

## FUNNY IN ANIMATED FILMS AND LITERATURE: WHAT THE RUSSIAN CHILDREN LAUGH AT

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### ABSTRACT

The humor is an important element of culture, reflects features of national consciousness and attitude, it is the means of reconciliation, settlement and preservation of social values, an indicator of intellectual and emotional development. An objective of this research was identification of representations of the Russian younger school students about comic on material of such cultural texts as animated films and works of fiction. 174 Russian school students of elementary school (92 boys and 82 girls) at the age of 9-11 years participated in a research. At the first investigation phase it was revealed what works and movies are selected by younger school students as Funny. At the second stage of school students asked to remember and tell Funny episodes from these works of fiction and television cartoon serials. The qualitative analysis of data allowed to reveal actions and situations which school students describe as Funny (frequency of their occurrence is specified): transformation (19%); violation of norms, also governed (15%); behavior of the hero (14%); speech games (14%); figurative discrepancy (10%); falling (9%); interaction (9%); logical discrepancies (8%); violations of physiological type (2%). The conducted research allows claiming that laughter in system of culture is a criterion of a ratio of acts of the individual with requirements of society: a large number of Funny situations with violation of social norms were allocated by school students.

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Relationship of children with adults is defined by culture; peers and laughter as its phenomenon participates in this process. Preferences in the choice of a comic plot are reflected by the level of informative, emotional, speech development, and an indicator of creativity of the school student. Results of a research can be used in the educational purposes, when forming cultural identity of the Russian school students, for development of informative and emotional spheres of children.

**Keywords:** humor, culture, animated films, works of art, younger school students, content analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Animated films and culture**

Ersoy and Turkkan, B. [1] by means of animated films which younger school students drew revealed problems which children faced. It was revealed that culture, in which children lived, exerts important impact on their interpretation of social problems. The research Cornelio-Mari [2] was directed to studying of understanding by the Mexican younger school students at whom cultural originality, the American culture on the example of the animated film "Dexter's Laboratory" is just formed. Most of children could distinguish the elements of the American culture which are present at a series (texts in English, traditions, a way of life, symbols) and which differ from their own culture. It is noted that age, sex and a social origin had no influence on extent of awareness of these differences. Use of media - symbols (the Greek gods, superheroes of animated films), cultural symbols for formation of social accessory, development of actor's activity is presented in work of Dyson [3]. According to *Leff et al.* [4] on the basis of animated films cultural sensitivity of ethnic minorities can be studied.

### **Animated films and social norms**

Goel and Dolan [5] (2007) on material of animated films revealed neural bases of regulation of affective experiences of humor under the influence of social norms. Studying of a demonizing in children's television animated films and Disney's animated movies were carried out *by Fouts et al [6]*. The received results are discussed in the context of repeated influence of children's popular animated movies and their training to demonize people who are perceived as having "bad" behavior. Consequences of viewing of animated films with the high and low level of aggression on emotionally unsuccessful children were revealed by Gadow and Sprafkin [7]. Kirsh [8] studied influence of violence in animated films on youth. Presence (or absence) comedy elements in the animated violence are significant.

### **Animated films and creativity**

In the research Nusbaum et al. [9] as studying of verbal creativity it is offered to use a multimethod. Use of humor in education, for increase in creativity of pupils is studied in works of Boyle and Stack [10]. Influence of comic incentives in the form of the animated film allowed improving results of pupils on the test of creativity of Torrance. On material of animated films investigated Kellner and Benedek [11] revealed a contribution of intelligence and creative abilities to production of humor. Work with the animated films containing humor according to Teske et al. [12] allows to develop creativity at younger school students, to create at them positive mood. Results of the research Smirnova et al. [13] show that viewing of the animated film corresponding to age of children promotes formation of adequate idea of the movie, subjective identification with the hero and an opportunity to develop more original plots based on the movie.

### **Animated films and gender distinctions**

Gender features of understanding and creation of caricatures are revealed in the research Samson and Huber [14]. Women drew caricatures with discrepancy of permission more often humor (incongruity-resolution humor) while men prefer to draw caricatures with humor - absurdity (nonsense humor). Thompson and Zerbinos [15] revealed that children aged from 4 up to 9 years in the same way perceive characters of animated movies: boys have to be cruel and active; expected manifestation of interest in boys from girls and appearance. A research objective of Kalayci [16] was the analysis and assessment of animated films "Pepee" for identification of ideas of gender roles. It was noted that these animated films do not contain gender inequality. However, gender inequality was revealed in all episodes concerning such aspects as color and a type of clothes, emotional reactions. It is emphasized that the animated films intended for the educational purposes have to correspond the principles of human rights and equalities.

### **Animated films and measurements**

Lowis and Nieuwoudt [17] is developed the scale for measurement of humor using the rating of a newspaper caricature (animated films). On the basis of *animated films Bidaut-Russell et al.* diagnostic test of Terry [18] is developed.

### **Animated films in education**

Efficiency of use of animated films in pedagogical process was studied by Tebar and Ruiz-Gallardo [19]. The assumption of influence of animated films on progress and motivation of pupils of initial classes was statistically confirmed. Studying of influence of use of humor, animated films at lessons of computer technologies (ICT) on progress of pupils, the relation to a lesson and fixing of knowledge was a research objective of Celik and Gundogdu [20]. Results

showed that introduction of humor at lessons increased progress of pupils, the level of their uneasiness decreased; knowledge became better to be fixed. Use of humor, caricatures in manuals is studied by Piaw [21]. Most of readers of the grant containing caricatures expressed opinion that use of humor exerted positive impact on their understanding of read and made training more intelligent. The humor during creation of comic caricatures helps to discharge tension and alarm at pupils of elementary school according to Christopoulou [22].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Participants

174 school students of elementary school of educational institutions of Kazan at the age of 9-11 years participated in an experiment. 92 boys and 82 girls agreed to participate in a research. The consent of parents to work with children was received.

### Procedure

In the first part of a research interested us what works of fiction and animated movies are selected by younger school students as Funny. In the second part of a research of school students asked to write down a Funny plot of the animated film or work.

## RESULTS

157 Funny plots were allocated, 68 of them had single character, 89 - were to group in groups. Distribution on groups is presented in table 1

**Table 1.** Frequency of the choice of works of art and animated movies by younger school students

Groups	Number of elections	%
<i>Deniskina stories (V. Dragunsky)</i>	15	17
Kid and Carlson (animated film)	7	8
SpongeBob Square Pants (cartoon serial)	5	6
Wait a moment (cartoon serial)	4	22
Zootopia (animated film)		
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (movie)		
<i>Live hat (N. Nosov)</i>		
<i>Barankin, be a person. (V. Medvedev)</i>		
<i>Little Prince (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)</i>	3	20

Smeshariki (cartoon serial)		
Pep Piggy (cartoon serial)		
<i>Adventures of Dunno and his friends (N. Nosov)</i>		
<i>Adventures of the baron Myunkhauzen (E.Raspe)</i>		
Jumble (Children's comic newsreel)		
Mikhail Zadornov	2	27
<i>Alice in Wonderland (L. Carroll)</i>		
<i>Warrior cats (Message) (H. Erin)</i>		
<i>Adventures of Buratino (A. Tolstoy)</i>		
<i>Wizard of the emerald city (A. Volkov)</i>		
<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (M. Twain)</i>		
<i>Three fat men (Y.Olesh)</i>		
<i>Diary of Nicky (R. Russell)</i>		
<i>Story "Elephant" (A. Kuprin)</i>		
Masha and bear (cartoon serial)		
<i>Visionaries (N. Nosov)</i>		
<i>In the country of unlearned lessons (L. Geraskin)</i>		

In the second part of a research school students described Funny episodes from works of fiction and animated movies. In total school students gave 112 Funny descriptions. With the help content - the analysis actions and situations which school students allocate as Funny were allocated.

**Table 2.** Groups of actions and the frequency of their use by younger school students in cultural humor (at the choice of Funny episodes from literature and movies)

Groups of actions	Child choice (%)
Transformation	19 (I)
Violation of norm, rule	15 (II)
Behavior of the hero	14 (III)
Speech games	14 (III)
Figurative discrepancy	10 (IV)
Falling	9 (V)
Interaction	9 (V)
Logical discrepancies	8 (VI)
Violations of physiological type	2 (VII)

## DISCUSSION

Most often in works of fiction and animated movies, for children *transformation* actions were Funny. 19% of all descriptions were carried to this group. Transformation of parents into animals, birds, children into vegetables seemed to amusing children; transformation into old men; transformation of parents into children and vice versa: "Barankin's spells and when Barankin became an ordinary butterfly, and his friend a radish are Funny" (Barankin, be a person); "When all were turned into old men". The role of dialectic actions, including action transformation in understanding of humor is lit in the research Aliullina and Artemyeva [23]. *Violation of norms, rules of conduct* is represented to school students in animated films and works amusing in 15% of descriptions. The role of social norms in regulation of affective experiences of humor was also emphasized by Goel [5]; Balina [24]. In Bayanova [25] research the rules regulating behavior, activity and communication of the younger school student (the rule of discipline providing self-checking, observance of the schedule, the relations with the adult, successful assimilation of educational activity, hygiene, self-service) are revealed. In our research, in Funny stories of children, rules of school discipline and the schedule, the relations with teachers and parents, hygiene are violated.

□ *Violation of school rules: deception.* "There two boys were late in school and wanted to tell lies to the teacher, but did not agree and dishonored in all class. (The fire in wings or a feat in ices)".

□ *The unwillingness to study, progress* "The fact that the boy did not know grammar" "When Malvin was learned by him idled", "He did not know how many 2+2" (Buratino's Adventures).

□ *Standards of behavior* "Very much made laugh me that Denis, by the nonsense threw out porridge on the street, and got on elderly mister who was just going to be photographed (Secret becomes obvious)", "Where boys stole cucumbers".

***The Behavior of the Main Character group*** (14%) included descriptions of the main characters of works, animated movies: "The behavior of the Sponge", "To me was Funny when they ate cotton candy, looked at ice cream" (Sponge Bob), "When a piece of iron lost the head" (The wizard of the Emerald city), "As there Shurik the uncle worked with another" (Shurik's Adventures).

Stories in which it is represented Funny to school students were carried to ***the Speech Games group*** (14%): incorrectly pronounced words, sounds; tempo of speech, turns of speech: "All boys and the girl told not cones, but fief"; "There was a name of cones on Funny, for example, investigations or fief" (The bewitched letter). "The cat was given bewild tablets and he flew into a rage. I laughed from the word bewild" (Adventures of a cat of Leopold). Also as well as in the research Nusbaum [9], the humor can be considered as one of examples of verbal creativity.

***Figurative discrepancy*** (10%). The image of the hero of the work of art, animated movie seemed to younger school students and Funny amusing: "I like the place where the Cheburashka in a zoo sees Gena, and thinks that Gena is similar to sausage with pads (The Cheburashka and Gena's crocodile)". "It is very Funny to me to watch this animated cartoon because there all animals round (Smeshariki). In Schultz's researches it was also revealed that at school students from 1 to 3 class permission of discrepancy becomes important for understanding of humor [26].

For younger school students situations *of falling of the main characters* (9%) are Funny: "When the wolf chased a hare, he stumbled, and fell (Wait a moment)", "when Nicki tried to skate, but it was impossible to her (the Diary Nicknames)", "where she fell in a pool (Pepp's Mumps)".

Stories of school students in which the social relations, the relation of character the friend at the friend are reflected are carried to the Interactions group (9%): "I liked the moment where the Asterisk got acquainted with a fox and a cat" (the Asterisk. A horse who sings). The humor, according to Latyshev, possesses pronounced communicative function: laughter

causes on communication, helps to come into contact, to relieve the tension, to inspire interlocutors [27].

*Logical discrepancies* (8%). Such discrepancies occurred in answers of school students: "The teacher talked to the pupil and the teacher asked that the pupil loves and the pupil answered: donuts, bagels, pies, drying, cakes, steering-wheels, sausages, herring, ice-cream, cheese ... So long proceeded and then the teacher told: and parents, and animals? And, still grandmother and kittens". Children derive the greatest pleasure from humor which represents optimum level of complexity for their cognitive structures. According to the researches Park, the humor, too difficult or too easy for understanding, does not give joy to the child [28].

Only 2% made descriptions of children which cause laughter in children, connected with physiological needs of people and animals: "Gary Potter ate candy and vomit" got to him (Harry Potter). In the researches McGhee [29] it is noted that at the small children experiencing experiences and the sufferings in the course of schooling to neatness connected with a toilet of action and cases become sources of emotional tension more and more, a lot of laughter causes the humor concerning defecation, an urination, a congestion of gases.

## CONCLUSION

Works B are the most popular with school students. Dragoon; "Deniskina stories": "The bewitched letter", "The girl on a sphere", "The fire in wings or a feat in ices", "Secret becomes obvious" (17% of all elections of school students).

The most popular animated movies at school students are: Russian animated film "Kid and Carlson" (8% of all elections) and foreign animated film "SpongeBob Square Pants" (6%).

Position of the child in society, the school student's position, socially controlled educational activity promote that younger school students "meet rules", realize the requirement to subordinate the behavior to school norms and rules. Increase in quantity of Funny stories in a cultural product of society - fiction and animated films are connected with it. Most often as Funny school students allocated situations in which school rules and standards of behavior were violated, deception, unwillingness to study at the main characters met.

It are presented in animated movies and fiction to Funny younger school students various transformation of the main characters into birds, animals, vegetables, young in old and vice versa. Younger school students derive pleasure from different *speech games*: turns of speech, incorrectly pronounced words of heroes of works and animated films.

The humor possesses pronounced communicative function: laughter causes on communication, helps to come into contact, to relieve the tension, to inspire interlocutors. Younger school

students allocate situations of love, friendship, pleasant communication with each other, interaction during performance of any activity.

Results allow to claim the researches conducted on the Russian selection of children that the humor is an important element of culture, reflecting features of regulation by younger school students of social norms, the level of their speech development (speech games); informative development (understanding of figurative and logical discrepancies) and emotional development (interaction).

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