

# DIALECTICS IN UNDERSTANDING COMIC TEXT CONTRADICTIONS BY CHILDREN

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## ABSTRACT

*Understanding the humorous text for the child's thinking is specifically difficult because it is connected with the resolution of contradiction, discrepancy to expectations, the decision of problem and conflict situations, the establishment of mutually exclusive properties and relations of the object. The study is directed on the identification of the actions of dialectical thinking involved in the understanding of comic texts by children of preschool and primary school age. Preschool children (5-7 years) were offered to make up and tell a funny story. A pilot study of primary school age children (8-10 years) used a complex of methods for studying dialectical thinking actions of children of primary school. The carried out study found that children used the transformation strategy in making up funny stories. Schoolchildren showed the ability to change the usual system of explanation, establishing links between a series of images in the reverse order, turning the original meaning of the event, presented in the images into the opposite. Primary schoolchildren were able to make the transition from one alternative to another, to go beyond the context of the current situation using dialectical integration actions, content seriation and changing alternatives.*

**Keywords:** *humor understanding, comic text, contradictions, dialectical actions, children.*

## INTRODUCTION

The researches devoted to such aspects of humor as the stages of development of children's humor (McGhee 1983), relation of cognitive development and humor understanding (Shcherbakova 2009), humor therapy (Rengade 2014) are intensively conducted in psychology. Humorous reaction of children is caused by actions that are unexpected or do not correspond to the developing cognitive schemes of a child (Piaget 2001). Laughter arises in response to the event unexpected or containing discrepancy which corresponds to the cognitive level of a child, but it is not consistent with his developing schemes according to Sroufe & Wunsch (1972), van Oers (2012), Bainum, (1984). Children tend to laugh at objects or events that do not correspond to their existing schemes (Martin, 2003, 2006). Influence of cognitive development on the perception and humor understanding is presented in the researches of McGhee (1983). Tasks with the comic content are particularly difficult for children, and it is possible to understand them only if there is discrepancy or contradiction in terms of statement (Artemyeva 2014, 2015; Shcherbakova 2009, Akhmetzyanova 2014; Kholodnaya, 2004). It is necessary to go beyond formal logic, to operate with the relations of oppositions (Luk 1968). Dialectical thinking which is able to reveal the reality contradictions as an internal source of a change and development is involved in the process of transformation of the problem and conflicting situations. Researches of N.E. Veraksa (2006, 2007, 2010, 2011), L.F. Bayanova (2013), I.B. Shiyan (2011) revealed that the basis of the mechanism of dialectical thinking is operating with the relations of oppositions: transformation, mediation, dialectical transition, reversion, integration, alternatives

change for which respectively stands some dialectical thinking action. The purpose of this action is to define its opposite. Action of integration is directed on establishing the opposites, that is, first of all mutually exclusive tendencies. Dialectical action of mediation aims at finding unity only within which contrasts can exist. Dialectical seriation action enters the temporary coordinate. The reversion action represents the transition, but is made in the opposite direction, that is, the ordering of events succession is performed from the one opposite, that was once the final. The alternatives change action characterizes the transition from one couple of opposites to another (Veraksa 2006).

## **Research Question**

The basis of the mechanism of dialectical thinking is operating with the relations of oppositions, transformation of problem and conflicting situations in which a child establishes existence of mutually exclusive properties and relations. We assumed that dialectical actions will be involved in understanding contradictions and discrepancies of comic tasks. This research is directed on identification of the actions of dialectical thinking involved in creation and understanding comic stories by children of preschool and primary school age.

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

123 children took part in experiment, including 78 children aged 5 to 7 years (35 boys and 43 girls) and 45 children aged 8 to 10 years (24 boys and 21 girls). Children attend preschool and school educational institutions.

### **Materials**

Children aged 5-7 were offered to create and tell a funny story. If children had difficulties, they were offered to remember a funny story or action from movies, cartoons or life.

#### **The Coping Humor Scale (CHS)**

The coping humor scale is developed by R. Martin and Lefkort (1996) (T.V. Artemyeva' adaptation) and intended for measurement of the degree of humor use by people.

#### **The Subtest "Successive Pictures" by D. Wexler**

Humorous component is deliberately built into the test tasks. It is necessary to understand a humorous implied sense of a picture and how it transforms the meaning of the story in order to give the correct interpretation of the drawn situations.

#### **The Complex of Techniques was used for studying dialectical actions of children**

The methodology of "Opposites" (Bayanova 1996) allows analyzing the judgments that reflect a child's ability to establish connections between objects and their functional orientation. The study method of dialectical action integration (Bayanova 1996) involves finding the real objects possessing the mutually exclusive relations.

The study method of content seriation (Veraksa 2010) allows determining the level of formation of the dialectical reversion.

The methodology of “dialectic stories” (Shiyan 2011) allows revealing the ability of children to mental transition from one alternative to another.

## **Procedure**

Children of preschool age were offered to create a funny story and tell it to an adult. The adult asked the child to make up a ridiculous story. The task was difficult to perform as it was offered to be done in a verbal form.

### **The Subtest “Successive Images” by D. Wexler**

Children were encouraged to lay out the pictures offered in the mixed order correctly, build a sequence so that it was possible to reproduce a story painted by an artist.

The methodology of “*Opposites*” is a set of cards on which different objects are drawn. The task for the child was to determine which of the four objects is opposite to the main object.

### **The Study Method of Dialectical Action Integration**

The questions suggesting the presence of opposite properties in a single object were set to children for diagnostics of formation of this action. For example, “What is both black and white?”, “What is both alive and lifeless?”

### **The Study Method of Content Seriation**

The child is offered to make up a story using the set of pictures in the story in direct and reverse sequence.

### **The Methodology of “Dialectic Stories”**

The child is shown a picture with problem situation, and he should give possible versions of its decision.

## **RESULTS**

### **Analysis of Funny Stories of 5-7 Year Old Children**

In total 105 children's stories were made and processed. A content analysis with the use of frequency analysis and the assistance of computer processing software SPSS v.20.0 and MS Excel was carried out for selection of the most frequent actions called by children and their grouping. Frequency (in %) and ranks of the actions used by children are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**GROUPS OF THE ACTIONS AND FREQUENCY OF THEIR USE BY CHILDREN**

Groups of the actions	Choice of children (in %)
Action with transformation	39 (I)
Discrepancy, violation of an image idea	24 (II)
Falling	19 (III)
Game actions, interaction	8,5 (IV)
Violation of the generally recognized norms of behavior (violation of physiological type)	5,7 (V)
Direct actions	3,8 (VI)

### **Action with Transformation**

This group includes stories of children in which the presentation of the usual course of events is broken by the action of the opposite content. It has to follow logically the story: “The hare got out of the box of the wolf and put the box on the head of the wolf”, “The lynx went on the prowl for a fox, but the fox itself attacked the lynx and put him to flight”.

### **Discrepancy, Violation of an Image Idea**

This group consists of stories which images of objects and phenomena were attributed by non-existent properties by children (“The frog speaks human language”, “Bed with tongues”, “Talking traffic light”, “The snowflake fell and did not melt”, “Food falling from the sky”).

### **Falling**

This group consists of the answers reflecting the falling of the children, people, animals, objects from any height (“I fell down from the horizontal bar on the sofa”, “The man swung a sledgehammer and dropped it on his head”, “The cat, catching mice, fell”, “The boy stumbled away and fell into the snowdrift”).

### **Game Actions, Interaction**

For children, whose answers were attributed to this group, funny situations are situations of communication and interaction with parents, children and animals. Game interaction is carried out by heroes of children's stories within the social norms; the heroes of the stories took pleasure. They were family members or animals (“It was funny when the dolphin touched my face and we wanted to communicate with each other”, “Dad tickled”).

### **Violation of the Generally Recognized Norms of Behavior (Violation of Physiological Type)**

Children noted that actions connected with violation of the norms of behavior of physiological type were ridiculous (“Playing boys made funny sounds”, “The director spoils the air”, etc.).

### **Direct (Simple) Actions**

This group consists of the answers of children which reflect the habitual, standard actions between subject and object, between subjects (“Police officers salvage the car”, “The boy was taken to mother”, etc.).

### **Results of Studying the Schoolchildren (Aged 8-10 Years)**

#### **Understanding Humor by Schoolchildren**

The coping humor scale was used for identification of humor use by schoolchildren. A high level of humor use in difficult situations was revealed by 62%. 17 examinees (38%) perceive the events happening to them seriously and use humor rarely in unstable situations.

Series of pictures as “Dog”, “Milk” and “Worms” of the subtest “Successive images” by D. Wexler were used for the study of understanding features of comic stories by schoolchildren. 37 examinees (82%) in the series of “Dog” and 36 examinees (80%) in the series of “Milk” laid out pictures correctly, built humorous accent in this sequence and understood discrepancy of a situation. 16% of examinees (7 children) were not succeeded to cope with a task of series “Worms”.

#### **Analysis of a Child's Ability to Establish Connections between Objects**

The methodology of “Opposites” was used for studying ability of a child to establish connection between subjects. It is revealed that 29 examinees (64%) are capable to discover the reasons and relationships between the entities, to allocate essential signs of subjects, to define its place among other concepts, to establish connection with other subjects.

#### **Analysis of the Use of Integration Dialectical Action**

According to the study 80% of children of primary school age establish mutually exclusive relationships in the object; it is believed that the object is on one state or in other opposite, but not simultaneously (the first level of the integration action). Only 20% of children noted interpenetration of opposite relations, demonstrating a high level of the integration action.

#### **Analysis of the Use of Dialectical Action Reversion**

Depending on how the children developed the ability to think dialectically, stories reflected their cyclic ideas of state transition or phenomenon to opposite. 65% of schoolchildren, possessing the high level of formation of the dialectic reversion, showed ability to change the habitual system of explanation of process or phenomenon.

#### **Analysis of the Use of Dialectical Action of Alternative Change**

The study of the dialectical mental action of alternative change was carried out by means of the methodology “dialectical stories”. It revealed that 71% of examinees (32 children) made the transition from one alternative to another, were capable to go beyond a context of the current situation and to consider the subject or phenomenon under a new, contradictory point of view.

22% of examinees (10 children) offered one version of the decision. 7% of examinees (3 children) did not cope with the task and could not solve this problem situation.

### **Interrelation of Humor and Dialectical Actions**

As a result of the correlation analysis it was revealed the presence of significant connections between the studied dialectical actions: dialectical integration action and meaningful seriation ( $r = 0,719$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ); meaningful seriation and dialectical action of alternative change ( $r = 0,566$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ); dialectical integration action and dialectical action of alternative change ( $r = 0,587$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ). The study revealed the direct relationship between the use of humor and action of dialectical integration ( $r = 0,815$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ). A direct relationship ( $r = 0,703$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) is found by the use of humor and dialectical seriation action. This fact says that dialectic action of a seriation allows children in understanding a comic situation to allocate opposite elements at the beginning of a situation and after its end. Also direct interrelation between humor and dialectical action of alternative change is established ( $r = 0,533$ ,  $p = 0, 01$ ).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The analysis of stories created by children confirms the results of studies (Martin, 2006) that the basis of humor is a contradiction that requires a resolution. This statement coincides with the results of researches of Shcherbakova O.V., Osorina M.V. (2009) that the comic content of the tasks is especially difficult for a child, it is only possible to understand the content if discrepancy or contradiction is revealed.

The study allowed identifying strategies for creating comic stories by children of preschool age. The contradiction to the norm presented in the stories of children belonging to the group called "Violation of the generally recognized norms of behavior" creates external humor (violation of physiological type). An affective component of humor, characterized by emotional pole, is prevailing in the stories of children belonging to the groups as "Game actions, interaction" and "Falling". The negative emotional component dominates in the group "Falling". Positive emotions are prevailing in the group "Game actions, interaction". Stories of the groups "Discrepancy, violation of an image idea" and "Action with transformation" reflect the cognitive component of representations better. 39% of children in creation of funny stories use dialectical transformation action. According to the works of Veraksa N.E. (2011), Bayanova L.F. (1996) the dialectical actions begin to develop in the stage of preschool childhood, they are the most successful in resolving conflicting situations. The study revealed that dialectical transformation action is involved in the creation of comic content. These results coincide with the studies of Veraksa confirming that dialectical transformation action is forming the first in ontogenesis (Veraksa 2007).

Children of primary school age experienced difficulties in establishment of mutually exclusive relationships in the object; it is believed that the object is on one state or in other opposite, but not simultaneously. 65% of schoolchildren showed ability to change the habitual system of an explanation establishing connections between all pictures of the series in the reverse sequence, thus, turning the original meaning of happening event, presented in pictures, into the opposite. Most of the primary schoolchildren (72% children) were able to make the transition from one alternative to another, to go beyond the context of the current situation, to consider the subject or phenomenon under a new, contradictory point of view.

The correlation study confirmed our assumption that dialectical actions are involved in the understanding of comic situations by children of primary school age. The closest correlations were established between humor and dialectical integration action. Dialectical integration action allows children to go beyond formal logic, to find opposites of phenomenon, at the same time fixing them, by the understanding of humorous context. Dialectical seriation action allows highlighting the opposite elements at the beginning and at the end of a humorous situation. Dialectical action of alternative change allows schoolchildren to go beyond the context of the current situation, to consider the subject or phenomenon under a new, contradictory point of view.

Perspective direction of the study of this topic is to identify the role of the intellect and the emotions in understanding humor, explore the possibilities of humor in children with coping with stressful situations.

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# THE USAGE PECULIARITIES OF MODERN TEACHING METHODS AS MEANS OF INCREASING EDUCATION QUALITY IN TATARSTAN REPUBLIC

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## ABSTRACT

*The Government of the Republic of Tatarstan has one aim: to improve the quality of their respective education system through the usage of innovative and communicative technologies. A Company of the Singapore Teacher's Union's Co-operative «Educare» was identified as the appropriate knowledge provider in helping Tatarstan to achieve better outcomes in education through these technologies by training teachers, designing e-contents and materials, and providing technical support to schools. The article describes the results of research on the effectiveness of using the data of pedagogical innovation in the teaching of Tatar language students of Yelabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University; highlights the need for training skills and experience of working with information, self-control and manage the time, apply various technical means and the internet to facilitate the relevant activities, communicate with others and work as a team. The author's studies show that tested modern educational technology, teaching methods of the Company of the Singapore Teacher's Union's Co-operative «Educare» allow an average of three times to increase the interest of the educational process of students - philologists and increase in performance and attendance in the discipline.*

**Keywords:** *education, modern teaching methods, the Republic of Tatarstan, the effectiveness of activities, educational consulting company Educare.*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems of modern society is the transition to the new reference points in education and technology, which has a distinct innovative character today. Innovations in education are linked, primarily, to the computerization of society and the development of information educational space.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union the system of education in Russia remained almost the same. About innovations in the Russian educational system began to talk since 80s of the XX century. Right during this time the problem of innovation and, accordingly, the conceptual provision in Pedagogics became the subject of special studies, the authors of the most famous of which are K. Angelovski, M.V. Klarin, V.Ya. Liaudis, L.S. Podimova, M.M. Potashnik, V.A. Slastenin, A. V. Khutorskoy, N.R. Yusufbekova, E.A. Yamburg and others. In spite of all social changes and permanent state of underfunding the system is still working. But unfortunately, in respect of the efficiency of the educational system our country practically has not advanced. Life itself, with its constantly accelerating pace, dictated by the need for change in the system. The knowledge, that students receive today, becomes obsolete in 2-3 years, and this process will eventually escalate. Economic and social conditions are changing so rapidly, that there is no need to memorize large amounts of information today. Successful study at school doesn't guarantee success in life. We must acknowledge the fact that knowledge, which is given in a modern school, more than 50% turns out to be useless. School should graduate people, first