

EXAMINING HUMOR IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PERIOD FROM TEACHER  
AND CHILD ASPECTS

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## Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EXAMINING HUMOR IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PERIOD FROM TEACHER AND CHILD ASPECTS**

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The purpose of the study was to examine humor in early childhood education in terms of children and early childhood teachers. The study sample comprised 22 five-year-old children and 5 early childhood teachers from a public preschool in Tokat. A qualitative phenomenological research method was used. As instruments, a humorous visual and five semi- structured questions, addition semi- structured questions that lead children to make a humorous drawing and to explain it were prepared. A questionnaire comprised of 15 semi- structured questions was then applied in teacher interviews. The findings of the current study confirm that in producing humor, our sample of five-year-old children mainly included items related with incongruity. Incongruity is seen as the main theme in these children's drawings and they may choose to exaggerate or use caricature in illogical ways. Analysis of their visualizations indicates that they appreciate humor and are able to explain why their representations are funny, and by identifying any extraneous aspects or items. The current study reports on how a sample of children receiving early years education in Turkey appreciate and produce humor and how their teachers explain it. The teachers

the study think that humor is necessary in our lives in terms of our social and personal experiences. They also feel strongly that humor is necessary for children's development and learning and described children's humor development in terms of how they observe their social group. Furthermore, some of the teachers who participated in this study stated that if a child does not make jokes about the children around them, they would perceive that child to be lacking in humor development.

**Keywords:** Humor, humor in early childhood, early childhood education, early childhood teachers

## ÖZ

### ERKEN ÇOCUKLUK DÖNEMİNDE MİZAHIN ÖĞRETMEN VE ÇOCUK AÇISINDAN İNCELENMESİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, okul öncesi dönemde mizahı çocuk ve öğretmen açısından incelemektir. Tokattaki bir devlet anaokulundan 22 beş yaş çocuğu ve onların öğretmeni olan 5 öğretmen çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi olan olgu bilim çalışması kullanılmıştır. Çocuklardan veri toplanırken mizahi bir görsel ve bu görselle ilgili açık uçlu beş soru kullanılmıştır. Ek olarak çocukların yaptıkları mizahi çizimlerle ilgili konuştularını sağlarken de açık uçlu sorular kullanılmıştır. Öğretmen görüşmelerinde ise 15 açık uçlu soru kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları çocukların mizah üretiminde temel olarak tutarsızlık/uyumsuzluk kavramından yola çıkarak mizah üretiklerini göstermiştir. Tutarsızlık çocukların resimlerinin temel teması olsa da abartma ya da karikatürleştirme gibi farklı yolları seçerek bu tutarsızlığı resimlerinde göstermişlerdir. Çocuklar görseldeki mizahı takdir ederken, görseli komik yapan alakasız unsurları açıklayabilmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, öğretmenler mizahı insan hayatında hem kişisel hem de sosyal açıdan gerekli bir unsur olarak tanımlamışlardır. Okul öncesi dönemde ise çocukların gelişim ve öğrenmelerine katkı sağladığını ifade etmişlerdir. Son olarak, öğretmenler çocukların mizah gelişimini sosyal grupları içinde nasıl gösterdikleri ile doğru orantılı olarak açıklamışlardır. Eğer etraflarındaki insanlara şaka yapmıyorsa mizah gelişiminin olmadığını ifade etmişlerdir. Sonuç

olarak, bu çalışma hem çocukların mizahı takdir etme ve üretme durumları üzerine hem de erken çocukluk öğretmenlerinin de erken yaşlarda mizah ile ilgili görüşlerini ortaya çıkarmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mizah, erken çocuklukta mizah, erken çocukluk eğitimi, erken çocukluk öğretmenleri

To My Parents

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
DEDICATION .....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	xi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xvii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xix
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Statement of Problem.....	4
1.2. Purpose and Research Questions .....	5
1.3. Significance of The Study.....	7
1.4. Definition of Important Terms .....	9
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
2.1. Definition of Humor.....	11
2.2. Historical Development in Humor and Laugh .....	12
2.3. Sense of Humor.....	12
2.4. Basic Components of Humor.....	14
2.4.1. Social Context .....	14
2.4.2. Cognitive-Perceptual Processes .....	14
2.4.3. Emotional Response.....	14

2.4.4. Vocal-Behavioral Expression.....	15
2.5. Laughter Theories .....	15
2.5.1. Superiority Theory .....	15
2.5.2. Incongruity Theory.....	16
2.5.3. Relief Theory.....	16
2.5.4. Psychoanalytic Theory .....	16
2.6. Contemporary Theories on Humor .....	17
2.6.1. Bergson's Humor Theory:.....	17
2.6.2. Marvin Minsky's Theory .....	17
2.6.3. Morreall's Theory .....	17
2.6.4. Thomas Veatch's Theory .....	18
2.7. Theory of Mind And Humor.....	18
2.7. Humor Development in Children.....	19
2.7.1. Wolfstein Model.....	19
2.7.2. McGhee Model.....	19
2.7.2.1. Incongruous Actions Towards Objects (18-20 Months) .....	20
2.7.2.2. Incongruous Labelling of Objects and Events (20-24 Months)	21
2.7.2.3. Conceptual Incongruity (2-7 Years).....	22
2.7.2.4. Humor in Multiple Meanings .....	23
2.8. Humor Styles .....	24
2.8.1. Self-Enhancing Humor.....	25
2.8.2. Affiliative Humor.....	26
2.8.3. Self-Defeating Humor.....	26
2.8.4. Aggressive Humor.....	27
2.9. Functions of Humor .....	28
2.9.1. Sociological Function.....	28

2.9.2. Psychological Function .....	28
2.9.3. Communication Function.....	29
2.10. Positive and Negative Aspects of Humor.....	29
2.10.1. Positive Aspects of Humor.....	29
2.10.2. Negative Aspects of Humor .....	30
2.11. Humor Practice in Educational Settings .....	31
2.12. Research in Child's Humor.....	33
2.12.1. National Studies .....	33
2.12.2. International Studies.....	36
2.14. Summary.....	42
<b>3. METHOD.....</b>	<b>44</b>
3.1. Research Questions.....	44
3.2. Design of the Study.....	44
3.4. Participants.....	45
3.4.1. Context of the School.....	48
3.5. Instruments.....	48
3.6. Pilot Study.....	50
3.7. Data Collection Procedure .....	53
3.8. Data Analysis .....	56
3.9. Trustworthiness of the Study .....	57
3.9.1. Validity.....	57
3.9.2. Reliability .....	58
3.10. Role of Researcher .....	58
3.11. Ethical Considerations .....	59
<b>4. FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>61</b>

4.1. RQ1: What Humorous Factors Do Five-Six Years Old Children Include in Their Drawings? .....	61
4.1.1. Category 1 Conceptual Incongruity .....	62
4.1.1.1. Big-Small People (n=3).....	63
4.1.1.2. Giving Human Features to Unliving Things (n=4) .....	64
4.1.1.3. Giving Animal Features to People (n=1) .....	65
4.1.1.4. Unusual Physical Features (n=7).....	66
4.1.1.5. Unusual Combination of Things (n=2) .....	66
4.1.2. Category 2 Physical Deformity .....	67
4.1.2.1. Unusual Size And Number of Body Parts (n=4).....	67
4.1.2.2. Unusual Shape-Color of Body Parts (n=5).....	69
4.1.3. Category 3 Caricature.....	70
4.1.3.1. Hurting Someone or Being Hurt by Someone (n=9).....	70
4.1.3.2. Unusual-Inappropriate Behaviors of Things (n=4) .....	73
4.1.4. Category 4 Exaggeration.....	74
4.1.4.1. Exaggerated Number of Things (n=2).....	74
4.1.4.2. Exaggerated Size of Things (n=2).....	74
4.1.5. Category 5 Costume .....	75
4.1.5.1. Clown (n=5) .....	75
4.1.5.2. Nurse (n=1).....	76
4.2. RQ2: How Do Five-Six Years old Children Explain Humorous Factors in The Provided Visual? .....	77
4.2.1. Conceptual Incongruity .....	79
4.2.1.1. Chair Giraffe (n=19).....	79
4.2.2. Category 2 Caricature.....	79
4.2.2.1. Amazed Face (n=6) .....	79

4.2.3. Category 1 Exaggeration .....	80
4.2.3.1. Adding Other Characters (n=6).....	80
4.2.3.2. Adding Animals (n=2) .....	80
4.2.4. Category 2 Caricature.....	81
4.2.4.1. Adding Different Actions (n=9).....	81
4.2.5. Category 2 No Comment .....	81
4.3. RQ3: What are Early Childhood Teacher's Views on Humor?.....	81
4.3.1. Category 1 Personal Tool.....	82
4.3.1.1. Way of Criticizing (n=1).....	82
4.3.1.2. Enjoyment Source (n=3) .....	83
4.3.1.3. Device to Lead Thinking (n=1).....	83
4.3.1.4. Ways of Self-Expression (n=1).....	83
4.3.1.5. Need for Satisfaction in Life (n=4) .....	83
4.3.1.6. Tool to Look from the Positive Point of View (n=1).....	84
4.3.2. Category 2 Social Tool.....	84
4.3.2.1. Communication without Hurting Others (n=1).....	84
4.3.2.2. Way of Communication with Children (n=1) .....	85
4.4. RQ4: What are Early Childhood Teacher's Views on Using Humor in Their Class? .....	85
4.4.3. Category 1 Developing an Interaction with Others.....	86
4.4.3.1. Developing an Attachment to the Teacher (n=1) .....	86
4.4.3.2. Communication ithout Hurting Ohers (n=1).....	86
4.4.4. Category 2 Supporting Development.....	87
4.4.4.1. Supporting Cognitive Development (n=1).....	87
4.4.4.2. Supporting Creative Development (n=1) .....	87
4.4.5. Category 3 Facilitation of Learning .....	87

4.4.5.1. Provide Developmentally Appropriate Learning (n=2) .....	88
4.4.5.2. Attract Attention (n=1).....	88
4.5. RQ5: How do Teachers Describe Children’s Sense Of Humor and Humor Styles of the Children in Their Class? .....	89
4.5.1. Category 1 Maladaptive Humor .....	90
4.5.1.1. Uses Physical Humor That Affects Relationships Negatively (n=4) .....	90
4.5.2. Category 2 Adaptive Humor .....	91
4.5.2.1. Likes To Laugh and Make Jokes (n=3).....	91
4.5.2.2. Uses Humor on His/Her Own (n=1).....	91
4.5.2.3. Shares Humor with Others (n=4) .....	92
4.5.2.4. Reflects Usual Things in a Funny Way (n=3).....	92
4.5.3. Category 3 No Humor .....	93
4.5.3.1. No Humor Use (n=8).....	93
4.6. Key Findings .....	94
4.7. Summary .....	96
<b>5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>99</b>
5.1. Summary of the Study .....	99
5.2. Discussion of the Findings.....	100
5.2.1. Humorous Factors Used by 5-6 Years Old Children in Their Drawings .....	100
5.2.2. Children’s Explanation of Humorous Factors in a Provided Visual	102
5.2.3. Early Childhood Education Teachers’ Views on Humor .....	105
5.2.4. Teachers’ Views on Humor in Early Childhood Period .....	107
5.2.5. Teacher’s Views on Their Students’ Humor Behaviors.....	111
5.3. Implications.....	113
5.4. Recommendations for Further Studies.....	117

REFERENCES.....	119
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
APPENDIX A: EVALUATION FORM OF HUMOROUS FACTORS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS .....	131
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (CHILDREN) .....	132
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (TEACHERS).....	133
APPENDIX D: HUMOROUS VISUAL .....	135
APPENDIX E: HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (METU)	136
APPENDIX F: ETHICAL PERMISSION (MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION) .....	137
APPENDIX G: PARENT CONSENT FORM.....	138
APPENDIX H: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET .....	140
APPENDIX I: THESIS PERMISSION FORM/ TEZ İZİN FORMU .....	156

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Demographic data of children participating in the study .....	46
Table 2 Demographic data of teachers .....	47
Table 3 Examples of the semi-structured interview questions the children were asked .....	49
Table 4 Interview questions for teachers.....	50
Table 5 Factors included in funny drawings .....	62
Table 6 Children's views on the humorous visual .....	78
Table 7 Children's views to make the visual funnier.....	80
Table 8 Teachers' views about humor .....	82
Table 9 Teachers' views on humor in the early childhood period .....	85
Table 10 Teacher's views on their students' humor behaviors .....	90
Table 11 Key findings from the interviews with children about their funny drawings .....	94
Table 12 Views of the early childhood education teachers on humor .....	94
Table 13 Views of the early childhood education teachers on humor in early childhood education .....	95
Table 14 Views of the early childhood education teachers on the humor development of their students .....	96

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Humorous visual .....	53
Figure 2 The storyline used in the data collection process .....	55
Figure 3 C2's drawing.....	63
Figure 4 C12's drawing.....	63
Figure 5 C3's drawing.....	64
Figure 6 C14's drawing.....	65
Figure 7 C6's drawing.....	65
Figure 8 C13's drawing.....	66
Figure 9 C4's drawing.....	67
Figure 10 C17's drawing.....	68
Figure 11 C7's drawing.....	68
Figure 12 C11's drawing.....	69
Figure 13 C4's drawing.....	69
Figure 14 C11's drawing.....	70
Figure 15 C18's drawing.....	71
Figure 16 C20's drawing.....	71
Figure 17 C21's drawing.....	72
Figure 18 C22's drawing.....	72
Figure 19 C12's drawing.....	73
Figure 20 C16's drawing.....	73
Figure 21 C12's drawing.....	74
Figure 22 C19's drawing.....	75
Figure 23 C19's drawing.....	76
Figure 24 C16's drawing.....	76
Figure 25 C5's drawing.....	77
Figure 26 Humorous visual (Conceptual incongruity).....	78

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Humor is defined as things that lead people to laugh, and these things can arise from several factors such as personality, culture and past experiences, etc. (Scarlett, Naudea, Salonius-Pasternak, & Ponte 2005). McGhee (2002) defines humor as a source that can provide several benefits in people's life. That is, humor helps people to develop a positive point of view for dealing with negative emotions and to cope with negative emotions such as fear, insecurity and hopelessness. Humor can also decrease the risks of the physical effects of these negative emotions. In addition, in setting social relations and connecting other people, humor can be a facilitator because it helps people to express themselves better and develop self-confidence (McGhee, 2002). Humor may contribute to intellectual, physical, social and emotional development (Bergen, 2003; McGhee, 2002; Chapman, 1990). As there are many different definitions of humor, for the current study, Southam's definition (2005) was used. He defines humor as "any communication that leads to an emotional experience of amusement, pleasure and/or mirth. It usually involves an element of surprise and results in smiling and/or laughter" (Southam, 2005, p.106). In addition to humor, definition of sense of humor gains importance to understand the nature of the study. Sense of humor can be seen as a skill or a personality characteristic that is about people's understanding, appreciating and producing humor (Ruch, 1998). Therefore, whereas humor is more about the situation that cause laughing, sense of humor is about the people's ability to understand and use of the ways of humor.

It is thought that with change in lifestyles and environment, people's problems also change and this would be the same for young children. Children are highly affected by problems in their family or environmental factors such as those presented

in the media and encountered at school (Akıncı, 2018). Thus, while supporting children's development and learning in school, it is also important to support their abilities to deal with their problems. Humor is one way for children to develop a positive point of view and overcome the problems in their life (Akıncı, 2015). We can ask how humor is effective and how should it be used in settings such as early years education. While this is vital for child development, what role can humor play in facilitating it?

Several studies exist on early humor development and humor production (eg. Chik, Leung & Molloy, 2005; Loizou, 2006; Koçer, Eskidemir & Özbek, 2012; Hoicka & Akhtar, 2012; Meral, 2013), however there are only a limited number of studies that relate to early childhood education, especially in our country, Turkey. While previous studies illustrate how to support the development of young children's humor skills, it remains crucial to determine what children laugh about, how they explain the humorous factors and what factors they use in the production of humor. With the answers of these questions, it can be possible to find ways for supporting humor development in both family and early childhood education settings.

Working with children and taking their own ideas about what they laugh about and how they create humor can provide a valuable source for teachers, families and researchers to deepen their understanding of their children's humor development. In early years children do not know how to read and write, and they may find it difficult to make an evaluation about what they find funny. For these reasons, using illustrations and asking leading questions to make them comment about humorous factors can provide data about their understanding and appreciation of humor (Loizou, 2006). Also, for their humor production, expecting them to create a humorous illustration that has a humorous story behind it can help children to express themselves and it can also facilitate researchers' understanding of how children understand, appreciate and produce humor (Loizou & Kyriakou, 2015).

In addition to work with children, teachers have importance to include studies related with humor development in children (Rossi, 2015). That is, humor not only contribute children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development, but also it can be used in teaching processes (Chabeli, 2008). Using humor in the classroom

can enhance children's verbal abilities, create an enjoyable learning environment, and make it easier for teachers to attract children's attention on a specific topic. Thus, an enjoyable learning environment can also help teachers to increase the quality of their teaching and have better classroom management, both issues which are closely related to children's learning and relationships with their peers and teacher (Chenfeld, 1990; McGhee, 2002). In order to include humor in education, Dickmeyer (1993) describes some advices for teachers. These advices are about teacher's own skills to use humor, considering their audience in using humor, choosing appropriate materials and include humor colleagues or family members in this process. Therefore, to provide a humorous learning environment, teachers should know what their children laugh at and how they express themselves in a humorous way. If they do not have necessary knowledge on it, and they use unappropriated humor in classroom, it can also create negative consequences in terms of classroom management or learning (Ocon, 2015). For this reason, this current study aims to find out how humor is understood and expressed by young children.

It is very important to find valid ways to examine humor in children. For understanding and analyzing child humor, McGhee (1979) defined four stages (Incongruous Actions Toward Objects, Incongruous Labelling of Objects and Events, Conceptual Incongruity, Humor in Multiple Meanings) in his Incongruity Theory, and he argue that with the development of cognitive and language skills, appreciating and producing humor are increasing. As our development of humor is highly related to our understanding of the incongruity between concepts or situations, it can also be explained by Piaget's stages of cognitive development (Southam, 2005).

In addition to analyzing children's answers and comments according to McGhee's humor development stages, they can also provide information about the humor styles of young children. For example, Martin et al. (2003) defines four humor styles that can affect a child's reactions to a humorous situation and their production of humor. These are adaptive ("self-enhancing" and "affiliative") and maladaptive ("aggressive" and "self-defeating") humor styles. To have a deep understanding of children's humor development, children's explanations on humor and how they produce it can provide data for analyzing their humor types which can help teachers to determine children's needs in the humor production process.

In addition to analyzing sense of humor and humor styles in children, it is also important to work with early childhood education teachers and know their ideas about humor, how they use humor in classroom, how they describe their children's sense of humor, and how much they know their children in terms of their explanations of humor. Teacher's ideas on humor, using humor in classroom and children's sense of humor in their classroom can provide data to analyze their strengths and weaknesses in terms of using humor in the classroom, and to help teachers to support children's engagement with humor via the provision of appropriate activities.

In this study, the researcher aimed to collect data that can be helpful to analyze how children understand, appreciate and produce humor because it is known that teachers and families can find appropriate ways to develop child humor by knowing their needs. The findings of the study can also contribute to studies on child humor and provide different perspectives on humor. In addition, by taking teacher's ideas on humor and its usage in the classroom, we are able to consider their strengths and weaknesses in terms of using humor and developing humor in children. That is why, even humor is seen as a spontaneous or easy method to include in classroom, still it needs some planning, time, energy and time (Dickmeyer, 1993). It is important because if humor is used in unappropriated ways such as discriminative or humiliate, it can affect students' attention toward the class and their ideas toward teacher. For this reason, the researcher sought to obtain information on how teachers in Turkey understand and explain children's explanation of humor and how much they know about children's sense of humor.

### **1.1. Statement of Problem**

The early childhood period is essential for children's development and learning, so these years are determinants for children's future life (Gabbard, 2000). For this reason, early childhood education and each part of this education such as teacher, school structure, physical environment, teaching strategies etc. affect children's learning and development. In order to increase the quality of education in these years, several methodologies and strategies can be applied because no best method can be found that suits every condition (Prabhu, 1990). Using humor in the classroom and developing children's sense of humor can be a one way to increase

classroom quality and support both learning and development (McGhee, 2002). However, before using humor in the classroom, it is important to examine children's sense of humor. That is, teachers should know children's development of humor to understand what children laugh at and why, and this can lead them in what type of humor to use in the classroom.

While different theories and approaches have been proposed to explain children's humor, it is still necessary to apply our understanding to children's own ideas as we encounter them, what they laugh at, why, and also how they produce humor. By examining humor in children, it can also be possible to find ways to reach children and have healthy relationships and communications with them that contribute to classroom management and learning.

Not only in terms of children, humor should be studied in terms of teachers because they affect children in many ways. Therefore, teacher's views on using humor in the classroom and how they explain children's sense of humor is important. Such information can reveal strengths and weaknesses in terms of teachers' humor and how much they benefit from humor in supporting children's learning and development, especially in early childhood settings.

While several studies have tried to define sense of humor in younger ages, Guo, Zhang, Wang and Xeromeritou (2011) argue that sense of humor differs in different cultures in terms of perception toward humor. This difference also affect their practice about humor in classroom. Therefore, the data gathered as a result of current study can provide information about sense of humor in Turkish children and it can also provide a perspective from teachers.

## **1.2. Purpose and Research Questions**

Given the significance of humor in child development, and the quality of learning in a classroom environment, there is need for humor studies to obtain data about humor in children and how humor is observed in early childhood classrooms related to teachers.

The aim of this study is to reveal what children laugh at and how they create humor. Therefore, the researcher aimed to analyze humor development in a Turkish

setting in terms of McGhee's humor development stages (1979), and to establish the humor styles in terms of the guidance given by Martin (2003). Martin's description can help us to understand children's needs and interests in terms of humor. With this knowledge teachers may be enabled to more readily communicate with children and prepare activities and apply appropriate classroom management strategies using humor.

The reason why McGhee and Martin's definitions are used for the study is that they provide detailed descriptions on humor development and humor styles. McGhee developed his theory with inspiration from Piaget's cognitive development theory. As this theory is accepted as universal, the researcher used McGhee's stages to examine children's humor. For determining humor styles, Martin's definitions of different styles provide researchers with useful information for scale development (Fox, Dean & Lyford, 2013; James & Fox, 2016). Thus, his definitions were used in the current study.

Aside from children, teachers should also be studied in terms of obtaining their ideas and humor and learn how well they know the children in their classroom in terms of children's humor development and humor styles. Therefore, another purpose of this study is to take teacher's ideas on humor and their preferences and ways of using humor in their classroom. Thus, their opinions on how they describe children's expression of humor and styles of humor in their classroom was also taken. In light of their answers, the researcher tried to understand if teachers are aware of the importance of using humor and in which ways they use it in class. The aim was for the results of this study to reveal teachers' weaknesses, strengths and needs in supporting children's humor development and how they use humor in their classroom to enhance the quality of their teaching. The following research questions were then drafted to address the aims of this study;

**RQ1:** What humorous factors do five-six years old children include in their drawings?

**RQ2:** How do five-six years old children explain humorous factors in the provided visual?

**RQ3:** What are the early childhood teacher's views on humor?

**RQ4:** What are the early childhood teacher's views on using humor in their class?

**RQ5:** How do teachers describe the children's sense of humor and humor styles of the children in their class?

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

Every day, people's lifestyles, their needs, expectations and problems are changing, and they require different strategies and life skills to be able to deal with them. Not only in adults, but also in children and in classroom settings, it is possible to see the need for development of different skills (Akıncı, 2015). Humor can help people to have a positive point of view toward life and to dispense with negative emotions (Eroğlu, 2008). Additionally, humor is highly related to children's cognitive, social, emotional, language and physical development (Sümer, 2008). In consideration of the various benefits of humor, the necessity to develop our personal sense of humor starts at an early age. While this process can start in the family environment, it continues through early childhood education. From this perspective, early childhood education, teachers, activities, environment etc. gain importance in terms of humor and the need for research in this area continues in order to develop understanding about humor and find appropriate ways to use it in education.

In the literature, several studies set out to try to understand children's humor development from different perspectives. For example, Sroufe and Wunsch (1972) tried to examine what children laugh at in terms of tactile, auditory, social and visual categories, and found that with age, what children laugh at changes. Other studies focused on the relationship between cognitive abilities and humor appreciation and production, and found that with development in cognitive skills, different humor types are also observed in children (Chaney, 1993; Justin, 1932; McGhee, 1971).

Culture is another area that can be effective on children's humor. Tobin, Hsueh and Karasawa (2009) focuses on how early childhood education differs and be affected from cultural variables. They are focusing and comparing three countries' education system, and they state that even they try to give similar values, the way and approaches changes. They conducted a longitudinal study to make comparison on

China, Japan and US, and they see that even if there are some changes in education or teacher's approaches, still the way of education reflects the culture. Therefore, from this point, culture is also effective on humor and use of humor in education. Several studies revealed that humor and types of jokes vary in terms of language and other dimensions in a culture (e.g. Ross, 1998; Attar do; 1994; Ruch & Forabosco, 1996). In addition to studies that were conducted with adults to show differences in humor resulting from culture (e.g. Jiang, Yue & Lu, 2011; Martin & Sullivan, 2013), there are also studies that examined the differences in children's humor, too (Guo, Zhang, Wang & Xeromeritou, 2011). Thus, in addition to cognitive abilities, culture is effective on children's humor and they can develop a different humor understanding with the effect of culture.

In the relevant literature, it is clear that humor is a powerful device for development and education (Rossi, 2015). Therefore, in order to determine children's needs, interests, and understanding toward humor, research on their humor is required that focuses on various aspects such as age and culture and uses different methodologies. These studies are important because they can provide different perspectives and help us to understand the most appropriate ways to include humor in activities, education programs, classroom management and teacher behaviors. Therefore, in addition to knowing the benefits of humor for children, it is also vital to understand children's humor and to be able to engage with children in an appropriate way and to know their needs (Meral, 2013). This situation is especially important for educators who have options to include considerations on humor that would serve children's development. In this context they need to be able to follow the process in terms of humor development and be able to construct the suitable learning environment in consideration of the features of children's humor.

Several studies have emphasized the importance of humor in terms of classroom management, children's learning and teacher-child and child-child relationships (; Rossi, 2015; Lovorn & Holaway, 2015; Praag, Stevens, & Houtte, 2017). All make it clear that humor should be included in education starting in early ages. As it is the teacher who plans, arranges and applies education, it is important for them to know what the children in their class know about humor, and if they use it in class. For a teacher to do this, they need to have necessary knowledge on

children's humor development. The aim of the current study is to provide a method whereby teachers' weaknesses and strengths in this regard, and, solutions for teacher education and development can be revealed.

The current study presents data obtained from both children and teachers that enables us to gauge what children laugh at and what teacher knows about their humor. This data is necessary to understand what humor means in the classroom and how teachers can meet children's needs by learning about what they laugh at. Therefore, current study can provide an insight to teachers, parents and researchers to understand children's humor better and provide appropriate environments and experiences in accordance with their humor development. The findings can be used not only in early childhood classroom settings but also in developing teacher training programs. That is why, the study also provides ideas on how teachers explain humor and in which aspect they need support in their education. Finally, the current study contribute literature by providing data on children's own expressions how they produce humor. It fills the gap in literature on humor in terms of understanding humor in Turkish culture by providing data in terms of both children and teachers.

#### **1.4. Definition of Important Terms**

**Humor:** A conceptual situation whereby people laugh at ridiculous, unusual, and inconsistent and surprising aspects of events in life (Southam, 2005).

**Sense of Humor:** One of people's personality characteristics that help to understand, appreciate and produce humor (Ruch, 1998). The ways of humor have relation with people's personality characteristics.

**Humor Appreciation:** The ability to recognize an unusual and inconsistent situation in an ordinary situation that in turn brings about a humorous response (McGhee, 1989).

**Humor Production:** The ability to create humor and enjoyment in various ways (verbal, physical etc.) (McGhee, 1989),

**Pictorial humor:** A way of communicating a humorous situation via visuals (Brown, 1993).

Self-enhancing humor: Making jokes about oneself that positively address problems in life (James & Fox, 2016).

Affiliative humor: Laughing at other people without using sarcasm (James & Fox, 2016).

Aggressive humor: Not used for oneself but directed at people for the purpose of aggressively humiliating them (James & Fox, 2016).

Self-defeating humor: Where one expresses one's emotions by making humiliating jokes about one's own weaknesses (James & Fox, 2016).

Early childhood education: Education provision that includes children aged between 0-6. Children's development and learning are supported in early ages by considering their interests, levels, background and needs (Härkönen, 2014).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Definition of Humor**

Humor is defined as any type of communication that results in pleasure, enjoyment or mirth, and smiling or laughing is how people reflect humor physically (Ziv, 1989). Laughing to unexpected, inconsistent events is another definition of humor (Southam, 2005). These definitions of humor do not make any distinctions among different types of humor. Any aggressive, sexual, or social humor can result in a smile or laugh, and it is about people's preferences (Martin & Lefcourt, 1884). The part that distinguishes humor from a basic smile is that humor provides positive energy and helps to deal with the effects of fear and anxiety (Mallen, 1993). Even though, in some cases, humor helps people to establish relationships and adapt to social groups, it can also affect relations in negative ways by means of the aggressive types of humor (Mallen, 1993).

For adults, humor is regarded as a powerful device to develop a healthy ego structure. As for children, having a sense of humor can be accepted as evidence for healthy development. That is why, according to McGhee (1989), humor is observed more and more in children with the maturation of their cognitive skills, language skills, and social and physical development. With the development of these skills, humor appreciation and production are observed in children; on the other hand, the development of humor also supports children's development. To illustrate, a sense of humor can help children to establish social relationships, solve problems and decrease the level of stress, which can affect development in negative way.

The elements that people find funny can differ with age, culture, personality and developmental features. Just as adults have a different and higher level of understanding of humor than children, so what children find funny changes with age. For example, a visual or mirth may be funny for a three-year-old child, but not for a

five-year-old child (Mallen, 1993). In line with this perspective, there are different theories and approaches that attempt to explain how people appreciate and produce humor, what factors they are affected by and how sense of humor changes with age (McGhee, 1979).

## **2.2. Historical Development in Humor and Laugh**

Humor is a concept that is observed at different times and in societies in different ways. Similarly, laugh is observed in people in different ways, and its occurrence is explained in different ways too (Yardımcı, 2010). For example, some researchers agree that laugh has been seen since the existence of human beings (Nesin, 2002), and we can see newborn infants laugh as well. However, laugh is also about maturation and development, and, hence, with the development of language, we start to observe laugh in people (Keith- Spiegel, 1972).

Furthermore, whereas Sanders (1995) explains laugh as a spiritual journey of people, Eastman (1921) and Rapp (1947) argue that it is like winning a victory in war because it provides people with the feeling of relief and superiority. Archaeological excavations of the Sumerian Civilization provide evidence for the variety of people's products of humor and of proverbs and bywords (Kramer, 2002).

In the 15th century, humor started to be seen as a product of the cognitive process, and physiological benefits of humor started to be understood as of the beginning of the 16th century. For example, humor is used as treatment in areas, such as surgery, digestive problems and depression, and with the understanding of the therapeutic effects of humor, more emphasis started to be laid upon humor in the 20th century (Wickberg, 1998).

According to Hill (2000), because there are different explanations for the occurrence, usage and benefits of humor, there is no single theory on humor that entails all the dimensions of humor. Thus, it is explained by means of different theories and from different aspects.

## **2.3. Sense of Humor**

According to İlhan (2005), sense of humor is defined as one's ability to produce, like, interpret and understand the humorous situations surrounding oneself. The studies and theories on humor in the related literature indicate that it is difficult to

provide a definition of sense of humor that involves all the dimensions of it. That is why, it includes cognitive, emotional, behavioral, physical and social aspects (Martin, 2004).

Eysenck (1972) provides a different meaning for humor, which can be also seen as evidence for the existing variety in the definitions of humor. To illustrate, whereas a conformist definition of laughing involves laughing at the same things with someone, a quantitative perspective towards the definition of laughing refers to the ease and amount of laughing. The third meaning of sense of humor can be referred to as the productive definition, which refers to amusing people or making them laugh by producing humorous stories.

Hehl and Ruch (1985) explain sources for individual differences in sense of humor. That is, people's level of understanding jokes and humorous stimuli, the way people express their reaction to humor, their ability to produce humor, their appreciation of several humorous products, and their use of humor as a coping strategy. Finally, their memory capacity of remembering humorous events, stimuli or stories is one of the factors that lead to individual differences in sense of humor (as cited in Yerlikaya, 2009).

In another definition, made by Raskin (1998), interpretation and understanding are the key elements in sense of humor, so it is not only about having a good time, but sense of humor is highly related with awareness of the world, and it contributes to social relationships. For Maslow (1954), sense of humor is an ability that people with self-actualization have (as cited in Avşar, 2008). Therefore, people with a sense of humor give importance to both the self and others.

Martin (2007) states that humor and sense of humor have different meanings. That is, whereas humor refers to all the behaviors, stories, sentences or writings that generate joy and laugh, sense of humor is a part of personality. That is, sense of humor can be seen as a part of temperament, ability, attitude or point of view toward the world (Küçükbayındır, 2003). This feature about personality affects people's humor appreciation and production processes (Özenç, 1998). Not only humor appreciation and production processes, but it also affects the daily life and social relationships. Due to individual features and differences, people can also have different styles of

sense of humor, and this can be influential in the impacts of humor on people's life (Eroğlu, 2003).

#### **2.4. Basic Components of Humor**

When humor is examined from the physiological perspective, it can be considered to have four components, namely "social context, cognitive-perceptual process, emotional response, and vocal-behavioral expression" (Martin, 2007).

##### **2.4.1. Social Context**

The social context of humor is more about the effect of humor on people's relationships, and how these relationships become the source for production of humor. Accordingly, people generally laugh at things about others even when they are alone (Martin & Kuiper, 1999). Therefore, humor can be observed in every type of social context. Even though "joy" or "play" can be regarded as parts of early years of life, with respect to humor, it continues in people's entire life.

Humor also meets various needs of people within the social context. That is, people can express their needs by making use of humor (Lefcourt, 2001). It also provides the feeling of belongingness to a social group (Nezlek & Derks, 2001). Finally, because humor decreases the level of stress, chaos, and conflict among people, by making use of humor, people can easily establish relationships and solve problems with others (Yerlikaya, 2009).

##### **2.4.2. Cognitive-Perceptual Processes**

Humor occurs in a social context, yet some cognitive processes are also needed to understand and produce humor. Cognitive abilities are needed in order to remember previous knowledge, use it in a creative way, or develop a different point of view to events, cognitive abilities (Martin, 2007). They are needed not only for producing, but also for understanding humorous situations and reacting to them. Therefore, understanding, recalling, manipulating, interpreting and analyzing are the necessary cognitive processes for the occurrence of humor (Martin, 2007).

##### **2.4.3. Emotional Response**

Humorous situations also result in positive emotions and help people to have a positive emotional mood. It also activates the limbic system of the brain, which is activated by pleasurable emotional output. That can serve as evidence of humor and

how it is perceived in the physiological context (Martin, 2007). Martin (2007) names this emotion resulting from humor as mirth. That is why it is composed of joy, happiness, enjoyment, and enthusiasm. Even if they can be seen at different levels, these feelings occur with humor.

#### **2.4.4. Vocal-Behavioral Expression**

Vocal- behavioral expression helps people to reflect the mirth that occurs as a result of humor. It can be seen as social behavior, and as a tool to share mirth with others. This expression can surface in different ways. That is, while in younger ages, it can surface with a basic smile, at older ages, laughing is also observed. Furthermore, this expression is more likely to be seen in a social group than when people are alone (Martin, 2007).

Laughing or smiling starts to be observed before language development, and whereas Aristo and Pliny state that an infant does not start to smile before 40 days from their birth, Nesin states that this period corresponds to the first 1-3 months (as cited in Roecklein, 2002). From Keith-Spiegel's perspective, this vocal-behavior expression starts to be observed before infants start to engage in cognitive processes. Therefore, it can be said that these expressions can be independent of engagement in a humorous situation (Hill, 2000).

Morreall (1997) defines two types of laugh, which are humorous laugh and non-humorous laugh. Whereas non-humorous laugh occurs as a result of tickling, solving a problem, feeling secure, winning a game or engaging in a pleasurable work, humorous laugh includes understanding a joke, realizing an incongruity or facing a humorous situation (as cited in Avşar, 2008).

### **2.5. Laughter Theories**

#### **2.5.1. Superiority Theory**

This theory was propounded by Aristo and developed by Hobbes (as cited in Akıncı, 2015). It mainly describes humor as people's laugh in cases where they feel superior. That is, in a funny story, a person laughs at the mistakes that the main character made because s/he thinks that s/he did not make those mistakes, and this provides the feeling of superiority. Thus, this feeling makes people laugh (Özünlü, 1999). According to Morreall, (1997), people laugh not only to the mistakes that

others make, but also when they think that they do not have the weaknesses they had before. This situation also provides people with pleasure and joy. Another philosopher, Ray, also contributes to the Superiority Theory. This contribution is about people's laughing at themselves. That is, people laugh at their previous mistakes because they are superior when compared to their worse times in the past (Morreall, 1997).

### **2.5.2. Incongruity Theory**

The incongruity theory, which was put forward by Kant and Bergson, is about having results that are different from what was expected (Özünlü, 1999). That is, people have some plotline in their minds about a specific situation, and they have some possible ends as a result of that plotline. Such cases where people face unexpected results cause laugh. According to this theory, there are three conditions for laugh. The first one is surprise, which means the results are unexpected. The second one is what causes the surprise should be valuable and people should be sensitive to it. In this way, they will make an effort to understand the situation. The last one is to have more than one inconsistent situation, which creates a complex situation as a whole (Usta, 2005).

### **2.5.3. Relief Theory**

Relief theory seeks answers to both why we laugh and why we feel relaxed after laughing. According to this theory, people laugh to get rid of the accumulative energy, which is caused by two reasons. Firstly, people can laugh because of the stress that a situation creates, and second, social bonds and limitations can cause stress in people. As a result, to get rid of this stress, people seek solutions to ease, and laughing helps people in this respect. Moreover, while listening to a story, people develop some expectations, and accumulate energy from the elements in the story. When there is an unexpected result, people feel the need to ease this energy, and, as a result, laugh is observed (Morreall, 1997).

### **2.5.4. Psychoanalytic Theory**

According to Freud, sometimes, people need to ease the energy that is more than they need, and laughing is one of the ways for achieving it (Özünlü, 1999). Freud's ideas on humor are more about the dynamics among the id, ego and superego.

That is, humor can be used to meet the pleasure need of id, and superego uses humor to meet the needs of the ego. Freud (1928) also sees humor as a defense mechanism. That is, in undesired situations or while having an unpleasant feeling, humor can help to deal with the crises because it facilitates in developing different perspectives to avoid negative effects.

## **2.6. Contemporary Theories on Humor**

### **2.6.1. Bergson's Humor Theory**

Bergson argues that people laugh at the things that are about human beings. He also explains the reason why people laugh at animals or inanimate things by saying that they laugh because they notice certain things about human beings in animals or inanimate things. According to Bergson's theory, the source of laugh is people's lack of ability to empathize. That is, people would not laugh at things if they had the ability to empathize. For the occurrence of laugh, people need to get rid of all kinds of emotions (Bergson, 2013).

Laugh is also about the society and the kindness of people to behaviors or situations that are not appropriate to social norms. Thus, one of the functions of laugh is to train people to adapt to society (Solak, 2013). When laugh occurs in a social group, people prefer to change the behavior because it is seen as a tool for warning, punishing or overseeing (Bergson, 2013).

### **2.6.2. Marvin Minsky's Theory**

Inspired by Freud, but unlike Freud, Minsky argues in his theory that laugh can occur in meaningful humor. However, for Freud, there needs to be comprehension in order to laugh (Mulder & Nijholt, 2002). In fact, laugh is about censoring inappropriate situations, so when people forget to censor things, laugh occurs. In addition to censoring, laugh is observed when stereotyped situations are seen in different conditions (Mulder & Nijholt, 2002).

### **2.6.3. Morreall's Theory**

Morreall (1997) argues that in order to have a deep understanding of humor, all theories and approaches should be considered together because resorting to one theory or perspective can lead to wrong assumptions. He defines humor as a physical activity that is caused by a change or the feeling resulting from a change. According

to Morreall, laugh can be examined from three aspects, which are changes in psychological structure, a sudden change in the psychology, and having pleasure as a result of this psychological change. Laugh can be considered not only as psychological changes, but also as a part of the defense mechanism (Morreall, 1997).

#### **2.6.4. Thomas Veatch's Theory**

Veatch focuses on individual humor and for him, there are three conditions that are necessary for a sense of humor: Violence, normality and contemporaneity. Without any one of these three conditions, humor cannot be observed (Sayar, 2012).

In the condition of violence, people have the feeling of responsibility because they know how things actually should be. Therefore, this feeling can create violence in people. Normality is more about people's feeling of the normality of things. Finally, contemporaneity is to have both of these two conditions at the same time. When there are both violence and normality, that means that there is also contemporaneity, and this creates humor (Sayar, 2012).

### **2.7. Theory of Mind and Humor**

The theory of mind dwells on one other factor that can have an effect on people's humor (Samson, 2008). That is why, in order to process humor, theory of mind is necessary (Howe, 2002; Jung, 2003). Papafragou et al. (2007) describe theory of mind (ToM) as “the ability to attribute to oneself and others’ mental states and to reason in terms of mental states” (p.255). Thus, ToM can be defined as the ability to understand both one’s own and others’ minds. This theory also includes realizing false mental states, and this ability starts to develop after four or five years of age (Wimmer & Perner, 1983). These cognitive processes related with ToM are also required for the understanding and production of humor. That is the reason why humor is used as a method of ToM assessment (Bass et al, 2018). In addition to cognitive processes, ToM is also effective in social relationships (Bosacki, 2013). That is why it is essential to understand other people’s emotions. Like ToM, humor also contributes to people’s social relationships because it helps people to look from others’ points of view and increases the level of positive emotions.

## **2.7. Humor Development in Children**

According to Akıncı (2015), what children laugh at differs from what adults laugh at. That is, children can see certain things meaningless, while adults laugh at the same things. This is not about children's lack of understanding, but about the fact that adults and children have different perspectives. This situation resembles cultural differences because culture can provide a different perspective toward understanding and producing humor. To illustrate, a story that is perceived as fun by one culture can mean nothing for another culture.

In preschool settings, laughing is observed most of the time, but according to Klein (1987), laughing does not stem simply from joy. It is a result of cognitive impulse. In order to understand how children appreciate and produce humor, there are different views. These views constitute perspectives that can help parents, educators, and researchers to meet children's needs in terms of humor, learn about suitable ways to use humor in education and know what to observe while trying to understand children's humor.

### **2.7.1. Wolfstein Model**

According to Wolfstein, development of humor is about children's suppressed sexual feelings. Children use jokes or mirth to get rid of these suppressed feelings. Children also use humor in attracting authority and in making fun of other children who are younger than themselves (Zbaracki, 2003).

### **2.7.2. McGhee Model**

Paul McGhee has also made contributions to humor studies. He explains appreciation and production of humor with the development of cognitive development, and he emphasizes that with the development of cognitive and language abilities, children's ways of understanding and using humor change, and they start to understand humor in the way that adults do (McGhee, 1979). That is, children start to understand complex jokes and irony. McGhee argues that incompatibility is the source in every type of humor, and the level of understanding these incompatibilities forms the case for humor development (Southam, 2005). McGhee describes some stages of development of humor, and he is highly affected by Piaget's cognitive stages in forming these stages.

McGhee uses age intervals in describing the time periods for the stages. Each stage specific with an age interval has a certain beginning age level, but some children can enter any stage earlier than their peers or at a younger age than specified. Moreover, even when children start to show a new type of humor, they can also continue to show the humor behaviors that belong to the previous stage. Therefore, the stated age intervals are for displaying the highest level for the new type of humor (McGhee, 2002).

#### **2.7.2.1. Incongruous Actions Towards Objects (18-20 months)**

The first stage is named as "Incongruous Actions Towards Objects", and this stage involves 18-20-month-old children. In this stage, children laugh at visual stimuli. They also laugh at the things that are incompatible with their schema. For example, using a soup bowl as a head can be fun for children at this stage. This situation is highly related to accommodation and assimilation in Piaget's theory (Loizou, 2006).

Not only children's basic and attachment needs, but parents also play a vital role in children's humor experiences. That is, infants start to show their first humorous responses to the experiences that they have with their parents. A 7-month-old infant can laugh at the unusual behaviors that their parents display. For example, when the father drinks milk from a bottle, babies can laugh at this. Also, in this stage, babies laugh at their parents' weird sounds and different facial expressions. If these sounds and expressions start to appear frequently, they may stop laughing at them.

What children laugh at in the first 6 months and between the ages of 6 and 12 month can be similar, and it is difficult to understand if this laugh includes humor or not. Babies can laugh at facial expressions in the first 6 months and in the first stage of humor. However, the difference is that they laugh at facial expressions because they are not usual. Furthermore, laughing at physiological arousals in this kind of play contribute to humor. Therefore, even if babies laugh at similar things, the reason why they laugh differs. Because of this, it is possible to say that humor is seen in this stage (McGhee, 2002).

According to McGhee (2002), children start to display new and exciting behaviors in terms of humor production. That is, they start to display "as if" behaviors. For example, they can use some object in an unusual way, different from

the common usage. Even though this behavior does not aim to produce humor, this is the earliest form of humor that children display. Like at the previous stage, children can laugh when objects are used in the usual way. For example, at the end of the first year of life, children may laugh when their fathers wear their pants over their head like a hat.

McGhee (2002) also shares his experiences with his son regarding humor. He stated that when 24 months of age, his son also used objects in different ways. For example, he had an observation of his son wearing his shoes on his hands. However, rather than laughing, he showed his reaction with a proud smile.

McGhee (2002) describes three crucial points in this stage. The first one is that the first examples of humor production are observed at this stage. Second, children can laugh when the people around them make the same behavior as their parents. Lastly, in this stage, children discover the incompatibility and humor in these situations. Children's schema and experiences with the environment are vital in this process. Children explore the environment by play. Similarly, in order to accept children's incompatible behaviors as productions of humor, there should be play in them.

Children's play is observed in similar environments and with materials. When children encounter a new environment or object, they also use play to discover it. During their attempts to discover their new environment or an object, they start to play in or with it. Humor is a form of play, and children can enjoy themselves when they are not using the objects in incompatible ways. However, when they get used to it and learn all the details related to it, they have fun when they use it in an unfamiliar way (McGhee, 2002).

#### **2.7.2.2. Incongruous Labelling of Objects and Events (20-24 months)**

In the second stage, Incongruous Labelling of Objects and Events, children at the age of 20-to-24 months start to use language for joy and pleasure. With the development of language skills, not only visual stimuli, but using incompatible words and playing with words start to become funny. Thus, in this stage, they start to produce humor in a verbal context (Loizou, 2006).

With development in language, the way humor is produced also changes. Children tend to ask questions about the objects around them and learn their names

(Meral, 2013). McGhee (2002) states that at this stage, children produce humor by changing the names of objects. An example of humor production for McGee can be an instance when parents ask the child to show his/her ears, the child can show his noise. Even if a child does not laugh in this situation, this is an enjoyable activity for him/her. McGhee (2002) also shares his experiences with his son, and states that at this stage, children can change names in the songs, or they can call their mother by saying "father". In this stage, children have the cognitive competence to mislead others by using language in playful and serious ways.

Another way to use language in humorous ways can be seen as using words with the opposite meaning. That is, the child can say, "this is a big hat" by referring to a small hat. Even if this reversing can generally be seen as the first sign for children's independence, it can also be seen as the way to produce humor. That is why McGhee (2002) argues that using opposite meanings can be seen as conceived jokes.

### **2.7.2.3. Conceptual Incongruity (2-7 years)**

Conceptual Incongruity is the third stage of humor development. In this stage, 2-to-7-year-old children, make jokes for not only themselves but also others. These jokes become abstract and complex. They also make jokes about themselves and what they have not done in the past with the development of the skills related to it. McGhee describes this period by saying that children appreciate and produce humor by being aware of "violations of perceptual appearances of things" (McGhee, 1984, p. 230).

McGhee explains this stage under different categories (Meral, 2013). The first category is playing with the sounds of words. In the previous stages, children learn to play with words and in this stage, they find ways to play with their sounds. This situation is generally observed with words being used again and again. This word play can be based on a word or sentence level. For example, children can say "daddy, faddy, paddy". Even if children know the meanings of the words, the features of the objects such as voice, looks or texture affect their sound play (McGhee, 2002), and these are sources of humor production for children.

In the second category named combination of meaningless and real words, even if children know the real words and meanings, they like to use meaningful ones by creating different combinations in their sentences. "I saw mailbox chocolate" can be an example to illustrate this McGhee (2002) argues that these word combinations

are meaningful. That is, even if there is no relationship between a mailbox and chocolate, children refer to a chocolate box by saying mailbox. This situation can be explained by the fact that children enjoy using things in a different way, while they actually know their original use.

Distortion of an object, human being and animal features is the third category in McGhee's fourth stage. McGhee states that children are aware that there is a classification in terms of objects' names and their features. Piaget states that this is the beginning of conceptual thinking. That is, even if children know that there are different kinds of birds with different features, they also know that the word "bird" involves similar characteristics of that animal group (as cited in Southam, 2005). As a result, distortion in conceptual features is a source of humor production.

In addition, children can add some features that do not belong to the object; they can remove some features or make changes in the color, shape or the place. Adding some exaggerated features or impossible behaviors can be ways to produce humor for children in this stage (McGhee, 2002).

The fourth and final category is naming the opposite sex. In the early childhood period, children learn the concept and features of sex. This includes naming different sexes, and they can also use it as a source of humor. That is, children can be amused by calling a girl Jack, or by calling their mother "father". This situation is also related to misnaming objects.

#### **2.7.2.4. Humor in Multiple Meanings**

The last stage that is seen between the ages of 7 and 11 is named as Humor in Multiple Meanings. Children realize that there can be several meanings of words. Furthermore, in addition to objects or words, they start to make prosocial or antisocial jokes. They are able to reverse the sequence and understand the relationships between events. This situation helps them to understand when there is an incompatibility (Loizou, 2006). When children begin elementary school, their sense of humor can vary. Even though children create humor based on physical things in previous stages, in this stage, humor is mostly about thinking and language. They can use this humor to deceive other people (McGhee, 2002). They start to comprehend jokes that were made when they were younger, and this process is an enjoyable process for them.

Children like to say riddles and they can spend most of their time with riddles, but in time this humor type occurs less in children. Even though children and their riddles can be affected by family and culture, their source is the same for all children (McGhee, 2002). This is defined by cognitive processes developed for the comprehension of meanings (Piaget, 1983). That is, understanding relationships between two things that actually seem irrelevant and establishing a relation among them give joy to children. Another source of joy for children derives from the fact that children think that the one whom they are saying the riddle does not know or see the relationship. Differences in this stage are highly related to cognitive development, and McGhee accounts for them by resorting to Piaget's theory. For example, because it is difficult for children to understand abstract concepts in the early childhood period, it is also difficult for them to understand the humor in a riddle including abstract concepts and to laugh at it.

## **2.8. Humor Styles**

In addition to considering cognitive development in children's humor development, the reason and method of using humor can also vary in children. For example, whereas some children can use humor to cope with stress, some of them can use it to show aggression (Führ, 2002). The humor styles of people also affect how to use humor, and there are four different styles (two adaptive, two maladaptive), which are described by Martin et al (2003).

In the current study, the humor styles model that was used. These styles were defined by Martin and his colleagues as a result of several studies. These humor styles include both adaptive and maladaptive behaviors in terms of humor, and in total, there are four humor styles. These humor styles are categorized based on different criteria. The first the aim of using the humor. That is, people can use humor for two different aims. Humor can be used for one's own benefit or to strengthen or contribute to relationships with others (Yerlikaya, 2009). Humor for one's own benefit can be about the feeling of victory gained by comparing the self with one's own prior weaknesses or with those of others. This feeling arises as a result of realizing these weaknesses (Keith-Spiegel, 1972). In addition, humor can be used as a tool for coping and defense mechanisms when people face a problem. (Freud, 1928; Lefcourt & Martin, 1986). That is, using humor to see positive points in negative situations and

to find solutions to problems are benefits of humor for the individual him or herself. This benefit is defined under intrapsychic functions of humor (Martin, et al, 2003).

Another aim of using humor is to develop relationships with others. Humor can be used to make others feel better, communicate better, decrease aggression among people and strengthen relationships. It can also benefit relationships within a group and support a positive and enjoyable atmosphere. It also supports group culture (Martin et al, 2003).

The second categorization of the model designed by Martin and his colleagues is based on the criterion of being adaptive or maladaptive. That is, whereas humor can be used in a way that does not harm both the self and others, it can also be used to humiliate and ridicule the self and others. In addition, it can be said that people can use humor to benefit the self, strengthen relationships or just adapt to others that do not harm the self and others; or it can be used in harmful ways (Yerlikaya, 2009).

With the consideration of these aims, four different humor styles are described by Martin and his colleagues. Whereas using humor in a way that benefits the self and gives no harm to others is defined as "self-enhancing humor", using it to benefit the self but harm others is named as "aggressive humor". Moreover, humor can be also used to enrich relationships with others by not harming people. This kind of humor is named as "affiliative humor". The final style is named as "self-defeating humor". This style is also used to enrich relationships. However, people do this by harming the self. That is, they use humiliating jokes about oneself to gain the love of others (Martin et al, 2003).

### **2.8.1. Self-Enhancing Humor**

Self-enhancing humor is the first type of the adaptive humor styles. This is about making jokes about oneself, but not others, and these jokes are not humiliating. People who have this humor style have a positive outlook toward life, especially in facing difficult situations (James & Fox, 2016). This humor style involves personal and intrapsychic aspects of humor. While using this humor, people are aware of their needs and deal with stress by gaining different points of view. Negative emotions can be decreased or change in this style, and perceiving humor in terms of individual aspects is sufficient. That is, there is no need to share this humor with others.

This humor style is about internalizing humor as a point of view toward life, and it includes finding ways to enjoy the problems in life even in stressful conditions. It is closely related to using humor as a coping strategy (Kuiper, Martin & Olinger, 1993). It can also be explained by Freud's (1928) ideas on humor. That is why it provides ways to get rid of negative feelings by not overlooking the reality, so it can be a powerful defense mechanism. As a result, this humor style can be associated with a healthy psychology and a positive self-perception (Yerlikaya, 2009).

### **2.8.2. Affiliative Humor**

Another adaptive humor style is affiliative humor. This type of humor facilitates relationships among people. That is why people who have this type of humor love to make others laugh without resorting to sarcasm (James & Fox, 2016). In this humor style, people do not harm themselves or others while making others laugh, and they tend to facilitate relationships and decrease the stress and aggression among people. They also make jokes about themselves in order to make others feel better. However, these jokes and criticisms of themselves do not include humiliations, and they protect their own self-acceptance (Martin et al, 2003). Extroversion, cheerfulness, and satisfaction in relationships are observed to be related to this humor style (Yerlikaya, 2009).

### **2.8.3. Self-Defeating Humor**

In maladaptive humor, there are two styles and one of them is self-defeating humor. This is also used for establishing social relationships with the denigration of the self. That is, by revealing their weaknesses and making jokes that humiliate oneself, people try to be a part of a social group. However, in the long-term, self-defeating humor damages one's emotions and the self (James & Fox, 2016).

In this humor style, people ignore their own needs, and their priority is to make others' laugh. They use their weaknesses and humiliate themselves to make jokes. Even when they are upset, they behave as if they were happy. Thus, this is another example of self-defeating humor. People also laugh when other makes humiliating jokes about themselves. That is why they argue that this is a way to be accepted by others (Yerlikaya, 2009). According to Kubie (1971), when humor is used as a defense mechanism tool, it enables one to deal with problems in a realistic way and they avoid facing negative emotions (as cited in Martin et al, 2003). Even

though people who use self-defeating humor can seem very cheerful, this is actually a method of avoiding solving problems. Developing a positive self-image and self-respect is difficult in this style of humor (Yerlikaya, 2009).

#### **2.8.4. Aggressive Humor**

Finally, opposite to self-defeating humor, in the aggressive humor style, people enhance the self, but they make humiliating jokes towards others. For example, when someone makes a mistake, s/he prefers to make fun of that mistake. In the long-term, because this situation will probably give harm to their relationships, it will be also harmful to the self too (James & Fox, 2016).

In this humor style, people only want to satisfy their superiority feelings by using humor in inappropriate ways. Thus, some theories also argue that people laugh when they feel superior by comparing themselves with others or their previous experiences (Morreall, 1997). However, this humor style includes humiliating, ridiculing and vilifying others (Zillman, 1983).

People can also use humor to make others do the things that they want them to do. Thus, using humor in order to threaten others is a way for aggressive humor (Janes & Olson, 2000). As a result, to show adaptive humor characteristics, people need to consider both their needs and the effects of the humor on others. By considering the ways of humor used in this style of humor, it can be said that people do not consider others by creating humor. Therefore, using this humor style can harm their relationships, and people can create a negative image in their social group. There is a negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and conscience (Yerlikaya, 2009).

Martin (2007) has found that there are strong correlations between physiological adjustment and people's humor styles. For example, those who have maladaptive humor styles have the tendency to have depression and anxiety. On the other hand, self-esteem is observed in people who have adaptive humor styles. In addition to self-esteem, adaptive humor styles are necessary for mental health. For example, they not only help people to cope with stress and decrease the effects of anxiety and depression, but also support mental health by satisfying positive relationships among people.

In this model, it is also described that these humor types are about the degrees of the behaviors that are displayed related to a specific humor style. That is, even if a person has an adaptive humor style, s/he can also use humor to ridicule others. Or, for example, self-defeating humor can be related to self-enhancing or affiliative humor because it also includes the ability to criticize the oneself. As a result, all of the humor styles can be related to each other, but the degree of the association is important. Even though people can have all of these four humor styles, the crucial point is which one of them is used more frequently and which is more coherent to the personality (Yerlikaya, 2009).

With the consideration of the effects of humor styles on physical adjustment and social competence, young children's humor styles should also be examined. Fox, Dean and Lyford (2013) also emphasized the importance of early years to determine humor styles because in this way, parents and teachers can learn about children's needs in terms of humor and support them to develop adaptive humor styles by providing necessary modeling, activities, environment, classroom management etc.

## **2.9. Functions of Humor**

According to Akaydin (2015), there are different functions of humor. It does not only serve one function but has effects on people's lives in several ways.

### **2.9.1. Sociological Function**

Du Pré argues that humor has a vital role for both individuals and society. That is, humor not only helps people to express their thoughts, experiences or dealings in a flexible atmosphere, but also enables people to contact others in a social group in an appropriate way. Furthermore, it can be used to solve problems and decrease stress in chaotic situations in a group by strengthening the friendship bonds among people. That is why humor can support the development of sincerity, truthfulness, courtesy, and respect in people (Yardimci, 2010).

### **2.9.2. Psychological Function**

In some cases, people can have some emotions that can be harmful for their health, relationship or life. For example, people can have emotions like fear or anger. Humor can be a useful tool to deal with these negative feelings. Humor cannot be solutions to the situations that create such feelings. However, because it provides a

positive point of view, humor can help people to deal with these emotions and develop different points of view that can help solve problems experienced at the time. This can also provide balance in people's life, which is necessary for healthy psychology (Yardimci, 2010).

### **2.9.3. Communication Function**

According to Mierop, like in every part of life, humor also plays a vital role in starting and developing relationships. Humor is a social feature that people have, and this feature affects people's relationships in a positive way. Humor is a powerful tool not only in starting or maintaining a healthy relationship, but because it increases positive emotions and helps people to express themselves. It enables one to consider other points of view and decrease the aggression and distance among people. By means of humor, they can discover their similar feelings and ideas (Yardimci, 2010).

## **2.10. Positive and Negative Aspects of Humor**

As afore-mentioned stated humor has positive effects on people's life. That is, humor is not just a tool that provides joy, it also contributes to their social relationships, physical and psychological health, and it helps to develop skills such as self-esteem and autonomy (Yerlikaya, 2003)

### **2.10.1. Positive Aspects of Humor**

According to the related literature, humor contributes to different areas in people's life such as educational psychology, physical health and social relations (Sümer, 2008). For example, it can help people to develop a healthy sense of ego by overcoming problems and discovering new perspectives (Gordin & Bordan, 1999). In dealing with stress, humor is a powerful source because it provides different points of view, and people can also see the positive aspects of life. Humor is explained as "laughing to the self", and it is defined as a personality feature which is necessary for people (Allport, 1960 as cited in Yerlikaya, 2003). Self-actualization and humor are also considered to be related to each other. That is, Maslow (1954) argues that people who develop self-actualization skills can also develop a sense of humor and do not use humor in a way that humiliates others or oneself.

Humor also has a positive impact on social relationships. People can easily establish social relationships and their concerns about their role and place in a group

decrease. They can easily develop a sense of belonging to a group by using humor. The rules and ethics that are shaped in a group can be more easily formed with humor, and conflicts among group members can decrease (Lowe, 1986).

In education, humor can be used to draw children's attention and make teaching appealing. In addition, because humor makes people open to communication, this can positively affect teacher-child relationships in the classroom. This situation not only develops healthy relationships, but also helps to solve problems in the classroom environment (Akkaya, 2011).

#### **2.10.2. Negative Aspects of Humor**

Even though most of the theories and studies argue that humor has a positive impact on people's lives, this idea is criticized by some researchers. They state that humor has different dimensions and these dimensions can also have negative effects on people's life. They add that humor has not only concurred, but also has no concurred factors which can harm people's psychology (Aslan, 2006).

For example, Spencer (1989) reveals the negative aspects of humor in his study. His study revealed that humor was used as a means to humiliate the students from other religions. Usage of this humor both supported the discrimination in social groups and increased aggression in students. Therefore, even if humor is helpful in developing social relationships, if the way it is used is changed, the results can also change. Furthermore, the usage of negative humor can also harm the classroom environment, the learning experience and teacher-child relationships (Yerlikaya, 2003).

People's sense of humor can be affected by age, culture, socio-economic status, education level etc. Therefore, just talking about one type of humor can be misleading in understanding sense of humor. In addition to adaptive humor, people can also make use of maladaptive humor (Morreall, 1997). Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Grey and Weir (2003) describe aggressive and self-defeating humor, which entail a negative sense of humor. These humor styles are also related to some character traits. For example, aggressive humor is negatively correlated with being unjust. That is, people who use this kind of humor are perceived as less reliable and ruder in their social group.

People who use self-defeating humor also face the negative effects of humor. That is, they seem aimless in life and experience a high level of anxiety and emotional insecurity (Martin et al, 2003). Using humor in appropriate ways to social norms can be evidence for people's needs to have a superiority complex, and it entails making humiliating and ridiculing jokes to others. Even though people use this humor style to feel better, in the long-term, it both harms social relationships and the individual him or herself. Unlike aggressive humor, self-defeating humor includes jokes about the oneself. These jokes are again humiliating and ridiculing, and people use it to make others laugh to be a part of a group. They also laugh when others make insulting jokes about themselves in order to make others love them. However, this kind of humor causes harm in one's personality (Martin et al, 2003).

With the consideration of maladaptive styles of humor and their negative effects, in education, the teacher should be careful about what kind of humor to be used in the classroom and which humor styles children have. The suitable time, style and conditions should be determined, and careful observations should be made to prevent the occurrence of humiliating, ridiculing and insulting humor in the classroom (Akkaya, 2011).

## **2.11. Humor Practice in Educational Settings**

In order to benefit from humor, several ways of practice are defined in the literature. One of them is about language teaching. That is, Muñoz-Basols (2005) argues that including some jokes, riddles or pronunciation games can facilitate learning. In addition, the materials used in language teaching can also be chosen purposefully so that they include elements of fun in them. Humorous materials can be used in the teaching of knowledge in other subject areas as well in order to draw students' attention and provide meaningful, memorable learning experiences (Krause, 2014).

Ways to use humor in the classroom also deserve attention. Both negative and positive humor can be used in classroom. They can also be named as destructive and constructive humor, respectively (Krause, 2014). Therefore, in order to benefit from humor, it is important to use constructive humor rather than destructive humor. For example, if the teacher uses or lets students use discriminating, stereotyping or humiliating humor, it may negatively affect both learning experiences and classroom

management (Chabeli, 2008). Humor should be relevant to the course content, compatible with the learning environment, and suitable for all the learners in the classroom (Chabeli, 2008). However, it is important not to have failed attempts in using humor. If students do not find a joke funny, their attention toward the lesson may decrease and learning may be affected in negative way (Wanzer, 2002).

Ocon (2015) also defines some guidelines to use humor in classroom. First of all, the teacher should maintain a balance from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester. The level of humor should be managed and maintained throughout all the classes. The second advice is that the teacher should develop their own humor skills. They can learn some funny stories about the topic to get the expected responses from the children. Thirdly, it is important to be open-minded about different humor styles. That is, if they can be flexible about their humor style, they can make necessary changes to provide enjoyable learning experiences in the courses. That is why every course can require different humor styles. Another advice is not to exaggerate the use of humor. Even though the use of humor in the classroom can provide many benefits, sometimes the teacher should have the ability to shift to traditional teaching. Thus, humorous communications should not continue throughout all classes. If the level of humor in answers cannot be arranged appropriately, learning can be distracted, and children can be confused about the questions and answers. Therefore, if children feel confused while trying to learn a topic, the amount of of humorous answers used in the classroom should be decreased by the teacher. Making some plans about specific topics can be another advice. That is, teachers can search for some funny stories or materials on specific topics to draw children's attentions better. This can be beneficial to find appropriate ways of humor for that topic. Finally, making fun of the self should be used by teachers. Children can develop an impression about the teacher. They can understand that the teacher also has a sense of humor and s/he can have weaknesses or mistakes. In this way, children can feel close to the teacher. According to Ocon (2015), if these items of advice in using humor in the classroom are taken into consideration, the level of positive effects of humor can be increased.

## **2.12. Research on Child's Humor**

In order to learn about how humor is perceived and used in the classroom, studies that focus on humor in terms of classroom activities, teachers and children should be conducted. In this way, the needs and weaknesses in this area can be revealed, and the support needed can be provided. These studies can also provide evidence for why humor should be important.

### **2.12.1. National Studies**

In order to understand children's humor, Akün (1997) aimed to reveal children's self-reported ideas about what they laugh at, what jokes make others laugh, or the jokes that make them angry. An open-ended survey consisting of eight questions was prepared and applied to fourth and fifth-grade elementary school children. According to their answers, children state that they laugh at funny Black Sea or Nasreddin Hodja stories. What makes them laugh when other people face trouble are animal behaviors, and impossible behaviors. Verbal jokes, mischievous jokes and behavioral jokes also make them laugh. Another finding is that children make mischievous and scary jokes to their friends. However, some children reported that they get angry with mischievous, scary and humiliating jokes, while 6.6% of the children stated that they do not get angry with any kind of joke. The researcher also made a comparative analysis of male and female children, it was revealed that female children laughed at verbal jokes, and made humiliating and animal behavior jokes, while male children tended to laugh at behavioral jokes. As a result of the study, the researcher concluded that integrating funny stories in teaching contributed to children's learning. These results reported in a study by Savaş (2009) show consistency because he also reveals the positive effect of using humorous materials in teaching on children's learning and success.

To prepare a teaching environment or activities in a way that includes humor, it is also important to know the features of children's understanding of humor. Thus, there are some other studies that aimed to develop or adapt a scale for understanding the humor in children. Yerlikaya (2003) made a scale adaptation study by using the Humor Styles Questionnaire. This adaptation study was conducted with 530 university students and it aimed to determine what humor behaviors people show. Because this scale has the potential of shedding light on people's humor styles, it also

can guide other studies to understand reasons, differences or similarities in these humor behaviors. However, because this scale is developed for adults, it may not be appropriate to be used in earlier ages especially in early childhood education.

Unlike the studies that focused on McGhee's humor development theory and age, Kızıltan (2006) tried to investigate the difference in male and female children's level of comprehending the humor elements in texts. 120 first grade elementary school children participated in the study. Six Nasreddin Hodja stories gathered from first-grade Turkish education books and to which the researcher had prepared 41 questions were used. As a result of the study, the researcher revealed that there was no difference in listening and reading abilities in terms of gender. However, it was also found that both males and females could not deeply understand the elements of humor in the stories. In consistency with these results, a study by Meral (2013) showed that children showed fewer reactions to verbal humor. Therefore, especially in this age period, children can experience difficulty in understanding the verbal humor elements present in texts, and the results of those who study can be supported by each other.

Savaş (2009) tried to understand the effect of using humor in the classroom on children's learning in a Turkish language course. The researcher worked with seventh grade children, and in total 56 students participated in the study. The experimental research design was used, and the results of the control and experimental groups were compared. Whereas a mixed method, which was based on the constructivist idea, was used in the control group, humor applications, which were also based on the constructivist approach, were used too. Funny stories, pictures, and cartoons were used in teaching. An achievement test and an attitude scale toward humor were used to collect data. As a result of the study, when compared to the control group, the experimental group was found to receive higher scores on both achievement and attitude scores, which indicated a positive attitude toward humor.

Studies also show that humor is not just related to academic achievement, but also show to other abilities. A study by Özdemir (2010) aimed to identify the relationships among prosocial behavior, humor, anger level and shyness in 452 high school students. The interactional survey model was used, and in this way, the differences and similarities were revealed with respect to several variables. Four

different scales were used, and the scores obtained from each were compared. As a result of the study, the researcher found that there was a positive correlation between prosocial behaviors and humor. Therefore, it can be said that developing children's humor or including humor in the classroom also has a beneficial impact on social behaviors in children.

Koçer, Eskidemir and Özbek (2012) also conducted a study to understand the development of humor in children. However, unlike Meral's study, they took data from parents' observations. In their study, they worked with parents and expected them to provide data on what their children laughed at. In this way, the researchers tried to analyze children's sense of humor by using McGhee's humor development stages. This study not only provided information on what stage children were in but what children found funny from the parents' perspective. 64-to-74-month old ten children were observed by parents for two weeks, and as a result of the study, the researchers found that parents had recorded humor behaviors related to the conceptual incongruity stage.

In order to have an in-depth understanding of humor development in children, Meral (2013) conducted a study with 101 children who were between 2 and 13 years of age. She investigated children's humor development by considering McGhee's humor development theory. In the study, the researcher made children watch a video that included elements related to McGhee's theory, and the children's reactions were chained via video recording. These recordings were analyzed by using the semi-structured observation form prepared by the researcher. As a result of the study, it was found that children's reactions to elements of humor changed with age. That is, in all stages, children who were at between the age interval of two-to-four years, showed least laughing reactions. Five-year-old children were found to be displaying more laughing reactions at the conceptual incongruity level and finally, 11-to-13-year-old children laughed at the elements related with humor in multiple meanings stage. Furthermore, it was observed that visual and movement related items resulted in more laughing reactions when compared with verbal humor elements.

Similar to the study by Savaş (2009), Katipoğlu (2016) also attempted to observe the effect of humor on learning mathematical concepts and decreasing anxiety in learning mathematics. The researcher worked with 44 sixth grade students,

who were assigned to one of the two groups, experimental or control group. In the study, the researcher included cartoons while teaching children in the experimental group, while traditional teaching strategies were used in the control group. In the data collection process, the researcher used quantitative data obtained from a mathematics achievement test, a mathematics attitude scale and a mathematics anxiety scale. The study revealed that even though there were no differences in the attitude of the two groups toward mathematics, the researcher reported that there were differences in the achievement and anxiety scores. More specifically, children in the experimental group received higher scores on mathematics tests and their anxiety scores decreased with the use of humor in the classroom. The findings of this study can also be shown as evidence for the importance of humor in increasing the quality of teaching.

Hantal (2016) also made an adaptation study of "Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale for School-Aged Children", developed by Dowling and Pain (1999). The aim of this scale is to evaluate children's sense of humor. The researcher worked with 210 children and these children were at the age of 6-to-12 years. Even though Yerlikaya (2003) and Hantal (2016) aimed to adapt the scale that helped to understand humor, they focused on different things to explain humor. The results that obtained from these scales can be used while adopting humor in the classroom and seeking ways to develop children's humor. Thus, these scales help to understand children's needs and features in terms of humor. However, this scale cannot be used in early ages e in the early childhood education period, children do not know how to read and write.

### **2.12.2. International Studies**

There are also several international studies that aimed to understand humor better. Pien and Rothbart (1976) used cartoons in their study design but they mainly focused on children's humor appreciation when incompatibility was resolved. 40 children who were at the age of 4 and 5 were included in the study. They were provided with two versions of the cartoons and asked which one was funnier. That is, the researchers wanted the children to compare the cartoon that included incompatibility and solved incompatibility. As a result of the study, it was found that young children were able to appreciate both versions. This can be shown as a source for understanding the development of humor in young ages. In addition to

understanding the impact of incompatibility on children's humor, Sinnot and Ross (1976) examine children's preferences in terms of incompatibility and aggression in humor. In the study, 3-to-8-year-old 230 children were provided with some stories that included neutral, aggressive and incompatible elements. The results indicated that children preferred stories with aggressive and incompatible factors when compared with the neutral ones. It can also be said that aggression can be seen in early stages of humor in children.

McGhee (1974) also tried to understand the development of humor in children from the developmental perspective, but unlike the previous studies stated above, he used riddles and expected children to distinguish the ones that did not include humor but absurd and meaningless humor. 160 children who were in their first, second, fourth or sixth grade participated in the study. 16 riddles were provided, and they were asked to evaluate the riddles based on whether or not they were funny. Subsequently, the researcher evaluated their reactions to the riddles. As a result of the study, it was found that age can be seen as a determinant in understanding humor because, with growing age, humorous responses to riddles increased. Furthermore, it was understood that children could perceive verbal humor even if they could not produce it. Finally, another finding stated by McGhee was that the ability to distinguish humorous and non-humorous situations developed in the concrete operational stage.

Allen and Zigler (1986) worked on children's sense of humor and they used a non-verbal humor test for revealing children's opinions on what they found and did not find funny. For the development of the test, the researchers used cartoons and expected children to identify the funny, illogical and logical endings of the cartoons they were provided with. The results showed that cognitive abilities and age were influential factors in children's understanding of humor.

About the importance of supporting children's humor behaviors, Hobday Kusch and Mcvittie (2002) conducted a study that involved observing two children that were described as being mischievous during an academic year. According to the observations, children were found to be aware of their mischievous behaviors and they used humor to deal with stressful and tough situations. It was also revealed that in order to show humorous behaviors, children needed to feel free to express their

humorous ideas and have permission to laugh. That is, having mischievous students in the classroom was also helpful for other students in the classroom to feel better.

Chik, Leung and Molloy (2005) tried to elicit information about children's appreciation and production of humor. However, rather than gathering data from parents, they developed a measurement tool for this aim. Their study included 53 children who were at the age between 9 and 15 years. Children were shown 16 visuals and expected to mark the level of humor in the visuals on a scale of 1 to 4. Their faces were also videotaped to examine their reactions while looking at the visuals. As a result of the study, it was revealed that the visual that included incompatibility was found to be funnier than the ones that did not include incompatibility. Chik, Molloy, and Leung (2005) also applied the same research design in different cultural contexts to examine if incompatibility were a universal source of humor. The results of this study showed that incompatibility was a crucial concept in creating humor in every culture.

In addition to studies with teachers, there are also studies that aimed to learn about children's humor. Because young children experience difficulty in expressing themselves, there are different strategies used for understanding what children laugh at. One of them was conducted by Loizou (2006). In her study, she tried to analyze children's understanding of humor by providing them with pictures because, with their responses to humor, she aimed to reach data on pre-school children's cognitive conceptual abilities. This study provided data on how to analyze children's humor and what to understand from their explanations of humor in terms of their cognitive abilities. Brown (1993) also used a similar methodology and visuals, but in analyzing children's answers, he used visual humor categories. He also found that cognitive abilities and age were influential in getting different answers from children.

With respect to culture issue, Guo et al (2011) tried to reveal the differences in children's humor in terms of culture. In this study, the differences and similarities between Chinese and Greek children in terms of humor were examined. 55 Chinese and 50 Greek children, whose ages ranged between 4.5 and 5.5 years, were included in the study. As a result of the study, they found that cognitive development had an impact on the development of humor in children. However, culture also had impact on children's cognitive development and their humorous reactions.

Similar to Allen and Zigler (1986), Degabriele and Walsh (2010) also tried to understand the effect of cognitive sufficiency on understanding humor. In their study, they worked with seven-to-eleven-year-old children, who had mild and moderate mental disability, and they tried to understand what kind of humor they appreciated and understood. The researcher provided the children with a Sponge Bob cartoon, which included 12 scene and 3 categories which are verbal, physical and visual humor. After watching the videos, the children were asked to evaluate the videos in terms of the being funny. The researchers also asked children to explain why the video was or was not funny. As a result of the study, the researchers concluded that children laughed at physical and visual humor more when compared to verbal humor. Guo's (2008) study also supports these results. That is, the researcher also tried to understand the relationship between cognitive abilities and humor. As a result of the study, it was found that three-year-old children who had developed social and cognitive abilities could understand, appreciate and produce humor. Children who possessed the typical cognitive and social development did not show the expected reactions in humorous situations; some of them even cried in this process.

Similar to Chik, Leung and Molloy (2005), Hoicka and Akhtar (2012) also tried to understand, with the help of parents, children's appreciation and production of humor. That is, they held interviews with parents about their children's humor. After these interviews, both parents and children entered a room where there were some materials which could be used to produce humor. Some examples about how to produce humor were also provided, and all these processes were videotaped. In total, 47 children, who were two or three years old, were included in the study. In the second part of the study, the researcher again worked with 113 parents who had children aged between 0 to 3 years. The data were collected by using a survey and the main aim was to gather data on children's way of producing humor, such as incorrect naming, funny body movements, humor on concepts, hiding or tickling. As a result of the study, it was found that 2-to-3-year-old children laughed at humor based on objects and concepts, but they did not laugh at humor based on incorrect naming. Children laughed when they produced humor, and they expected a reaction from others. Finally, while in two-year-old children imitate other's humor, they mostly produce new humor at three years of age.

Lovorn and Holaway (2015) also found similar results in their study, in which they interviewed pre-school teachers on humor. Pre-school teachers also agreed that humor was necessary for classroom management because it enhanced positive relationships and increased student motivation toward learning. This study also provided data on areas of how teachers included humor in their activities and what kind of behavioral approach they should use. These results can also be indicative of teachers' needs in learning how to use and how to understand children's humor in early years.

Rossi (2015) also revealed the importance of teachers' behaviors towards children when they used humor. If teachers respond to children's humor by labeling it as being inappropriate, this affects their relationships negatively and discourages children from using humor. However, if the teacher responds positively to children's humor and extends the humorous interaction, their relationship and the child's learning experience can be affected in a positive way. Showing different approaches toward humor can be related with such factors as the teacher's own humor styles, lack of knowledge, and their attitude. Therefore, understanding children's humor and how to include it in the classroom can be beneficial for teachers in terms of increasing classroom quality and learning.

In a study conducted to reveal the effect of humor on teacher-child relationships, Praag, Stevens, and Houtte (2017) made observations of the teacher to observe whether or not s/he used humor and whether or not there was a difference in their relationships with children. As a result of their observations, they concluded that the use of humor had a positive effect on the classroom environment. It also contributed to their teaching and to peer relationships in the classroom. However, even if the teacher's use of humor can be observed as a powerful device in this study, without having an insight in children's levels, interests and understanding toward humor, the teacher cannot use appropriate humor, which can ultimately have a negative effect on children.

Both national and international studies about humor guides future studies, and they help to develop a better understanding of humor. When national and international studies are compared, it is seen that there are both common points and differences in terms of the focuses and methodologies of the studies. First of all, both

national and international studies aim to reveal what people/children laugh at (McGhee, 1974; Pien & Rothbart, 1976; Allen & Zigler, 1986; Akün, 1997; Chik, Leung & Molloy, 2005; Loizou, 2006; Koçer, Eskidemir & Özbek, 2012; Hoicka & Akhtar, 2012; Meral, 2013). Because children and adults differ in their understanding of humor and humor behaviors, it is important to examine their humor. Thus, both national and international studies provide literature to understand children's humor better.

A second common point between national and international studies is that they try to understand the relationship between humor and other terms, such as academic achievement, prosocial behavior, anger level, shyness and cognition (Savaş, 2009; Guo, 2008; Özdemir, 2010; Katipoğlu, 2016; Kusch & Mcvittie, 2002). These studies can provide evidence for the necessity of humor not only simply for joy, but also contribution of different aspects in life.

The effect of humor on educational settings is another focus point of the studies (Lovorn & Holaway, 2015; Rossi, 2015; Praag, Stevens & Houtte, 2017). These studies focus on different elements, such as classroom management, teacher-child relationships, classroom quality and learning. However, even though there are international studies that provide findings on the effect of humor in educational studies, national studies could also be encountered. In order to develop guidance for increasing the usage of humor in the classroom, studies conducted in educational settings are needed. It can be claimed that there is a lack of these kinds of studies in the national context. Teachers' views, perspectives and attitudes are also important for their practices in education children (Pajares, 1992). However, there are inadequate number of studies in both national and international studies when the studies in literature were examined.

Another issue about understanding humor is culture. Culture is important because the way humor is perceived differs in various cultures, so comprehensive studies on the development of humor and the way humor occurs is needed. Although there is an international study that can be shown as an example for these kinds of studies (Guo et al, 2011), there is still a need to extend points of view on humor and culture.

To conclude, the number of both national and international studies on humor is increasing to explain humor in different aspects. Even though most of the studies focus on discovering what children laugh at, there still is a need to examine the relationships between humor and other factors, such as education and culture.

## **2.14. Summary**

This chapter tries to provide an insight about humor related literature. The literature was examined under 12 title: (1) definition of humor; (2) historical development of humor; (3) sense of humor; (4) laughter theories about humor; (5) contemporary theories about humor; (6) ToM; (7) humor development in children; (8) humor styles; (9) functions of humor; (10) positive and negative sides of humor; (11) humor in education and (12) studies related with humor.

Humor is about the feeling of pleasure or joy that is resulted by a communication, realization of an inconsistency or facing with a surprising situation (Ziv, 1989; Southam, 2005). The occurrence of humor is related about people's sense of humor which can be described as the skill of their understanding, appreciating or producing humor (Ilhan, 2005). To understand why people laugh and how they use humor, there are several theories. These theories try to provide in-depth understanding of humor. Also, to understand the difference between child and adult humor, these theories provide knowledge on how children develop humor abilities (McGhee, 1979).

Every people can differ in their humor behaviors or responses. Martin (2003) explains this situation with humor styles. People can have adaptive and maladaptive humor behaviors and these styles have different outcomes for their self and relationships with others. Even humor can be seen a basic source of joy, it contributes people's life in several aspect such as cognitive, social and emotional (Sümer, 2008). It can be also used as a tool in education to increase the quality of education (Steele, 1998). To understand these benefits, to find ways to use it in life and to assess it, there are several studies in both national and international context. However, there is still a need of conducting studies for especially understanding children's humor, humor in education and humor in Turkish context. This can contribute to not only

understanding of child humor and humor in classroom, but also understanding humor behaviors in our culture.

The following chapter can provide clearer understanding which ways were used to contribute the literature. That is why, the following chapter explain methodology including research questions, design of the study, participants, instrumentations, pilot study, data collection and analysis, and trustworthiness of the study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

In this chapter, the researcher provides details concerning the design of the study, participants, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures.

#### **3.1 Research Questions**

The aim of the study is to explore what makes children in early childhood laugh and how they use humor. This research also aims to reveal early childhood teachers' views on humor, humor in early childhood education, and children's humor behaviors in the classroom. To be able to achieve these aims, in the current study, the researcher focused on finding the answers to the following questions:

**RQ1:** What humorous factors do five-six years old children include in their drawings?

**RQ2:** How do five-six years old children explain humorous factors in the provided visual?

**RQ3:** What are the early childhood teacher's views on humor?

**RQ4:** What are the early childhood teacher's views on using humor in their class?

**RQ5:** How do teachers describe the children's sense of humor and humor styles of the children in their class?

#### **3.2 Design of the study**

This study aimed to collect in-depth data from children about their understanding and production of humor and gather teachers' views on humor in the classroom, and the children's use of humor. Qualitative research methods can serve this aim because they fit the nature of the research. According to Creswell (2007),

phenomenological research enables researchers to collect data on the experiences of an individual or their views on a specific concept or situation. Therefore, in the current study, the researcher used phenomenological research and, as suggested by Creswell (2007), interviewed the participants to obtain direct responses on the topic.

### **3.4 Participants**

Children aged 60 to 66 months and their teachers were included in the study. For young children, it can be hard to understand and express their ideas because of language development; however, the age range of the participant children was considered as appropriate for this study. Convenience sampling was adopted, in which the participants are selected according to their accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Creswell, 2007). These children were chosen from public preschools in Tokat, the city in which the researcher lives, and thus gave her easy access to the schools, teachers and parents, and to collect the data. For the present study, the 22 young children chosen from five classrooms in a public preschool were those whose parents and teacher had given permission to participate.

In addition to the children, their teachers were also included in the study. Five preschool teachers working at a public preschool in Tokat was also interviewed concerning humor and the children's humor. Since they know children and can observe children in terms of humor appreciation and humor production, these teachers provided the anticipated data. The researcher had the opportunity to analyze whether there was consistency between what children found funny and what teachers considered were the things what children would find amusing. In this way, the researcher was able to estimate whether the teachers were aware of the development of the children's humor and undertake observations on this process. The demographic information of the children and teachers is given in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively.

Of the 22 children aged 60 – 66 months included in the study, 10 were female and 12 were male. Pseudonyms were given to children from C1 to C22. The children attended preschool either in the morning or afternoon. Three of the five classrooms were morning classrooms, and two were afternoon classrooms. Four or five children from each classroom participated in the study.

Table 1

*Demographic Data of Children Participating in the Study*

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Classroom-Teacher
C1	5	Boy	T1
C2	5	Boy	T1
C3	6	Girl	T1
C4	5	Girl	T1
C5	5	Girl	T1
C6	5	Boy	T2
C7	5	Boy	T2
C8	5	Girl	T2
C9	5	Girl	T2
C10	5	Boy	T3
C11	5	Girl	T3
C12	5	Boy	T3
C13	5	Girl	T4
C14	5	Boy	T4
C15	5	Boy	T4
C16	5	Girl	T4
C17	5	Boy	T5
C18	5	Boy	T5
C19	5	Girl	T5
C20	5	Boy	T5
C21	5	Boy	T5
C22	5	Boy	T5

Table 2

*Demographic Data of Teachers*

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Type of University Attended	Years of Experience
T1	39	Female	Public University	16
T2	29	Female	Public University	7
T3	39	Female	Public University	16
T4	26	Female	Public University	4
T5	35	Female	Public University	8

Data was collected from early childhood teachers who are working and preschool children who are studying at a public preschool in Tokat. In total, five teachers were interviewed, all of whom were female. Pseudonyms for the teachers were assigned from T1 to T5. The age range of the teachers was 26 to 39, and all graduated from public universities with a bachelor's degree. Their teaching experience varied from four to 16 years. All of the teachers taught five-year-old children. Since the interview questions concerned humor, and children's humor development and humor usage in early childhood education classroom, it was important to include information on the teachers' background and whether they had attended a seminar or course related with humor. However, the teachers' responses showed none of them had attended a seminar or course on this topic. In fact, one teacher stated that she did not even think about necessity of humor in classroom.

Concerning the number of participants in qualitative studies, there are different ideas; for example, Polkinghorne (1989) argued that in a phenomenological

study, the number of participants should be between five and 25. For the current study, the participants consisted 22 children and five teachers, which is in keeping with Polkinghorne's suggestion.

### **3.4.1. Context of the School**

Data were collected from a public school in Tokat. This school is placed in the city center of the Tokat city. The school has ten classrooms, and it provides education for three, four- and five-years old children. There are ten preschool teachers and one guidance counselor who contributes education in the school. 189 children are attending this school in total, and about 100 of them are at the age of five. The participants of the study were chosen among these 100 children in sample selection. The school has both morning and noon classrooms, and it provides half day education. There are also some courses about art, chess, mind games, English, religion etc. that are provided for children.

### **3.5. Instruments**

To collect data, the researcher used semi-structured questions for both the children and teachers. With the help of the literature, conducting a pilot study and taking expert opinion, the final version of the questions was developed. Expert opinion was obtained from two assistant professors and one associate professor from the early childhood education department. In addition to the questions, a humorous visual was chosen from a child's picture book using the Evaluation Form of Humorous Factors in Children's Books developed by Johnson (2010). This form was adapted to Turkish by Akıncı (2015) (see Appendix A). This form examines humor in picture books in terms of the visual, verbal and situational aspects; however, for the current study, using the visual part of the form alone was sufficient. The researcher checked the visuals from the children's picture book that were suitable for 60-72 months and eliminated those visuals that were not appropriate in accordance with the expert opinion and the result of the pilot study. Finally, one visual was selected and used for all of the children (Appendix D). The books that were examined by using the form is found from two most common bookstore in Ankara. Every book that are stated in children's picture book category were examined, and the photograph of the visual were taken that could serve the study. the necessary permissions were

taken from the owners of the bookstore were taken before taking the picture of books' pages. Among 80 books were examined in terms of their visuals. The final visual was chosen from the book named "Ben Sandalye Değilim" that was written by Ross Burach and translated by Nuran Hatırnaz (2018).

At the beginning, the researcher asked the children to draw a "funny" picture (that makes them laugh) and presented them with questions to explain the idea behind their drawings. In this way, the researcher was able to understand how children produced humor and what elements they used. Then, the researcher posed semi-structured questions concerning the visual to obtain children's opinions about the humorous elements in the given visuals (see Appendix B).

Table 3

*Examples of the Semi-Structured Interview Questions the Children were Asked*

Category of Question	Example Questions
Views on drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you see in the picture?</li><li>• Do you think that it is funny?</li><li>• Why is it funny? Or what is it not funny? What are the factors that makes this picture funny?</li><li>• What would you add to this visual to make it funnier?</li></ul>

For the teacher part, the researcher also used semi-structured interview. With these questions, the researcher aimed to learn about teacher's views on humor, humor in classroom, their use of humor in classroom, and finally children's use of humor in classroom. Lastly, the researcher asked specific questions about the children who engage in humor and how these children used humor, what they laughed at and how it affected their relationship with children (see Appendix C). This question was posed to determine if there was consistency in children's drawings and teachers' views. Their answers provided data on what teachers knew about humor and their students in terms of humor. Teachers' knowledge is important because to provide activities

and classroom activities that encourage child humor development, teachers should know about humor, importance of humor, and child humor. Therefore, the results can reveal the teachers' weaknesses and strengths in terms of humor.

Table 4

*Interview Questions for Teachers*

Category of Question	Example Questions
Demographic Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which university that they graduated from?</li> <li>• What is your teaching experience year?</li> <li>• Have you ever taken any classes or seminars about humor?</li> </ul>
Views on Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does humor mean for you?</li> <li>• Do you use humor in with people in everyday life?</li> <li>• How and when do you use humor in your life?</li> </ul>
Views on Humor in Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you describe humor development in early ages?</li> <li>• What do you think about usage of humor in early childhood education?</li> <li>• How do you use humor in your classrooms?</li> </ul>
Views on Humor Development of Their Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you define the humor development of C*?</li> </ul>

### 3.6. Pilot Study

Before starting the data collection process, undertaking a short trial to determine how the instruments work and if they would serve the aim of the research

can be beneficial. A pilot study can provide this trial (Creswell, 2007). With the feedback from the pilot study and taking expert opinion on the required changes, the final version of the instruments and process can be obtained (Yin, 2011).

For the study, the researcher used visuals chosen from children's picture books, and the interview protocol was prepared for both teachers and children. Therefore, to determine whether the children understood and could give expected responses to the questions and visuals, the researcher conducted a pilot study. This pilot study is also necessary to make any necessary changes to the teacher's questions. For the pilot study, six children were included from one private preschool classroom together with the teachers ( $n = 2$ ) of these children. This pilot study allowed the researcher to see if the visuals and questions were appropriate to the context, and any necessary changes were made to the final version of the visuals and questions.

The pilot study was conducted in a private kindergarten in Tokat. In order to use the time efficiently, the pilot study was conducted in the summer period, and a private school was selected for convenience. The school is placed in the center of Tokat city. There are three, four- and five- years old children who are attending the school. There are both full time and half-time classes in the school, and it provides during both winter and summer periods. As a first step in the pilot study process, the researcher visited some private schools and met with the principals of the schools to discuss the content and aim of the study and whether they would give permission for the pilot. After gaining the permission from a school, the researcher went to the school and explained the study to the teachers of the selected classroom. In the class, there were eight participants aged of four to six. After the teacher introduced the researcher to the children, the data collection process started. Although the target population of the current study was five-year-old children, it was useful to see the younger and older children's reactions to the visuals and the way they drew the funny picture.

Initially, the researcher asked the children whether they liked drawing or what kind of drawings they made. Then, the researcher asked the children to draw a funny picture. This process was conducted as a group activity with all eight children, rather than working with children one to one. In this situation, the children felt comfortable

and this contributed to their drawings. While the children were drawing, the researcher did not interrupt them, only observing the children's conservations with their peers. At the end of the drawing part, two children had not completed their work and refused to explain their picture. One child stated that he missed his mother, and the other paid no attention to the researcher or teacher's request. This resulted in the researcher being able to talk to six children on a one-to-one basis about their stories. During this process, the researcher took notes on the children's answers.

As a result of the pilot study, it was observed that age was an important factor because children aged four had harder time expressing themselves when drawing and later explaining their drawing. However, the five-year-old children easily understood the researcher's request and provided relevant responses to the questions. According to the observations, all the six children liked the idea of making a funny drawing because they talked about their drawing with their peers and explained what they were doing. Making observations and taking notes during this process can be beneficial in the main study because children do not always share every detail that they tell their peers when the researcher asks the research questions.

Another reason why children may not want to talk much with the researcher can be because they do not feel comfortable with a new person. Even though the researcher introduces herself and engages in small talk with all the children before starting to ask questions, this may not be enough for children to feel close to this person. Also, they may find it difficult to understand what the researcher expects them to do, and in this situation, more explanation is needed. To overcome this difficulty, before the data collection process, it can be beneficial for the researcher to read the children a short story and talk to them about drawing and funny things. This can help the children think about what to draw. An example of an introductory short story is one about a child who like drawings and especially funny drawings and stopping from time to time to ask for the children's ideas. However, it is important in presenting the short story that it should not include examples that are used in the main study.

In the second part of the pilot study, the researcher asked the children to share their ideas on the visuals chosen from the children's picture books. These visuals

were selected using the Evaluation Form of Humorous Factors in Children's Books, and there were five categories. One visual for each category was shown to children one by one. These visuals were chosen from 30 visuals by taking expert opinion. To find the main visual to use in the study, the children's ideas were obtained, and they were asked what they thought about it, whether it was funny or why it was not. A visual was chosen according to the children's common responses, and then used in the main study. This visual was under the conceptual incongruity category in the form (Figure 1).



*Figure 1 Humorous Visual*

In the pilot study, the two teachers were interviewed by the researcher. There were 15 questions which had been created after taking expert opinions. After applying the questions to the teachers, it was observed that the questions were understood in a way that served the aim of the main study. The structure of the questions was suitable because the teachers did not have difficulty understanding them. Therefore, as a result of the pilot study, there were no changes in the teachers' interview questions.

### **3.7. Data Collection Procedure**

The necessary permissions from the University Ethics Committee and the Ministry of National Education were gathered prior to the data collection. With these permissions, the researcher contacted school principals and teachers to access the

children. A consent letter was sent to the teachers informing them about the study and procedure and asking them to sign a document that shows their acceptance to participate in the research. In addition to the permission taken from administrator, teachers and parents, the researcher also asked the children if they would like to participate in the study. To collect the desired data, children's willingness for participation is necessary, and before starting to collect data, the researcher contacted the children and informed them what they were expected to do and that they could leave the research study at any time.

After the necessary permissions were obtained, firstly, the researcher tried to develop a relationship with the participant children and increase their willingness to join the main study. In the pilot study, the children were shy and found it difficult to understand the requirements of the researcher. Thus, for the beginning of the main study, the researcher worked with the whole class and started by introducing herself and telling children what she was going to do. She explained, "Today, I will tell a story for you, and after that we will do an activity". Then, the researcher asked the children for ideas about what sort of story it could be. This conversation time allowed the researcher to learn about children and their names and for the, children to become familiar with the researcher. The researcher started to tell the story that she prepared using latches and rope to attract children's attention and provide enjoyable experiences. The text of the story presented to the children was as follows;

"There is a child called Ali. His most favorite activity is drawing, and every day, he makes a lot of drawings about what he sees around him. In the morning, he makes the drawing of himself by looking at the mirror. One day, Ali takes his pencils and papers, and goes outside. Firstly, he looks at the sky and he realizes that there a lot of clouds. Thus, he decides to make a drawing of the sky. After a while, he sees a car, a tree, and a house, and he makes the drawings about all of them. When he gets tired, he decides to go home, but on his way home, he sees something interesting. What can it be?".

At the end of the story, the children were encouraged to offer ideas about what Ali saw on his way home. After taking their ideas, the researcher explained that "The event was very funny. What could it be?"; thus, the researcher encouraged the

children think about what the funny thing could be. Rather than directly asking the children to create a funny drawing, this approach helped them to think about funny things that they could use in their drawing. The researcher then explained that Ali tried to draw this event, but he could not because he did not know how to create a funny drawing, so he needed help from the children to make a funny drawing for them. Therefore, he wants help from the children to make a funny drawing for them. Here, researcher asked if they could make a funny drawing for Ali from children.

The story was read to all children in the classroom and all the children were involved in the drawing activity. However, the drawings included in the study were chosen from the children whose parents gave permissions, including those who wanted to share and talk about their drawing and created a drawing considering the “funniness” concept. Because some children created drawings that were not connected to the story, the researcher made some eliminations from these drawings. The storyline is provided through pictures in Figure 2.



*Figure 2 The storyline used in the data collection process*

To ensure that the children felt comfortable in communicating with the research, the data was collected in their classroom. After gaining permission from the parents and teachers, audio recording was used to avoid the risk of missing some of the data. The researcher also took notes during the interviews. While the children were drawing, the researcher did not interfere with their choices of crayons and colors. After they finished their drawings, the researcher asked each child to talk

about the funny elements and story behind the drawing through one to one interview. Because they made their drawing in classroom, their answers were also taken in a quiet part of the classroom. This process took about 30 to 40 minutes with the story reading part.

In the second part, the researcher showed the visual taken from the picture books and asked the questions prepared with the help of the literature and revised according to expert opinion and the results of the pilot study. This activity was conducted after the drawing activity to avoid the children's drawings being affected by the visuals; for example, they could copy elements from the visual taken from the books, and this could affect the originality of their drawings. Children's answers were taken during one to one interview in a separate room to obstruct distractions. Because researcher develop communication in the first part of the study, children felt comfortable to share their answers in one to one interview. This process took 10 or 15 minutes for each child.

For the final part of the study that was conducted with the teachers, the researcher asked semi-structured questions, but before this, she gave information about the confidentiality of research. To avoid missing important data, the researcher asked the teachers to give their permission for audio recording. Although all the participants gave permission, the researcher would still take full notes during the interviews. During the interviews, the researcher-maintained eye contact and listened actively to the interviewee, and if necessary, for clarification, the researcher asked further questions. At the end of the interview, the researcher asked if the interviewee wanted to add anything, and if required, the researcher offered to give further information about the research. The answers were taken in a separate room through one to one interview to obstruct distractions. This process took about 20 to 30 minutes for each participant. As a result of the data collection part, the researcher transcribed all the data and entered in a word processing program. In addition, the children's drawings were scanned to the computer. Then, the data analysis process started.

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

First, the audio recording was transcribed by the researcher. In qualitative research, coding allows providing an understanding of chunks of data and capture the

major points in the provided answers (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Therefore, for responses from the teachers and children, the main points were coded. This coding process were held with two different coders. These coders have master's degree on early childhood education and working as a research assistant in faculty of education at different public universities. After they created their codes, the results were compared with the researcher's codes and final codes were created. Almost all of the codes were match among three coders. However, there are some word changes made to make understanding easier by choosing more general terms. All of the three coder's agreements were ensured. For the children, the codes were analyzed using McGhee's humor development stages and Martin's humor styles. From this analysis, the researcher tried to determine what made children laugh, the elements they used in producing humor, and if it was possible to make estimations on their humor styles. Having these old theories can be seen as limitation of the current study because there are changes in today's word and the perspectives of children's development. Also, especially in McGhee's theory, age ranges are broad, so when we consider how fast children's development in early childhood years (Shonkoff & Philips, 2000). Even these can be seen as limitation for the study, still because it provides detained, accepted and universal descriptions on humor development, it was under in analyzing process.

### **3.9. Trustworthiness of the Study**

#### **3.9.1. Validity**

Both in qualitative and quantitative research, validity and reliability is important to ensure quality of the data (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Misleading data is the greatest concern in qualitative research because participants can hide their normal behaviors and responses. There are several ways to avoid this; for example, learning about the participants and observing their language and vocabulary to understand what they say and what they actually mean (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). In addition, the researcher can take notes about concerning the participant's behavior during the interview to help detect discordant answers and behaviors (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). An external audit reviewing the research can also support validity and reliability (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). In particular, when

the participants are children, their active behavior can make it hard for the researcher to catch every detail; thus, it can be helpful for a second person to review the research.

In qualitative research, the data obtained is mostly dependent on factors related to the researcher, such as his/her bias, behavior and other characteristics. Creswell (2007) describes eight different strategies to minimize the effect of these factors and states that two of the strategies are enough for validity. In the current study, a peer review strategy was used, defined as having two coders separately code the data and check the consistency between the codes (Creswell, 2007). The second strategy was the rich, thick description that was provided, allowing the other reader to transfer the results into other settings (Creswell, 2007).

### **3.9.2. Reliability**

In qualitative research, there are several ways to support reliability. Detailed field notes obtained from a detailed transcript and good-quality recording is one way (Creswell, 2007) and having two coders is another way to ensure reliability. The latter involves checking the stability between two coders and determining the differences and similarities between the codes. This process can provide inter-coder agreement (Creswell, 2007). In the current study, from the results of two different coders, the necessary changes were made in the analysis process. The audio records were transcribed by two different researchers to ensure that all detail in the data was preserved. As a result of this process, general titles and categories were determined to provide the data in more meaningful context.

### **3.10. Role of Researcher**

While conducting qualitative research, the data collection tool is the researcher. Therefore, data can be affected by the researcher's individual features, attitude, values, biases, and assumptions. (Creswell, 2007). To protect the data and interpret it as it is, the objectivity of the researcher is important. That is, while collecting the data, the researcher should be careful not to affect the participants' answers with his/her behaviors or statements, or by making the participants uncomfortable (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). In addition, the way the researcher should form the questions in the same for each participant because of order of

questions or the way they are posed can affect the responses. Confidentiality and ethical considerations are important for research, and the researcher is the one who is provider of these issues (Creswell, 2007).

In the current study, the role of researcher was important for data collection and analyzing process. Because there are three different data collection parts, the planning and maintaining processes are important. In the study, there are both children and teachers who participated to the study. It was important to set close relationships with children to gain children's trust. It was required for the study to have children's willingness to the study. Therefore, researcher started data collection process with story reading. She read the story that she prepared and tell it by using rope and clothespin to take children's attention. Using the story with this method helped to take children's attention and increase the communication between researcher and children. During one to one interview, children felt more comfortable in providing their answers and drawings with the researcher. Even story reading is a part of children's drawing part, because the relationship between researcher and children developed, it affects the second data collection part that is about taking children's ideas on visual. For all process spent with children, researcher tried to use a language suitable for children, and tried not to force them to answer. She also tried to answer children's questions even they are unrelated to the study.

For teachers' part, researcher again used some ice-breakers and used a positive language in communicating with them. in this way, participants felt more comfortable in sharing their answers. Researcher did not use ant judgmental or leading statements not to affect participants answers. In this way, the researcher tried to take teachers' actual answers.

### **3.11. Ethical Considerations**

In qualitative research, ethical considerations are crucial. The physical and physiological wellbeing and identities of the participants should be protected. Informing the participants about confidentiality and explaining that they can quit the study when they wish is a way to support ethics. The researcher should also respect the participants in terms of their identities, backgrounds and responses. The researcher should not lie or mislead the participants.

In the study, audio recording was used but without the permission of the participants, audio records should not be used, and the data from the records should be transferred without change (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Asking leading questions can also harm ethics. Having an impartial attitude can make the participants feel more comfortable in sharing their ideas. For the trustworthiness of the study, it is essential to report the participants' actual answers (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

In research with children, ethical consideration gains more importance because researcher should consider the possible factors that can harm the child. Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, (2012) suggest that informing parents or caregiver about the research and obtaining a signature as acceptance of joining the research were beneficial in preventing refusal to join the research. When giving the parents/caregiver information, the researcher should not adopt a diagnostician approach since this can make parents feel uncomfortable concerning the research. However, it is the children's willingness that is the most important aspect of any study. Even if the researcher obtains the necessary permission from parents/caregiver, if child does not want to participate, they cannot be coerced (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

In this chapter, the data collected from the children and teachers will be analyzed in line of research questions. The categories and codes will be provided in tables. Related quotes will be also placed to make the codes clearer. The data aims to display both the children's humor production and appreciation and the teacher's views and use of humor in early childhood education classrooms. Therefore, beginning with providing participants demographic information, the findings of the research will be presented in parallel with research questions. In order to create meaningful patterns in data, codes were created from transcriptions without affecting the meaning of the actual responses. These codes will be also used in the presentation of the data.

#### **4.1. RQ1: What Humorous Factors Do Five-Six Years Old Children Include in Their Drawings?**

In order to determine the factors that children include in their drawing, first the children were asked to make a funny drawing and they were given enough time to complete their drawings. After they finished the drawings, the researcher asked the following questions: “*what are the things in your drawing?*”, “*what are they doing in the drawing?*”, and “*what are the things that make this drawing funny?*”. In the analysis process, McGhee's humor development stages and the definitions of Martin's Humor Styles were used in the description of children's humor production. The categories from the Evaluation Form of Humorous Factors in Children's Books developed by Johnson (2010) related to McGhee's stages were also used in this process. In relation to these categories, the children's comments on their drawings are given in Table 5.

Table 5

*Factors included in funny drawings*

Categories	Codes
Conceptual incongruity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big-small people (n=3)</li> <li>• Giving human features to inanimate elements (n=4)</li> <li>• Giving animal features to people (n=1)</li> <li>• Unusual physical features (n=7)</li> <li>• Unusual combination of things (n=2)</li> </ul>
Physical deformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unusual size and number of body parts (n=4)</li> <li>• Unusual shape-color of body parts (n=5)</li> </ul>
Caricature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hurting someone or being hurt by someone (n=9)</li> <li>• Unusual-inappropriate behaviors of things (n=4)</li> </ul>
Exaggeration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exaggerated number of things (n=2)</li> <li>• Exaggerated size of things (n=2)</li> </ul>
Costume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clown (n=5)</li> <li>• Nurse (n=1)</li> </ul>

**4.1.1. Category 1 Conceptual Incongruity**

This category concerns the illogical and unusual items that the children included in their drawings based on the definition provided by Johnson (2010). Thirteen of the children included items or storylines that were conceptually incongruous.

#### 4.1.1.1. Big-Small People (n=3)

In their drawings, three of the participants included people that were excessively big or small. As an example of this code, C2's drawing and his/her description of the drawing are given in Figure 3. In this drawing, C2 depicted humor based on the contrast between the size of a person and that of the world.

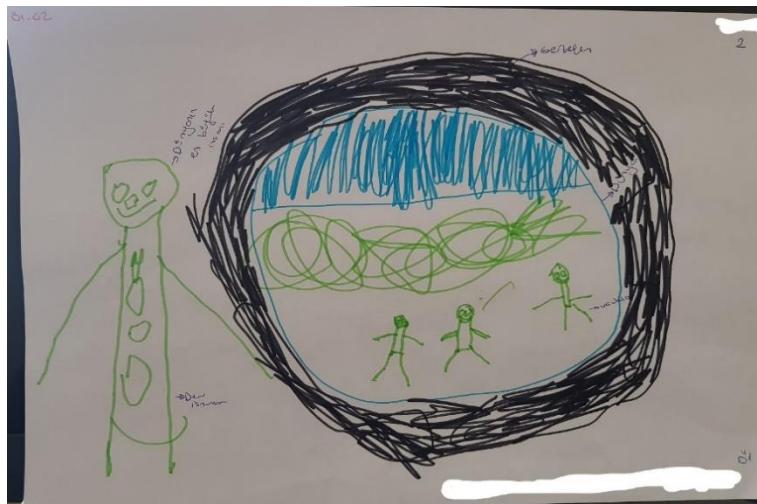


Figure 3 C2's drawing

There is a very big person in the drawing. This person is so big, he is even bigger than the world. Thus, he likes to play with the world as a ball.

Another child, C12, provided several examples of this code in his/her drawings and their description (Figure 4).

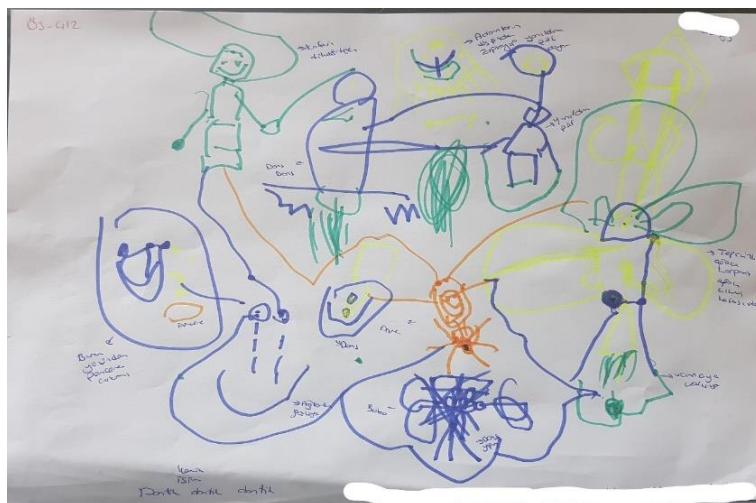


Figure 4 C12's drawing

There is a mother and father in the drawing who are dwarves. They have 100 children and all of these children are giants. The dwarf parents having giant children is funny.

#### 4.1.1.2. Giving Human Features to Unliving Things (n=4)

The children also produced humor by ascribing different features to unliving things. They explained that being illogical was funny for them, and therefore creating unusual features or physical characteristics assigned to unexpected things made their drawing funny. C3's drawing and description are given as an example of this category (Figure 5).



Figure 5 C3's drawing

There is a crazy world. This world has six arms and four legs. This world has strange behaviors. It jumps, crawls, tumbles in the air. It has a UFO turning around on its head. Sometimes it sticks out its tongue. It is a very crazy drawing.

C14's drawing also had similar illogical features (Figure 6).



Figure 6 C14's drawing

There is a tree that is surprised because it is raining. When it starts to rain, the tree is surprised. This tree also has legs and arms.

#### 4.1.1.3. Giving Animal Features to People (n=1)

In addition to giving human features to unliving things, giving animal features is also something the children did in creating their funny drawings. C6 provided a drawing from this category (Figure 7).

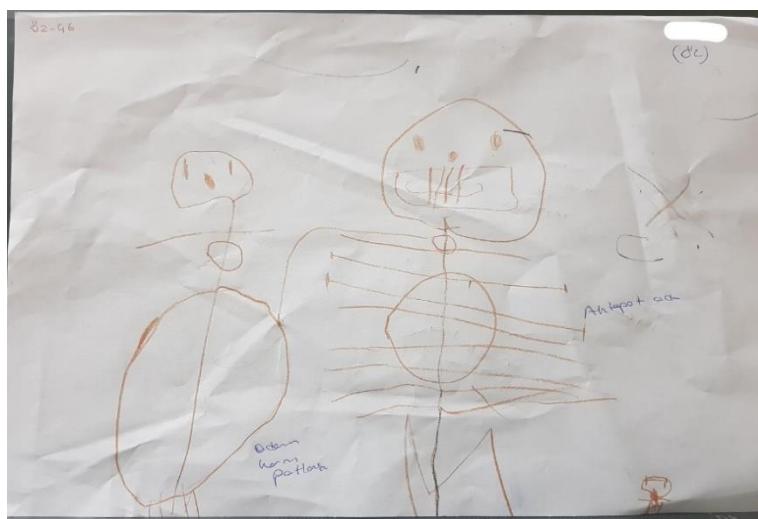


Figure 7 C6's drawing

There are two men in the drawing. One of them has a bloated belly. The other is an octopus man. He has many arms like octopus. With his one hand, he blows up the other man's belly.

#### **4.1.1.4. Unusual Physical Features (n=7)**

According to the findings in their pictures, most children gave people unusual physical features. They explained the reason why this was funny by stating that people had certain features, such as eyes, arms and other body parts; therefore, if there were differences, it was funny. C13's drawing, shown in Figure 8, is an example of this code because it depicts a girl with a moustache. It is funny for C13 because it is strange for a girl to have a moustache.



*Figure 8 C13's drawing*

There is a weird girl with a moustache. She also has more than one leg and a bottom on her belly. These are funny.

#### **4.1.1.5. Unusual Combination of Things (n=2)**

The last code of the first category is about strange combinations of things. According to children's responses to their drawings, there can be humor if there are two things together that would not be possible to see in normal conditions. C4's drawing in Figure 9 is an example of this.



*Figure 9 C4's drawing*

There is a turtle planet in the drawing. It is funny because it is weird. Its name is also funny. (the turtle planet is on the right of the drawing and drawn with pink.)

#### **4.1.2. Category 2 Physical Deformity**

This category consists of misshapen or malformed body parts in people. The children included these kinds of elements in their drawings and explained that a person with a bigger head was funny since we normally do not have a head like that.

#### **4.1.2.1. Unusual Size and Number of Body Parts (n=4)**

Some of the participants created deformity by making unusual changes to the size and number of body parts. They also explained the funny things caused by these unusual sized body parts in their stories as shown in C17's drawing and description (Figure 10).

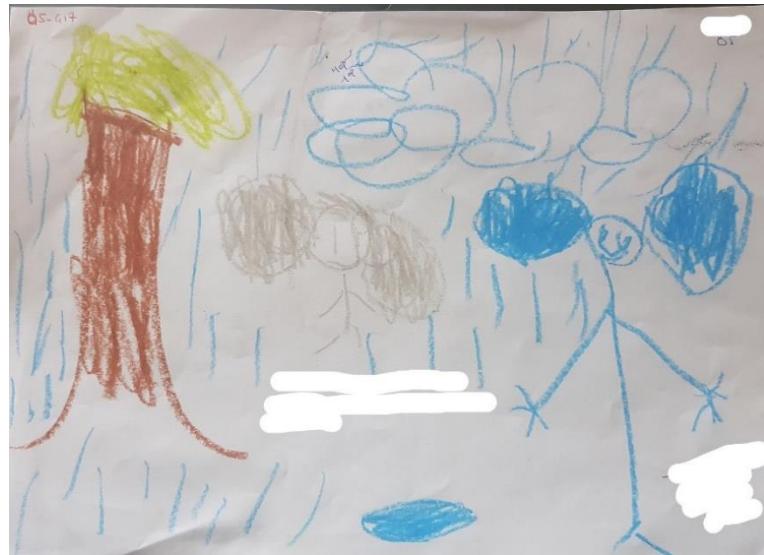


Figure 10 C17's drawing

There are two men in the drawing. One of them has ears that are too big. He tries to lower his head, but he cannot because his ears are too big. The other man also has big ears. His body is also too long. Thus, when he tries to touch to the floor with his hands, he cannot because of his length.

Another example of this category can be seen in C7's drawing (Figure 11).

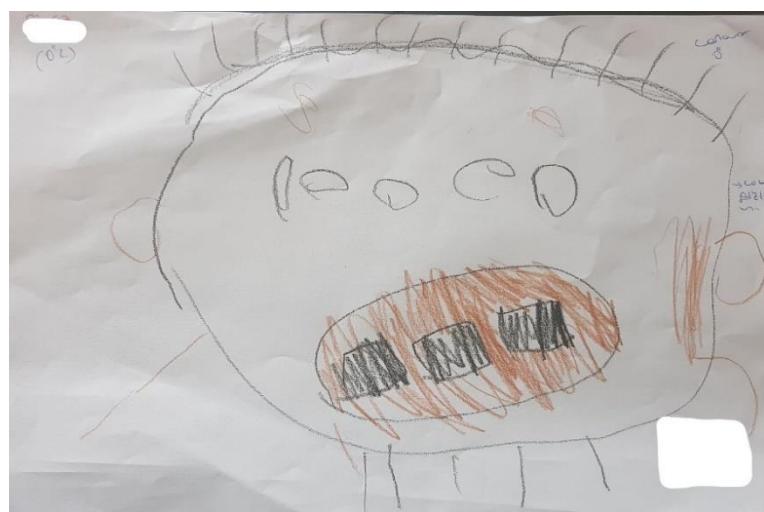


Figure 11 C7's drawing

There is a monster man. He has so many eyes. He makes other people surprised and scared.

C11's drawing also includes physical deformation (Figure 12).



Figure 12 C11's drawing

There is a weird boy in the drawing. There are four eyelashes on one eye, but only three eyelashes on the other eye. His ears are a different color. His head is too big and his body is too small. He also has two chins.

#### 4.1.2.2. Unusual Shape-Color of Body Parts (n=5)

The child participants also created physical deformity by making changes to shape and color of body parts. Adding different colors or shapes also seemed funny for the children as shown in the clown drawn by C4 (Figure 13).



Figure 13 C4's drawing

There is a clown in the drawing. Her eyes are a different shape and color. Her hair mixed with rain and mouth is weird.

C11's drawing also includes physical deformation in terms of shape and color (Figure 14).



Figure 14 C11's drawing

There is a weird boy in the drawing. His ears are different colors of blue and green.

#### 4.1.3. Category 3 Caricature

When there was a ludicrous situation concerning the characters in the drawing, it was placed in this category. In addition to their drawings, in their stories, the children talked about the items related to the caricature.

##### 4.1.3.1. Hurting Someone or Being Hurt by Someone (n=9)

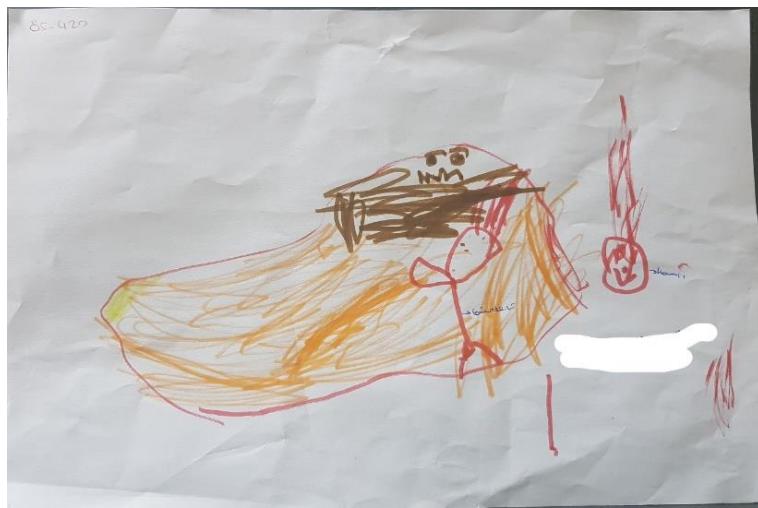
Nine of the participants included in their drawings and stories situations in which the character hurt someone or was hurt by others. They also depicted people who were crying or were in pain because of the situations in the drawings. For example, the main character in the drawing of C18 was unhappy because of his fight between his friends, which is explained in the text below the drawing (Figure 15).



*Figure 15 C18's drawing*

There is a child who is playing. This child is making his friends wet with the water on the floor. Because of this, his friends become sad. After that, his friends make him wet and this time he is sad. And this is funny.

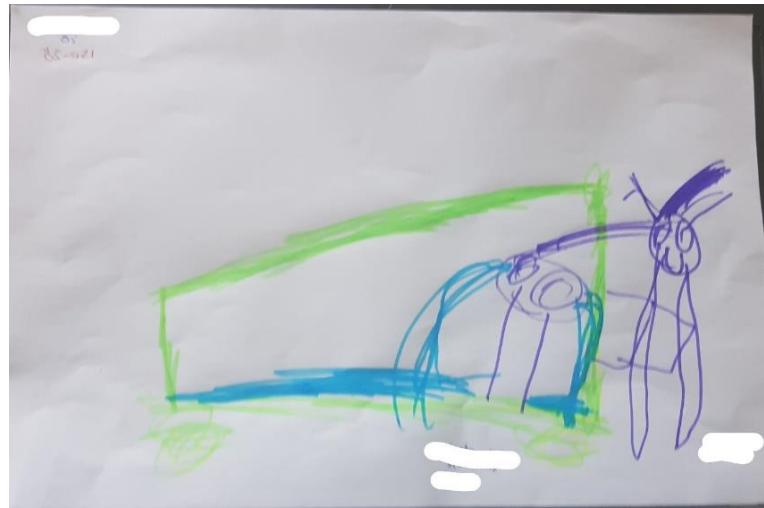
C20's drawing shows an accident and a child in pain (Figure 16);



*Figure 16 C20's drawing*

In the drawing, a car is crushing the boy's body and his head is falling apart. His body stays in the car and his head bursts outside. There is blood everywhere.

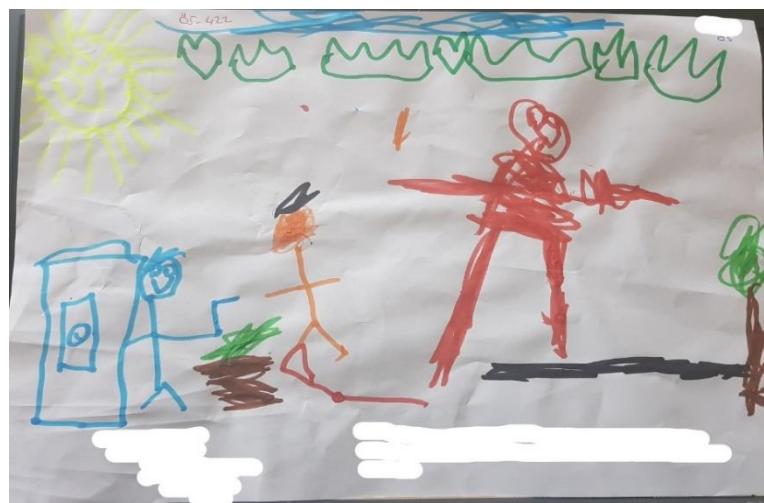
C21 showed a car but added a person laughing at the young girl in pain (Figure 17).



*Figure 17 C21's drawing*

In the drawing, there is a girl whose hair is jammed in the car's door. The girl is crying, so everywhere in the car is getting wet. The boy outside of the car is laughing at the girl because he closed the door.

A further example is C22's drawing including aggressive behavior (Figure 18).

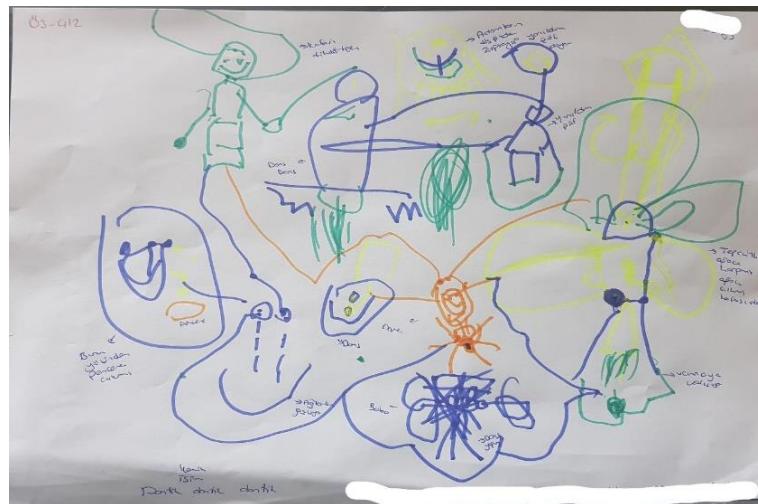


*Figure 18 C22's drawing*

In this picture, there is a frying pan on the floor. There's a crepe in the pan. The red robot hits the pan and the crepe jumps and sticks to his face. Her face is burning. The sun is laughing. Then the blue man throws fire with a bead gun in his hand. This time the mud leaps over. The other orange boy laughs at it.

#### **4.1.3.2. Unusual-Inappropriate Behaviors of Things (n=4)**

In addition to hurting others, weird behaviors were also funny for the children; furthermore, dancing, jumping or trying to fly were all funny ideas for some participants and they included these items to add humor to their drawing. In his/her drawing, C12 provided several examples of this code (Figure 19).



*Figure 19 C12's drawing*

There are dancing people, and they laugh when they make mistakes and they say, "I made a mistake, argh". There is also a child who is laughing while he is crying.

C16 also produced humor by presenting inappropriate behaviors of the character in the drawing (Figure 20).



*Figure 20 C16's drawing*

In the drawing, there is a clown mother. She sticks out her tongue and showing her breast to everyone.

#### 4.2.4. Category 4 Exaggeration

This category includes overstatement of the things in terms of size, number, and feelings. Some participants not only used unrealistic numbers of the things in their humor but also exaggerated the sizes of the items in their drawings.

##### 4.1.4.1. Exaggerated Number of Things (n=2)

The first code of the fourth category was the provision of an extensive number of the things in their drawing. Some participants used this idea in the creation of their funny drawing and explained the humor by the impossibility of having that number in a typical situation. The drawing of C12 provides an example of this (Figure 21).

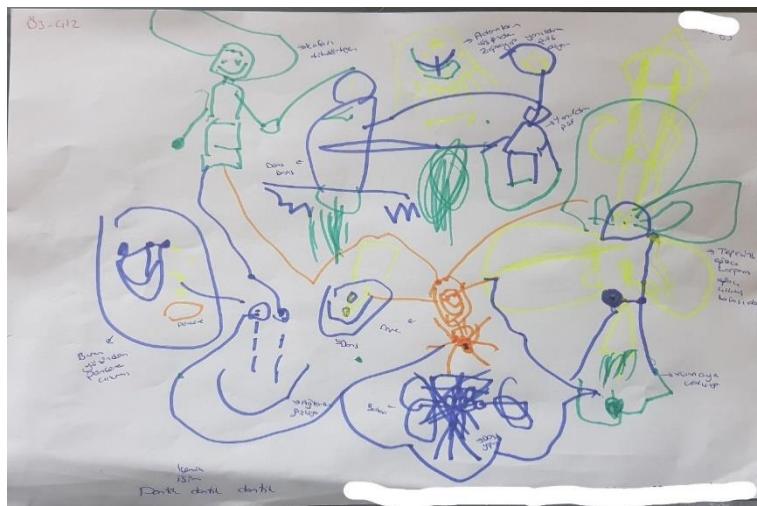


Figure 21 C12's drawing

In the drawing, there is a mother and father. They have 100 children and it is impossible to have that many children. So, it is funny.

##### 4.1.4.2. Exaggerated Size of Things (n=2)

Drawing things that are not a size in keeping with their actual dimensions or in relation to the other items around them was another way that some children used to incorporate humor into their drawing.

C19 provided an example of this category by drawing both smaller and bigger items (Figure 22).



*Figure 22 C19's drawing*

There is a big girl. She comes home but because she is too big and her home is too small, she cannot enter her house.

#### **4.1.5. Category 5 Costume**

In this category, the children's drawings include characters with a costume. The funny thing about the costumes are that they are irrelevant for the situation in the drawing, and this meaningless match creates humor in the picture.

##### **4.1.5.1. Clown (n=5)**

Five of the participants included a clown in their drawing. Wearing colorful clothes and acting out funny behaviors are the specific characteristics of these clowns. C19's drawing demonstrates an example of a clown who experienced a funny and interesting situation (Figure 23).

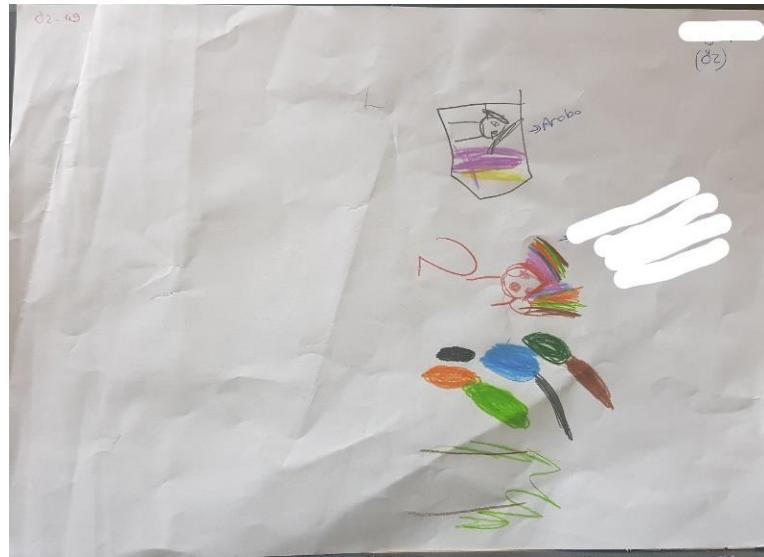


Figure 23 C19's drawing

There is a clown in the drawing and he is in a car accident. After the car accident, he falls onto a tree.

C16 also drew a clown that was unusual (Figure 24).



Figure 24 C16's drawing

In the drawing, there is a clown mother. A woman clown is funny. She is behaving weirdly.

#### 4.1.5.2. Nurse (n=1)

One participant (C5) drew a nurse together with other unrelated characters. This appeared to be the child's way of creating humor (see Figure 25).



Figure 25 C5's drawing

There is a nurse, a clown, and a world with ten legs and three eyes. This is funny because there are so many weird elements.

#### 4.2. RQ2: How Do Five-Six Years Old Children Explain Humorous Factors in The Provided Visual?

After asking the children to create funny drawings and explain the stories in the drawings, the researcher also showed one humorous visual, and asked the children questions to gather their ideas about the picture. Using Johnson's (2010) Evaluation Form of Humorous Factors in Children's Books, five visuals were chosen from every category in the form from a children's book. After taking expert opinion and according to the outcome of the pilot study, the visuals were determined. The visuals referred to conceptual incongruity. An example is given in Figure 26. In order to elicit the children's ideas, questions were posed, such as "*What do you see in the drawing?*", "*What do you think about this drawing?*", and "*Is that funny? Why?*", and the children's responses to these questions are discussed below.



*Figure 26 Humorous Visual (Conceptual incongruity)*

To provide a clearer understanding, the visual in Figure 26 was used to elicit the children's responses to different aspects in the picture. First, the categories and codes about conceptual incongruity were obtained. All the children were able to describe the characters in the drawing, and they could talk about the animals in the drawing. Apart from one child (C4), the children thought it was a funny drawing. The children were asked why they found the drawing funny, and their responses are presented in Table 6 based on the categories from the literature.

Table 6

*Children's views on the humorous visual*

Categories	Codes
Conceptual incongruity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair giraffe (n=19)</li> </ul>
Caricature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amazed face (n=6)</li> </ul>

#### **4.2.1. Conceptual Incongruity**

This category was taken from the literature and Johnson's (2010) Evaluation Form of Humorous Factors in Children's Books prepared in the light of McGhee's humor development theory was used. The following code is discussed under this category.

##### **4.2.1.1. Chair Giraffe (n=19)**

The children mentioned that a giraffe is not chair; however, other animals are sitting on it. 19 of the participants found this situation funny. For example, the comments of C2 were "The hippopotamus is reading book, and the rabbit is sleeping. However, they do this on the giraffe. A giraffe is not a chair. This is funny." Other children had similar ideas on the drawing "Normally, giraffe is not a chair. However, other animals use it as chair. It is funny (C20)."

However, C4 did not find the drawing funny and explained why this drawing was not humorous as follows; "The hippopotamus is just sitting, and the rabbit is just reading a book. And here, the rabbit is laughing. These are not funny things. They are normal. Because they are sitting on a giraffe, it can be a little funny, but not that much."

#### **4.2.2. Category 2 Caricature**

This category is about the ludicrous experiences of the characters, and some children laughed at the reaction of the giraffe. The code related to category 2 is discussed below.

##### **4.2.2.1. Amazed Face (n=6)**

On seeing this visual, some of the children laughed at the facial expressions of the animals. In the visual, the giraffe is shocked because the other animals are sitting on it. This amazed face was found to be funny by six children and described by two of the children. First, C7 stated "The rabbit closed its eyes. Its face (pointing to the giraffe) is very funny because it is amazed when the animals sat on it." C15 offered a similar response "It is funny that the giraffe is amazed. It is amazed because the rabbit is sleeping on it. This face is funny."

The children were also asked to share ideas how to make this drawing funnier. The question, “*What to add to make these visual funnier?*”, was posed to the children and according to their answers, the category and codes were determined (Table 7).

Table 7

*Children's views to make the visual funnier*

Categories	Codes
Exaggeration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding other characters (n=6)</li> <li>• Adding animals (n=2)</li> </ul>
Caricature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding different actions (n=8)</li> </ul>
No comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (n=3)</li> </ul>

#### **4.2.3. Category 1 Exaggeration**

As stated for the previous categories, this category was also taken from the literature. An overstatement of the things in children's statements was evaluated under this category. Even if the way of presenting the overstatement was different, all the children referred to exaggeration in their comments.

##### **4.2.3.1. Adding Other Characters (n=6)**

To increase the humor level in the visual, meaningless situations with irrelevant characteristics were preferred by the participants. For example, C4 suggested “We can add a clown. He has weird and funny behaviors. The other animals would laugh at him and the visual would become funnier.”

##### **4.2.3.2. Adding Animals (n=2)**

For some of the children, increasing the number of the characters would also be funnier. An example of this category is C3's comment by saying that “We can all put more hippopotamuses and rabbits in the drawing. They could all sit on the giraffe and this would be funnier.”

#### **4.2.4. Category 2 Caricature**

Ridiculous situations were another idea for making the visual funnier and eight children gave their preference to add this kind of item in the provided visual.

##### **4.2.4.1. Adding Different Actions (n=9)**

In order to make the visual funnier, some of the children said they would add different activities into the drawing. They stated that if there were different movement or situations, they would laugh more. C12 describes a way of doing this “If the hippopotamus sat on the giraffe’s head, it would be funnier. Even the rabbit could sit on the head. They could also dance on it. These would make the visual funnier.” C16 presented another idea to make the visual funnier “We can throw some water onto the animals, so they can be surprised or get angry.”

C10 explained by saying that “We can add a monster to the visual. We can also add a car to the visual. The giraffe can get on the car. This is funny because giraffes do not normally use cars.”

“Finally, C22 offered another suggestion “We can throw crepe on their face. We can also add something to their faces like a beard. This would be weird. I would laugh more if there were those things.”

#### **4.2.5. Category 2 No Comment**

Three children stated that there was nothing that could be done to make the visual funnier because it was already funny, and they did not offer any ideas in response to this question.

### **4.3. RQ3: What Are Early Childhood Teacher’s Views on Humor?**

Under this research question, teacher’s views on humor and how they explained children’s humor development were analyzed by asking the teachers questions, such as “*how do you describe humor?*” and “*what is the humor’s position in people’s life?*”. The categories and codes about the teacher’s ideas are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

*Teachers' views about humor*

Categories	Codes
Personal Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Way of criticizing (n=1)</li> <li>• Enjoyment source (n=2)</li> <li>• Device to lead thinking (n=1)</li> <li>• Way of self-expression (n=1)</li> <li>• Need for satisfaction in life (n=4)</li> <li>• Tool to look from the positive point of view (n=1)</li> </ul>
Social Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication without hurting others (n=1)</li> <li>• Way of communicating with children (n=1)</li> </ul>

**4.3.1. Category 1 Personal Tool**

In interviews, the teachers mentioned that there were different ways of using humor and their views concerning humor were related to personal issues. The teachers perceived humor as something that affected people's personal situations, such as their thinking style and life style.

**4.3.1.1. Way of Criticizing (n=1)**

One of the participants argued that humor was a tool that led people to develop critical thinking. By using humor, people could think in critical ways and develop a different view of the events around them. This situation could also affect the way how they perceived the world, events and other people. T1described the way they used humor "I describe humor as keeping the judgmental aspects at the forefront. Criticizing comes to mind when you say humor. It is also about political issues because politicians also use humor while criticizing others."

#### **4.3.1.2. Enjoyment Source (n=3)**

Humor is also seen as a source of joy. People become happy and enjoy it when there is a humorous situation or when they use humor, it can be seen as a source of enjoyment. The following is T4's definition of humor "It is any kind of work that aims to make others laugh and enjoy themselves."

#### **4.3.1.3. Device to Lead Thinking (n=1)**

According to the teachers, in addition to making people laugh, humor also helped them to think and be more critical about the issues around them. T3 explained this effect as follows "Humor is connected to the things that make people think while laughing. Humor reflects the reality."

#### **4.3.1.4. Ways of Self-Expression (n=1)**

The teacher data shows that because humor is an enjoyable and easy way of communication, it helps people to express themselves in every situation. In every topic, humor can help to start and engage in conversation. As T5 comments about humor "It is a way to express the self in every aspect. It can be also the way to remember what they have in their mind."

#### **4.3.1.5. Need for Satisfaction in Life (n=4)**

Another use of humor related to people's personal needs is about satisfaction. According to the participants, due to humor, people can gain satisfaction in their lives. In stressful situations, humor helps to deal with the issues. T1 explained this process as;

Actually, it is a necessity. Whenever we go to the dining room or school managers' room, the need for humor can occur. If there is humor in every part of life, or if people engage in jokes in these areas, it offers people satisfaction in their lives. It is like a vitamin for people.

T3 had similar ideas concerning humor and satisfaction in people's lives; "Even choosing a movie to watch, I prefer comedy movies. It is important for people's life. I am not actually a funny person. I am mostly serious. However, I love people who make me laugh. I even chose my husband on this basis." T4 added to the

comments like; “Humor must exist. It is so necessary. We have a very intensive work load and humor helps us to relax. It is vital.”

#### **4.3.1.6. Tool to Look from the Positive Point of View (n=1)**

The last code of the first category concerned the use of humor in developing a positive point of view toward the world, event, problems, and people. There are always problems in people’s life, and it is not easy to get away from them. Therefore, people need to have positive point of view in order to deal with bad situations. The data in this study showed that the participants saw humor as a tool that promoted a positive point of view. T2’s comment is an example of this concept; “We experience many things that are both negative and positive. When there is humor, we can look at the negative events positively. We can develop a positive attitude toward bad and negative behaviors.”

#### **4.3.2. Category 2 Social Tool**

Humor is not only a personal aspect, it also has an effect on people’s social world. Socialization is one of the needs of people and this process is important in learning how they can understand and apply rules and values. Another important point is the way people communicate with each other, and this makes it easier to become a member of a social group. Humor was perceived as a tool by the teacher participants and they explained the function of humor in terms of communication.

##### **4.3.2.1. Communication without Hurting Others (n=1)**

Sometimes a person can hear something and feel hurt. Therefore, in order not to affect the relationships, it is important to find a suitable way of saying something that could be interpreted as a criticism. One of the participants argued that humor provided a way of changing the communication with others avoiding hurting the person. T3 explained this as follows; “Humor is the way to say things without hurting the other person. By saying something humorous before making an important comment.”

#### **4.3.2.2. Way of Communication with Children (n=1)**

The final code under this category concerns communicating with children. One of the participants said that it could be hard to communicate with children, but humor could be used to achieve contact and it could provide an opportunity to understand the children better. T5 explained the way this can be achieved as;

When we think about our family, we can use humor when interacting with our children. When the child wakes up in the morning, when s/he is getting dressed, we can make it into a play activity and use humor to help them dress. We can do this in every area. We do not approach them as if they were an adult. We do not say “go and put your clothes on”. In order to communicate with them from their perspective, we include humor. Even in encouraging to do their homework, we can include humor to reach the child. We do this unconsciously.

#### **4.4. RQ4: What Are Early Childhood Teacher's Views on Using Humor in Their Class?**

Teachers' views on humor in the early childhood period and early childhood classroom were also elicited during the interviews: “*How do you describe humor development in the early childhood education period?*”, “*What do you think about including humor in early childhood education?*” and “*What can be the possible benefits of humor for children's learning and development?*”. The responses to these questions are defined in terms of the categories and related codes in Table 9.

Table 9

*Teachers' views on humor in the early childhood period*

Categories	Codes
Developing an Interaction with Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing an attachment to the teacher (n=1)</li><li>• Communication without hurting others (n=1)</li></ul>

Table 9 (continued)

Supporting Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting cognitive development (n=1)</li> <li>• Supporting creative development (n=1)</li> </ul>
Facilitation of Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing developmentally appropriate learning (n=2)</li> <li>• Attracting attention (n=1)</li> </ul>

#### **4.4.3. Category 1 Developing an Interaction with Others**

As a result of the questions related to humor in early childhood education, the first category concerns how humor in classroom affects interactions with the teachers and others. Under this category, the teacher's views on how humor contribute to the relationships and communications in classroom is presented.

##### **4.4.3.1. Developing an Attachment to The Teacher (n=1)**

One of the participants argued that if the teacher used humor while interacting with children, there would be a closer and warmer relationship between the children and the teacher. This teacher (T1) explained this process as;

If a teacher uses humor, s/he can also establish a relationship with children. This helps to change the classroom environment from just teaching to providing real life experiences because humor exists in real life. This also helps support the children's learning.

##### **4.4.3.2. Communication without Hurting Others (n=1)**

According to the teacher responses, humor enhances the children's communication with the teacher and their peers. Even when uttering negative comments or criticism, it reduces the negative reactions from others. Thus, humor creates a positive atmosphere and T3explains it like this; "The use of humor can be used to say something without giving harm to others. It is about saying things in funny way. It includes both reality and laughter."

#### **4.4.4. Category 2 Supporting Development**

Some of the teacher participants explained humor in terms of how it affected the children's development. Four teachers argued that understanding or producing humor required having a certain level of development, such as cognitive and creative. Under this category, the codes related to humor and child development are discussed.

##### **4.4.4.1. Supporting Cognitive Development (n=1)**

One of the benefits that humor can offer in early childhood classrooms is described in terms of cognitive development. One of the participants stated that to understand and produce humor, certain cognitive capacity is needed. Therefore, if a teacher uses humor, the children will try to understand what is being said, which will help them to use their cognitive abilities. T3 described this process as; "Intelligence requires humor. It is about cognitive abilities. Humor requires repartee. Therefore, this is evidence that the brain also works quickly; thus, humor is beneficial."

##### **4.4.4.2. Supporting Creative Development (n=1)**

In order to create humor, children need to combine elements in unusual ways, and this requires creative thinking abilities; i.e., being able to use different ways to do things. T4 explained this idea as;

Humor affects children in positive ways. For example, if I want children to draw improbable things, such as asking them to draw five ears on a person, which appears to be impossible. But using their cognitive skills, they can recognize these five ears as humor. In this way, I use humor with the children to develop their creativity.

#### **4.4.5. Category 3 Facilitation of Learning**

In addition to facilitating development, according to the teacher participants, using humor is also beneficial in helping children learn better. Some of the teachers argued that the reason why humor should be used in classroom was to support learning. The following codes provide detailed examples of this process in relation to children.

#### **4.4.5.1. Provide Developmentally Appropriate Learning (n=2)**

To ensure appropriate learning, it is important to provide meaningful experiences for children, providing hands-on and concrete activities. One teacher (T4) stated that the children should be presented with concrete examples of humor; “The children are in a concrete operational stage, so they have a hard time understanding abstract humor. Therefore, humor should be related to concrete subjects, thus serving to support their learning.”

Humor can support developmentally appropriate activities and assist in classroom management. How to provide experiences that are suitable for children’s developmental needs and level was described by T5;

Humor should be used in classroom. Because they are young, we cannot teach children in the same way as older children. We must integrate animation and humor into our teaching. For example, including drama or imitation in a specific topic, rather than just presenting the information will increase the quality of education. Drama and imitation must incorporate humor. Therefore, I do not just give the information; I include humor in my teaching to support the children’s learning. In this way, they understand better and easier. Humor is necessary in early childhood education. Via humor, we can prepare suitable activities for the children’s developmental level. If we don’t consider their developmental levels, the education that we provide will not mean anything. Humor contributes to organizing activities. If we use only one type of teacher-centered activities, the children will not understand anything. We should add animation and humor to provide appropriate education for their developmental level.

#### **4.4.5.2. Attract Attention (n=1)**

In the early childhood period, children’s attention span is short; therefore, teachers need to implement different strategies in the classroom to attain better classroom management. T2 agreed with this idea and commented; “Humor can attract the children’s attention. I use it in play activities. I also use it when I start a new topic because it makes it easier to gain attention.”

Questions were posed, such as “*What do you think about the use of humor in the early childhood classroom?*” and “*In which ways do you use humor in your classroom?*”. The five participants agreed that humor should be used in early childhood classrooms, and it can be incorporated into every activity in communication with the children. Actually, they stated that they used humor while

interacting with children; however, this appeared to occur spontaneously since they did not consider how to include humor in their activities or within classroom management strategies. T5's following comments confirms this; "I use humor but not too much. I did not think about it before; maybe I use it unconsciously. I like to make children laugh. However, I generally do not have a special aim to make humor in the classroom."

T3 responded to the questions in a similar way; "I use humor in an involuntary way. I don't think of including humor in my daily plans. However, it develops in an impromptu manner. I do not pay special attention to using humor."

#### **4.5. RQ5: How do Teachers Describe Children's Sense of Humor and Humor Styles of the Children in Their Class?**

For the teacher interview, the final question specifically concerned the children in their classroom who participated in the making funny drawings part of the study. The aim of this question was to determine whether the way in which children produce humor and the way that teacher explain children's humor overlapped. Therefore, the question, "*What are the humorous characteristics that C? show in the classroom?*" was asked of the teachers in each classroom. In the first part, the general categories and codes were discussed and after that findings were provided for each child. In describing the categories, Martin's humor styles were used, which is why when the teachers were asked to share their ideas about children's humor, they mainly focused on how they used humor, rather than commenting on their development in terms of humor understanding, appreciation or production. McGhee described the use of physical humor that negatively affected relationships in two main styles: adaptive and maladaptive. Maladaptive humor concerning the use of humor that harms the self or others whereas the aim of adaptive humor is to provide joy to oneself and others. There is no sarcasm, humiliation or negative criticism in adaptive humor.

Table 10

*Teacher's views on their students' humor behaviors*

Categories	Codes
Maladaptive Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses physical humor that affects relationships negatively (n=4)</li> </ul>
Adaptive Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likes to laugh and make jokes (n=3)</li> <li>• Uses humor on his/her own (n=1)</li> <li>• Shares humor with others (n=4)</li> <li>• Reflects usual things in a funny way (n=3)</li> </ul>
No Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not use humor (n=8)</li> </ul>

#### **4.5.1. Category 1 Maladaptive Humor**

Under this category, the teacher responses describing the children's negative humor were discussed. Some of the teachers argued that the children used humor that could have negative effect on others or themselves. The teachers' responses about this category referred to four children participating in the study.

##### **4.5.1.1. Uses Physical Humor That Affects Relationships Negatively (n=4)**

According to the teachers, four of the children used humor that harmed their friends. They liked to engage in physical humor, such as hitting or aggressively hugging others, and they did it to be funny. However, the teachers stated that the other children did not like these behaviors, and they avoided these children. This situation affected the children's relationships in negative ways, and these children were not chosen to play with. An example of this situation concerning C7 was given by T2;

His physical development is better than his classmates. He makes a lot of physical jokes and this is too much for the other children. Their relationships are affected in negative ways. He causes pain to the other children. I warn him, so he is restricted in his behavior because of my warnings, but I have to.

T3's comments on C10 parallel the situation given; "He likes to use humor and make us laugh. However, he sometimes cannot manage the level of his humor and he harms his classmates. Therefore, his classmates do not want to play with him." Similarly, T5 explained C18's behavior within this code;

He gets along with his classmates, but sometimes he has communication problems; therefore, he is not chosen as a friend by the other children. Sometimes, he can be disturbed by his friends and he upsets his classmates by making jokes; he is not so good in terms of social relations.

#### **4.5.2. Category 2 Adaptive Humor**

Adaptive humor is more about using humor as the source of joy, but it does not include humiliation or harming others. This humor can be about both the self and others. However, the main point is about the consequences of the humor. Teachers shared their observations and experiences concerning twelve of the children's adaptive humor behaviors. The related codes provide a more detailed understanding of this category.

##### **4.5.2.1. Likes to Laugh and Make Jokes (n=3)**

Under this code, the teachers' responses concerning the children's appreciation and production of humor are discussed. According to some of the teachers, some of the children in their classrooms enjoyed making jokes and laughing. They were happy, and to make others happy, they created humor. Furthermore, they liked to participate in or observe humorous situations. The following two examples of this type of child were given by T2; "C6 likes to tell jokes. He also likes to laugh at others' jokes. You can always see him laughing or trying to create humor around himself."

T4's ideas on C16's humor can be an example for this explanation; "C16's humor level is higher than her peers. She can understand more qualified things and laugh. She chooses what to laugh at."

##### **4.5.2.2. Uses Humor on His/her Own (n=1)**

Under this code, the teachers talked about children who used humor on their own; i.e., those that made jokes but when playing alone. These children created this

humor using their toys or talking to themselves. T5 explained the behavior of C18 as follows;

He produces humor while playing on his own. He makes some weird noises, like car sound. He makes some imitations. But he does it when he is alone. He has problems communicating with classmates. He does not choose to play with them and enter into humorous situations with his peers.

#### **4.5.2.3. Shares Humor with Others (n=4)**

According to the teachers, some of the children used humor in their social group. In order to create humor, they needed to have others around them. They liked to make others laugh and enjoyed things with them. In this context, T5 described C19 as;

She has a good sense of humor. She gets along with her friends. Her social abilities are developed, and her relationships with friends are strong. When playing with classmates, she plays roles and makes jokes. When she is doing this, she calls her friends to join her. After creating a play or humorous situation, she includes her friends in it.

T5 presented similar comments for C22;

He likes to make jokes with his friends. However, he does it only with his close friends. He likes to make jokes and make them laugh. However, because he does not have a good communication with everyone in the classroom; if his close friends are not around, he generally prefers not to engage in humor.

#### **4.5.2.4. Reflects Usual Things in a Funny Way (n=3)**

This code refers to how children produce humor in classroom. According to the teachers, some of the children in their classroom preferred to use usual things in unusual ways to make others laugh or to laugh. They liked creating funny stories or made the ordinary events around funny. C1 showed this kind of humor behavior according to T1;

He has a high level of humor. He tries to make jokes and engage in funny behavior to make me laugh. He also explains the events that he experiences at home in funny ways. He includes funny items in his stories. Even in an ordinary story, he finds ways to create humor and he also likes to share it with us.

T1 also shared similar ideas about C3 in the following sentences;

She likes to describe imaginary things. She likes to make things funny. She includes humor in her stories. She also finds ways to add humor when playing. For example, she mimics a behavior or even in an ordinary play situation, she engages in role playing to produce humor.

#### **4.5.3. Category 3 No Humor**

For some of the children, the teachers stated that they did not observe any humor behavior. They said that eight children did not understand, appreciate or produce humor, or they did not observe these children in attending a humorous situation.

##### **4.5.3.1. No Humor Use (n=8)**

Not engaging humor in their play and communication described some of the children in the study. The teachers stated that they did not observe humor in these children and were not sure about what they would laugh at. For example, C2 was described by T1 as; “I have not seen any humor in him. He does not use humor in his relations or play.”

T4 also provided similar comments for C13; “She is a calm child. I did not observe any humorous behaviors in her. I also did not observe her laughing on her own. If her friends laugh at something, she participates.”

Finally, T4’s ideas on C15 for this code were; “He is a sweet-natured child. Some of the children can laugh at inappropriate things. However, C15 does not participate in this kind of humor. He smiles at everything, but I did not observe any humorous behavior in him.”

#### **4.6. Key Findings**

The table stated bellow displays preschoolers' explanations of their drawings

Table 11

#### *Key Findings from the Interviews with Children About Their Funny Drawings*

- 
- Children laughed at conceptual incongruity, physical deformity, caricature, exaggeration, and costumes, and in producing humor, they used items related with these categories.
  - Among the children, the most preferred category was conceptual incongruity.
  - Most of the children included unusual people, items, creations, and situations in their drawings.
  - Harming others or inappropriate behaviors were also shown in children's drawings as a means of humor.
  - Crying or bleeding are also funny for some of the children, and they used these situations in their drawings.
  - McGhee's humor development stages and the features of age period were seen to overlap when compared with the data from the children. Therefore, this can be evidence for accepting the theory as universal.
- 

Table 12 displays views of the early childhood education teachers on humor in general and in the early childhood period

Table 12

#### *Views of the Early Childhood Education Teachers on Humor*

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##### **Explanation of Humor and Function of Humor**

- All the teachers stated that they did not specifically think about the place of humor in their life.
  - They argued that humor was in every aspect of their life, such as work, private, and social lives.
-

Table 12 (continued)

- 
- Humor has both personal and social effects on people's lives.
  - Humor is needed for satisfaction and happiness in life, and it must exist in people's lives.
  - Even if some of the teachers did not describe themselves as humorous, they stated that they preferred to have humorous people or things in their life.
- 

Table 13

*Views of the Early Childhood Education Teachers on Humor in Early Childhood Education*

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Explanation of Humor and Function of Humor in Young Children

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- The teachers stated that they did not specially think about the development of humor in the early childhood period.
  - The teachers considered that humor can benefit development, learning, and communication if used in classroom.
  - Humor can be used in play activities, storytelling, drama, and teaching new topics.
  - None of the teachers gave special attention to humor in preparing their activities or communicating with children, and they did not observe children's humor development while undertaking developmental evaluations.
  - The teachers would use humor if it developed in improvisation, and they participated in the children's humor. They tried to give humorous answers or reactions if the children approached them in this way.
  - In classroom management, some of the teachers used humor as an easier way to draw the children's attention.
  - If it was necessary to create humor, the teachers engaged in unusual behaviors or used unusual words. For example, the teachers found that asking the children to make their shoes sleep, rather than telling them to take their shoes off was more effective.
-

Table 14

*Views of the Early Childhood Education Teachers on the Humor Development of Their Students*

Teachers' Explanation of Their Students' Sense of Humor and Humor Styles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The teachers did not specifically observe the children's humor development and they did not comment on what children laughed at in terms of their developmental levels.</li><li>• The teachers combined the children's social and cognitive development with humor. They explained the children's humor behaviors with their high cognitive skills and quality of relationships.</li><li>• The teachers distinguished the children's humor behaviors according to their results among other children. They described the children's humor development according to the positive-negative consequences of their behavior.</li><li>• If a child did not show humorous behavior in a social group, the teachers thought that there was no humor development in that child.</li><li>• Being calm, sweet-natured, and quiet was described as non-humor development by the teachers.</li><li>• Except for physical humor that harm others, the teachers supported the children's attempts to engage in humor. However, if the classmates were harmed by the humor of another child, the teacher would warn the child even though it might obstruct their humor development.</li></ul>

#### **4.7. Summary**

The aim of the current study was to describe five-year-old children's sense of humor and their teachers' views on humor in early childhood education. In order to reach this aim, the data was collected from both children and teachers. The children's views were taken by asking them to draw a picture and comment on a humorous visual. The children were asked questions, such as; "*What are there in the drawing/visual?*", "*Why are they funny?*", and "*What makes them funny?*" and they were encouraged to talk about these drawings and visuals. In addition, the data was

collected from the teachers of the children in the study. They talked about what they thought about humor, humor in early childhood education, and children's humor development. To encourage the teachers to talk prompt, the following questions were used: "*How do you describe humor?*", "*What is the humor's position in people's life?*", "*How do you describe humor development in the early childhood education period?*", "*What do you think about including humor in early childhood education?*", "*What can be the possible benefits of humor in terms of their learning and development?*" and "*What are the humorous characteristics that C? shows in the classroom?*".

The responses of all the participants were presented in the findings part. After providing the demographic information about the participants, each piece of data was displayed in relation to the research questions. Under each related research question, the categories and codes were created to reveal common answers and provide a clear understanding. The necessary explanations about each category and code were also included. In addition, related quotations from the participants were also provided to support these explanations.

The data provided in this part showed several findings. First is that the children showed humor behaviors parallel to McGhee's humor development theory and in producing humor in their drawing, they used related items. In their explanations of their drawings, the children also explained the logic of their humor. While commenting on the humorous visual, the children were able to understand the main idea of the visual. They explained why the visual was funny and identified the conceptual incongruity in the visual.

In the teacher part of the study, the teachers generally identified humor as a source of joy and satisfaction. They also argued that humor must be in every aspect of people's lives. In early childhood education, humor can benefit children's development, learning, and communication. Humor should be used in classrooms. However, the teachers also mentioned that they did not think about including humor in their planning, teaching, classroom management or communication with children. For them, humor was a spontaneous process in the classroom. When asked about their students' humor behaviors, the teachers mostly talked about humorous behaviors

observed in children while interacting with others. If no humor behaviors were observed for a specific child, the teachers described them as having no humor behavior or no humor development. These findings provide an insight into how children and teachers approach humor in early childhood education. In the next chapter, these findings will be discussed using the related literature and previous studies.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Here the findings of the study are presented and discussed in relation to the related literature. The findings encompass early childhood children's humor appreciation and production, and teacher's views on humor and the development of humor in early ages. In the light of these findings and discussions, possible implications for early childhood education and recommendations for researchers, teachers and parents are given.

#### **5.1. Summary of the Study**

The aim of the study is to investigate how children explain humor in a provided visual and produce humor in their drawing. Another aim was to obtain early childhood teacher's views on humor, humor in early childhood education and humor development in children. To achieve this aim, both children and teachers were interviewed. During the interview they were presented with a humorous visual, children were then asked to make a humorous drawing and teachers were asked some semi- structured questions. The humorous visual and interview questions were determined with the help of a pilot study. A humorous visual that is about conceptual incongruity, and five semi- structured questions related to this visual were used with children. With teachers, 15 semi- structured questions were applied during the interviews. The sample comprised 22 five years old children who were attending early childhood education, and five of their teachers. Data was collected in Tokat because the researcher was able to access early childhood education schools in Tokat. After the data collecting process, the researcher transcribed the data, created categories and codes from these transcripts in a meaningful context.

## **5.2. Discussion of the Findings**

In this part, each finding is discussed in relation to previous studies in the literature. As in the findings part, discussion is themed according to the research questions of the study. In this way, the researcher set out to present the findings meaningfully and entirely.

### **5.2.1. Humorous Factors Used by 5-6 Years Old Children in Their Drawings**

To collect data related with this research question, children were asked to make a humorous drawing. While they were making their drawing, the researcher observed the children and answered their questions. When they had completed their drawings, the researcher asked questions about them. Children were encouraged to explain what they had drawn, what are the items that make it funny, and why they are funny. By using their explanations, categories and codes were created with reference to the relevant literature. In this process, mainly, McGhee's humor development theory and Johnson's (2010) study were used to interpret the data as they provide detailed explanations for developmental stages, and they have been so used in similar studies (e.g. Meral, 2013; Koçer, Eskidemir & Özbeş, 2012; Loizou, 2006). The stages used in McGhee's theory are parallel to Piaget's cognitive development stages and can be applied to children aged between 18 months and 11 years (Johnson, 2010). As the current study involved five-year-old children, the data was analyzed according to the Conceptual Incongruity stage which applies to children between the ages of two and seven (Southam, 2005).

In order to describe what kind of visual humor children laugh at in this stage, Johnson (2010) describes some categories such as physical deformities, caricature, and exaggeration. Children in the present study were seen to appreciate visual humor related to these categories, and to be able to produce humor that can be explained under these categories. These capabilities were previously reported by Loizou and Kyriakou (2015). In their study they provided a drawing of a seal and asked the children to add funny things. They noted that children use incongruities which they categorized as color violation humorous symbols, feature violation and violence. Very similar categories emerged from the current study. Violence, for example, was clearly observed in some of the drawings produced by the five-year-old sample in

Tokat. Their explanations for why their drawing was funny included “*Making hurt somebody else*” and this illustrates similar humor production patterns. Also, a notable feature of the violation category is the unusual presentation of the various items that make up the drawing.

Drawings in the current study that were classified as “*Unusual size and number of body parts*” and “*Unusual shape-color of body parts*” were similarly observed by Loizou and Kyriakou. However, a number of drawings in the present study were coded “*Big-small people*”, “*Giving human features to unliving things*”, “*Giving animal features to people*”, “*Exaggerated number of things*”, “*Exaggerated small – big size of things*”, and “*Nurse*”. While such drawings were not observed in Loizou and Kyriakou’s study, and the current study includes different codes, both studies found strong evidence that children prefer to include incongruities when they are producing humor. Loizou and Kyriakou (2015) explain this phenomenon using Absurd Theory which suggests that children’s humor exists when a mismatch occurs in their existent schemas.

Loizou conducted an earlier study related with humor production in 2011. In this case she worked with children aged between 56 and 68 months. Rather than making them draw, Loizou asked children to take photos of funny things and then to tell her why they were funny. Her results indicated that incongruity was the main idea behind their humor, and this finding is supported by the current investigation. The photographs were categorized as humorous gestures, incongruous actions (animals/people), and incongruous appearance. Similar ways were also observed in the current study. While Loisou’s results were explained using Absurd Theory, they nevertheless fit the categories that emerged from the current study using McGhee’s humor development approach.

McGhee developed his theory by using a cognitive approach. Accordingly, humor capacity develops with the development of cognitive skills. Cognitive changes that are affected by age also created changes in children’s humor appreciation and production (Johnson, 2010). The current study also provides supportive findings about the relation between cognitive development and humor development. The current study observed that children produced drawings related to the categories that

are described for their age group and developmental stage. Zigler, Levine And Gould (n.d.) also worked on cognitive development and changes in humor behaviors. They worked with children at different ages and found that with age, children start to understand more complex humorous situations. From this aspect, the results of the studies support each other.

A primary concern of this study was to learn how children produce humor of any type. The researcher sought to focus on five years old children, thinking that she would obtain more reliable data from this age group as they are able to express themselves and to understand directions. However, several studies have included children in different ages to observe their humor production. For example, in 19-month-old children, Hoicka and Gattis, (2008) observed that they tend to imitate the behavior caused by the laughing of others and that can include incongruous behaviors. In another study, 30-month-old children initially produced humor by misnaming objects or creating new names for them (Hoicka & Akhtar, 2011). In terms of early humor production, Reddy (2001), states that we should accept that children produce humor, even if we do not understand how they plan their humor. Humor production is thus a behavior initiated and continued by the child to cause laughter. Accordingly, by only including five-year-old children the findings of the current study cannot be used to describe early childhood children's humor production in a broad context.

### **5.2.2. Children's Explanation of Humorous Factors in a Provided Visual**

The current study presented a humorous visual to children that included a giraffe, rabbit and hippopotamus. The amusing aspect of the visual was that the hippopotamus was sitting on the giraffe as if it was a chair. Almost all of the children focused on this aspect of the drawing. This is clear evidence of the children's capability to understand the incongruity in the visual. Similarly, Loizou (2006) found that young children are able to recognize and appreciate humor by understanding the incongruities in provided situations. This situation can test children's schema development because children laugh when something does not fit with their schemas. Such situations can also be explained in terms of their cognitive development. With age, the number of schemas increases, and children's understanding of humor also

develops. Loizou (2006) explains this situation using McGhee's description of conceptual incongruity stage, and Brown's visual incongruities category as it provides a suitable explanation of how children understand the humorous items in a picture.

In the current study, the researcher set out to establish how children at the age of five, understand and appreciate humor. She chose to work with children in this age group because they have been found to have a better understanding of visuals thanks to their cognitive abilities when compared with younger ages (Brown, 1993). Zigler, Levine and Gould (n.d.) found differences in ages affected how children appreciate humor in their study of children between second and fifth grade. While those children would have been older than the participants in the present study, their appreciation of humor is clearly different and provides strong evidence that changes in how children appreciate humor reflect the development of their cognitive abilities with age.

In terms of taking children's ideas on what is funny in a provided illustration, Chik, Leung and Molloy (2005) provided supportive findings for the current research. Working with primary school children, they gave children both congruous and incongruous visuals to describe, and children thought those with incongruity to be funnier. This finding corroborates the ideas expressed by the children in Tokat about their understanding and appreciation of the humor in the visual presented to them, in terms of its incongruities. This finding is supported by the results of related studies' which explain children's level of humor appreciation with age and cognitive competences. It is important to note that the visuals used in the current study were chosen with consideration of McGhee's description of humor development in children and reflects the importance. The researcher attributes to our understanding children's cognitive abilities.

The present study also provides evidence of the universality of humor, given that even though previous studies were conducted in different countries that include different cultures related with humor, incongruities are nevertheless the common point for appreciation humor. Guo, Zhang, Wang and Xeromeritou (2011) found that culture is an effective factor in humor along with cognitive development. While a positive correlation between cognitive development and the number of humorous

responses was seen in Greek children, overall a negative correlation was seen between these two factors. Being shy, quiet and showing restrained behaviors are approved of and considered as a sign of maturation in most cultures. With age, children typically change their humorous behaviors to show their mature behaviors. Thus, humor develops with improvements in cognitive skills, but still, the effects of culture are undeniable.

While commenting on the provided visual, some of the children in the current study focused on the facial expressions of the characters. Seeing the giraffe surprised was funny. In his study, Johnson (2010) also described facial expression as most common usage of humor. These facial expressions can be on both humans and animals. Laughing at facial expressions is about recognizing them and there is no specific category defined. Camras and Allison (1985) state that preschool children start to match emotions and facial expressions that represent them. They explained this process to be related to age because preschool children start to develop deeper understanding about emotions and the ability to recognize facial expressions. And, the humor related with this age group can be categorized under McGhee's third stage (Camras & Allison, 1985). In this stage, children can understand and appreciate humor related with it. As a result, by appreciating humor in facial expressions on the visuals, participants provided similar data with the previous stage, and this situation is again linked to age and development in children. Children's appreciation of humor develops with age and they were seen to appreciate this kind of humor in the current study.

In addition to wanting them to explain why the visual is funny, in the second part, the researcher also asked children to how they would make the visual funnier. It was interesting to hear children's questions, whereas some preferred to add funny stories to the visual, others chose to increase the number of the characters or actions. These observations can be also explained by McGhee's third stage. Similar to the way that they choose to embellish their drawings, they prefer to exaggerate by adding different animals and people or adding caricatural items to make the visual funnier. Johnson (2010) explains this situation with a feature of the developmental level whereby the exaggeration serves to include incongruity, and it provides supportive explanations as to why children chose to include it to make the visual funnier.

### **5.2.3. Early Childhood Education Teachers' Views on Humor**

In addition to interviews with children, teachers' ideas were also taken as a part of the current study. While some of the teachers mentioned humor in terms of their personal perspective, others explained it in terms of its social aspects. When looked at from the personal perspective, the first explanation is that humor is perceived as a way of criticizing. That is, people can use humor to make criticism about things around them such as people or events. It can be also used in daily life, and among politicians. This finding is in agreement with Grugulis (2002) who found a relationship between humor and criticism whereby humor gives chance to criticize others without causing negative emotions. In this way and by including jokes while talking about another person, the narrator hopes not to be thought of as offensive but to engender healthy communication between parties. Elsewhere, Meyer (2000) argues that when humor is used to criticize a person or a situation, a level of care is necessary for people to understand the message in the humor. Humor has also been observed as a useful way to arrange a level of criticism, and when politicians use humor in their speech, it helps them to maintain a suitable degree of criticism of the ideas they stand against (Graham et al., 1992).

Humor is also seen as a source of enjoyment for teachers. As Torok, McMorris, and Wen-Chi Lin (2004) stated, one of the roles of humor is to help people express enjoyment. This can be a benefit of teaching because it makes learning more pleasant and enjoyable, too. Humor can be a source of enjoyment for both teachers and children in class and assist all involved to increase their quality of life. While the study explains that humor is used in the classroom to increase enjoyment in class, the participants in the current study generalize this source of enjoyment to their whole life.

According to the present findings, humor is perceived by teachers as a device to help children think. Aside from enjoyment and providing pleasure, thinking on the specific points is another consequence of humor. The teachers of the children in Tokat thought that while children laugh at the incongruities in situations, they also develop ideas about the concepts in such situations or the reasons for these incongruities. This finding corroborates the ideas of Temple (1992), who suggested that humor leads

people to think. She mainly focuses on how humor affects people's creative, critical thinking and problem solving. Because people need to develop an understanding of concepts and the things that cause humor around them, they require local- logical thinking, and use cognitive abilities (Ziv, 1984).

While communicating with others, people may choose various ways to express themselves. Humor was observed to be one of the ways for the participants in the present study to share what they have in their mind. These results match those observed in earlier studies (e.g. Great batch & Clark, 2002) which argue that humor is a common way of communication and it reveals positive feelings. Humor creates a positive atmosphere, too. This situation enhances the transmission of the message and makes listening easier. Actually, this is the reason why humor is used as an attention taking strategy (Sterthal & Craig, 1973).

The teachers in the present study stated that humor is necessary to be happy in life and satisfied with their work life, social life and inner life. The related literature also supports their description of humor as important to people feeling satisfaction in their lives (Martin 2007; Ruch 2008). Decker (1987) explains this satisfaction in work life and argues that humor also contributes to productivity implicitly. Thus, a lack of sense of humor affects this situation negatively. Samson and Antonelli (2013) especially tried to find out how this situation affects people's life satisfaction. That is, they worked with individuals with Autism spectrum disorder who do not have necessary cognitive abilities to understand, appreciate and produce humor. When they looked at their life satisfaction, it was found that humor did not contribute to it. Looked at from both aspects, participants' ideas about the benefit of humor for life satisfaction is proved.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) see humor as a tool that enables people to develop a positive mood, or positive feelings that would also affect their perception of the situations they encounter around them. Relief theory also supports this idea because it argues that humor decreases the stress and make people feel relaxed (Morreall, 1997) In the current study, early childhood teachers felt that humor gives children a chance to see the situations in different perspectives. This supports previous findings which show that in this way, people can deal with negative

emotions and stress and come up with ideas to address problems (Yardımcı, 2010). This can be also about using humor as defense mechanism as Freud (1928) suggested in psychoanalytic theory. It helps to fight with undesired feelings and solve the crises between id-ego and superego.

In the second category of teachers' views on humor, the study participants shared their ideas on how humor affects children in terms of their social relations. They stated that it changes the way children interact with others, and they can find opportunity to say negative things in suitable ways. In this way, hurting others can be obstructed. When a negative situation arises, tension and dissonance among children increases. However, using humor can decrease this tension. In this way, the negative consequences that result from miscommunication can be prevented (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). The findings of the present study also reveal that teachers think that humor is an effective tool of communication with both adults and children. It also enables adults to use humor in a suitable way to converse with children. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Lovorn (2008) who also supports the idea of using humor in communication with children. Rather than punishing children or using a strict language, humor can be used in conversations with children. In this way successful communication might develop between children, parents and teachers. Fruitful relationships with children can also be developed as their level of listening and understanding others increases (Walsh, 2004).

#### **5.2.4. Teachers' Views on Humor in Early Childhood Period**

Teachers ideas on humor in early childhood development were categorized under three titles. Some of the teachers shared that humor enables children to develop communication with others. This communication occurs with both their teacher and peers. Firstly, children do not have difficulty interacting with their teachers and they can develop a healthy relationship. Therefore, a secure attachment between teacher and child can be created. These ideas on the use of humor to build positive relationships in the classroom are mentioned by Praag, Stevens and Houtte (2017) who found that humor has an important impact on classroom dynamics. It balances inequalities in education and creates a positive atmosphere in classroom. These dynamics strengthen the bond between teacher and student. The participants in the

current study provided similar explanations, that using humor when creating relationships in the classroom can lead to better relationships which can also affect children's learning, too (Garner, 2006).

Humor is a way in communicating with others, and it has different functions in communications (Meyer, 2000). The current study recorded that participants felt strongly that humor provides opportunities for children to interact with each other without hurting others. In this way, humor enables a positive environment in the classroom and when children want to say something to their friends, humor can change the mood of the conservation. Prior studies that have noted the importance of humor in classroom communication. Lovorn and Holaway (2015) suggest that positive communication is supported with the help of humor for relationships with both teacher and peers. Without giving harm to others or to create a negative environment, children can readily interact with each other using humor. This aspect of humor in class supports the findings of Praag et al (2017) who found that even though some stereotyping, insulting or discriminating statements are used in the classroom between peers, a negative reaction was not observed by the researchers. The reason for this situation was described as the usage of humor. Children were observed to have used some jokes to relate the details in their negative statements, no negative reaction occurred. The bond between students strengthened, and discrimination between peers decreased.

When teacher's views on humor in early childhood education were asked, some of them explained humor in terms of a developmental perspective. One of the participants stated that humor is closely related with cognitive abilities. To understand and produce humor, cognitive processing is necessary, and if humor is observed, it is an evidence for cognitive development. This accords with the related literature. In creating his theory of humor development in children, McGhee (1974) also emphasize the relation between humor and cognition. He explains the stages of humor development in parallel with Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory. Thus, he argues that with advancing age and development of cognitive age, children's understanding and producing of humor develops and they start to use more complex humor with this development. Humor also requires understanding some interpretations. Thanks to these interpretations, children can realize when something

funny happens around them (Rothbart, 1973). Other cognitive abilities such as memory, and recognizing incongruity also come into play. Therefore, with increase in schemas, and development in assimilation and accommodation processes, appreciating and producing complex humor also occur in children (Sroufe & Wunsch, 1972). The findings of the current study confirm association with Meral (2013)'s study which shows how children in different ages show different humor behaviors to the provided humorous videos that were prepared in consideration of McGhee's humor development stages. Thus, this study also reveals the effect of cognitive development on humor in children as the participant stated.

In addition to cognitive development, creativity is another issue in the findings of this study. Teachers felt that to create humor children need to use their creativity, and humor can be created by using creative statements or behaviors that are unusual. Similarly, Martin and Lefcourt (1983) describes humor as a creative behavior that develops different and unusual ways or perspectives of a topic or problems (Amabile & Pillemer, 2012). In the same way, humor is about developing different points of view about the situations around people. Thus, both of these terms support each other (Romero & Pescosolido, 2008; Wood, Beckman, & Rossiter, 2011). The reason why these two concepts support each other is that both use the same sources. For example, a sense of surprise that is suitable for the situation is needed for both concepts (Filipowicz, 2006). Moreover, cognitive development again gains importance in these concepts. Humor occurs as a result of incongruity, and there is the need of distribution on present schemas and deviation on what is expected (Suls, 1983). Therefore, this distribution and deviation requires cognitive processes. Similar cognitive processes are also needed in creativity. That is, the digression between the present schemas and development a different point of view on ordinary schemas and combination of unrelated elements are needed for creativity (Dubitzky, Kotter, Schmidt, & Berthold, 2012).

Teachers argued that in addition to development, humor benefits learning in early childhood education. When talking about why humor is important for children in early childhood period, some of the participants stated that it facilitates children's learning and provides developmentally appropriate ways in teaching. Jeder (2014) tries to explain various reasons why humor should be used in classroom. One of these

is how it benefits children's learning. As humor is closely related with some cognitive processes, humor can lead them to think, show attention and develop critical ideas on a topic. Steele (1998) also points to similar topics on stating the benefits of humor in classroom. He found that children's humor helps in learning difficult topics. However, rather than the effect of humor on cognitive skills, this situation was explained by its effect on reducing stress in the classroom and creating a positive learning environment. Even if these two different studies produced different reasons as to why humor facilitates learning, the main idea is that to make children understand the concepts or provide more efficient teaching, humor is an effective tool. Lei, Cohen, and Russler (nd.) argue that the benefit of humor should not be considered in only one perspective because in the classroom, humor benefits in terms of emotional, social and cognitive aspects, and this explains why different rationales occur in the literature.

In learning, another contribution of humor is described as its attention taking effect by the participants. Especially in early childhood education, children's attention span is limited, and teachers can get children's attention by using humor. Therefore, because children show attention, they can also learn better. Even if it is explained in terms of the benefit of humor on children's cognitive abilities, its use as a teaching strategy in the early childhood classroom is promoted by the participants. In their study, Lei, Cohen, and Russler (nd.) also provide supportive ideas for this finding. A little humorous act can be enough to attract children's attention, and their level of participation in class activities can also be increased. Cornett (1986) also defines humor as an attention taking strategy and argues that teachers must include it in their daily plans. It does not just for taking attention at the beginning of the class, but it also helps to maintain their attention during the learning process (Herbert, 1991). Cornett also argues that humor is efficient not just for learning, but for classroom management as well. While laughing, children will not even realize that they are using high level thinking abilities. Therefore, taking their attention with humor and increasing their motivation to participate in activities is recommended by Cornett (1986), and this view was also emphasized by participants in the current study.

### **5.2.5. Teacher's Views on Their Students' Humor Behaviors**

In the final part of the interviews, researchers took teacher's ideas on children's humor in their classroom. Questions were asked specifically about the children who participated in the study. Teachers explained the children's humor in terms of how they showed this humor socially. That is, teachers generally explained children's humor with their observations on how children use humor among their friends, and in which way they use it. In the light of the literature, maladaptive and adaptive humor were defined as the categories for these research questions.

In the maladaptive humor category, teachers explained that some of the children used humor that affects children's humor in a negative way. For example, some of the children use physical jokes that their peers do not like and due to these jokes, those children become an undesired peer in their social environment. Martin (2007) also explain this process in his studies. Children can use maladaptive humor to feel better that can include both harm to themselves and others. Even if the style and reason of showing this kind of humor changes, the result of this kind of humor is defined as alienation from others. Thomas Veatch also explains the relationships between violence and humor in his theory (Sayar, 2012). Awareness about violence is a inappropriate action creates humor because it is against to normality. In teachers' explanations, they also give similar examples. If children prefer to use this kind of humor, sometimes, they can become lonely in the classroom. Therefore, even if humor is seen as a powerful tool for developing positive social relationships (Kuipers, 2010), such usage can serve in the opposite way. This finding is in agreement with Oberjohn (2002) who showed that while humor increases the level of peer acceptance and friendships, if it is used in negative ways such as teasing, acceptance among peers becomes harder and the bonds in friendships are weakened.

In his article which explains the relationships between importance of communication and humor, Meyer (2000) argues that in order to produce humor that is appreciated by others, the expectations about humor and sense of humor should be similar among audiences. That is, humor can change from person to person and from situation to situation. Even if something is perceived as funny in one social group, it can be perceived as inappropriate behavior by another. In light of this explanation, it

becomes clearer why some children have problems with their friends because of their peers.

While describing children's humor and how it is produced, teachers also mentioned the use of adaptive humor items that do not aim to harm others but serve to heighten their enjoyment. According to McGhee (1968), children start to produce humor at the age of between three and six, and it depends on children's cognitive processing. While Morrison (2008) explains humor with linguistic abilities, Ghayas (2013) and Lang and Hoon (2010) argued that the production of humor requires creative abilities. When the benefit of producing humor is examined, it might be said that both the act of producing and appreciating humor is beneficial to children's learning. Teachers support that three to seven-year-old children generally appreciate and produce verbal and visual humor that can be affiliative or aggressive and tends to use incongruity (Loizou & Kyriakou, 2015).

In producing humor, another finding that is provided by teachers was that children prefer to produce humor by reflecting usual things in unusual ways. This accords with McGhee's (1986) explanation of incongruity. In this study, incongruity was also observed in some of the children's drawings and shows that teachers realize children's humor behaviors.

A similar finding is that children can use humor for their own purposes. Teachers shared that some children like to make jokes and laugh when they are alone, and they produce this humor for themselves. Such humor has been defined as self-enhancing. That is, children produce humor for themselves (Martin, 2007). Thus, teachers are able to observe specific humor styles in children.

Some of the children were defined as more social in their usage of humor by the participants. Teachers explained this humor by saying that some children like to share humor with their peers and adults in the classroom. This humor style is called affiliative by Martin (2007). In affiliative humor, people like to make jokes in their social groups, and make others laugh. However, this humor does not harm others or the self.

As a last finding under this research question, some of the teachers describe children with little or no humor development. While explaining the reasons for this, they stated that such children are silent, sweet-natured and calm. Children who are active and social have a developed sense of humor. However, when their drawings and statements on the drawings were examined, all of the children were seen to produce humor as it was described in McGhee's humor development stages. Therefore, even if the items in their drawing differs among children, all of them were seen to have developed humor appropriate to their age and developmental level. When the descriptions of teachers about humor development in their children are examined, it is certain that their observations reflect their cultural attitudes. Guo, Zhang, Wang and Xeromeritou (2011)'s study exemplifies how culture affects humor in their study of Greek and Chinese children. They found that more so in China, children's humor responses decrease with age and the development of cognitive skills. Clearly, children are affected by their cultures differently (Greenfield et al., 2003; Wellman et al., 2006). Therefore, even if children go through similar processes in terms of cognition and humor development, their different cultures affect their humor. When teachers were asked to explain children's humor, we found that culture is also affective on how they perceive children in terms of whether or not they are using humor and how they are using it. Thus, relative to one another, teacher's attitudes toward children's humor behavior and their definitions of children's humor development could differ.

### **5.3. Implications**

The literature provides us with several studies that worked with different age groups, different settings and used different methodologies to develop our ideas about humor, its use in early childhood education and across different cultures. The current study sought to contribute to our understanding of humor in the early childhood education setting. The study involved children and teachers in Turkey and sought to establish if it is possible to explain children's humor with McGhee's humor theory in this culture, too.

In terms of its first conclusion, this study found clear evidence that in producing humor, children provided drawings and stories that are parallel to

McGhee's humor development stages. That is, when participants' age is considered, they fit in the "Conceptual Incongruity (2-7 years)" stage as McGhee described. Their drawings and statements on their drawings were analyzed and coded by using categories described under the visual humor categories devised by Johnson (2010). As a result, from a developmental perspective, this study provides further supporting evidence that children show similar developmental features in different cultures. However, even if children show similar characteristics developmentally, their usage of some items or sentences might differ in terms of gender. Their explanation for their humor can also be affected by their daily experiences or personal backgrounds. For example, if there was a specific activity in the classroom, children can include things about it in their humor. Even if their ways of producing humor is changeable in terms of culture, interest, background etc., children nevertheless tend to show relevant behaviors on humor production in accordance with McGhee's humor development theory.

A second conclusion of this study arose from trying to identify how children appreciate humor in the provided visual. As observed in their production of humor, children appreciated humor in a way that McGhee explained. The universality of McGhee's theory is supported by these findings. The visual was chosen with the consideration of McGhee's humor appreciation explanations for this age period, and children did not have difficulty understanding and explain why the visual is humorous. They appreciated the humor in the visual.

A third conclusion concerns how early childhood teachers explain the humor they observe in the classroom. When interviewed, teachers thought that humor benefits people's lives in ways personal and social. Humor is a part of life and even if people are not humorous, they prefer including humor in their life. Teachers see humor as bringing personal benefits such as being a source of thought, self-expression or for developing positive point of view, and it helps to develop better relationships with adults and children.

However, when teachers were asked about humor and children, it was realized that some of them have not thought about humor and early childhood education. Nevertheless, when giving their ideas on humor, they argued that it can benefit

children in several ways if it is used in early childhood education settings. They mainly talked about benefits in terms of development, learning and relationships with others. Thus, when we looked at teacher's perspective, they agree that humor has positive impacts for children in different aspects. However, it is not clear how they would include humor in their classrooms. In making their daily plans or communicating with children, they do not aim to include humor. They generally talked about spontaneously developed humor in their classrooms that could be produced by either the teacher or children. Even if they found it difficult to remember specific examples of what children laugh at, they are aware that children laugh at different things according to age. Even if these things do not seem meaningful for teachers, they respect children's humor and participate with them rather than obstructing their humor behaviors.

The final conclusion concerns teacher's views on what they think or observe about children's humor in their classrooms. The teachers in our sample were asked questions specifically about children who had participated in the study. Most replied to these questions by addressing humor behaviors that are socially observed. That is, if children show humor behaviors among their friends or make jokes to make others laugh, the teachers would tend to consider these children to possess a high level of humor development. However, those children they perceived calm, silent, or sweet-natured were thought to have little or no humor development. However, when we checked the drawings, the same children showed humor production at levels that fit McGhee's humor development stages. From a developmental perspective, our sample of teachers in Turkey failed to observe the range and typologies of humor that the children appreciate and produce in their class.

In the light of these findings, a number of issues were highlighted that are local to Turkey or cultural in nature. First, our interviews with teachers showed that they do not consciously plan or purposefully use humor in class. In their teacher training program, they say they were not supported in terms of humor usage in their activities, classroom management and relationships. The findings of this study thus have implications in terms of early childhood teachers, parents, children and policy makers. Implications for teachers concern their knowledge, behaviors and attitudes toward humor. With sufficient training, teachers could support children to express

appropriate humor behaviors rather than unknowingly obstructing them. They can also use materials or activities that include humor. Also, in assessment of children's development, children's humor development can be observed, or some assessment activities can be developed related to it. This assessment can be made related with their cognitive skills and with McGhee's explanations of humor development. For example, in a literature activity, the teacher could choose a book that includes humorous elements. In addition to developing teacher training programs, additional in-service teacher education programs can be provided to teachers to develop humor understanding and practice in classroom. As parents' behaviors are also important to humor development in children, it may also be useful for teachers to share their knowledge and observations with parents about what their children laugh at and why it is important for their development and learning. Workshops on humor could also help to guide parents in how to support children's humor development. Parent-school cooperation should be developed in terms of humor.

As our findings show, humor development can be seen as an indicator for cognitive development. The ability to observe and make comments on changes on what kind of humor children appreciate and produce should be developed by teachers. In this way teachers could realize children's cognitive development, too. The needs of children could be understood and could be met with appropriate support or guidance for children's development and learning. Therefore, learning about children's humor can help teachers to observe and learn about children's cognitive development. Another implication can be about teacher's own humor usage in their personal life. Teachers can be trained in how to include humor in their daily lives and to decrease stress. This training could contribute to the quality of teacher's lives and level of satisfaction in life and career.

Some implication for policy makers could be developed. First of all, humor development lessons could be included in the relevant courses that comprise teacher education in Turkey. As with other developmental areas, teachers should develop their theoretical and practical knowledge on children's humor development. In this way, they can both understand children's humor and observe them in terms of their developmental level. Teachers can learn how to use humor as a classroom strategy in courses on classroom management, early childhood education, curriculum etc. in

which teachers learn both child development and how to plan or arrange classroom for better learning for children's developmental level. In addition to upgrading existing courses, some elective courses could be added to the teacher training program whereby teacher candidates can discover their own humor styles and sense of humor and attitudes toward humor. It is important for teachers to know how their own humor abilities are also affective on their behaviors in classroom.

As the findings of the current study have some implications for teachers, parents, children and policy makers, it can serve as a source for the development of relevant solutions.

#### **5.4. Recommendations for Further Studies**

In the current study, the researcher aimed to reveal humor in children and to provide an insight about it from the perspectives of early childhood teachers. Even if the findings and related literature might serve this aim, further studies are also necessary to fully understand and test the results of the current study. The current study was limited to a sample of 22 five-year-old children and 5 of their teachers. Further studies could include more participants from different schools, locations and age groups. Thus, children's humor development could be examined more comprehensively in Turkey.

Moreover, only children and teachers were included in the study. Parents are vital to children's development and learning. Therefore, studies that include parents and gather information about their views and knowledge on humor, and how they support their children in terms of humor could be conducted in the future. The results of the study show that culture also influences children's humorous behaviors. Thus, cooperative studies with researchers in other countries can also be conducted to reveal these aspects in more detail.

In addition to the variety of the participants, studies with different methods can also provide extended information for understanding of humor. In this study, semi- structured questions and qualitative methods were used in an effort to obtain sufficient understanding of participants views. However, in order to reach more participants, quantitative research methods could also be used.

Only in-service teachers were included in this study. In the process of taking their views on humor and it was revealed that they had not undertaken any formal training in this area. It is therefore relevant to consider how we in Turkey can establish the views of teacher candidates on humor, and accordingly determine how best to enable them to use it in the classroom and throughout their professional lives.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: EVALUATION FORM OF HUMOROUS FACTORS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Kitap Adı:		Yazar:		Kodlama Tarihi:			
Gelişim Evresi	Görsel Mizah Çeşitleri	Toplam	Sözel Mizah Çeşitleri	Toplam	Durumsal Mizah Çeşitleri	Toplam	
1. Evre: Nesnelere Karşı Tutarlı, Davranışlar (18-20 ay)					-Mıç Gibi Oyun -Sürpriz Durum -Dokunma İçenlikli Fiziksel Oyun (Örneğin Gıdıklama)		
2. Evre: Nesnelerin, Olayların, İnsanların Tutarsız Olarak Adlandırılması (20-24 ay)			-Türkçede Yer Almayan Sesler  -Şaçma Kelime  -Kafileleme  -Nesneyi Farklı İsimle İsimlendirmek				
3. Evre: Kavramsal Tutarlılık (24 ay-7 yaş)	-Kavramsal Tutarlılık  -Fiziksel Deformasyon  -Kanıtlaştırılmış Espriler  -Uçuk Abarı  -Abarılı Küçülme  -Maskeleme  Kostüm	-Kelimelerin Şaçma Dizilişi  -Tekrarlı Kafileleme  -Kavramsal Açıdan Yanlış Ses  -Garip Sesler  -Kes Yapıtır Söz  -Fıkra  -Zıt Anlamlı Kelime	-Gaf Yapma  -Kaba Şaka  -Vücut Bölümü Ya Da İşlevlerine Yönetik Olarak Kullanılan Komik Sözler  -Abarılı Eylem Komedisi  -Başkası Üzerinde Üstünlük Hissine Dayalı Mizah  -Özdeşleşme  -Rol Değiştirme				
4.Evre: Bilmeceler Ve Çoklu Şakalar/Yetişkin Türü Mizah (7-11 yaş)			-Soz Evirtilim  -Tık Tık Kimse Yok Mu Tarzi Şaka/Oyun  -Özlü Taşlama  -Şakalaşma  -Şaraka  -Ironi  -Yergi  -Zipir Bilmecesi  -Bilmece		-Aşağılama  -Sosyal Gaf  -Başkasını Taklit  -Muziplik  -Freud Sürmesi  -Kötü Şaka  -Anekdot  -Parodi		
	Toplam Görsel Mizah		Toplam Sözel Mizah		Toplam Durumsal Mizah		

## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (CHILDREN)**

### **Çocuklardan resimlere yönelik görüş alma soruları:**

1. Resimde neler görünüyorsun?
2. Sence bu komik bir resim mi?
3. Sence bu resim neden komik/ neden komik değil?
4. Bu resmi komik yapan şeyler nedir?
5. Bu resmi daha komik hale getirmek için neler ekleyebiliriz?

## **APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (TEACHERS)**

### **Demografik Bilgi**

1. Yaş:
2. Cinsiyet:
3. Mezun olunan üniversite:
4. Meslekteki deneyim yılı:
5. Şu anda çalışılan yaşı grubu:
6. Erken çocuklukta mizah gelişimine yönelik ders veya seminere katılma durumu:

### **Mizah ile ilgili görüşler:**

1. Mizah kavramını nasıl tanımlarsınız?
2. Mizahın insan yaşamındaki yeri hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz?
3. Günlük yaşamda hangi alanlarda mizah kullanıyorsunuz?

### **Erken Çocuklukta Mizah Gelişimi:**

1. Erken çocukluk döneminde mizah gelişimini nasıl tanımlarsınız?
2. Sınıfınızdaki çocukların mizah kullanımı konusunda ne düşünüyorsunuz?  
(Kullanıyorlar mı? Ne şekilde?)
3. Erken çocukluk eğitiminde mizah kullanımı konusunda ne düşünüyorsunuz?  
(Kullanılmalı mı, kullanılmamalı mı?)
4. (Eğer kullanılmalı cevabı verildiyse) Erken çocukluk sınıflarında mizah kullanımının çocukların gelişim ve öğrenmelerine ne gibi katkıları olabilir?
5. Siz etkinlikleriniz ya da çocukların iletişim kurarken mizah kullanıyo musunuz?  
Ne şekilde kullanıyorsunuz?

**Çalışmaya katılan çocuklara yönelik sorular: (bu soru çalışmaya katılan her çocuk için sorulmak üzere hazırlanmıştır.)**

1. “Kalitimci-1” in sınıf ortamında sizinle ya da diğer arkadaşları ile iletişim kurarken mizahi davranışlar sergiliyor mu? Öğrencinizin komik bulduğu durumlar hakkında örnek verebilir misiniz?

**APPENDIX D: HUMOROUS VISUAL**



## APPENDIX E: HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (METU)

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
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25 Haziran 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (IAEK)

İlgili: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç. Dr. Feyza TANTEKİN ERDEN

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız yüksek lisans öğrencisi Betül YILMAZ'ın "Erken Çocukluk Döneminde Mizahin Öğretmen ve Çocuk Aşısından İncelenmesi" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görüлerek gerekli onay 2018-FEN-041 protokol numarası ile 05.06.2018 - 30.09.2019 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN

Başkan V

  
Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

  
Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye

  
Doç. Dr. Yaşa KONDANCI

Üye

  
Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK

Üye

  
Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

**APPENDIX F: ETHICAL PERMISSION (MINISTRY OF NATIONAL  
EDUCATION)**



## **APPENDIX G: PARENT CONSENT FORM**

**Tarih**

**Sayın Veli,**

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Okul Öncesi Eğitim Bölümünde yüksek lisans öğrencisiyim. "Erken Çocukluk Döneminde Mizahın Öğretmen ve Çocuk Açısından İncelenmesi" başlıklı bu Yüksek Lisans tezi kapsamında 5-6 yaş-grubu çocukların mizah anlayışları ve mizah üretmeleri üzerine çalışılması hedeflenmektedir. Bu formun yollanış amacı çocuğunuzun çalışmamızına katkı sağlama konusunda onayınızı almaktır.

Çalışmamızın amacı okul öncesi dönemde çocukların mizahi durumları nasıl açıkladığı ve mizah üretirken ne gibi elementler kullandığı konusunda bilgi toplamaktır. Toplanan bilgiler eğitimcılere, ailelilere ve araştırmacılara mizahi eğitime ne şekilde dahil edilebileceği konusunda çıkarımlar yapılabileceği de tartışılmacaktır. Bu durum sınıf ortamının iyileştirilmesi, sınıf yönetimine mizahın dahil edilmesi gibi konularda da öğretmenlere yol göstereceğinden çocukların gelişimi ve öğrenmesi de desteklenmiş olur.

Çalışma sürecinde çalışmaya katılan çocuklar ile 5 soruluk bir görüşme yapılacak ve buna ek olarak onlardan bir resim çizmeleri istenecektir. Bu süreç yaklaşık 40 dakika ile sonlanacaktır. Görüşme sırasında verilerin eksiksiz aktarımını sağlamak için ses kaydı kullanılacak ve bu ses kaydı yalnızca araştırmacı tarafından kullanılacaktır.

Çalışmada elde edilen veriler bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılacak olup katılımcıların gizliliği korunacaktır. Katılımcılardan isimleri yerine kodlama kullanılacak ve yaş bilgisi haricinde herhangi kimlik bilgisi talep edilmeyecektir.

Çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına bağlıdır. Velilerden alınan onay formunun yanısıra çocukların da sözlü onayı dorultusunda çalışmaya başlanacaktır. Arzu edildiği takdirde, herhangi bir yaptırıma maruz kalmadan katılımdan vazgeçme hakkı katılımcılara sunulacaktır.

Çalışmaya ya da çocuğunuzun katılımına yönelik daha fazla bilgi için aşağıda iletişim bilgileri bulunan Betül YILMAZ'a ulaşabilirsiniz.

Teşekkür,

Betül YILMAZ

İmzası

Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, A322

05557277572

Yukarıda açıklamasını okuduğum çalışmaya, oğlum/kızım \_\_\_\_\_'nin katılımına izin veriyorum. Ebeveynin:

Adı, soyadı: \_\_\_\_\_ İmzası: \_\_\_\_\_ Tarih:

Çocuğunuzun katılımı ya da haklarının korunmasına yönelik sorularınız varsa ya da çocuğunuz herhangi bir şekilde risk altında olabileceğine, strese maruz kalacağına inanıyorsanız Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Etik Kuruluna (312) 210-7348 telefon numarasından ulaşabilirsiniz

## **APPENDIX H: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET**

### **GİRİŞ**

Dünyadaki değişimler insanların farklı beceriler geliştirme ihtiyacını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Zihinsel, sosyal, duygusal ve fiziksel faydaları göz önüne alındığında mizah da insanların geliştirmesi gereken beceriler arasında sayılabilir (McGhee, 2002). Mizah kavramı ile ilgili birçok tanım yapılsa da genel olarak bir davranış ya da olay içerisindeki tutarsızlığın keşfedilmesiyle ortaya çıkan ve gülme ile sonuçlanan durumlar olarak tanımlanabilir (Southam, 2005). İnsanlarda görülen mizah davranışlarının gülme yanında birçok faydası olduğu da alanyazın tarafından desteklenmiştir. Örneğin mizah seviyesi yüksek olan insanların problem durumları ile baş etme ve oylara farklı bakış açıları geliştirme konularında daha yeterli oldukları savunulmaktadır (Yerlikaya, 2007). Mizah kişiye kendini kötü duygulardan ve onların yaratacağı fiziksel etkilerden korumada da fayda sağladığından insanda geliştirilmesi istenen beceriler arasında sayılmaktadır (Bergen, 2003). Bu faydalarının yanı sıra, gelişmiş mizah becerisinin sosyal olarak da insana katkı sağladığı söylenebilir. İnsanlarla iletişim kurarken mizahın kullanılması olumlu bir atmosfer yaratacağından gelişmiş mizah becerisinin hem kendini ifade etmede hem de daha pozitif ilişkiler kurmada yardımcı olacağı savunulabilir (Yardımcı, 2010).

Yukarıda belirtilen faydalarının yanı sıra mizahın eğitim ortamındaki faydaları da alanyazın tarafından ortaya konulmaktadır. Erken çocukluk eğitiminin kalitesini artırmak için de farklı stratejiler kullanılmalıdır ve mizah, eğitimin kalitesini artırmak için kullanılan yöntemler arasında yer alabilir (McGhee, 2002). Çocuklara eğlenceli bir öğrenme ortamı sağlama, olumlu bir sınıf ortamı yaratma, arkadaşları ve öğretmeni ile sağlıklı ilişkiler geliştirme, öğretenleri daha iyi anlama ve sınıf yönetimini kolaylaştırma mizahın erken çocukluk dönemindeki faydaları arasında sayılabilir (Yerlikaya, 2003; Lovorn & Holaway, 2015; Rossi, 2015; Praag, Stevens, & Houtte, 2017).

Bu becerinin gelişiminde bireyin kişilik özellikleri, yaşamış olduğu kültür ve geçmiş deneyimleri gibi farklı faktörler etki etmektedir (Scarlett, Naudea, Saloni-Pasternak, & Ponte 2005). Bu faktörlerin etkilerini erken çocukluk dönemlerinden itibaren gözlemlenmekteyiz. Bu faktörlerin olumlu/olumsuz etkilerini kontrol altına alma süreci yine erken çocukluk döneminde gerçekleşmektedir. Uygun koşullar sağlanarak desteklenen mizah becerisi de çocuğa ve onun gelecek yaşantısına birçok açıdan fayda sağlamaktadır. Ancak mizah gelişimini desteklemek için yapılacak düzenlemeler planlanırken erken çocukluk döneminde ki mizah ve yetişkin mizahının farklılık gösterdiği de göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır. Yetişkinlere anlamsız gelen durumlar çocukların için komik olabilirken aynı şekilde çocukların güldüğü durumlar yetişkinlerin mizah anlayışına hitap etmeyebilir (Akıncı, 2015). Bu sebeple, erken çocukluk döneminde mizahı desteklemek ve gözlemelemek için çocukların ne tür mizahı takdir ettikleri, mizah üretirken nelerden faydalandıkları ve mizah anlayışlarına etki eden etmenlerin değerlendirilmesi gerekmektedir.

Erken çocuklukta mizah gelişimi ile ilgili McGhee'nin mizah gelişimi teorisi bu dönemde ilgili kaynak oluşturmaktadır. McGhee'ye (1979) göre mizah gelişiminin yaş ve bilişsel beceriler ile ilgili yakından ilişkisi bulunmaktadır. Teorisini oluşturma sürecinde Piaget'in Bilişsel Gelişim Teorisinde etkilenen McGhee (2002), yaşın ilerlemesi ile birlikte çocukların daha karışık mizahi öğeleri anlayabildiği, takdir edebildiği ve üretebildiğini savunmaktadır. McGhee, mizah gelişimini genel olarak dört aşamada açıklamaktadır. Buna ek olarak uyuşmazlık mizahın ana kaynaklarından biri olarak görülmektedir. İki durum arasındaki uyuşmazlık ya da olayların beklendik oluş biçiminin dışına çıkması gülme ile sonuçlanır. İnsan beynindeki şemalar da bu durumla yakından ilişkilidir. Örneğin, insan beyninde bir kavram ile ilgili var olan şemaya tutarsız bir şey ile karşılaşıldığında mizah ortaya çıkar. Bu yüzden, yaşla ve bilişsel gelişimle artan bu şemalar da mizah gelişiminde önemli bir yere sahiptir. Bu çalışmada da çocuklardan alınan veriler McGhee'nin gelişimsel açıklamalarından yardım alınarak açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Gelişimsel özelliklerin yanı sıra, çocukların sahip oldukları mizah tarzları da onların üretikleri mizahı anlamak için gereklidir. Bu mizah tarzları yalnızca çocuklarda değil yetişkinlerde de kendilerini mizahi yönden ifade etme biçimlerini anlamlandırmada kullanılabilir. Mizah tarzları, Martin (2003) tarafından tanımlanan

ve olumlu ve olumsuz olarak iki ayrı grupta incelenen mizah davranışlarını içerir. Olumlu mizah tarzlarından biri olan kendini geliştirici mizah kişinin kendini incitmeden ya da aşağılamadan kendi ile ilgili mizah üretmesini içerirken katılımcı mizah yine aynı şekilde herhangi bir zarar verici davranış içermeden çevresindeki insanları güldürmek ile alakalıdır. Bunların aksine olumsuz mizaha bakıldığından yine iki farklı mizah tarzı tanımlanmıştır. Saldırgan mizah tarzına sahip olan bireyler çevresindeki insanları güldürmek için onlara zarar verici mizahi öğeler kullanmayı tercih ederken kendini yıkıcı mizahta kendi zayıf yönleri ile ilgili aşağılayıcı mizah üretirken bunu içinde bulunduğu sosyal grupta ki insanları güldürmeye amaçlayarak yapmaktadır. Martin'nin (2003) açıkladığı bu mizah tarzları da kişilerin sosyal-duygusal durumu ve bu konudaki ihtiyaçları konusunda bilgi sağlayabilir. Bu sebeple, yapılan çalışmadaki veriler analiz edilirken mizah tarzları da göz önünde bulundurulmuştur.

Sonuç olacak bakıldığından mizah gelişiminin erken yaşlardaki önemi yadsınamaz. Bu sebeple, çocukların mizah gelişimleri hakkında bilgi sahibi olmak hem ihtiyaçlarını anlama hem de uygun bir öğrenme ortamı sağlamada önemlidir. Erken çocukluk döneminde çocukların gelişim ve öğrenmesinde büyük bir etkiye sahip olan öğretmenlerin de bu konuda ki görüşleri önem kazanmaktadır (Meral, 2013).

### **Çalışmanın Amacı**

Bu çalışmanın amacı erken çocukluk döneminde mizahın çocuklar ve öğretmenler açısından incelenmesidir. Çocukların mizahi taktir etme durumları ve mizah üretirken kullandıkları öğeleri ortaya çıkararak onların mizah gelişimlerini anlamlandırmanın yanında erken çocukluk öğretmenlerinin bu konudaki görüşlerini öğrenerek çocukların mizahları ve onların çocukların mizahı üzerindeki yorumlarının kıyaslamak hedeflenmiştir. Bir diğer amaç ise, mizah ve erken çocukluk döneminde mizah ile ilgili görüşleri alınan öğretmenlerin mizahın işlevleri, önemi, gelişimi ve sınıfta mizah kullanımı ile ilgili görüşleri hakkında bilgi sahibi olmaktır.

## **Çalışmanın Önemi**

İnsanlar her gün farklı problemlerle karşılaşıp bu problemler için en uygun çözüm yollarını bulmak için stratejiler geliştirmek durumundadırlar ve bu problemlerle baş etmek için çeşitli beceriler geliştirmelidirler (Meral, 2013). Bu durum sadece yetişkinler için değil çocuklar için de böyle olduğundan gerekli olan becerilerin geliştirilmesi erken yaşlarda başlanmalıdır. Bu becerilerden biri olarak tanımlanan mizah da erken yaşlarda gelişmeye başlar. Mizahın çocuklar üzerindeki sosyal, duygusal, fiziksel ve bilişsel faydalari göz önünde bulundurulduğunda erken yaşlarda mizah gelişimini anlamak ve buna yönelik değişiklikler yapmak gerekmektedir (Akıncı, 2015).

Alanyazına bakıldığından erken çocukluk döneminde mizahı anlamlandırmak için birçok çalışma yapıldığı görülebilir. (örn. Sroufe & Wunsch 1972; Chaney, 1993; Justin, 1932; McGhee, 1971; Eroğlu, 2008). Bu alandaki çalışmalar erken çocuklukta mizah ile ilgili bir çerçeve sağlasa da kültürün mizah üzerindeki etkisi ve farklı kültürlerde görülen mizah davranışlarının da değişkenlik gösterebileceği de ortaya çıkarılmıştır (Guo, Zhang, Wang & Xeromeritou, 2011). Bu çalışma ile, çocukların mizah davranışlarını Türk kültürü açısından değerlendirecek ve eğer varsa bizim kültürümüze ait olan mizah davranışlarının da ortaya çıkarılacaktır.

Rossi, (2015) mizahı eğitimin kalitesini arttırmada faydalı bir kaynak olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu sebeple, çocukların mizah anlayışlarını, ilgilerini, ihtiyaçlarını vb. belirlemek eğitime dahil ederken de eğitimcilere katkı sağlayacaktır. Bu katkılara örnek olarak daha eğlenceli bir öğrenme ortamı, olumlu sınıf ortamı ve daha kolay sınıf yönetimi sayılabilir (Meral, 2013).

## **YÖNTEM**

### **Araştırma Soruları**

- 1. 5-6 yaş孩童们如何在图画中加入幽默元素？**
- 2. 5-6 yaş孩童们如何理解并描述幽默表情包中的幽默情况？**
- 3. 早期教育者对幽默的看法是什么？**

4. Erken çocukluk öğretmenlerinin erken çocukluk döneminde mizah kullanımı hakkındaki görüşleri nelerdir?
5. Erken çocukluk öğretmenleri sınıflarındaki çocukların mizah anlayışlarını ve mizah tarzlarını nasıl yorumluyor?

### Araştırma Yöntemi

Çalışma nitel çalışmalarдан biri olan olgu bilim çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Çalışmada erken çocukluk dönemindeki çocukların mizahı takdir etme ve üretme durumları ile ilgili bilgi sahibi olmaya ek olarak öğretmenlerin de mizah ve erken çocuklukta mizah ile ilgili görüşleri alınmıştır.

### Katılımcılar

Bu çalışmada örneklem amaçlı örneklem yöntemi kullanılarak belirlenmiştir. Çalışmaya devlete bağlı bir erken çocukluk kurumunda eğitim gören 22 beş yaş çocuğu ve bu çocukların öğretmeni olan beş erken çocukluk öğretmeni katılmıştır. Çalışmaya katılan çocukların beş yaşında olmaları bu çalışma için önem taşımaktadır. Bunun sebebi beş yaş çocuğunun araştırmacı tarafından verilen yönergeleri anlayacak, sorulara cevap verecek ve kendini ifade edecek zihinsel ve dil becerilerinin yeterince gelişmiş olmasıdır. Çalışmaya katılan erken çocukluk öğretmenlerinin de çalışmaya katılan çocukların öğretmenleri olmasına dikkat edilmiştir. Bunun sebebi ise çocuklarla ilgili sorulan sorularla ilgili cevap alabilmek ve çocuklardan alınan veriler ile öğretmen görüşleri arasında bağ kurabilmektir. Çalışmanın verileri Tokat il merkezinde toplanmıştır. Bunun sebebi ise araştırmacının Tokat ilindeki okullara kolay ulaşım sağlayabilmesidir. Katılımcıların gizliliğini korumak için çocuklara C1 den C22 ye kadar öğretmenlere ise T1 den T5 e kadar takma isimler verilmiştir.

### Veri Toplama Aracı ve Süreci

Çalışmada açık uçlu sorular ve mizah içerikli bir görsel veri toplama sürecinde veri toplama aracı olarak kullanılmıştır. Kullanılan tüm materyaller alanda uzman hocaların görüşleri alınarak tasarlanmış ve yapılan pilot çalışmalar sonucunda son halini almıştır. Veri toplama süreci başlamadan üniversite etik kurulundan ve Milli Eğitim Bakanlığından gerekli izinler alınmıştır. Gerekli izinler ile birlikte Tokat

ilindeki bazı devlet anaokullarının müdürleri ve izin alınan okullardaki çocuklar ve öğretmenleri ile iletişime geçilmiştir. Bu izinlere ek olarak çocuklardan veri toplamak için velilere izin mektubu gönderilmiş ve veli izni alınan çocuklardan veri toplanmıştır. Sadece veliler değil çocukların da çalışmaya katılım için istek durumları göz önünde bulundurulmuş ve çalışmaya katılmak istemeyen ya da resimlerini paylaşmak istemeyen çocuklar çalışmaya dahil edilmemiştir. Pilot çalışmaya özel bir okul öncesi kurumuna devam eden 6 çocuk ve onların öğretmeni olan 2 erken çocukluk öğretmeni dahil edilmiştir. Pilot çalışma sonucunda yalnızca materyaller değil süreç hakkında da bazı düzenlemeler için de kararlar alınmıştır. Pilot çalışmadan alınan geri bildirimlere göre yeniden düzenlenen çalışma, Tokat ilinde bulunan bir devlet anaokulunda sürdürülmüştür. Çalışmada hem çocuklar hem de öğretmenler ile görüşme yapılmıştır. Sürece çocuklardan veri toplama ile başlanmıştır. Çocukların dikkatini çekmek, araştırmacı ile aralarında olumlu bir ilişki başlamasına katkıda bulunmak ve çocukların ana çalışmaya hazırlamak için bir hikâye etkinliği ile çalışmaya başlanmıştır. Çalışmada kullanılan hikâye araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilmiştir ve hikaye ipte mandalla hikaye anlatma tekniği ile anlatılmıştır. Hikaye genel olarak etrafında gördüğü şeylerin resmini çizmeyi seven bir çocukla ilgilidir. Hikayenin sonunda komik bir olay gören ancak bunu çizemeyen çocuk için sınıftaki çocuklardan “komik” bir resim çizmesi istenir. Bu hikaye süreci tüm sınıfta uygulanırken sadece veli izni olan ve çalışmaya katılmak isteyen çocukların resimleri çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Resim çizme sürecinde araştırmacı çocukların gözlemlemiş ve resimleri ile ilgili sorular sormuştur. Çocuklar resimlerini bitirdiklerinde ise çalışmaya katılan her çocuk ile bire bir görüşmeler yapılarak yaptıkları resimleri açıklamaları istenmiştir. Resimde ne olduğu ve bunun neden komik olduğu anlaşılmaya çalışılarak çocukların mizahı nasıl ürettiğine yönelik veri toplanmıştır.

Çalışmanın diğer kısmında yine uzman görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi ve pilot çalışma sonucunda ortaya çıkan “komik” bir görsel, çocuklara gösterilmiş ve bu görsel ile ilgili beş tane açık uçlu soru çocuklara yöneltilmiştir. Bu görüşmeler de yine öğrencilerle bireysel olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bunlara ek olarak bu kısmın resim çizme bölümünden sonra yapılmasında ki amaç ise çocukların kendi resimlerini

yaparken gösterilen resimden etkilenmelerini engellemek ve özgün resimler ortaya çıkarmalarını sağlamaktır.

Son olarak da öğretmenlerden veri toplanmıştır. Öğretmenlere ise mizah, okul öncesinde mizah kullanımı ve çalışmaya katılan çocukların mizah anlayışları ve gelişimleri ile ilgili görüşlerini almaya yönelik 15 açık uçlu soru yöneltilmiştir. Her öğretmen ile yapılan bireysel görüşmeler sonucunda veri toplanmıştır. Çocuklarla ve öğretmenle yapılan bu görüşmeler her sınıf için 60 – 70 dakika sürmüştür.

### **Veri Analiz Süreci**

Veri toplama sürecinde elde edilen ses kayıtları, bilgisayar ortamına aktarılarak veri analiz sürecine başlanmıştır. Bu veriler kullanılarak genel kategoriler ve kodlar oluşturulmuştur. Verilerin daha anlaşılır bir şekilde sunulması için de bu kategori ve kodlar tablolar halinde sunulmuştur (Creswell, 2007). Bu kodlar yine erken çocukluk alanında yüksek lisans yapan ve araştırma görevlisi olarak çalışan bir araştırmacı ile ayrı ayrı oluşturulup bu kodlar karşılaştırılmıştır. Sonuç olarak kategori ve kodların son hallerine birlikte yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda karar verilmiştir. Bu kategori ve kodlar oluştururken McGhee'nin mizah gelişim aşamaları, Martin'nin mizah tarzları ve alanyazın göz önünde bulundurulmuştur.

### **BULGULAR VE TARTIŞMA**

Bu bölümde öncelikle katılımcıların kişisel bilgileri tablolar halinde sunulacaktır. Daha sonra da çalışma sonunda elde edilen bulgular ilgili alanyazın ile tartışılarak verilecektir.

#### **Katılımcıların Kişisel Bilgileri**

Tablo 1

#### *Çocukların Kişisel Bilgileri*

Katılımcı	Yaş	Cinsiyet	Sınıf-Öğretmen
C1	5	Erkek	T1
C2	5	Erkek	T1
C3	6	Kız	T1

Tablo 1 (devamı)

C4	5	Kız	T1
C5	5	Kız	T1
C6	5	Erkek	T2
C7	5	Erkek	T2
C8	5	Kız	T2
C9	5	Kız	T2
C10	5	Erkek	T3
C11	5	Kız	T3
C12	5	Erkek	T3
C13	5	Kız	T4
C14	5	Erkek	T4
C15	5	Erkek	T4
C16	5	Erkek	T4
C17	5	Erkek	T5
C18	5	Erkek	T5
C19	5	Kız	T5
C20	5	Erkek	T5
C21	5	Erkek	T5
C22	5	Erkek	T5

Tablo 2

*Öğretmenlerin Kişisel Bilgileri*

Katılımcı	Yaş	Cinsiyet	Üniversite Tipi	Deneyim Yılı
T1	39	Kadın	Devlet Üniversitesi	16
T2	29	Kadın	Devlet Üniversitesi	7

Tablo 2 (devamı)

T3	39	Kadın	Devlet Üniversitesi	16
T4	26	Kadın	Devlet Üniversitesi	4
T5	35	Kadın	Devlet Üniversitesi	8

### **1. Araştırma Sorusu: 5-6 Yaş Çocukları Resimlerine Nasıl Mizahi Ögeler Dahil Ediyor?**

Bu araştırma sorusuna yönelik veri toplamak amacıyla araştırmacı katılımcılardan “komik” bir resim çizmelerini ve sonrasında bu resmi açıklamalarını istemiştir. Çocukların verdiği cevaplar analiz edilirken McGhee’nin mizah gelişimi aşamaları ve Johnson’nun bu dönemde çocukların mizah anlayışlarına yönelik hazırladığı kategoriler kullanılmıştır.

Tablo 3

#### *Komik Resimlerdeki Ögeler*

Kategoriler	Kodlar
Kavramsal Tutarsızlık	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Büyük-küçük insanlar (n=3)</li> <li>• Cansız varlıklara insan özelliklerini vermek (n=4)</li> <li>• İnsanlara hayvan özellikleri vermek (n=1)</li> <li>• Olağandışı fiziksel özellikler (n=7)</li> <li>• Bir şeylerin olağandışı kombinasyonu (n=2)</li> </ul>
Fiziksel deformasyon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beden bölümlerinin olağandışı boyut ve sayıda olması (n=4)</li> <li>• Beden bölümlerinin olağandışı renk ve şekilde olması (n=5)</li> </ul>

Tablo 3 (devamı)

Karikatürleştirme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birini incitme (n=9)</li> <li>• Olağandışı- uygunsuz davranışlar (n=4)</li> </ul>
Uçuk abartı	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abartılı sayı (n=2)</li> <li>• Abartılı büyük ya da küçük şeyler (n=2)</li> </ul>
Kostüm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palyaço (n=5)</li> <li>• Hemşire (n=1)</li> </ul>

Bu araştırma sorusu ile ilgili veriler, Johnson (2010) tarafından McGhee'nin mizah gelişimi aşamaları göz önüne alınarak hazırlanan kategoriler altında değerlendirilmiştir. Bu kategoriler üçüncü aşama olan ve 2-7 yaş çocukların kapsayan "Kavramsal Tutarsızlık" aşaması altında tanımlanmıştır (McGhee, 1979). Çalışmanın katılımcılarının kişisel bilgilerine bakıldığından da çocukların mizah gelişiminde bu aşamada olduğu söylenebilir. Bu sebeple McGhee'nin teorisinin farklı kültürlerdeki çocukların da mizah gelişimlerini açıklayabildiği söylenebilir. Ancak çocuklar genel olarak benzer mizah davranışları gösterseler de kullandıkları ögeler kültürden kültüre farklılık gösterebilir (Loizou, 2006; Hoicka & Akhtar, 2011; Meral, 2013; Koçer, Eskidemir & Özbek, 2012; Loizou & Kyriakou, 2015)

Erken çocuklukta mizah üretimini açıklamaya çalışan bu çalışmaların yanı sıra Reddy (2001) aslında bu tür uygulamaların mizah üretimini anlamada yeterli olmadığını savunmaktadır. Bunun sebebi mizah üretimi sadece planlı davranışlar değildir. Eğer çocuğun yaptığı herhangi bir davranıştı gülme ile sonuçlandıysa ve bu sebeple çocuk bu davranışı devam ettiriyorsa bu da mizah üretmenin bir parçası olabilir. Erken çocuklukta mizah üretimini tam anlamı ile anlamak için bu tür davranışların da gözlemlenmesi gerekmektedir.

## **2. Araştırma Sorusu: 5-6 Yaş Çocukları Gösterilen Mizahi Görseldeki Mizah Durumunu Nasıl Açıklıyor?**

Bu araştırma sorusu altında çocukların komik görselle ilgili alınan görüşlerine yönelik bulgular tartışılmıştır. Bu görsel kavramsal tutarsızlık kategorisi altında değerlendirilmiş ve beş açık uçlu soru kullanılarak çocukların görseli değerlendirmeleri istenmiştir.

Tablo 4

### *Çocukların Komik Görsel ile İlgili Görüşleri*

Kategoriler	Kodlar
Kavramsal Tutarsızlık	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sandalye zürafa (n=19)</li></ul>
Karikatürleştirme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Şaşkın yüz (n=6)</li></ul>

Çocukların cevapları incelendiğinde görselde sunulan mizahi taktir ettiği ve resimdeki kavramsal tutarsızlığı açıkladığı görülmüştür. Bu durum yine gelişimsel özellikleri ile açıklanabilir. Loizou'nun (2006) yaptığı benzer bir çalışmada da çocukların gelişimsel özellikleri ve bilişsel becerilerinin mizahi taktir etme durumları üzerinde etkisi olduğunu ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Çocukların görseldeki kavramsal tutarsızlığı fark etmeleri sahip oldukları şemalarla ilgili olduğundan bilişsel şemalarının artması onları mizahi taktir etme seviyelerini de artıracagını ifade etmiştir (Brown, 1993).

## **Araştırma Sorusu 3: Erken Çocukluk Öğretmenlerinin Mizah Hakkındaki Görüşleri Nelerdir?**

Bu araştırma sorulu ile ilgili olarak öğretmenlerden mizah ile ilgili görüşlerini almaya yönelik sorular sorulmuştur.

Tablo 5

*Öğretmenlerin Mizah ile İlgili Görüşleri*

Kategoriler	Kodlar
Kişisel Araç	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eleştirmeye yol (n=1)</li> <li>• Eğlence kaynağı (n=2)</li> <li>• Düşünmeye yönlendiren bir araç (n=1)</li> <li>• Kendini ifade etme yol (n=1)</li> <li>• Yaşamdan tatmin olma yol (n=4)</li> <li>• Pozitif bakış açısı aracı (n=1)</li> </ul>
Sosyal Araç	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Başkalarına zarar vermeden iletişim kurma yol (n=1)</li> <li>• Çocuklarla iletişim kurma yol (n=1)</li> </ul>

Erken çocukluk öğretmenlerinin mizah ile ilgili görüşlerini içeren cevapları temel olarak iki kategori altında değerlendirilmiştir. Bunlar mizahın insan üzerindeki kişisel ve sosyal etkileri ile alakalıdır. Kişisel etkilerine bakıldığından mizah insanlara kendilerini ifade etme, düşünme, hayattan tatmin olma ve pozitif bakış açısı geliştirme gibi faydalı sağlamaktadır. Alanyazına bakıldığından yapılan diğer çalışmaların da mizahın bu tür katkılarından bahsettiğini görebiliriz (Decker, 1987; Grugulis, 2002; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Martin 2007; Ruch 2008; Samson & Antonelli, 2013).

Mizahın insan üzerindeki etkilerine sosyal açıdan bakıldığında ise öğretmenlerin genelde mizahın iletişim üzerindeki etkilerine yönelik cevaplar vermiş olduğu görülmüştür. Öğretmenlere göre mizah insanları incitmeden onlara bir şeyler söyleme yolları sağlar. Buna ek olarak çocuklarla iletişime geçerken mizah kullanmak çocukların seviyesine inmede yetişkinlere yardım eder. Mizahın sosyal yaşamı ya da insanların iletişimlerini inceleyen çalışmalara bakıldığından mizahın aslında insanlara olumsuz sonuçlanma ihtimali olan iletişimi olumlu yöne çevirmede

katkı sağlayabileceği ortaya çıkarılmıştır (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). Çocuklarla iletişime geçerken de mizah kullanılmasının olumlu etkileri yapılan çalışmalarla ortaya çıkarılmıştır (Walsh, 2004; Lovorn, 2008).

#### **Araştırma Sorusu 4: Erken Çocukluk Öğretmenlerinin Erken Çocukluk Döneminde Mizah Kullanımı Hakkındaki Görüşleri Nelerdir?**

Öğretmenlerle yapılan görüşmelerin bir diğer kısmı da onların erken çocukluk dönemdeki mizah ve mizah kullanımı ile ilgili değerlendirmelerini içermektedir.

Tablo 5

#### *Öğretmenlerin Erken Çocukta Mizah İle İlgili Görüşleri*

Kategoriler	Kodlar
Başkaları ile İletişimi Geliştirme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Öğretmen ile bağ geliştirme (n=1)</li><li>• Başkalarını incitmeden iletişim kurma (n=1)</li></ul>
Gelişimi Destekleme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bilişsel gelişimi destekleme (n=1)</li><li>• Yaratıcılığı geliştirme (n=1)</li></ul>
Öğrenmeyi Kolaylaştırma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gelişimine uygun öğrenme sağlama (n=2)</li><li>• Dikkat çekme (n=1)</li></ul>

Öğretmenler, çocukların mizah davranışları ile ilgili görüşlerinin yanı sıra mizahın sınıfı kullanılmasının ne gibi faydaları olabileceği konusunda da görüşlerini paylaşımlardır. Yukarıda ki tabloda da gösterildiği gibi bu faydalar üç ayrı başlıkta incelenmiştir. Bunlardan ilki mizahın çocukların sosyal çevresi ile ilişkilerine nasıl katkıda bulunduğu ile alakalıdır. Bu ilişki hem öğretmen hem de akranları ile olabilir ve mizahın her ikisi üzerinde de faydası vardır. Alanyazına bakıldığından mizahın insanlarla iletişim konusundaki katkılarına yönelik benzer çalışmalar bulunmuştur (Meyer, 2000; Garner, 2006; Lovorn & Holaway, 2015; Praag, Stevens & Houtte, 2017).

Mizahın gelişim üzerindeki etkileri öğretmenler tarafından bilişsel beceriler ve yaratıcılık gelişimi başlıklarını altında tanımlanmıştır. Mizahın faklı kavramları, imaları vb. anlama ve bunlarla ilgili farklı şemalar geliştirme ile ilgili olduğunu ortaya koyan çalışmalar vardır (Sroufe & Wunsch, 1972; Rothbart, 1973; Meral, 2013). Mizah aslında farklı kavramları anlamlandırmayı da gerektirdiğinden, çalışmaya katılan öğretmenlerin de belirttiği gibi bilişsel gelişime katkı sağladığı söylenebilir. Mizahın yaratıcılık üzerindeki etkisine bakıldığıda ise ikisinin de aynı kaynaktan beslendiği ve benzer beceriler gerektiğini savunan çalışmalar vardır (Martin & Lefcourt, 1983). Olaylara farklı bakmayı sağlama, alışlagelmedik sonuçlar çıkarma mizah ve yaratıcılığın ortak yönleri olup birbirini destekleyen iki süreç olduğu söylenebilir (Filipowicz, 2006; Romero & Pescosolido, 2008; Wood, Beckman, & Rossiter, 2011; Amabile & Pillemer, 2012).

Son olarak öğretmenler mizahın öğrenme üzerindeki etkileri üzerinde durmuşlardır. Özellikle gelişime uygun bir öğrenme sağlama ve dikkat çekme üzerine konuşan öğretmenler mizahın öğrenmeyi bu şekilde desteklediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Mizahın eğitimde neden kullanılması gerektiğini sorusuna cevap arayan birçok çalışma da mizahın öğrenme üzerindeki etkileri üzerinde durmuştur. Özellikle mizahın gelişim üzerindeki etkileri üzerine duran çalışmaların yanı sıra mizahın daha ileri zihinsel süreçleri gerektiren konularda bile daha iyi öğrenme sağladığına yönelik çalışmalar vardır (Steele, 1998; Jeder, 2014). Alanyazında ki diğer çalışmalar ise öğrenmeyi kolaylaştırma konusunda yalnızca zihinsel süreçlere değil sosyal ve duygusal gibi diğer alanlara da odaklanması gerektiğini savunuştur (Lei, Cohen, & Russler, t.y.). Mizahı sınıfta bir dikkat çekme yöntemi olarak kullanma da birçok çalışma tarafından desteklenmiş ve hem çocukların dikkatini çekme hem de daha uzun süre dikkat göstermelerinde faydalı olacağı konusunda bulgular sunmuşlardır (Cornett, 1986; Herbert, 1991; Lei, Cohen, & Russler, t.y.).

#### **Araştırma Sorusu 5: Erken çocukluk öğretmenleri sınıflarındaki çocukların mizah anlayışlarını ve mizah tarzlarını nasıl yorumluyor?**

Son araştırma sorusu öğretmenlerin sınıflarındaki öğrencilerin mizah gelişimleri ile alakalıdır. Çalışmaya katılan çocukların mizah davranışları ile ilgili öğretmenlere sorular sorulmuştur.

Tablo 6

*Öğretmenlerin çocukların mizah anlayışı ve mizah tarzları ile ilgili görüşleri*

Kategoriler	Kodlar
Uyumsuz Mizah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• İlişkilerini olumsuz etkileyen fiziksel mizah kullanma (n=4)</li> </ul>
Uyumlu Mizah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gülmeyi ve başkalarına şaka yapmayı sever (n=3)</li> <li>• Kendi kendine mizah yapar (n=1)</li> <li>• Mizahi başkaları ile paylaşır (n=4)</li> <li>• Normal şeyleri komik şekilde ifade eder (n=3)</li> </ul>
Mizah Yok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mizah kullanmaz (n=8)</li> </ul>

Yukarıdaki tabloda yer verilen kategoriler oluşturulurken Martin'ın (2003) mizah tarzlarından faydalانılmıştır. Mizah tarzlarını uyumlu ve uyumsuz mizah olmak üzere iki ana başlık üzerinde değerlendiren Martin, mizahın insan üzerindeki etkilerinin insanların sahip oldukları mizah tarzları ile ilgili olduğunu belirtmiştir. Öğretmenlerin cevaplarına bakıldığında ise uyumsuz mizah davranışını olarak diğerlerinin hoşuna gitmeyecek ya da zarar verecek mizah davranışlarının onların diğerleri ile iletişimlerini etkilediği görülmektedir. Uyumsuz mizah davranışlarının ilişkiler üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerini gösteren çalışmalar da bu bulguyu desteklemektedir (Oberjohn, 2002; Kuipers, 2010). Öğretmenler tarafından tanımlanan uyumlu mizah davranışlarına bakıldığında ise çocukların hem kendileri hem de çevresindekileri güldürmek için kullandıkları ve zarar verme amacı içermeyen davranışlar olarak tanımlanabilir. Alanyazında da bu bulguyu destekleyecek çalışmalara rastlanmaktadır. Çocukların uyumlu mizah üretmesini bilişsel ve dil gelişimi gibi gelişimsel faktörlere bağlayan çalışmaların yanı sıra (Morrison, 2008; Lang and Hoon, 2010; Ghayas, 2013; Loizou & Kyriakou, 2015),

mizahın sağlıklı sosyal ilişkiler kurma üzerindeki etkileri üzerine duran çalışmalar da vardır (Martin, 2007).

Son kategoriye bakıldığından ise öğretmenlerin bazı çocukları tanımlarken mizah “gelişimi yok” ya da “mizah davranışını göstermiyor” gibi ifadelerde bulunduğu görülmektedir. Çocukların sosyal çevrelerinde mizah kullanmamaları öğretmenler için mizah duygusunun olmaması ile eşdeğer tutulduğu elde edilen veriler doğrultusunda söylenilenbilir. Ek olarak öğretmenler bu çocukların “halim selim”, “sakin” ve “sessiz” olarak tanımlamışlardır. Öğretmenlerin bu tanımlarını anlamlandırmak için örnek gösterilebilecek çalışmalar bu durumu kültürle ilişkilendirmiştir (Guo, Zhang, Wang & Xeromeritou, 2011).

Tüm bulgulara genel olarak bakıldığından erken çocuklukta mizahı taktir etme ve mizah üretmenin gelişimsel bir durum olduğu ve McGhee'nin bu gelişim sürecini açıklama şekli ile uyumluluk gösterdiği söylenebilir. Buna ek olarak öğretmenlerin mizahı algılama şekillerinin ve içinde bulundukları kültürün çocukların mizahını değerlendirme şekillerini etkileyebileceği söylenebilir. Mizahın çocuğun gelişimine, öğrenmesine ve ilerideki yaşamına katkıları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda erken çocukluk döneminde de mizah becerilerinin desteklenmesi ve sınıf ortamına dahil edilmesi önem kazanmaktadır (Meral, 2013). Ancak erken yaşlarda görülen mizah anlayışı ve mizah davranışları yetişkinlerin mizah anlayışlarından farklı olduğundan mizah gelişimini desteklemek için erken çocukluk döneminde mizahın anlaşıılması gerekmektedir (Akıncı, 2015). Bu çalışmanın hem çocukların mizahını anlama hem de öğretmenlerin mizaha ve erken çocuklukta mizaha karşı bakış açılarını sergilemeye faydalı olabileceği söylenebilir.

## **APPENDIX I: THESIS PERMISSION FORM/TEZ İZİN FORMU**

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### **YAZARIN / AUTHOR**

**Soyadı/Surname** : YILMAZ

**Adı/Name** : Betül

**Bölümü / Department** : Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği

**TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English)** : Examining Humor In Early Childhood Period From Teacher And Child Aspects

**TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:** Yüksek Lisans/Master

Doktora /PhD

1. **Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır.** / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide
2. **Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of two year. \*
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