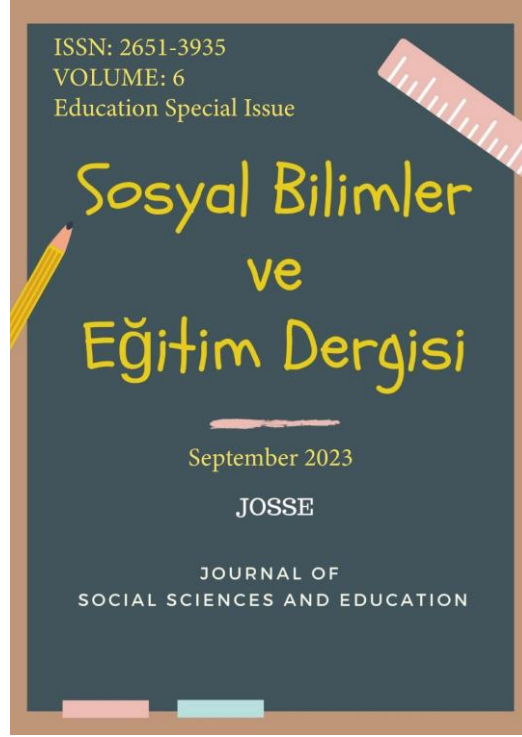


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Cartoons in The Context of Paul McGhee's Theory of Humor Development

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ABSTRACT

Research Article

This study, which was conducted to examine cartoons according to Paul McGhee's humor development theory, is a basic qualitative research design. The research study group consists of 8 cartoons, 4 Turkish and 4 foreign productions, which are available on national and international children's channels and digital broadcasting platforms. These cartoons are; Keloğlan Masalları, Niloya, Pepee, Rafadan Tayfa, Caillou, Masha and the Bear, SpongeBob, and The Smurfs. The study's data were analyzed using the "humor checklist" prepared by the researcher. Document analysis technique was used to analyze the data obtained. As a result of the study, it was determined that the cartoon with the most humor elements was Masha and the Bear, the cartoon with the least humor elements was Pepee. In the study, it was observed that the most humor elements were found in stage 4c, which includes humor aimed at distorting the properties of objects, people, and animals, and the least humor elements were found in stage 4d, which includes naming the opposite sex. As a result of the research, it was determined that the cartoon with the most and least humorous elements in each stage differed. Since cartoons have different characteristics, the amount of humor in different stages may vary. However, humor is universal, and children of all ages watch cartoons. In this context, it is suggested that cartoons should have humor elements with different characteristics.

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Introduction

Today, technology plays a vital role in the lives of children and adults. From smartphones to tablets, computers to televisions, children can use many technological devices, sometimes even more expertly than adults. Depending on the duration, content, and intended use of technology, it can either contribute to or harm children's development and learning. Cartoons, one of children's daily habits, can also affect children's behavior positively or negatively (Wijethilaka, 2020). A cartoon is a humorous film, especially for children, made using animation instead of live actors (Thompson, 2010). It can also be defined as movies consisting of different drawings or models that appear to move and change when shown one after the other in sequence (Habib & Soleman, 2015). Visual and content features play a key role in determining the quality of cartoons. The visuals in cartoons are narrative tools for conveying cartoon content to children (Kagan, 1982). Theme and character features constitute the content features of cartoons (Güler, 2013). The colorful, exaggerated, and enjoyable world created by cartoons entertains and affects children (Peri, 1997). Children can internalize events and characters watching cartoons (Oruç et al., 2011). Although it is stated that YouTube videos have emerged as an alternative to traditional children's television and there are many popular children's videos on the platform (Papadamou et al., 2020), it is thought that cartoons on television are still up to date since every socio-economic level family has a television at home. The study by Yazıcı et al. (2019) determined that 97% of children watched cartoons, 46.7% watched television, and 24.0% watched mobile phones. Cartoons are among the most preferred and criticized programs (Aktaş Arnas, 2005). On the one hand, some argue that cartoons have adverse effects on children, such as violence and aggression; on the other hand, some claim that there is insufficient reliable evidence to support these claims (Browne & Hamilton Giachritsis, 2005). Studies are showing that well-designed cartoons contribute significantly to children's positive behaviors and cognitive, social, and language development (Akpınar, 2004; Bulut Pedük, 2012; Öztürk, 1999; Yaşlı, 2013), as well as studies showing that cartoons increase children's aggression (Fouts et al., 2006; Luther & Legg, 2010; Yaşar & Paksoy, 2011). Studies also show that using cartoons in educational environments contributes to children's academic achievement and learning. For example, in the study conducted by Oruç and Teymuroğlu (2016) to examine the effect of cartoons on the academic achievement of primary school 5th-grade students in social studies teaching, it was determined that the use of cartoons in social studies teaching was effective in increasing

students' academic achievement. The study of Türkan et al. (2016) determined that using cartoons in science teaching positively contributed to the academic achievement and attitudes towards science of children in the 3rd grade.

Humor is a phenomenon that has existed for as long as human history (Martin, 2007). It is ubiquitous in social and professional life, taking many forms, including jokes, cartoons, and funny conversations (Wyer & Collins 1992). Humor in children's lives contributes to their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development (Loizou & Recchia, 2019; McGhee, 2002). Bergen (2018) found that humor helps children make decisions on moral issues, and Schmidt (2002) found that using materials containing humor in educational environments facilitates their learning.

There are also studies to determine the relationship between children's psychosocial adjustment and humor. For example, Sherman (1988) found that children rated as humorous by their peers were also rated as less socially distant. Masten (1986) found that better humor production and understanding were associated with better social competence. Humor also helps children cope with stress. Dowling (2014) found that children use humor to cope with various stressors related to school and home life and can give examples to support the benefits of using humor. Führ (2001) found that children reported that humor was a proper coping strategy for dealing with problems or events but not for dealing with serious problems or deeply felt emotions. The primary emotion that arises when comprehending and appreciating a humorous event is fun (Herring et al. 2011; Shiota et al. 2006). According to Keltner (2008), the experience of fun and laughter in response to humor can be likened to a momentary vacation of the mind where one takes a break from severe events.

McGhee(2002), who examined the development of humor according to Piaget's cognitive development theory, put forward his theory consisting of five stages by suggesting that the humor examples that individuals understand and produce show qualitative differences in the stages of cognitive development with age.

In the zeroth stage, laughing without humor (first 6 months), infants laugh without any humor. In the first stage, laughing at the attachment figure (6 months- 12/15 months), they laugh at their parents' unfamiliar actions. In the second stage, inconsistent behavior towards objects (12/15 months- 3/4/5 years), the earliest examples of humor created by children are seen. Children enjoy using an object in unusual and inappropriate ways once an object has become very familiar to the child. In the third stage, inconsistent naming of objects, events, and people (2-3/4 years), children begin to play with objects by giving them the wrong names.

The fourth stage, conceptual inconsistency (3-5 years old), is divided into 4 categories: a. Playing with the sounds of words (not their meanings), in which children become attuned to the sounds of words and begin to play with the sounds of words on their own. b. In combining nonsense and real words, children like to put words together in absurd ways, even if they know they are wrong c. In distorting the properties of objects, people, or animals, children like to add properties that do not belong to people, animals, or objects, erase existing properties, and change the size, color, or shape of familiar things. They laugh at inconsistent and impossible behavior of events, items, and people with exaggerated characteristics. d. In the opposite-sex naming category, children find it amusing when other children are called by the name of the opposite sex or called by a name associated with the opposite sex. In the fifth stage, riddles and jokes (multiple meanings) (6/7- 10/11), children can understand humorous jokes and riddles made with double-meaning or ambiguous words (McGhee, 2002).

In the literature, there are studies examining cartoons in terms of cultural elements (Karakuş, 2016; Pekşen Akça & Baran, 2018), popular culture (Tozduman Yaralı & Avcı, 2017), suitability for children (Hamarat et al., 2015) gender roles (Duman & Koçtürk, 2021; Semiz Türkoğlu & Türkoğlu, 2022; Şen & Deniz, 2019), and values education (Akıncı Coşgun & Güven, 2014; Ay & Yangil, 2021), peer bullying (Dilek Çin et al., 2023). Studies examining the humor characteristics of children's books (Dirican et al., 2020; Eroğlu, 2008; İnce Samur & Arıkan, 2018; Pala & Gönen, 2018; Taşçılar & Babaoğlu, 2023) were also found. However, no study on humor development theory was found in which cartoons were examined. Although cartoons, which take place in children's lives and are produced for children, have been examined from different angles in studies, they have not been examined in terms of humor features. However, it is thought that it is necessary to determine how humor, which is effective in children's development, learning, having fun and coping with stress, is included in cartoons. With this study, it is aimed to benefit both cartoon producers, teachers who use cartoons in the educational environment, and parents who should be a guide in children's choice of cartoons. In addition, it can be said that including examples in the context of Paul McGhee's (2002) humour development theory will be useful in terms of understanding the theory. In this context, it is thought that this study will contribute to the literature.

This study aims to examine the cartoons according to Paul McGhee's humor development theory. In line with this primary purpose, answers to the following questions will be sought:

- According to Paul McGhee's humor development theory, what is the distribution of the humor elements in the cartoons in the study group?
- Which cartoons contain the most and least humorous elements?
- Which humor development stage contains the most and least humor elements?
- What are the sample scenes in cartoons according to Paul McGhee's humor development theory?

Method

In this section, the design of the study, the study group and the collection and analysis of data will be discussed.

Model

This research was conducted in a basic qualitative research design. Basic qualitative research analyzes data obtained through observation, interviews, or documents. The aim of basic qualitative research, which is a qualitative research design frequently used in education and social sciences, is to focus on and understand the process (Merriam, 2013). In this study, cartoons were handled as documents, watched by focusing on Paul McGhee's humor development theory, and a conclusion was reached by making sense of the scenes in the cartoons according to the theory.

Ethical principles were followed at every stage of this research. However, ethics committee permission was not obtained because the cartoons, which were open to everyone, were analysed and no data were collected from any living creature.

Sample and Population

The study group of the research consists of 8 cartoons, 4 Turkish and 4 foreign productions, produced for preschool children, which are available on both national and international children's channels and digital broadcasting platforms.

The cartoons included in the study group are 480 episodes and last 6074 minutes. In line with the purpose of the study, criterion sampling technique, one of the purposeful sampling types, was used to select the cartoons in the study group. While selecting the selected cartoons, attention was paid to the following criteria:

- Being a cartoon produced for preschool children

- Availability of a sufficient number of departments,
- Continues to be broadcasted
- Appearance on national and international channels broadcasting in Turkey and digital broadcasting platforms

Information about the cartoons in the study group is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Information About The Cartoons

Cartoon Movie	Country	Year	Place of Broadcasting	Average Duration of an Episode	Number of Episodes Watched (Total: 480)	Time Watched (6074 min.)
Keloğlan Masalları	TR	2008	TRT Kids	13-21 min.	44	760 min.
Niloya	TR	2012	Yumurcak TV-TRT Kids	5-7 min.	125	755 min.
Pepe	TR	2008	TRT Kids	10-20 min.	60	768 min.
Rafadan Tayfa	TR	2014	TRT Kids	13-17 min.	50	750 min.
Caillou	Canada	1997	Yumurcak TV, TRT Kids, Cartoon Network	16-23 min.	45	765 min.
Masha and the Bear	Russia	2012	TV8, Netflix	8-14 min	74	753 min.
Sponge Bob	USA	1999	Nickelodeon, Netflix	22-24 min.	33	759 min.
Smurfs	Belgium	1984	Kanal D, Cartoon Network, Boomerang	12-24 min.	49	764 min.

Data Collection Tool

The study's data were collected using the "humor checklist" prepared by the researcher. The humor checklist consists of the sections in Paul McGhee's humor development theory, except for stage 0 and stage 1, where the name of each stage is written, and the number of examples of the stage in the cartoon and the scene's content is written. There are no sections for Stage 0 and Stage 1 in the humor checklist because laughter in Stage 0 does not contain humor, and in Stage 1, children laugh at the attachment figure. The humor checklist was sent to two child development experts for their expert opinions, and necessary

arrangements were made in line with the experts' opinions. Then, in order to determine whether the humor checklist was useful or not, a pilot study was conducted by two researchers by watching a section that was not included in the study group. Thus, the "humor checklist" was finalized.

Collection of Data and Analysis

In the first stage, after the cartoons to be analyzed were selected considering the purpose of the study and the criteria determined, random episodes were identified for each cartoon. Then, the researchers watched each episode twice, and the "humor checklist" was filled out. The data were collected in 5 months between January 2023 and May 2023. To ensure the reliability of the study, the data in the humor checklist were examined, and the coders' agreement was calculated according to Miles & Huberman's (1994) reliability formula. The agreement between the coders was calculated as $734 / 734 + 86 \times 100 = 89\%$. This agreement is expected to be 70% and above (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001). The coders re-watched the relevant scene for their evaluations and reached a common opinion. Document analysis technique was used to analyze the data obtained. In document analysis, both written sources and visual materials such as films, videos, or photographs can be analyzed (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The data obtained were tabulated, and frequency values were calculated.

Findings

The findings are presented in the order of the sub-problems of the study.

General Findings Regarding the Distribution of Humor Elements in Cartoons According to Paul McGhee's Humor Development Theory

The analysis of the humor elements in the cartoons in the study group according to Paul McGhee's humor development theory is given in Table 2.

Table 2

Distribution of The Elements of Humor in The Cartoons According to Paul McGhee's Humor Development Theory

Stage / Cartoon	Stage 2 f	Stage 3 f	Stage 4a f	Stage 4b f	Stage 4c f	Stage 4d f	Stage 5 f	Total f
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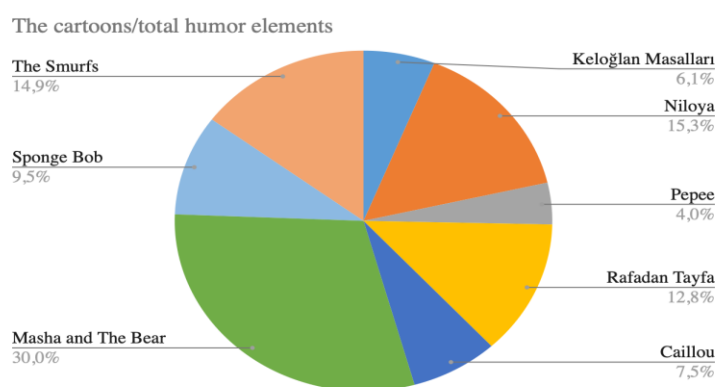
Keloğlan Masalları	2	3	1	3	32	1	3	45
Niloya	14	0	0	0	93	0	5	112
Pepe	3	1	1	0	24	0	0	29
Rafadan Tayfa	20	2	2	3	41	1	25	94
Caillou	20	1	0	3	30	0	1	55
Masha and the Bear	33	1	0	1	185	0	0	220
Sponge Bob	17	1	0	0	48	0	4	70
The Smurfs	10	4	0	5	74	1	15	109
Total	119	13	4	15	527	3	53	734

Table 2. shows that there are 734 scenes containing humor elements in cartoons. It was determined that the cartoons with the most humor elements were Masha and the Bear (f:220), Niloya (f:112), and The Smurfs (f:109). In contrast, the cartoons with the least humor elements were Pepe (f:29), Keloğlan Masalları(f:45), and Caillou (f:55). In all comics, it was determined that the humor elements in the conceptual inconsistency stage (f:527), which is stage 4c, took place the most, and the humor elements in the naming of the opposite sex stage (f:3), which is stage 4d, took place the least. Only two cartoons (Keloğlan Masalları and Rafadan Tayfa) had at least 1 humor element in all phases.

Findings Related to The Cartoons with The Least and Most Humor Elements / Humor Development Stages

Graph 1

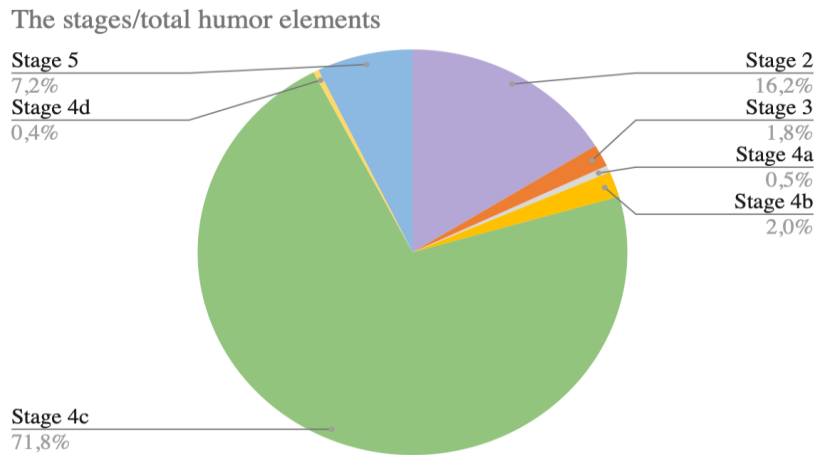
Distribution of Total Humor Elements in Cartoons



Graph 1 shows that the cartoon with the most humor elements is Masha and the Bear (30%), and the cartoon with the least humor elements is Pepee (4%).

Graph 2

Distribution of Total Humor Elements in Cartoons According to The Stages in Humor Theory

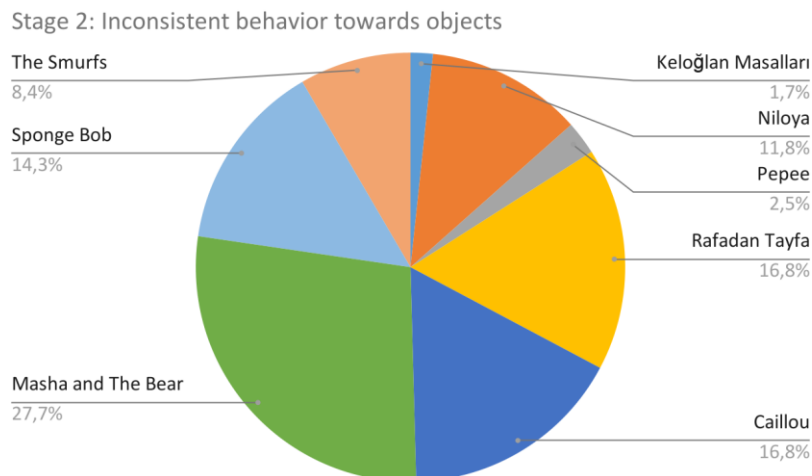


Graph 2 shows that the highest number of humor elements is found in stage 4c, while the lowest number is found in stage 4d.

Findings on The Distribution of Humor Elements in Cartoons According to Stages

Graph 3

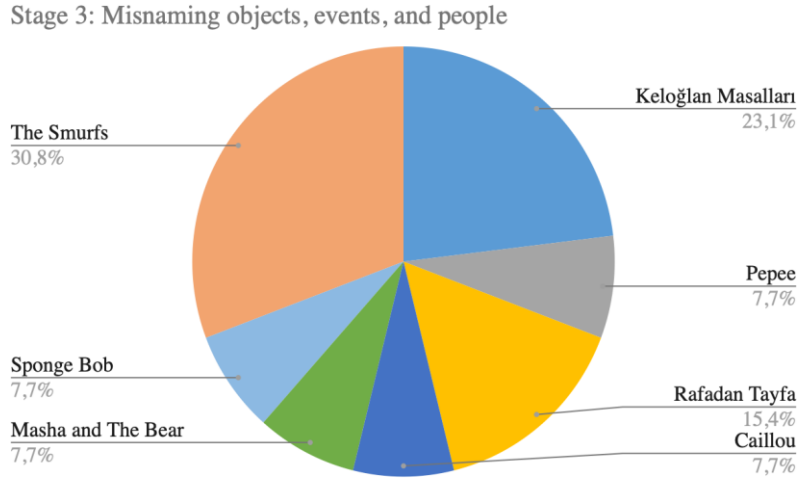
Distribution of Humor Elements in Cartoons According to Stage 2



Graph 3 shows that the highest number of humor elements suitable for the 2nd stage is in Masha and the Bear, and the lowest number of humor elements is in Keloğlan Masalları.

Graph 4

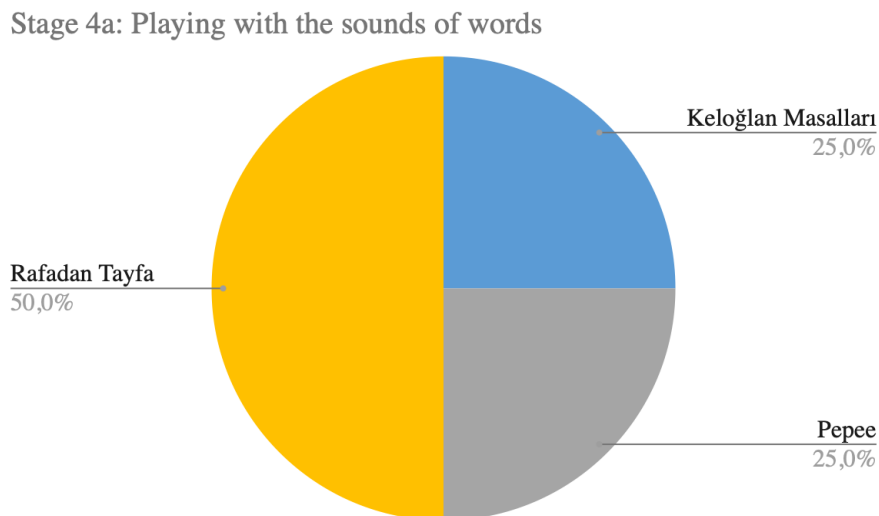
Distribution of Humor Elements in Cartoons According to Stage 3



Graph 4 shows that the highest number of humor elements suitable for the 3rd stage is found in The Smurfs. Niloya, on the other hand, does not have any humor elements suitable for this stage.

Graph 5

Distribution of Humor Elements in Cartoons According To Stage 4a

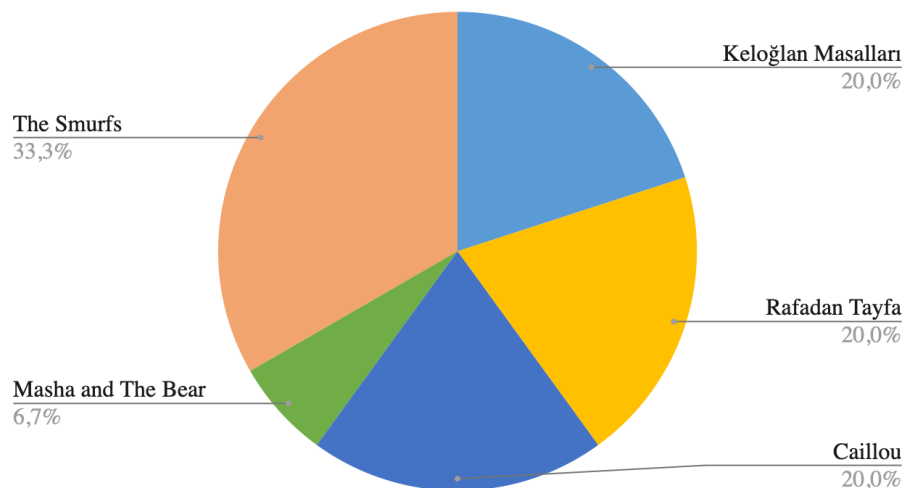


Graph 5 shows that only Rafadan Tayfa, Keloğlan Masalları, and Pepee have examples suitable for stage 4a.

Graph 6

Distribution of Humor Elements in Cartoons According To Stage 4b

Stage 4b: Combination of meaningless and real words

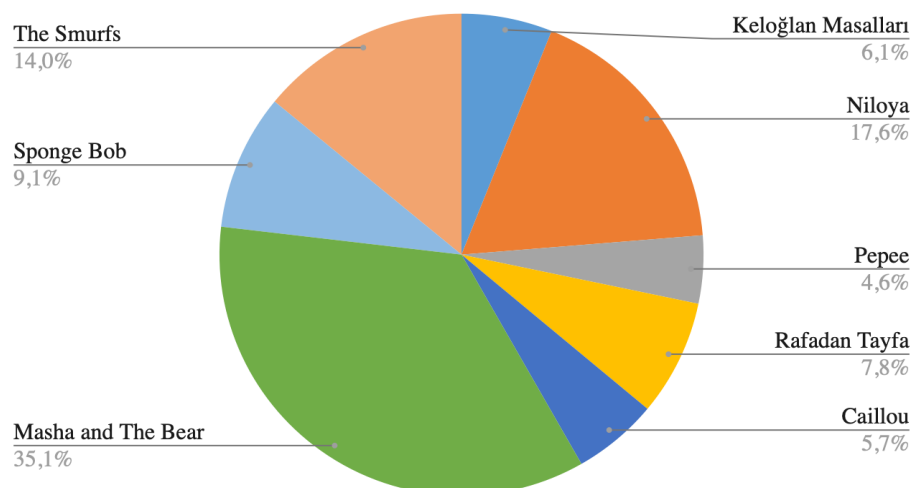


Graph 6 shows that the highest number of humor elements suitable for stage 4b is found in The Smurfs, while SpongeBob, Niloya, and Pepee do not have any humor elements suitable for this stage.

Graph 7

Distribution of Humor Elements in Cartoons According To Stage 4c

Stage 4c: Dstorting the characteristics of people or animals

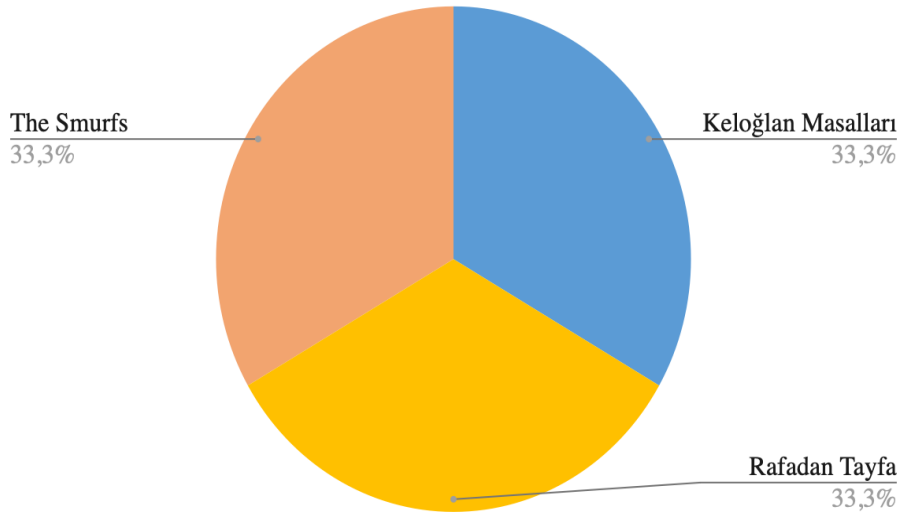


Graph 7 shows that Masha and the Bear has the highest number of humor elements suitable for stage 4c, while Pepe has the lowest number of humor elements.

Graph 8

Distribution Of Humor Elements in Cartoons According To Stage 4d

Stage 4d: Opposite-sex naming

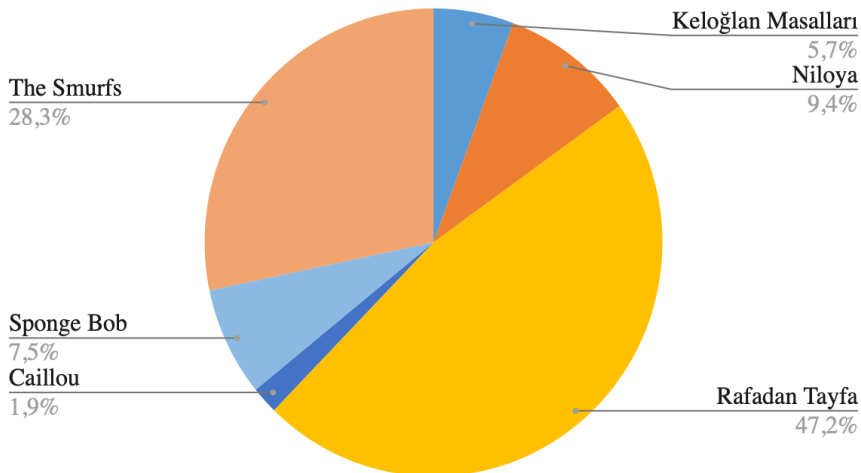


Graph 8 shows that only Rafadan Tayfa, Keloğlan Masalları, and The Smurfs have examples suitable for stage 4d.

Graph 9

Distribution of Humor Elements in Cartoons According To Stage 5

Stage 5: Riddles and jokes (multiple meanings)



Graph 9 shows that Rafadan Tayfa has the highest number of humor elements suitable for the 5th stage, while Masha and the Bear and Pepee do not have any humor elements suitable for this stage.

Findings on Sample Scenes from Humor Elements in Cartoons

According to Paul McGhee's humor development theory, examples of scenes containing humor elements in cartoons are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Examples of Scenes Containing Humor Elements in Cartoons

Phase/ Example	Example scene 1	Featured in the cartoon	Example scene 2	Featured in the cartoon
Stage 2	Niloya uses a lemon peel as a hat	Niloya	SpongeBob using his nose as a flute	Sponge Bob
Stage 3	Uzun calls ginger a radish	Keloğlan Masalları	When Şila says 'out' when she should have said 'burnt' while playing with Pepee	Pepee
Stage 4a	Keloğlan says "Dondalomanda, Shondolamanda, zanga, banga, pondolamanda" while performing magic.	Keloğlan Masalları	Someone in the forest calls Kamil "rafa rara fara fara rafa danara" and in response Kamil says "rara fara fara"	Rafadan Tayfa
Stage 4b	Caillou's mom asks if you made screw and loaf soup for lunch.	Caillou	Masha says she will drink cabbage milk, not goat's milk	Masha and the Bear
Stage 4c	Masha hatches the egg she found and puts it on Bear's foot for incubation.	Masha and the Bear	Ants are too big	Niloya
Stage 4d	The transformation of Grumpy, a boy, into Smurfette, a girl.	Smurfs	Kamil saying to Mert: "What's wrong with you, auntie?"	Rafadan Tayfa
Stage 5	Mete making a joke by saying, 'It's so delicious, I love it when he eats mulberry	Niloya	Shirin's saying that it is true what they say that love is blind; the man has gone blind.	Smurfs

Discussion and Results

In this study, which was conducted to examine the cartoons according to Paul McGhee's humor development theory, 8 cartoons were included. As a result of the study, it was determined that the cartoon with the most humor elements was Masha and the Bear (30%), and the cartoon with the least humor elements was Pepee (4%). The adventures

between a small and cute Russian girl named Masha and a big but cute bear retired from the circus are told in the cartoon Masha and the Bear. In the cartoon, the Bear is not frightening, wild, and angry; it is a naive and easily deceived bear (Karakale, 2018). It is thought that the fact that Big Bear is an innocent and easily deceived character increases the humor elements in the cartoon. Looking at the whole cartoon, the fact that a little girl and a giant bear have adventures together can be seen as an incompatibility in itself. Pepee is a cartoon for the preschool age group that attracts attention by teaching basic concepts such as shape, color, and number with songs and processing cultural characteristics with folk dances and folk songs (Coşkun & Köroğlu, 2016). Pepee is a cartoon that has been the subject of many studies in terms of cultural values, concept teaching, and gender (Kalaycı, 2015; Pekşen Akça & Baran, 2017; Türkmen, 2013; Yılmaz & Arı, 2021). However, it can be said that the humorous elements in the Pepee cartoon, which was examined for the first time in this study in terms of humorous elements, are pretty low. It can be said that the fact that Pepee has the least humor element is because it is a cartoon that is intended to have educational features and the educational feature overrides the entertainment feature. As a result of the study, it was determined that only two cartoons (Keloğlan Masalları and Rafadan Tayfa) had at least one humor element belonging to all phases. This finding means that there were no humor elements in some stages in other cartoons. It is thought that this situation may be because humor development in children is less known and researched than in other developmental areas. The people involved in the production processes of cartoons do not have sufficient knowledge on this subject. Although there are humor elements in cartoons, it would be beneficial to diversify them to support children's humor development.

The study observed that the most humor elements took place in stage 4c and the least in stage 4d. In stage 4c, which is the conceptual inconsistency stage, it is expected that humor aimed at distorting the properties of objects, people, and animals, adding properties that do not belong to objects, erasing their existing properties, changing the size, color, or shape of things they know, and inconsistent events are expected to take place (McGhee, 2002). It can be said that it is easier to give humor situations suitable for this stage visually due to the fact that cartoons consist of visual scenes compared to other stages. In stage 4d, humor elements related to naming the opposite sex are expected (McGhee, 2002). The least humorous elements are considered in the 4d stage because the production of appropriate examples is more limited than in other stages. In the study of Koçer et al. (2012) to examine the situations in which 6-year-old children produced humor and appreciated the value of humor according

to McGhee's humor development stages based on the observations of their parents, similar results were obtained to the results of this study. While no cases were observed in which children produced humor and appreciated the value of humor in categories 4a. playing with the sounds of words, 4b. combination of meaningless and real words and 4d. naming the opposite sex, it was found that children produced humor and appreciated the value of humor mostly in category 4c.

As a result of the research, it was determined that the cartoon with the most and least humorous elements for each stage differed. This may be due to the differences in the content of cartoons, the age group they appeal to, and the countries where they are produced. Since cartoons have different characteristics, the amount of humor in different stages may vary. However, humor is universal, and children of all ages watch cartoons. In this context, it is thought that each cartoon should have humor elements with different characteristics. Because including humor elements in cartoons will enable children to produce humor. According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, children learn through modeling, observation and imitation. In the theory, it is stated that there are three types of modeling stimuli. a. Live model: A real person who demonstrates a desired behavior. b. Symbolic model: A real/fictional character or person portrayed on different platforms through the media, including movies, television, internet, books and radio. c. Verbal directives: Instructions on how a person should behave. From this perspective, it can be said that children encounter symbolic models in the cartoons they watch. If these symbolic models produce humor and appreciate the value of the humor produced, the children watching them can produce humor in a similar way. The study of Eskidemir Meral and Koçer (2023) revealed that children's exposure to jokes enables them to create humor. In this context, it is thought that including humor situations with various characteristics suitable for different age groups in cartoons will contribute to children's humor development.

In stage 2, it is seen that the most humor elements are found in Masha and the Bear, and the least humor elements are found in Keloğlan Masalları. Stage 2 is the earliest stage in which humor is produced (McGhee, 2002). It is thought that the fact that Masha is a 4-year-old girl who loves to play games all the time (Masha and The Bear, 2023) and that she produces examples suitable for this phase is the reason why Masha and The Bear has the most examples suitable for the second phase, which is the phase in which children use one object as another object and laugh at it, especially with the emergence of symbolic play. Although Keloğlan is an adult in fairy tales, he appears as a child in the cartoon Keloğlan Masalları. It is

stated that it is not a coincidence that the age of the hero in the cartoon is close to the age of primary school children. Considering that those who watch the Keloğlan cartoon are generally 5-12 years old, it is deliberate that the age of Keloğlan as a cartoon hero is close to this age group (Bayraktar,2014). Since behavioral patterns want to be transferred to children through Keloğlan, it has come to life on the screens by updating it so that children can empathize with empathy (Bayraktar, 2014). In this study, it can be said that the least number of examples suitable for stage 2 is in the Keloğlan Masalları cartoon because Keloğlan's wise personality continues in the cartoon; even though he is a child, he shows adult characteristics. He, therefore, does not use an object differently. At the same time, it is an expected finding that Keloğlan Masalları are targeting children in the 6-9 age group (Yorulmaz & Tanrıverdi, 2015), and therefore there are no examples in the 2nd stage, which is the earliest stage in which humor is produced.

In stage 3, it is seen that the highest number of humor elements are found in The Smurfs. Niloya, on the other hand, does not have any humor elements suitable for this stage. Sauthom (2005) states that after children learn the meanings of words with their developing language skills, they produce appropriate humor and find this kind of humor funny. In this stage, children start to play by giving the wrong names to objects. The Smurfs cartoon occurs in an unspecified place called "Smurfland" (Güler, 2013). It can be said that the country of the Smurfs is unusual, and some of the known objects here are named differently. Therefore, the most humorous situation in this phase is expected to occur in The Smurfs.

As a result of the research, it was seen that there was at least humor produced in stage 4d. However, it can be said that the examples of humor in stages 4a and 4b, which include word games, are also quite limited. Only Rafadan Tayfa, Keloğlan Masalları, and Pepee have humor elements suitable for stage 4a. The highest number of humor elements suitable for stage 4b was found in The Smurfs, while SpongeBob, Niloya, and Pepee did not have any humor elements suitable for this stage. In some cartoons, no examples suitable for these stages were found. Pala & Gönen (2018)'s study examining the humor elements in illustrated children's books determined that the least number of examples in the category of "verbal humor" (15%) was found in illustrated children's books.

It was determined that the highest number of humor elements suitable for stage 4c, the stage where the most humor is produced, was found in Masha and the Bear, and the lowest number of humor elements was found in Pepee. In the 5th stage, Rafadan Tayfa had the most humor elements, while SpongeBob, Masha and the Bear, and Pepee did not have any humor

elements suitable for this stage. In a study conducted to determine the favorite cartoons of primary school children (Cerrah Özsevgeç & Saka, 2018), it was determined that the favorite cartoons of 1st-grade children were Rafadan Tayfa (40%) and Masha and the Bear (20%). In the study of Yazıcı et al. (2019), it was found that the cartoon children watched the most was Rafadan Tayfa, and their favorite character was Hayri. The fact that Rafadan Tayfa targets children in the older age group and that the adult type of humor, which is stage 5, is mainly in the Turkish-made Rafadan Tayfa cartoon can be considered an indication that cartoon producers take into account the humor development characteristics of children. In the SpongeBob cartoon, which also appeals to adults and is at the forefront with its humor elements, more examples of stage 5 were expected to be found, but the opposite situation was encountered. Humor is universal but also culture-specific (Jiang et al., 2019). It is clear that cultural characteristics have significant effects on the way humor is used and the situations that are deemed appropriate for laughter (Martin & Ford, 2018). Xia et al. (2023) stated that the translation of humor has long been a challenge for translators and that it is inevitable for translators to eliminate or reduce some of the humorous effects in the target language despite their efforts to preserve humor elements. In his study, he mentioned the difficulties encountered in translating the humorous scenes of the American comedy cartoon SpongeBob. Stage 5 adult humor is expected to include examples of multiple meanings. It is thought that another reason why fewer humorous situations were found in SpongeBob in the 5th stage than expected is due to the translation of the cartoon into Turkish.

In this study, it was determined that there are elements suitable for humor development in cartoons, which are indispensable for children's lives. In the study of Güleken Katfar and Yılmaz (2020) to examine the effects of dominant personality traits in cartoons on children, it was determined that children found the behaviors of the dominant character in the cartoon funny and entertaining and exhibited similar behaviors. In this respect, it can be said that if fun and funny elements are included in cartoons, children will also produce humor.

As a result, in this study, it was determined that the cartoon with the most humor elements was Masha and Big Bear and the cartoon with the least humor elements was Pepee. In the study, it was observed that the most humor elements were found in stage 4c, which includes humor aimed at distorting the properties of objects, people and animals, and the least humor elements were found in stage 4d, which includes naming the opposite sex. As a result of the research, it was determined that the cartoon with the most and least humor elements in each phase was different from each other.

Recommendations

In this study, humor elements in cartoons were examined based on Paul McGhee's theory of humor development. The humor elements in the scenes were not examined in terms of compatible and incompatible humor types. Studies can be conducted in which humor elements in cartoons are examined in terms of compatible and incompatible humor.

In this study, the cartoons with the most and least humor elements were determined. However, children's reactions to the humor elements in cartoons were not examined. Studies can be conducted to examine children's reactions to cartoons containing humor.

In this study, it was determined that the cartoon with the most and least humor elements for each stage was different from each other. Studies can be conducted to examine the effect of including different cartoons containing humor in educational environments.

It was determined that there are elements suitable for humor development in cartoons, but in some cartoons these elements are limited. In this respect, trainings can be given to increase the awareness of people who produce cartoons for children about humor development.

In this study, only cartoons were examined in terms of humor elements. It may be recommended to conduct studies investigating the humor elements in videos prepared for children and their suitability for children.

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