical variables.
It is based on the null hypothesis that two categorical variables are independent in some
population. The calculation uses the formula

\[ \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e} \]

where \( f_o \) stands for the observed frequency (the observed counts in the cells) and \( f_e \) stands for the expected frequency if no relationship exists between the variables. The result of the formula is then compared to the
degrees of freedom. The expected frequency is calculated by the total sum of the column
containing the observed data multiplied by the quotient of the total sum of the row containing
the observed data divided by the total sum of all columns and rows. The degrees of freedom
are calculated by multiplying the number of rows – 1, times the number of columns – 1. If the
test statistic (or the result of the formula) is improbably large according to the chi-squared
distribution, then the null hypothesis of independence is rejected, and the categorical variables
are in dependence of each other. The present study uses the Excel CHITEST function to
calculate the p (probability) value of statistical significance. If p is equal to or smaller than 0.05
the differences are said to be statistically significant on the 5% level. The result suggests that
there is some association between the variables, but it does not provide any further
information.8

3.3 Categorization

This section presents the various categories used in the classification of the linguistic features
examined in the present study as well as the abbreviations used for the various types of

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6 Anthony, L. (2016). AntConc (Version 3.4.4) [Computer Software]. Tokyo, Japan: Waseda
7 The term sentence is somewhat problematic since it is a term that applies to written texts and the term
utterance applies to spoken texts. However, the present study uses written scripts to study the spoken texts of
the cartoons. Therefore, the term sentence is used in the analysis (Section 4.1.2) and other parts of this paper.
questions (Section 3.3.1) and the types of interruptions (Section 3.3.2). The present study relies on the use of the question mark in the scripts to determine whether an utterance is a question. Elliptical questions are considered full sentences. For example: *Coming too?* is regarded as *Are you coming too?*

### 3.3.1 Types of questions

The different types of questions asked in the two cartoons by the male and female characters were classified according to their syntactic and semantic type. The classification depends mainly on the response of the interlocutor. This section presents a short definition and the abbreviations used of the syntactic type, based primarily on Berry's (2012) and Coates' (1996) classifications, as well as the semantic type of all questions found in the two cartoons, based on Freed and Greenwood's classification (1996).

Syntactically, questions were classified as follows:

1. **Closed questions (CQ):** questions answered by yes / no. They are always direct speech acts. In the utterance, the auxiliary precedes the subject. Example: *Have you seen Anna?* In questions where more than one auxiliary is used, only the first one moves before the subject. Example: *Will you be going shopping?* (Berry, 2012:120).

2. **Wh-questions (WhQ):** information questions introduced by a word beginning with *wh-*: what, who, whom, whose, which, why, where, when and how (as an honorary member of this group since it does not begin with *wh-*) They are direct questions that ask for more details. Example: *Who broke the window?* (Berry, 2012:121-122). Because more words than yes / no are needed to answer these questions, these questions are also called open questions.

3. **Tag questions (TQ):** short questions that follow declarative sentences, thus turning them into interrogative sentences. They repeat the subject and auxiliary of the declarative, but with inversion and change from positive to negative or vice versa, or by adding interjections like *right* and *ok* at the end of the declarative sentence. Example: *You're coming along, right?* Depending on the intonation, the tag question may be used by the speaker to seek confirmation, to echo a previous statement, to draw a conclusion or express a doubt if the speaker is not sure of the answer (Berry, 2012:120). They are often indirect speech acts.

4. **Full declarative questions (FdQ):** sentences that follow the subject-verb word order but with a rising intonation towards the end, turning them into questions. They seek information. Example: *More or less, you are satisfied with the results?* (Coates 1996:175).
These questions were further divided into six categories depending on their role in the conversation and the type of information the speaker requested (Freed & Greenwood, 1996:14). Semantically, questions were classified as follows:

1) **External questions (EQ):** questions asked in order to receive information. These questions may address an invitation or draw attention to a special matter. Example: *What time does the party begin? Do you want to come over for dinner? Haven’t you brushed your teeth yet?*

2) **Relational questions (RQ):** questions asked to enable the flow of the interaction and clarify any misunderstandings between the speakers. Examples: *Why do you think he said that? Are you catching my point? Do you remember Alice from third grade?* (Freed & Greenwood, 1996:15-17).

3) **Talk questions (TkQ):** questions asked for confirmation or repetition of something already mentioned in a conversation, or for clarification. Many times, they have the function of repair in a conversation. Examples: *What did you say? You mean, he left already? Well, can she dance?* (Freed & Greenwood, 1996:15-16).

4) **Expressive questions (ExpQ):** questions asked for didactical, rhetorical or humorous reasons; they contain information already known to the speaker and are usually self-directed. Examples: *Did I say that? Who knows?* (Freed & Greenwood, 1996:15-17).

5) **Request questions (ReQ):** questions asked to prompt the listener to do something. They are often indirect speech acts. Examples: *Isn’t this your favorite treat? Don’t you think it is a bit chilly in here?* (Aitchison, 1995:96).

6) **Exclamation questions (SQ):** exclamation utterances that express surprise or bewilderment. Example: *Huh? Hmm? What? Stella?*

The present study categorizes questions consisting of a proper name as exclamation questions. In several cases where the proper name did not express only surprise or bewilderment but also confirmation, the question was classified as both SQ and TkQ, as in example (1):

1) **Lloyd:** Get them!
   **Slithraa:** (Rattling his tail) Sssezzeize them!
   **Kai:** (Shocked) **The Serpentine?** They’re real? (LEGO Ninjago, episode 1).

Several other cases were also problematic because they could be interpreted as expressing various meanings, as in example (2):

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9 To avoid confusion with expressive and external questions, the abbreviation SQ – from *surprise* – is used for exclamation questions.

10 Due to their high frequency in the material, this category was added even though it is not mentioned in the secondary sources.
Lloyd: Bow down to me or suffer my wrath! I'll give you to the count of three! One! Two!
Kai: What are we supposed to do? Spank him?
Lloyd: Two and a half! (LEGO Ninjago, episode 1)

The two questions in example (2) are categorized syntactically as WhQ and CQ, and semantically as ExpQ because Kai asks rhetorical questions where he does not expect and he does not get any answer – and not as EQ and TkQ.

Icy: Where are your glasses?
* Knut pulls out his glasses.*
Knut: Here, your wickedness.
Icy: KNUT! HOW MANY TIMES DO WE HAVE TO TELL YOU?! You are never to remove your glasses.
Darcy: Don't you know you're as blind as a hairless mole-rat without them you buffoon?
* Knut puts on his glasses.*
Knut: I don't like these frames. They're not me. (Winx Club, episode 1)

The two questions in example (3) are categorized syntactically as WhQ and CQ, and semantically as ReQ because they prompt the listener to do something, namely to use his glasses– and not as EQ or TkQ. It is important to point out that this interpretation rests on Knut’s actions when the questions are uttered. (See Appendix 4 for all questions which could be interpreted as expressing various meanings, and their classification in the present study.)

3.3.2 Types of interruptions

The different types of interruptions used in the two cartoons were classified according to the purpose they serve in the interaction. Interruptions were indicated in the scripts by the use of three periods (...), a dash (—), or comments in the script ([Wu] stopping Cole). The context was also considered to verify whether the above-mentioned punctuation marks indicate an interruption. This section presents interruptions as categorized in the present study and the abbreviations used based on James and Clark’s (1993) study.

Interruptions were classified as follows:

1) **Controlling interruptions (CI):** the purpose of this interruption is to dominate and control the interaction. In controlling interruption, the interrupter does not allow the speaker to conclude the utterance either by finishing the utterance as the interrupter pleases or by completely changing the subject of conversation (James & Clark, 1993:268).

2) **Supportive or cooperative interruptions (SI):** the purpose of this interruption is to enable the flow of interaction or to confirm. The interrupter supports the speaker by completing the utterance either when the speaker expresses doubt or when the speaker has difficulty in continuing the interaction (James & Clark, 1993:268). This type of interruptions is sometimes labeled “collaborative completions”.

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The present study considers an interruption used by a lead character to occur when a lead character interrupts another character, lead or minor. An interruption is considered to be used by a minor character when a minor character interrupts another character, regardless of whether the other character is a lead one or not; in other words, the character who interrupts determines whether the interruption will be numbered among the lead characters’ interruptions or other characters’ interruption.

Cases where characters complement each other’s speech were considered supportive or cooperative interruptions as in examples (4) and (5):

(4) Fangtom #1: And who...
   Fangtom #2: ...may I say released us...
   Fangtom #1: ...from our captivity? (LEGO Ninjago, episode three)

(5) Stormy: First we’ll kick her booty...
   Icy: ...Second we’ll freeze her...
   Darcy: ...And third we’ll crush her into fairy dust! (Winx Club, episode three)

Cases where characters stop the flow of the conversation either to draw attention or to ridicule were considered controlling interruptions, as in examples (6) and (7):

(6) Nya: Looks like we’re about have some visitors, and loud ones at that.
   Jay: (Sigh.) Ugh...It’s my parents. Please, if they start yapping, just don’t let them going, okay? They don’t know when to quit. And if you start talking then they’ll start talking, and suddenly half the day is gone before you know it ends...
   Kai: (cuts in) We get it! They talk a lot.... (mumbles) the cherry doesn’t fall far from its blossom.
   (LEGO Ninjago, episode three)

(7) Musa: And what’s Riven’s problem?! Why doesn’t he ask me out like how Sky did Stella?
   Tecna: What?
   Musa: I’m just saying...
   Bloom: Well, I’ve taken the potion and it should start working in the morning. (Winx Club, episode five)

3.4 Limitations of the study

There are some limitations in the material collected for the present study. First, the length of the episodes in the two cartoons is not equal. Each episode of the Winx Club lasts approximately 24 minutes, while the LEGO Ninjago episodes are two minutes shorter. Hence there is, in total, a 14-minutes difference in the material from the two series. To eliminate this difference, the average number of words per minute is calculated (the quotient of the total number of words divided by the total number of minutes) and then converted into hours (multiplied by 60).

Another limitation in the material is that the number of female and male characters in the two cartoons is not equal. The Winx Club has 39 characters, while LEGO Ninjago has only 27, i.e. 12 characters fewer. The Winx Club has 26 female characters and 11 male ones, while the LEGO Ninjago has 22 male and five female characters. This means that for every 2.36 female
characters in Winx Club there is one male counterpart. In LEGO Ninjago, though, for every 4.4 male characters there is one female counterpart. In other words, the female-male ratio between the two series is not equal. The number of lead characters is equal, however. Winx Club has ten female lead characters and LEGO Ninjago has ten male lead characters. Therefore, special focus has been given to these lead characters. Nevertheless, this could also be seen as a drawback since one gender predominates, because the present study compares language use across rather than within each series. That is not the case with the opposite gender, though. Winx Club has five male lead characters, but LEGO Ninjago has only one female lead character. Since the comparison between them is problematic, the present study does not put any special focus on them but will analyze their language use together with all other remaining characters.

The present study is also limited in examining aspects of language. It is limited to three aspects, talkativeness, use of questions, and interruptions. Moreover, the aspect of interruption can be tricky, as demonstrated in much research on conversation, because many times overlapping talk may be perceived as an interruption. Also, the focus on question marks perhaps reflects intended intonation rather than a particular speech act. Nevertheless, despite these limitations and due to the scarcity of studies on language and gender in cartoons, the present study is best regarded as explorative; its findings may provide suggestions for further research on differences in language use between genders in cartoons.

### 4. Analysis and results

This section presents the analysis and results of the present study on talkativeness (Section 4.1) and other linguistic strategies (Section 4.2), i.e. the results on word count (Section 4.1.1), and sentence count (Section 4.1.2), as well as the use of questions (Section 4.2.1) and interruption (Section 4.2.2). These will be presented, analyzed, and compared with previous studies.

#### 4.1 Talkativeness

The results on talkativeness indicate that male characters utter 93.76% of all the words in the LEGO Ninjago and 18.95% in the Winx Club, while female characters utter 81.05% of all the words in the Winx Club and 6.24% in the LEGO Ninjago, as shown in Tables 1 and 2 in the following two subsections. The difference between the amount of talk done by the male and female characters, though, is an indication of the difference in the number of male and female characters. Out of the 35 male characters, 15 are lead characters and out of the 30 female characters, eleven are lead ones in the two cartoons. In other words, male characters talk more
because they outnumber the female characters. However, when the number of words per hour uttered by the ten male lead characters of the LEGO Ninjago and the ten female lead characters of the Winx Club is calculated, the difference is not as great anymore, since female lead characters appear to speak a few more words per hour. These results are presented in more detail in Section 4.1.1.

4.1.1 Word Count

The results on word count show that all the female characters in the Winx Club uttered 13,482 words in the seven episodes of the first season, measuring 81.05% of all the words (see Table 1). Of this, the female lead characters uttered 12,824 words, measuring 77.10% of all the words. The number of words varies for each episode because the number of female characters varies as well. For example, episode six has the highest percentage of words uttered by female characters (95.72%) and the highest number of female characters appearing in the cartoon (twelve female and one male character). The results for each episode, the total number of words, as well as the average number of words uttered by female, male, and female lead characters in the Winx Club cartoon are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>Female Characters</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male Characters</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female Lead Characters</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>1353</td>
<td>65.46%</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>34.54%</td>
<td>2067</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>57.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>2097</td>
<td>88.93%</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>11.07%</td>
<td>2358</td>
<td>2045</td>
<td>86.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>91.34%</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>8.66%</td>
<td>2160</td>
<td>1807</td>
<td>83.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>1508</td>
<td>57.58%</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>42.42%</td>
<td>2619</td>
<td>1469</td>
<td>56.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>2259</td>
<td>83.02%</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>16.98%</td>
<td>2721</td>
<td>2229</td>
<td>81.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>2305</td>
<td>95.72%</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>4.28%</td>
<td>2408</td>
<td>2178</td>
<td>90.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E7</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>86.35%</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>13.65%</td>
<td>2301</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>82.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13482</td>
<td>81.05%</td>
<td>3152</td>
<td>18.95%</td>
<td>16634</td>
<td>12824</td>
<td>77.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>81.05%</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>18.95%</td>
<td>2376</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>77.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results on word count show that in total, all the male characters in the LEGO Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu uttered 11,815 words in the seven episodes of the first season, measuring 93.76% of all the words uttered, while the male lead characters uttered 10,863 words, measuring 86.21% of all the words (see Table 2). As with the Winx Club cartoon, the number of words varies for each episode because the number of male characters varies. For example, in episode seven the only female character appears in one scene and speaks twice for a total of twelve words. This episode has the highest percentage of male talk of all episodes (99.23%). The results for each episode, the total number of words, as well as the average number of words
uttered by male, female, and male lead characters in the LEGO Ninjago cartoon are presented in Table 2.

The total number of words uttered by all characters in all episodes is 16,634 for the Winx Club and 12,601 for the LEGO Ninjago. The Winx Club has an average of 2,376 words per episode while the LEGO Ninjago has an average of 1,800 words per episode. These results reflect the fact that the LEGO Ninjago’s episodes are two minutes shorter than the Winx Club’s episodes.

Table 2. Number of words uttered by male, female and male lead characters in each episode of the first season of the LEGO Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEASON 1</th>
<th>Male Characters</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female Characters</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total Characters</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPISODE 1</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>93.40%</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>88.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPISODE 2</td>
<td>1757</td>
<td>92.04%</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>7.96%</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>86.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPISODE 3</td>
<td>1538</td>
<td>99.23%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>93.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11815</td>
<td>93.76%</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>6.24%</td>
<td>12601</td>
<td>86.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>1688</td>
<td>93.76%</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>6.24%</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>86.21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More accurate results appear to emerge when the number of words per hour are calculated. Out of the 4,815 words per hour average uttered by the female characters in the Winx Club, the female lead characters spoke an average of 4,580 words per hour. Similarly, out of the 4,602 words per hour average spoken by the male characters in the LEGO Ninjago, the male lead characters spoke an average of 4,232 words per hour. These results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Estimated number of words per minute and hour uttered by female, male and female lead characters in each episode of the first season of the Winx Club series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season 1</th>
<th>Female words/min</th>
<th>Female words/h</th>
<th>Male words/min</th>
<th>Male words/h</th>
<th>Male Lead words/min</th>
<th>Male Lead words/h</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Episode 1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3383</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>5243</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>5113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 3</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4933</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 4</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3770</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2778</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 5</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>5648</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>5573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 6</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>5763</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>5445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 7</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>4968</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>33705</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>7880</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>32060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4815</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Estimated number of words per minute and hour uttered by male, female and male lead characters in each episode of the first season of the LEGO Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season 1</th>
<th>Male words/min</th>
<th>Male words/h</th>
<th>Female words/min</th>
<th>Female words/h</th>
<th>Male Lead words/min</th>
<th>Male Lead words/h</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Episode 1</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4745</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 2</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3750</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 3</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4751</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 4</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>5365</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>5144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 5</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4625</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4792</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4195</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>32223</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2144</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>29626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4603</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the calculation of the words per hour indicate that female characters utter slightly more words than their male counterparts, even though the percentage indicates otherwise (81.05% female vs 94.76% male). Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) came up with similar results in their study. Initially, male characters appeared more prominent than female characters “simply because there were so many more male characters than female characters” (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995:659). When the male and female communication variables were divided by the total number of male and female characters, the female frequency of using these variables was increased (see Table 5).

Table 5. Chi-square test of significance on average per character regarding word count of female and male characters in the Winx Club and LEGO Ninjago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Winx</th>
<th>Lego</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>1430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result from the present study confirms the result of Mehl et al.’s study (2007) as well as Thompson’s and Zerbinos’ study (1995). There is a statistical significance at the 5%-level reflecting the fact that the female characters talk more in the Winx Club and the male characters in the LEGO Ninjago (see Table 5).
### 4.1.2 Sentence count

The results on sentence count show that female characters spoke 2,284 sentences in the Winx Club and 135 in the LEGO Ninjago, a total of 2,419 sentences. Their male counterparts spoke 475 sentences in the Winx Club and 2,088 in the LEGO Ninjago, a total of 2,563 sentences. Taking into account the difference in number of female and male characters as well as the difference in episode length in the two cartoons, the difference in the number of sentences spoken by the two genders is limited, even though there is a statistical significance at the 5%-level according to the chi-square test results, indicating that there is some association between sentence count and gender. The results are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

**Table 6.** Number of sentences uttered by female and male characters in the Winx Club and the LEGO Ninjago cartoons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utterance count</th>
<th>Season 1</th>
<th>Female Characters</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male Characters</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winx Club</td>
<td></td>
<td>2284</td>
<td>82.78%</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>17.22%</td>
<td>2759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGO Ninjago</td>
<td></td>
<td>135</td>
<td>6.07%</td>
<td>2088</td>
<td>93.93%</td>
<td>2223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2419</td>
<td></td>
<td>2563</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7.** Chi-square test of significance on average per character regarding sentence count of female and male characters in the Winx Club and LEGO Ninjago.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Season 1</th>
<th>Female Characters</th>
<th>Male Characters</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winx Club</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGO Ninjago</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>103</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winx Club</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGO Ninjago</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.000004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average number of words per sentence for the female characters is 5.9 and 5.8 in the Winx Club and the Lego Ninjago respectively. For the male characters it is 6.6 in the Winx Club and
5.7 in the LEGO Ninjago. The results indicate that the utterance length between the two genders is almost equal. The results are presented in Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utterance length</th>
<th>Season 1</th>
<th>Female Characters</th>
<th>Male Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winx Club</strong></td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEGO Ninjago</strong></td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of the present study on utterance length agrees with the results found in Krantz’s bachelor thesis (1999) on comic books, namely that the male characters use more sentences than their female counterparts, but that the difference is limited and has no statistical significance. The results do not agree, though, when it comes to sentence length. In Krantz’s study (1999), male characters used longer sentences, a difference of 1.2 – 2.9 word per sentence, while in the present study the difference is between -0.1 to 0.7 words per sentence, i.e. less than one word. One may say that the utterance length is almost equal between male and female characters.

The results of the present study point to the conclusion that there is no significant difference between utterance length and word count of male and female characters in the two series and agrees with the conclusions in the above-mentioned studies (Mehl et al. 2007, and Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995). In other words, male and female characters speak equally much. Once more, it is confirmed that there are more similarities than differences in talkativeness between the two genders in cartoons.

### 4.2 Other linguistic strategies

This section presents the analysis and results of the present study on the use of questions both syntactically and semantically (Section 4.2.1) and the use of interruptions (Section 4.2.2). Focus is placed on the lead characters’ use of questions because there is an equal number of male and female lead characters in the two cartoons. The results will be presented, analyzed, and compared with previous studies.

#### 4.2.1 Questions

The result shows that female lead characters use more questions than their male counterparts. A total of 370 questions were found and syntactically categorized in the Winx Club. Out of
these, 308 were posed by female lead characters. A total of 348 questions were found and syntactically categorized in the LEGO Ninjago. Of these, 300 were asked by male lead characters.

**Table 9.** Syntactic classification of questions used in the LEGO Ninjago and the Winx Club cartoons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>LEGO Ninjago</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>LEGO Ninjago male lead characters</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Winx Club</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Winx Club female lead characters</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CQ</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>39.66%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>34.48%</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>32.16%</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>22.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhQ</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>45.98%</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>39.66%</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>45.41%</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>42.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQ</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.17%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.74%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.14%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FdQ</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>17.30%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>348</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td>370</td>
<td></td>
<td>308</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *wh*-, or open, questions dominated in both cartoons (approximately 45% of all questions), with yes / no (i.e. closed) questions coming second (approx. 32% in Winx Club and 40% in LEGO Ninjago). The full declarative questions were the third in rank even though their usage varied between the two cartoons. In the Winx Club they amounted to 17.30% of the questions while in the LEGO Ninjago they amounted to 9.20%. Tag questions were used equally in both cartoons (approximately 5%). The result also shows that male lead characters ask more closed questions – yes / no questions (120 CQ by male lead characters vs 83 CQ by female lead characters) – while female lead characters ask more *wh*-questions or open questions than their male counterparts (158 WhQ by females vs 138 WhQ by males). Female lead characters use an almost equal number of tag questions as the male characters (15 TQ by females vs 13 TQ by males) but more full declarative questions (52 FdQ by female vs 29 FdQ by male). The results are presented in Table 9 and graphically in Figure 1. Tables A and B in Appendix 2 present the results for the syntactic classification of the questions per episode.
The semantic analysis of the questions used in the cartoons shows that external questions predominate in both cartoons with female lead characters in the Winx Club using them the most (40.459% in Winx Club vs 31.35% in LEGO Ninjago), a rather unexpected finding since they are said to predominate among males. The second most frequently used type of question is the talk question. The number is approximately the same in both cartoons (101 TkQ, 22.70% in Winx Club vs 109 TkQ, 28.24% in LEGO Ninjago), which is surprising since female characters are expected to use more talk questions than male characters. However, in the Winx Club talk questions were used both by female lead characters and other characters (61 TkQ, 13.719% by female lead characters vs 50 TkQ, 8.99% by other characters). In LEGO Ninjago, though, talk questions were used mainly by the male lead characters (95 TkQ, 24.61% as opposed to 14 TkQ, 3.63% by other characters), which may explain why male characters appear to use talk questions more than female characters. Exclamation questions came third in rank for the Winx Club (52 SQ, 11.69%) while expressive questions were slightly more frequent than exclamation questions in the LEGO Ninjago (47 ExpQ, 12.18% and 40 SQ, 10.36%). Request and relational questions were the least used questions in both cartoons (22 ReQ, 4.94% and 19 RQ, 4.27% in Winx Club – 34 ReQ, 8.81% and 11 RQ, 2.85% in LEGO Ninjago) and were mainly used by their respective lead characters. The analytical results are presented in Table 10 and the graphic results are presented in Figures 2 and 3. Tables C and D in Appendix 3 present the results for the semantic classification of the questions per episode.
Table 10. Semantic classification of questions used in the LEGO Ninjago and the Winx Club cartoons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>LEGO Ninjago</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>LEGO Ninjago male lead characters</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Winx Club</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Winx Club female lead characters</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EQ</strong></td>
<td>145</td>
<td>37.56%</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>31.35%</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>48.99%</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>40.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.85%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.27%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TkQ</strong></td>
<td>109</td>
<td>28.24%</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>24.61%</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>22.70%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ExpQ</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12.18%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.14%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.42%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ReQ</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8.81%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.51%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.94%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SQ</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.36%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.07%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11.69%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Number of semantically categorized questions used by all characters in the LEGO Ninjago cartoons.
The analysis shows that female characters ask more questions, are interested in details, show more surprise and try to keep the interaction flowing, while male characters ask for confirmation or repetition, ask rhetorical questions but also seek information from others, and more often put forth requests than the female characters do. The result of the present study agrees with the result of the studies carried out by Baker and Raney (2007), Mesthrie et al. (2009), and Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) which indicate that female characters ask more questions. They disagree with Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) who claimed that females tend to ask questions to maintain the conversation, in other words use of talk questions. Freed and Greenwood (2006) concluded that male and female speakers use questions with roughly the same frequency. The results on talk questions and external questions are rather unexpected because they report the opposite of what previous studies have shown.

Taking into consideration the difference in the number of female and male characters in the cartoons, even though the difference may appear insignificant in the total use of questions in the two cartoons, there may be an indication that female characters do indeed use more questions than their male characters, thus disagreeing with Freed and Greenwood’s results. Since male lead characters in the LEGO Ninjago do 86% of all the talking and female lead characters in the Winx Club do 77.10% of all the talking, it is rather logical to expect that male lead characters would ask more questions than their female counterparts in the two cartoons, according to the hypothesis that male and female speakers use questions with roughly the same frequency. However, the results show that the female lead characters in the Winx Club do less talking but ask more questions than their male counterparts in the LEGO Ninjago (308 questions asked by the female lead characters vs 300 questions asked by the male lead

**Figure 3.** Number of semantically categorized questions used by all characters in the Winx Club cartoons.
characters), thus indicating that female characters use more questions than the male characters in the two cartoons.

4.2.2 Interruptions

Although interruptions tend to be limited in written scripts, the results show a total of 18 interruptions in the Winx Club and 22 interruptions in the LEGO Ninjago. In the Winx Club, ten were controlling interruptions; 90% of them were used by female lead characters. The remaining eight interruptions were supportive or cooperative interruptions; half of them were used by female lead characters. In the LEGO Ninjago, thirteen interruptions were controlling; 92% of them were used by male lead characters. The remaining nine supportive or cooperative interruptions were all used by other characters. The results are presented in Tables 9 and 10, and graphically in Figure 4.

Table 9. Number of interruptions used in the Winx Club and the LEGO Ninjago cartoons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interruption Type</th>
<th>Winx Club</th>
<th>Lego Ninjago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All characters</td>
<td>Female lead characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that male characters use interruptions a little more often than female ones do, even though the number of interruptions is rather limited and therefore too unreliable to allow for a definite conclusion. There seems to be a tendency for the male characters to use interruptions in order to control or dominate the interaction, while female characters use interruptions not only to exert control and dominance but also for support and cooperation between the speakers (see Table 10).

Table 10. Percentage of interruptions used by female characters in Winx Club and male characters in LEGO Ninjago cartoons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interruption Type</th>
<th>Winx Club female lead characters</th>
<th>Lego Ninjago male lead characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 The chi-square test is not used to check the statistical significance in the use of interruptions because of its limitations and potential problem with small values (no value lower than one is allowed).
The results of the present study on interruption seem to agree with the result of Thompson and Zerbinos’ study (1995), in that male characters appear to interrupt more often than their female counterparts. One may argue, though, that male characters interrupt more often than female ones because there are more interruptions in the LEGO Ninjago cartoon which has more male characters than the Winx Club cartoon. In other words, an unequal number of characters results in an unequal number of interruptions. However, there is a difference of only one interruption between the number of female and male lead characters, which is the same in the two cartoons (13 by the ten female lead characters vs 12 by the ten male lead characters) which points to the conclusion James and Clarke (1993) as well as Baker and Raney (2007) came to, namely that both male and female characters use interruptions equally. It needs to be pointed out, though, that the total number of interruptions in the data used for the present study was very low.

![Interruptions](image)

**Figure 4.** Number of interruptions by all characters and lead characters in the Winx Club and the LEGO Ninjago cartoons.

The reasons for using interruptions agrees with James and Clarke’s study (1993), which concluded that females use the supportive type of interruptions more often than males.

5. Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to investigate whether or not there are any differences in the language use of male and female characters in two popular animated cartoons, the Winx Club
and the LEGO Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu. Based on earlier research on language and gender, the features analysed were talkativeness, questions, and interruptions. The purpose was to investigate whether female characters are more talkative than their male counterparts, if they use questions and interruptions more frequently than male characters do, including the form and function of questions and interruptions, and to what extent there are any differences between the two genders.

The results of the present study confirm other studies on talkativeness, use of questions, and interruptions on both fictional characters (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995; Baker & Raney, 2007) and on “real” men and women (James & Clarke, 1993; Mehl et al., 2007; Mesthrie et al., 2009; and Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) and disagree with some others (Brizendine, 2006; Freed and Greenwood, 2006). Specifically, it demonstrates that male and female characters are equally talkative, and dismisses the idea of female talkativeness, in these cartoons as well. It confirms the equal use of questions and interruptions by the genders, as well as the tendency of female characters to seek more details by using wh- and external questions and use the supportive type of interruptions more than male characters.

It seems as if the tendency of the past decades of decreasing gender differences in language use is reflected in the language use in the two cartoons studied in this paper, where similarities rather than differences in language use prevail. Baker and Raney’s (2005:36f) interpretation that the gender-based stereotypes present in children’s cartoons have finally been broken down may actually be true. This could be the result of an increase of awareness on part of the cartoon producers in terms of their impact on children in combination with their commercial efforts to reach a wider audience. The breaking down of the gender-based stereotypes presented in children’s cartoons may come as a relief to parents considering the pedagogical role TV-programs play in the life of children and the present struggles for a more understanding and equitable society. As children watch male and female characters exposing gender roles that do not dominate or control each other, but rather show respect and express equality in their behaviour, they may become inspired to build a future society that will give equal opportunities to and appreciate all genders.

However, it is important to stress the need for further studies in the field of language and gender in cartoons. Such studies need to use large amounts of data from various cartoons, not, as is the case with this study, just two cartoons and only a limited number of episodes from only one season. Different methodologies in counting interruptions and questions ought also to be explored, since the interpretation and counting of these two aspects may be problematic, as mentioned in Section 3.4. Another approach would be to conduct a study on the frequency of use of linguistic features – like verbs and adjectives, exploring the type and number of verbs
(action verbs, state or condition verbs, for example) and adjectives (polite, rude, adjective describing values and appearance, etc.) used by male and female characters.
References


Appendix 1

*Titles of the episodes*

**Winx Club Season 1: (Scripts from 4kids)**

Episode 1: It feels like magic (or An unexpected event)
Episode 2: More than high school (or Welcome to Magix!)
Episode 3: Save the first dance (or Alfea College for fairies)
Episode 4: The voice of nature (or The Black-Mud swamp)
Episode 5: Date with disaster
Episode 6: Secret guardian (or Mission at Cloudtower)
Episode 7: Grounded (or Friends in need)

**LEGO Ninjago: Master of spinjitzu Season 1**

Episode 1: Rise of the snakes
Episode 2: Home
Episode 3: Snakebit
Episode 4: Never trust a snake
Episode 5: Can of worms
Episode 6: The snake king
Episode 7: Tick tock
Appendix 2

Table A: Number of questions used by all characters and by female lead characters in each episode of the first season of the Winx Club cartoon categorized syntactically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season 1</th>
<th>CQ</th>
<th>WhQ</th>
<th>TQ</th>
<th>FdQ</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Lead</td>
<td>all Lead</td>
<td>all lead</td>
<td>all lead</td>
<td>all Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 1</td>
<td>19 9</td>
<td>24 18</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>7 5</td>
<td>52 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 2</td>
<td>13 5</td>
<td>19 18</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>15 13</td>
<td>50 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 3</td>
<td>9 7</td>
<td>19 18</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>7 6</td>
<td>37 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 4</td>
<td>19 10</td>
<td>11 17</td>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>9 6</td>
<td>42 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 5</td>
<td>18 17</td>
<td>45 41</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>17 16</td>
<td>82 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 6</td>
<td>20 19</td>
<td>30 28</td>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>56 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 7</td>
<td>21 16</td>
<td>20 18</td>
<td>4 4</td>
<td>6 4</td>
<td>51 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119 83</td>
<td>168 158</td>
<td>19 15</td>
<td>64 52</td>
<td>370 308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>17 12</td>
<td>24 23</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>9 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B: Number of questions used by all characters and by male lead characters in each episode of the first season on the LEGO Ninjago cartoon categorized syntactically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season 1</th>
<th>CQ</th>
<th>WhQ</th>
<th>TQ</th>
<th>FdQ</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>all Lead</td>
<td>all lead</td>
<td>All lead</td>
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<td>Episode 1</td>
<td>25 24</td>
<td>14 12</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>41 38</td>
</tr>
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<td>Episode 2</td>
<td>18 16</td>
<td>22 22</td>
<td>1 6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>47 44</td>
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<td>23 14</td>
<td>7 4</td>
<td>2 0</td>
<td>53 28</td>
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<td>33 32</td>
<td>1 0</td>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>63 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>19 15</td>
<td>4 4</td>
<td>4 4</td>
<td>41 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 6</td>
<td>20 18</td>
<td>23 20</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>8 8</td>
<td>53 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 7</td>
<td>14 14</td>
<td>26 23</td>
<td>2 8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>160 138</td>
<td>18 13</td>
<td>32 29</td>
<td>348 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>20 17</td>
<td>23 20</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>5 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 3

Table C: Number of questions used by all characters and by female lead characters in each episode of the first season of the Winx Club cartoon categorized semantically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode</th>
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<th>EQ lead</th>
<th>RQ all</th>
<th>RQ lead</th>
<th>TkQ all</th>
<th>TkQ lead</th>
<th>ExpQ all</th>
<th>ExpQ lead</th>
<th>ReQ all</th>
<th>ReQ lead</th>
<th>SQ all</th>
<th>SQ lead</th>
<th>Total all</th>
<th>Total lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 2</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<td>Average</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table D: Number of questions used by all characters and by male lead characters in each episode of the first season of the LEGO Ninjago cartoon categorized semantically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>EQ all</th>
<th>EQ lead</th>
<th>RQ all</th>
<th>RQ lead</th>
<th>TkQ all</th>
<th>TkQ lead</th>
<th>ExpQ all</th>
<th>ExpQ lead</th>
<th>ReQ all</th>
<th>ReQ lead</th>
<th>SQ all</th>
<th>SQ lead</th>
<th>Total all</th>
<th>Total lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Episode 1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
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<td>Episode 2</td>
<td>19</td>
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Appendix 4

This section presents questions in the Winx Club and the LEGO Ninjago that are somewhat problematic since they can be interpreted in more ways than one. Their given classifications are also specified. Questions are listed by episodes.

Winx Club Season 1

Episode 1:

Bloom: Get back!
  * Bloom unknowingly creates a barrier that repels the ghouls.*

Bloom: "What just happened?? How'd I do that??" WhQ & ExpQ
  * Kiko does a boxing stance, notices a ghoul, turns white and faints. Bloom taps the ghoul on the shoulder.*

Bloom: C'mon, Dad. I have lots of other stuff I have to do, lots of important stuff!

Mike: What sort of stuff are you talking about? WhQ & TkQ

Bloom: Do you remember when I was into fairies and witches dad?

Knut: Here, your wickedness.

Icy: KNUT! HOW MANY TIMES DO WE HAVE TO TELL YOU?! You are never to remove your glasses. WhQ & ReQ

Darcy: Don't you know you're as blind as a hairless mole-rat without them you buffoon? CQ & ReQ
  * Knut puts on his glasses.*

Mike: So, she's been asleep for 20 hours because she's a fairy? FQ & TkQ Is that like a goth or something? CQ & EQ

Bloom: I'm talking real fairy dad with a scepter, magic powers and fluttering wings. She's amazing.

Mike: What is that rabbit doing? WhQ & ExpQ
  * Mike goes to check on Kiko.*


Bloom: Um, duh dad. Broomsticks are for witches!

Mike: Oh yeah, that's right. So, what do you use Stella? WhQ & EQ Wait, don't tell me. Is it fairy dust? CQ & TQ Ooo.

Bloom: Are we gonna use the portal? CQ & TQ
Episode 2:

Wizgiz: That's terrific! Let me show you what I worked on this summer. It's a whole new kind of metamorphosis.
- Wizgiz turns into a rabbit and hops onto Dufour's shoulder.*

Wizgiz: Got any carrots? CQ & ReQ
- Dufour faints.*

Stella: Duh! I'm gonna, like, rule the Kingdom of Solaria!

Bloom: What did she mean 'connect to your Winx'? WhQ & TkQ

Stella: Winx is essentially three things. First, it's your source of power, as in your strength and energy. And second, it's what guides you. Thirdly, it's like your magical identity.

- On Earth, Vanessa picks up the phone.*

Vanessa: Hello? Honey? FQ & TQ – CQ & TQ

Episode 3:

Brandon (Sky): Hey, uh, would you like to dance?

Bloom: Yeah, for sure!
- Bloom runs off to the other girls.*

Brandon (Sky): Uh... Okay? FQ & ExpQ

Episode 4:

Stormy: Hold on though. What if the interrogation sorcerers get a hold of him and use a mind read spell? Even with his little pea-brain they'll find out about our plan. CQ-ExpQ

Icy: Point taken. In that case, We'll just have to stage a little jail break, free the troll and then get rid of the sorry beast, forever.

Brandon: Isn't that the Black-Mud Swamp down there? Are we sure we're going the right way? WhQ & EQ

Sky: Yup, Magix is North of here.

Brandon: Something doesn't feel right.

Riven: You worry too much Brandon. Everything's under control. Trust the captain.

Sky: Captain? This question was missed and not counted in the analysis. It would eventually be categorized as EQ & TkQ used by minor characters.

Tecna: Well? Did Mother Nature give you any advice? SQ

Bloom: He went that way, through the thicket.

Stella: Are you sure about that? CQ & TkG

Icy: And he does like to roar. The Quietus Carnivorus could've gotten him. Hmm. (Hears Pepe calling Mommy) What?! SQ

Darcy: You again? SQ

Stormy: Sooo cute.
**Episode 5:**

*Bloom*: Guys, that's not Stella! You know who calls us "pixies"!

- Bloom stands.*

**Bloom: Are you Icy or Darcy?!** CQ & EQ

**Stella (Darcy):** And the slowest horse crosses the finish line! Hah-hah-hah-hah!! Congratulations.

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**Stormy:** She's gonna be splattered all over the wall!

**Icy:** Time's running out. So what's it gonna to be Bloom? **Stella or the ring?** CQ & EQ

**Stella:** Bloom, don't give it to them!!

**Episode 6:**

**Knut:** I've been asking and asking them for a vacuum cleaner but no one cares about my needs.

**Icy:** Did you say something? CQ & ReQ

- Knut stops sweeping, stutters and turns around.*

**Knut:** Oh, uh yes. U-uhh. I was counting all the calories I was burning with the sweeping.

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**Knut:** I'd be done now if I had a vaccum.

**Darcy:** What did you just say? CQ & ReQ

**Knut:** I said I'd be right there.

**Darcy:** That's what I thought. You missed a spot over there.

**Episode 7:**

**Flora:** Um, Miss Griselda? We were wondering if we can get our powers back? SQ

**Griselda:** Your little field trip to Cloud Tower was unacceptable, not to mention dangerous. You're lucky that you weren't turned into jumping beans and sold to the inter-realm circus. You won't be getting your powers back anytime soon, but that's only the beginning of your punishment.

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**Flora:** That's one use for it. And the broom. **Well?** SQ

**Tecna:** The broom is elongated so that the user may reach high places. Hmph.

- Tecna grabs the broom and ruffles its fine twigs.*

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- A four-armed Minotaur enters the main hall from limbo.*

**Icy:** Pretty cute, don't you think? TQ & TkQ

- The Minotaur stomps the ground.*
LEGO Ninjago Season 1

Episode 1:

(The Ninja are shown to flying up on the sky.)

Cole: Just like old times, eh, Rocky? RQ & TQ
Kai: You guys believe what Sensei said about unlocking our full potential?

Zane: The Serpentine are real, Kai. They're not something to joke about.
Kai: Serpentine? Real? We're talking about the ancient race of snake people who once ruled Ninjago and were supposedly locked underground. SQ & TQ

Cole: Well that's because you'd be a fool to look for one. If there was anything I hated more than Dragons, it was snakes. Rubber or not. (The Ninja grab Lloyd, who hits Jay with the can) Don't worry, folks, we'll take care of this. Nothing to see here.
Lloyd: Bow down to me or suffer my wrath! I'll give you to the count of three! One! Two!
Kai: What are we supposed to do? Spank him? WhQ & ExpQ – EQ & ExpQ
Lloyd: Two and a half!

(All the Ninja except Kai head home).
Kai: (To himself) Could I be the Green Ninja? EQ & ExpQ

Episode 2:

Kai: I'm sorry, Zane. I...(Zane's missing.)
Jay: Zane? SQ/CQ

Wu: Remember, we must be thankful for what we still have.
Cole: What do we have? Our home is gone. WhQ & ExpQ
Kai: You know, I don't miss our home. What I really miss is Zane.
Jay: Yeah. I miss Zane.

Episode 3:

(Videogame version of overture)
Kai: What took you so long? WhQ & ExpQ
Nya: Wow, This place looks amazing! You guys did all this?
Cole: Ninja don't just fight, Nya. We clean.
Ed: It'ssss okay, sssson.
Wu: There is still a way.
Jay: How? WhQ & TkQ
Wu: Part of reaching your own full potential is understanding your weapon’s potential. Once it is in tune with a focused heart, its secrets and powers can be unlocked.

**Episode 4:**

Wu: (Sighs.) Pace yourselves. You have a lot of training ahead of you. Make sure you sharpen your mind as well as your Spinjitzu. (He walks away.)
Cole: Ugh. **What's the best way to defeat an enemy?** It could be anything, ugh! WhQ & ExpQ

**Episode 5:**

Cole: (spits out the taste) Jay!
(On the upper deck, Jay has kendo gear on as he prepares for his routine with a Sparring Robot.)
Jay: (gets out his nunchucks) Let's ease our way into this. **How about level 2, shall we?** TQ & ReQ

Nya: (Annoyed.) Yes, Sensei.
Cole: Let's go, boys. We got some snakes to club.
Wu: (Sighs.) Where are you, Pythor. **What are you up to?** WhQ & ExpQ

Kai: (He hears a frog croak and grabs his sword.) You shouldn't sneak up on people like that. Heh, if I wasn't such a well-trained Nin—(Spitta emerges from the bog and uses his venom on him.) Ugh! Jay? Jay!
Jay: No, I'm the real Jay!
Echo: No, I'm the real Jay! (More Venomari ambush Kai.)

Pythor: Boo!
Jay: Aah! (Zane tries to play the flute, but Pythor took it.)
Pythor: **Oh, let's not let music ruin things, hmm?** (The Ninja jump onto a log, which slowly drifts away.) I've got a sinking feeling this may be the last I see of you four. (He laughs.) TQ & ExpQ
Cole: That's it. I used to hate Dragons, but now I officially hate snakes.

Zane: For whatever it is worth, it was an honor to fight beside you all.
Cole: me too.
Jay: Yeah, ditto. (A rope dangles in front of them.)
Cole: **Hey, what?** WhQ & TkQ
Samurai X: Pythor target confirmed. Time to bag and tag.

Cole: Who are you? WhQ & EQ
Jay: How about the coolest thing I've ever seen? WhQ & ExpQ
Kai: Santa? CQ & TkQ
Zane: Thank you, mysterious warrior. I owe you my life for saving—(Samurai X renders him unconscious.) Ugh.

Cole: Okay, don't let this mysterious Samurai cloud what's really important. All the Serpentine are out, and if Pythor can unite them, the legend states some Great Devourer is gonna consume the land and—

Nya: Great Devourer? SQ & TkQ
Cole: Whatever it is, it's a can of worms I don't wanna see open.

Episode 6:

Pythor: (Skales throws him his staff. Pythor defeats the other Generals.) Bow to your master. Bow to your master, Serpentine! (Lloyd tries to, but accidentally drops his rattles.)
Mezmo: Where do you think you're going? This question was missed and not counted in the analysis. It would eventually be categorized as WhQ & EQ used by minor characters.
Pythor: Lloyd? SQ & TkQ

Zane: Sensei, we have not seen him.
Wu: We must find the boy. (They went to the arcade.)
Kai: Lloyd? Lloyd? He was right here. Someone must have seen him. SQ & TkQ

Nya: I have my ways. (She presses a button on her helmet.)
Jay: Kai? SQ
Zane: Kai? (The Mech stands up.) SQ

Episode 7:

Wu: (Sighs.) I'm sorry if I've been distant lately. My mind has been elsewhere since Lloyd has gone missing. What can I help you with?
Cole: Sensei, what if we've done enough training? What if we've reached our True Potential? What if we're ready? WhQ & ReQ
Wu: Hm. You might have reached peak physical condition, but you've yet to reach your inner potential. In each and every one of us, there are obstacles that hold us back. Only when you conquer that fear will your heart be free. Only then will you reach your True Potential. Only then will we have a fighting chance to stop the Serpentine from releasing the Great Devourer.
Jay: (Panting.) Keep going. I'll...I'll catch up later.
Cole: I'm good. Just...just taking a breather. Uh, I'll meet up with you shortly.
Kai: (Pants.) Good thing...we're in...peak...physical...condition. Gosh, that bird just keeps going. (Pants.)
Hey, what do you make of this? WhQ & ExpQ
Zane: (He reads a sign that warns visitors of Treehorns.) I am not familiar with a Treehorn.

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Zane: Where are we going, my mysterious friend? (The Falcon falls from the sky and twitches, with sparks coming out of it.) You're a...a robot? (He puts the Falcon next to a tree and sees the Juggernaut.)
WhQ & ExpQ
Juggernaut: Intruder! Intruder! Prepare to be terminated!

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Cole: Uh, it just makes you more special. You're still the same Zane. Just more, uh, gears.
Kai: No matter what you're made of, you're still our brother.
Zane: Really? SQ & TkQ
Cole: In fact, I bet it even makes you an even better Ninja.
Jay: Yeah, and how cool is it that I can honestly say "My brother is a Nindroid?" WhQ & RQ
Zane: A Nindroid? CQ & TkQ