



FORMATION OF HUMOR IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK CHILDREN: A LINGUOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Mohichehra Yormamatova Jurakul kizi

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17480501>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 25th October 2025
Accepted: 28th October 2025
Published: 29th October 2025

KEYWORDS

Child humor, linguocultural analysis, English, Uzbek, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, intercultural communication.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the formation of humor in English and Uzbek children from a linguocultural perspective. It examines how humor appears as a social and linguistic phenomenon in early childhood communication, shaped by cultural norms, parental influence, and language-specific features. The study employs a comparative linguistic and cultural analysis in both English and Uzbek children's discourse. Findings reveal significant differences in the nature and expression of humor between the two languages, reflecting broader distinctions in cultural attitudes toward laughter, politeness, and child socialization.

Humor represents one of the most intricate and culturally bound aspects of human communication. In childhood, humor not only entertains but also plays a crucial role in social development, identity formation, and language acquisition. Children's humor is closely tied to their environment, parental discourse, and cultural expectations of what is considered 'funny.' This study seeks to examine how English and Uzbek children construct and interpret humor in everyday interactions, and how linguistic and cultural contexts shape these differences. The research aims to answer the following questions: (1) What linguistic and pragmatic features characterize English and Uzbek children's humor? (2) How do cultural values influence the perception and production of humor in both societies? (3) What are the cross-linguistic implications for understanding child communication?

Children's humor in both English and Uzbek cultures reveals distinct linguistic and pragmatic mechanisms that reflect cognitive development, linguistic creativity, and cultural norms. From a linguistic perspective, English children's humor often relies on phonological play, semantic ambiguity, and syntactic incongruity. Examples include puns ("Why did the banana go to the doctor? Because it wasn't peeling well!") and riddles that manipulate word meanings or sound similarities (Attardo, 2001). Such humor demonstrates children's growing awareness of homonyms, morphological changes, and the playful side of the lexicon. Pragmatically, English children use humor to establish peer solidarity and challenge authority within acceptable limits, showing early awareness of conversational implicature and politeness norms (Norrick, 2003).

Conversely, Uzbek children's humor tends to be more context-dependent and sociopragmatically sensitive, often reflecting collective values and hierarchical relationships prevalent in Uzbek society. Uzbek jokes and playful teasing ("Sen shunchalik ozg'in ekansanki, shamol uchirib ketadi!") rely less on linguistic ambiguity and more on situational irony and hyperbole, which align with the cultural emphasis on indirectness and group harmony. Pragmatically, Uzbek children's humor reinforces social closeness within family and peer groups. Still, it avoids direct mockery of elders or authority figures, consistent with the norms of respect and modesty in Uzbek discourse (Karimova, 2018).

While both linguistic systems allow for wordplay and irony, their cultural pragmatics differ. English children show early mastery of individual expression through humor, whereas Uzbek children learn humor as a collective, socially guided act. This contrast highlights the influence of individualism vs. collectivism in shaping the linguistic realization of humor (Hofstede, 2001).

The findings reveal that English children's humor is primarily verbal and playful, often involving phonological similarity, puns, or semantic ambiguity. Common examples include 'knock-knock' jokes, rhyming riddles, and cartoon-based humor emphasizing creative thinking and independence. Uzbek children, by contrast, display humor rooted in situational irony, social behavior, and moral lessons. Traditional Uzbek jokes and folklore often emphasize respect for elders, cleverness, and social awareness, shaping children's understanding of humor within moral and collective frameworks. Additionally, English humor tends to encourage self-expression and assertiveness, whereas Uzbek humor reinforces politeness, empathy, and adherence to communal norms.

These findings correspond with Hofstede's cultural dimensions: the individualistic orientation of Anglo cultures contrasts with the collectivist nature of Uzbek society, influencing humor's linguistic realization. Humor in childhood represents more than linguistic play—it is a mirror of cultural cognition and socialization. Through comparative linguocultural analysis, this study has demonstrated that English and Uzbek children employ humor to navigate their respective cultural values and communicative norms. English humor prioritizes creativity, self-confidence, and linguistic innovation, while Uzbek humor foregrounds respect, morality, and collective identity.

References, Литературы, Adabiyotlar:

1. Apte, M. L. (1985). *Humor and laughter: An anthropological approach*. Cornell University Press.
2. Attardo, S. (2014). *Linguistic theories of humor*. De Gruyter Mouton.
3. Bergen, B. K. (2016). *What the F: What swearing reveals about our language, our brains, and ourselves*. Basic Books.
4. Dynel, M. (2013). Pragmatics of humor. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 45(1), 1–12.
5. Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Press.
6. Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Sage Publications.
7. Hoicka, E., & Gattis, M. (2012). Do the wrong thing: How toddlers tell a joke from a mistake. *Cognitive Development*, 27(1), 55–70.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2011.07.001> Martin, R. A., & Ford, T. (2018). The psychology of humor: An integrative approach (2nd ed.). Elsevier.

8. McGhee, P. E. (1979). Humor: Its origin and development. W. H. Freeman.

9. Risager, K. (2006). Language and culture: Global flows and local complexity. Multilingual Matters.

