

Short overview of the project ‘Guessing Game at the PRIX JEUNESSE 2006’ organised by the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI)

The initial idea for the creation of the eleven spots of the PRIX JEUNESSE Guessing Game 2006 was to bring children and their internationally varying viewing habits into the festival. The perspective of young recipients should find its way into the ongoing presentations. Furthermore, we tried to find an entertaining and inspiring way to communicate scientific considerations and evoke discussions on the determining factors of children’s humour appreciation. Whether children are laughing about special jokes may depend on the impact of cultural background, gender, age and – of course – individual personality traits.

Driven by these considerations we created the following research structure: At first we selected 12 short extracts of funny children’s television programmes (PRIX JEUNESSE and Item Exchange programmes). It was important for the experiment to choose scenes which



may rouse a kind of diversity between the viewing children: For example, scenes were chosen to produce a difference in reception between boys and girls, Asian and European children, youngsters and teens. That is why programmes from different nations and for different target groups were included. In addition, the humour of the clips should not depend on the use of language, because wordplays and verbal allusions are hard to translate adequately. Finally, the following programmes have been chosen to be tested:

KNYACKI – GOES TO THE SEA (extract)	Japan / NHK
PUCCA	GB / Jetix
BEZEES	Slovenia / RTV Slovenija
GOGS (extract)	GB / S4C
WORTEL TV	Netherlands / KRO
THE CHILDREN’S SUPERSHOW (extract)	Norway / NRK
31 MINUTOS (extract)	Chile / TV Nacional de Chile
BUS LIFE	GB / Disney Channel UK
SPONGEBOB (extract)	USA / Nickelodeon, Super RTL
MR. SIMPLE	Iran / IRIB
BAKING A CAKE	Netherlands / KRO
DIE SENDUNG MIT DER MAUS (extracts)	Germany / WDR

In the next step we composed a DVD with all these segments and tried to find international collaborators who would conduct the screening session and videotape the viewing children. Fortunately, we could ask several producers of global children’s television who have been connected to the PRIX JEUNESSE for years. All colleagues were interested in the project and very collaborative in providing video tapes with children’s reactions. The following list of co-operators shows the international variety which was important for the concept of the Guessing Game.

Iyabode O. Aladejana, Nigerian Television, Nigeria
Norliza Mohd. Ali, Wisma TV, Malaysia
Firdoze Bulbulia, CBFA, South Africa
Beth Carmona, TVE Brasil, Brazil
Hyun-sook Chung, EBS, Korea
Inge Dumon-Kamer, KETNET, Belgium

Kalle Fürst, NRK, Norway
 Christine Gitau, Children's Voices Foundation, Kenya
 Birgit Guth, Super RTL, Germany
 Josephine Karani, Channel 1 KBCTV, Kenya
 Frank Klasen, Super RTL, Germany
 Benjamin Manns, SWR, Germany
 Seham Nasser, ERTU, Egypt
 Riad Raad, Radio and TV Arab Training Centre, Syria
 Adelaida Trujillo Caicedo, Citurna Ltda., Colombia
 Ragna Wallmark, Nordvisjonen, Sweden
 Maria Weininger, IZI, Germany
 Wang Yan, CCTV, China



These contributors were asked to follow a special screening procedure: The camera had to be placed under the TV set so that the viewing children can easily be seen. The age may vary, but the children should not be older than 13 years. We asked for a typical living-room environment as viewing background, so that the final spectator may get an impression of the cultural television watching context. There were no guidelines concerning the size of the group or the sex of the children. Additionally to the viewing behaviour of the children we asked for the recording of a children's joke.

In the end we received 26 tapes from 14 different nations: 11 from Europe, 7 from Africa, 6 from Asia and 2 from America. A total of 153 children were included in the recordings, whose age varied between 2 and 16 years.

The following evaluation of the tapes has been structured into three steps. At first we chose a quantitative form of analysis: We developed five categories of children's laughing behaviour: 'Laughing out loud' – 'Smiling' – 'Talking' – 'Being attentive, but not laughing' and 'Being bored' and generated simple effects like 'Which children are laughing most?' or 'Which spot is laughed about most?' and 'Which programme evokes discussions among the viewers?'. These results led to first considerations and expectations which were revised in a second and a third closer analysis: This time, we considered the specific filmic situation which was linked to the children's laughter. By doing this, we found other aspects of children's behaviour which are important in understanding children's television appreciation: For example, laughing can sometimes be combined with signs of feeling disgusted (see GOGS) or with imitating sounds and movements (see KNYACKI).





These various considerations led to the ideas expressed in the 11 clips presented as the PRIX JEUNESSE 2006 Guessing Game. Several treatments concerning national, age and cultural differences (and similarities) in humour could be outlined for the Guessing Game spots. The sample of the study is not representative in a scientific way, so generalisations are not intended. After all, the Guessing Game was created to show tendencies of children's humour appreciation, to get an idea of cultural, age and gender differences in this context and to inspire discussions and contemplations

on how to use humour in children's quality programmes.

We hope that the PRIX JEUNESSE Guessing Game 2006 has been an entertaining and enlightening experience for all participants and that we may come back to those helpful colleagues from all over the world when we are going to prepare the Guessing Game in 2008.