

Humor and Translation

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Abstract:

The translation of humor is not an easy task to handle. It requires the translator to choose from many standards in order to successfully transform the humor from one language into another. In general, humor is of two kinds: universal humor and culture/language-bound humor. Universal humor is that which can be understood by all humans, no matter what culture they belong to. Cultural and language-bound humor; however, constitutes a rough mission for translators. For instance, interpreting a non-humorous cultural expression usually relies upon an explanation of it within the text itself or through footnotes. This solution often does not work with humor because humor relies on the element of surprise, subtle nuance, and/or the use of language-bound puns in order to deliver laughter-inducing effect. In short, over-explanation ultimately kills the joke.

الترجمة والفكاهة

الباحثة

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المخلص:-

ترجمة الفكاهة ليست مهمة سهلة للتعامل معها. يتطلب الأمر من المترجم الاختيار من بين العديد من المعايير من أجل تحويل الفكاهة من لغة إلى أخرى بنجاح. بشكل عام ، الفكاهة من نوعين: الفكاهة العالمية والفكاهة المرتبطة بالثقافة / اللغة. الفكاهة العالمية هي تلك التي يمكن أن يفهما جميع البشر ، بغض النظر عن الثقافة التي ينتمون إليها. ومع ذلك ، روح الدعابة الثقافية واللغة ؛ يشكل مهمة صعبة للمترجمين. على سبيل المثال ، عادةً ما يعتمد تفسير التعبير الثقافي غير المضحك على تفسيره في النص نفسه أو من خلال الحواشي السفلية. غالبًا ما لا يعمل هذا الحل بروح الدعابة لأن الفكاهة تعتمد على عنصر المفاجأة والبراعة الدقيقة أو استخدام التورية المقيدة بلغة لغوية لإحداث تأثير يحث على الضحك. باختصار إن الإفراط في التفسير يقتل في النهاية النكتة.

1. Introduction

Humor constitutes a vital part of people's daily communication. It is a significant part of infinite literary works and movies and of art in general. Whether it is culture-bound or language bound, it is a crucial part of intercultural communication and mass entertainment. Culture-bound humor and linguistic humor (puns) are expected to make the work of translators difficult.

It is crucial to note that "although humor has been approached from several angles, it has rarely been systematically studied as a specific translation problem" (Spanakaki, 2007). It is not an easy task to translate a text from one language into another, but what about translating humor? No matter how difficult it may be to translate humor, it is even more difficult to translate it within the constraints of culture and language. Thus, to successfully translate written content, translators must understand that cultural expressions are not universal. Often, they require an explanation or footnotes in order to be understood by the TL's readers. This "over-explanation" can negatively impact the humorous effect of text.

Further, readers do not realize the complexity of translation while reading what is meant to be a humorous work of a foreign writer. Then, is it possible to translate humor? What difficulties does a translator encounter? This paper explores the possibility of translating humor.

2. Humor: An Introduction

In general, humor is an indispensable part of human life and social interaction. It is not one of life fundamentals; like air or water etc., nor is it one of luxuries. It is rather something in between. So what is humor? According to Mariam-Webster dictionary, "humor is something that is designed to be comical or amusing". Though the previous definition is correct, it is too general. It is important to specify what exactly is meant by the term "humor". In fact, it is not

easy to provide a definition for humor because sometimes people do not laugh, or find amusement, in something that is termed as humor. In other words, there is no total agreement on what comprises the essence of humor. Chateau (1950) maintains that humor should be considered as the opposite of seriousness, rather than being contrasted with tragedy (cited in Attardo, 1994: 3).

Raskin (1985: 1) elucidates that humor is a common phenomenon that can be found in funny situations, funny stories, and even funny thoughts. For him, humor is to hear or see something and laugh at it. Furthermore, he maintains that despite the fact that humor is something subjective (i.e., what is funny for someone might be boring for someone else) the ability to appreciate and enjoy humor is something universal. It is, as Raskin describes, "a universal human trait" and part of human behavior is to respond to humor. Accordingly, despite its universality, individual responses to various kinds of humor are not the same. Different responses exist because of, the nature of people's societies and cultures, as well as individual psychological natures. Having a keen sense of humor is part of some people's characters while it is lacking in others. Those who have a keen sense of humor react to humorous stimuli more readily, more simply, and with greater excitement. Such people may seek out jokes and derive more pleasure from them. They may even create new jokes in an effort to be likeable and popular; especially if such persons live in a society that highly appreciates humor. Conversely, people with a dull sense of humor do not readily respond to humorous stimuli – even stimuli common to their own culture or society. In fact, such people may find some humorous stimuli amusing, but it is just very few things are perceived by them as funny. All human beings have humorous competence; it is individual perception or performance (i.e. the way they apply their humor competence) which varies from person to person (Raskin,

1985: 2-3). Therefore, all people, regardless of what language they speak or what culture they belong to, are able to understand and respond to humor.

It is worth noting that linguists, anthropologists and psychologists have considered humor as an inclusive category, including any event or object that elicits laughter, provides amusement, or is perceived to be funny (Attardo, 1994: 4). Therefore, with such a broad range of perceptions of humor, it is important to define and elucidate the common varieties in the next few pages.

2.1 A Brief History of Humor: The Greeks

Attardo (1994: 18) considers the Greeks to be the first in history to examine humor as a human phenomenon. Morreal (1987) explains that there is a total agreement, in the humor literature, on considering Plato (427-347 BC) to be the first Greek theorist of humor. Piddington (1933) states that for Plato, humor is a mixture of pleasure and pain (cited in Attardo, 1994: 18).

Another Greek theorist of humor is Aristotle (384-322 BC). There are differences between the theories of Aristotle and Plato; namely that Aristotle identifies the aesthetic principle in laughter and disagrees with Plato's view that humor is an "overwhelming" of the soul. Aristotle is of opinion that humor is a "stimulation" of the soul, which puts the listener in a mood of good will (Attardo, 1994: 18).

Bremmer, (1997) argues that there are some descriptions of "professional" jokers and joke books in the Ancient Greek texts. He further states that the Greek philosopher Democritus is one of the first historical figures to be definitely associated with humor; and considers Democritus to be well-known as the "laughing philosopher". Democritus not only had a reputation for his joyful mood, but also for laughing at the foolishness of his fellow citizens" (cited in Polimeni and Reiss, 2006: 348).

Further evidence of Democritus's association with humor and laughter can be found in Beard (2014) who maintains that this fifth-century BCE philosopher, from the northern Greek city of Abdera, is one of the most notable icons of Greek expressions of laughter. Beard further acquaints readers with the richest account of Democritus' humor: epistolary novella. According to her, this literary work is an epistolary novella that contains fictional letters between the citizens of Abdera and the legendary Greek doctor, Hippocrates. In this novella, the Abderites are preoccupied with concerns about the rationality of their famous philosopher because Hippocrates is always laughing; and often at inappropriate things. The novella is considered one of the most comprehensive philosophical works of laughter from the ancient world in existence.

Theophrastus (ca 373 - ca 287 BC) is another Greek theorist who made great contributions to the theory of humor (Attardo, 1994: 22). Plebe (1952) states that for Theophrastus, comedy is fictional (i.e. not related to reality) whereas Aristotle had maintained that comedy had to be realistic (cited in Attardo, 1994: 22).

2.2. The Latins: Certainly, the Latin theorist with the most crucial influence on humor is Cicero (106-43 BC) who writes about it in his book the *De Orator*. In this work, a long speech on humor is delivered by his character, Caius Julius Strabo. Strabo's dialogue reveals Cicero's opinions about humor. Further, it explores five humor-related topics: 1) what is humor? 2) Where does humor originate? 3) When is it fitting for the orator to use humor? 4) To what extent is it fitting to use humor? 5) What are the genres of humor? (Attardo, 1994: 26).

One of Cicero's most significant contributions to humor is the distinction between verbal (humorous because of the language used) and 'Referential' (humorous because of the content). He is the first theorist to produce a taxonomy of humor. That is, Cicero has made

the first attempt at a taxonomy of humor- referential humor and verbal humor. When Cicero's taxonomy is compared to modern taxonomies, it is clear to see that there have been few deviations. Furthermore, most authors of humor categorizations appear to be unaware of Cicero's taxonomy from two eras prior.

It is worth noting that Cicero is of the opinion that translation can be used to determine the category to which a humorous text belongs, i.e., the only way to differentiate between verbal and referential is to see whether the humorous text resists translation (for instance puns, which are very language specific, hardly withstand translation; but referential humor like a man slipping on a banana peel is considered universally comical). (Attardo, 1994: 26-28)

In other words, Cicero believes that the process of translation determines whether a humorous text is referential or verbal. If the humor within a text is lost in translation, then the humor is considered verbal. If the humor within a text remains intact after translation, then the humor is referential.

In the sixth book of his *Handbook on Oratory*, Quintilian ((ca 35 - ca 100 AD writing in the second century CE) examines the role of laughter in the speech of the orator (Beard, 2014: 65). From Quintilian's view point, humor is something which relaxes the mind. He praises the avoidance of exaggeration in humor. He explains that there are situations in which humor is inappropriate - such as in cases of tragedy, seriousness, etc. Quintilian introduces a three-party division on the target subjects of humor. He believes that target subjects can include the orator himself/herself, other persons, or a "neutral" (middle) category which involves neither the orator nor others. When the subject(s) of humor is others, Quintilian argues, "either we censure others" activities, or we refute them, or we praise them, or we react to them, or we avoid them" (Attardo,

1994: 31). In other words, either we criticize others' actions, or we refuse them, or we praise them in a way that is humorous.

Concerning humor directed towards the orator himself/herself, Quintilian notes that it is a reflection of the speaker's intentionality. That is, it differentiates between unintentional humor (which is not meant to be funny, yet is perceived by an outside spectator as humorous or ridiculous) and intentional humor (which is something the speaker says intends to be funny and which may, or may not, be perceived as such by the hearer). Quintilian maintains that when someone says something accidentally, which can be construed as self-deprecating, the speaker looks foolish. However, if the speaker consciously says something to poke fun at himself/herself, then there is humor present, as well as admiration for the speaker. As for Quintilian's third "neutral" category of target subjects, (Attardo, 1994: 31-32), references the involvement of varying perceptions of the things said.

Horace's(65-8 BC) greatest impact on the theory of humor is in his assertion of the inevitability of a correspondence between the humor and the form: a subject for comedy cannot be formed in tragic verse (Attardo, 1994: 33).

2.3. The Middle Ages: Truly, the middle Ages were the "dark ages" for humor because there was little theorizing on humor at that time. John Tzetzes (1110 – 1185 AD), who wrote a brief comedy poem, is the only name worth mentioning for this time period (Attardo, 1994: 34).

3. Theories of Humor

Morreal (1983: 4) explains that the *Superiority Theory* is the oldest and most well-known theory of humor. According to this theory, humor is an expression of one's feelings of superiority over other people. The origins of this theory are well explained by Morreal. He makes it clear that this theory goes back at least as far

as Plato, (427-347 BC), who said that the purpose of humor stems from human wickedness and foolishness. Plato is of opinion that self-ignorance is what makes a person ridiculous and laughable. In other words, the laughable individual is one who considers himself wealthier, better looking, more honorable, or cleverer than he really is.

Both Aristotle and Plato agree that humor is mainly a form of scorn. They also consider it a type of educative rudeness. Despite their dark view of humor, Plato and Aristotle also see its bright side; mainly, humor as a means of social correction. Because most people loathe personal ridicule, Plato and Aristotle consider humor a useful tool to shame non-conformers into conformity (i.e. wrongdoers cease bad behavior under fear of ridicule). Aristotle insists that since humor is mainly focused on what is socially-improper, too much humor is unsuitable to a good life. He believes that humor's focus on improper topics lends one's thinking toward negativity. Aristotle further states that too much joking can be injurious to a person's personality because it makes him/her non-serious about important things.

On one hand, Aristotle considers people who laugh too much; attempt humor any cost; and are more concerned with raising a laugh than saying what is right, to be clowns with no morals and a lack of respect. On the other hand, Aristotle does not convict the humorous attitude completely. He acknowledges that 'those who would not say anything funny themselves, and who are annoyed at those who do, seem to be boorish.' What is called for is self-control and reasonableness, but this is occasionally achieved" (Morreal, 1983: 5).

It can be inferred that Aristotle believes moderation to be the best approach to the use of humor. A person who uses humor too frequently loses respect and charisma in society. Conversely, a person who uses no humor at all risks being labeled boorish,

brooding and uninteresting. Therefore, the use of humor infrequently is preferable to both the constant use of humor and the non-use of humor. The Superiority Theory of Humor, as formed by Plato and Aristotle, is prominent on following thought about humor. No new thoughts were added to the theory until the early modern period when the British philosopher Thomas Hobbes put it into a stronger form in 1651 (Morreal, 1983: 5).

Jensen (2009: 8) recognizes that, for Hobbes, the Superiority Theory of Humor implies laughing because of a sudden glory of recognizing (or imagining) the misfortunes or horrible characteristics of others, which makes ourselves seem superior to them even though we are well conscious of our own failings and shortcomings. Jensen further explains that jokes and humorous expressions belonging to the domain of "Superiority Humor" poke fun at people by drawing attention to their apparent misfortunes, weaknesses, or defects. Superiority Humor does not poke fun at all people indiscriminately, but focuses instead on those belonging to certain social classes or ethnic groups. For instance, people of Arabic ethnicity have been known to tell jokes about people of Kurdish descent. The Superiority Theory explains the reason such jokes are perceived as funny by Arabs who believe themselves to be better and smarter than Kurds – regardless of the truth.

The Superiority Theory goes beyond the implication of imperfection in others as a form of humor. It also illuminates the complex relationship between social groups and social attitudes through the use of jokes. "Racist and dodgy ethnic jokes, sexist jokes, mother-in-law jokes and all those types of politically incorrect jokes are instances of superiority humor." (Jensen, 2009: 8) Consequently, probing questions are raised here: Does the Superiority Theory explain the basis of all humor? Does the Superiority Theory cover the whole spectrum of jokes, humorous

situations and categories? The answer is no. People laugh at humorous material which has nothing to do with poking fun at the weaknesses of others. The next sections explore the jokes and humorous categories that cannot be explained within the scope of the Superiority Theory.

Moving now to the second theory of humor: the *Incongruity Theory*, the focus is moved from the passionate or feeling side of humor to the mental or thinking side. It is worth to say that self-glory or the feeling of success is the reason of amusement for the superiority theory. That is to say, the primary motivation under the Superiority Theory is a type of emotional satisfaction attached to humor. Conversely, Incongruity Theory explains that humorous amusement can be found through an intelligent reaction to something that is unpredicted, illogical or inappropriate (Morreal, 1983:15). Morreal (1983: 15-16) explicates the Incongruity Theory of Humor as follows:-

The basic idea behind the Incongruity Theory is very general and quite simple. We live in an orderly world, where we have come to expect certain patterns among things, their properties, events, etc. We laugh when we experience something that does not fit into these patterns.

It is fair to say that the Incongruity Theory of Humor depends upon the understanding of the obscure and unexpected idea elucidated by the speaker or the writer. If the intended audience fails to comprehend the sudden and unexpected idea behind the humor, the joke will fail and there will be no amusement or laughter elicited.

Raskin (1985: 31) is of the opinion that the Incongruity Theory explores humor which is dependent upon that which is inappropriate, paradoxical and dissimilar. He further maintains that many researchers emphasize the crux of the joke; namely that two

incongruent components form the joke when they are brought together, blended and made similar. The Incongruity Theory was first put forward by Aristotle. He references a method through which a speaker can get a laugh; mainly by leading listeners to form a specific expectation before surprising them with a conclusion they did not expect. Since this is the only known contribution Aristotle made to this theory, many writers have not given him credit, nor have they have commented on his works (Morreal, 1983: 16).

Through Morreal (1983: 16), we know that the Incongruity Theory was not fully developed until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where its most well-known proponents were Kant and Schopenhauer. Kant states, "In everything that is to excite a lively convulsive laugh, there must be something absurd. Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing." (Cited in Morreal, 1983: 16). The following example is produced by Kant as an example resembling the Incongruity –based Expressions Theory, "*The heir of a rich relative wished to arrange for an imposing funeral, but he lamented that he could not properly succeed; 'for the more money I give my mourners to look sad, the more cheerful they look'*". People laugh when they hear or read such a joke, because they expect something but are then frustrated by discovering that what they expected has gone and turned into "nothing" as Kant put it (cited in Morreal, 1983: 16).

Raskin (1985: 31) clearly declares that Schopenhauer is one of the very first scholars to put forward a more obvious Incongruity- based Theory of Humor. Schopenhauer's description of the Incongruity Theory is rather different from Kant's. He explains that what we catch in the twisted portion of a joke or other humorous situation, is not (as Kant has suggested) nothing; our predictions are not just frustrated and that is the end of the case. Rather, we (the recipients

of the joke) get something other than what we are expecting. No matter what that new idea is, it put the last touches of the story or fits into the situation in some satisfying conclusion. It just does not what is expected or what perceived as normal. The humor is found in the unexpected.

Jenson (2009: 5) lists three characteristics of incongruity-based humorous expressions suggested by Alison Ross:

1. Conflict between what is predicted and what follows in the joke.
2. Ambiguity at some level of language which causes conflict.
3. Surprise at the end of the joke which triggers a meaning which is not estimated since it is not harmonious or coherent with the rest of the joke.

It is significant to mention that the importance of surprise in a joke is highly emphasized by many proponents of the Incongruity Theory of Humor. The element of surprise is generally conveyed by what is called as the "punch line". The punch line offers a change from one level of perception to another, and the shift occurs within seconds. (Raskin, 1985: 33). For this reason, a joke fails to invoke vivid humor when one hears it for the second time. Regarding the Incongruity Theory of Humor: Is it plausible for all kinds of humor? Morreal (1983: 19) answers that question by stating that incongruity is not involved in all cases of non-humorous laughter - though it may well be engaged in all humor.

For the sake of clarity, Morreal explains that James Beattie (humor theorist) differentiates between what he terms "sentimental laughter" (the kind involved in humor), and "animal laughter." According to Beattie, sentimental laughter "always proceeds from a sentiment or emotion, excited in the mind, in consequence of certain objects or ideas being presented to it." Beattie believes that the second kind of laughter, animal laughter, does not work at an emotional or intellectual level.

"*Animal laughter is the kind found in babies,*" says Beattie, "*who have no intellectual capacity for appreciating incongruity; it is their response to stimuli such as tickling.*" Beattie goes on to say that "in adults too, we find animal laughter occasioned by tickling or gladness." (Cited in Morreal, 1983: 18-19). This incongruity cannot be taken as a comprehensively true stimuli for laughter.

Hu (2012) postulates that the *Release Theory* of Humor can be understood from the perspective of psychology. It implies that humor is a sort of release from social authorization, both physically and psychologically. According to the Release Theory, humor can be used to induce a sense of relief from negative feelings and stresses, such as grief caused by tragedy or tense circumstances. Topics that are considered **taboo** in a given society (i.e.. sex, death, religion, etc..) or which deal with subjects not typically thought of as humorous (i.e.. historical events such as the holocaust, 9/11 and so on) constitute the main subjects of the release-based humorous expressions. The use of censored words, such as some four-letter words in the English language, as well as other tabooed or politically incorrect words, are often used in the release-based humorous expressions (Jenson, 2009: 11).

Wilkins, & Eisenbraun, (2009) maintain that, according to the Release Theory of Humor, people explore humor because they sense that pressure is condensed by doing so (cited in Fotini 2014: 2) One of the earliest exposes of the Relief Theory is Shaftesbury's essay of 1711, "The Freedom of Wit and Humor." By Anthony Ashely Cooper. In this essay, Cooper (1711/2011 version: 4-5) argues that if clever men with free mental spirit have controlled or imprisoned by other stronger authority, they will find a way to relieve themselves. And if they have prevented from talking and discussing specific subjects, they will discuss it ironically. They

will talk in such a way that they will hardly be understood by people who are willing to punish them if they plainly expressed their minds. For Cooper, humor is a linguistic means by which one can relieve himself by talking about what is forbidden. People do not like being controlled or forced not to talk about what they want. So, the more people are prevented from talking about some subjects, the more eager they are to discuss them. And as a result for that eagerness, people have invented humor. Furthermore, it has been said that the more grieved someone is the more humorous he tends to be. Laughing or humor is some kind of trying to survive, trying to get rid of the negative feelings and trying to live.

Morreal (1983: 21) presents two ways of relief by maintaining that relief might fit into laughter situations in two ways. One may have come into the situation with the negative energy that is to be relieved, or the humorous situation itself may provoke the constitution of the nervous energy, and its release. That is to say that the person may be already nervous and finds in humor a way of releasing that nervous energy. Or, the humor itself might cause some nervous energy that needs to be released through the humor and laughter.

As far as the first way of release is concerned, it needs no further explanation. It is simply that someone is nervous and needs to express that negative energy throughout laughter. But, the second way of release could happen when we hear or read some certain nonhostile, nonsexual jokes, for instance, the story may provoke certain feelings in us toward the characters in the story. But then at the twisted line the story takes an unpredicted turn, or we (the recipients) discover that the characters are presented not to be what we believed they were, the passionate energy which has constituted by us (the recipients) is unnecessary and will overcome us. That extra energy requires release. According to the simplest version of

the relief theory, the release of this energy, is laughter (Morreal, 1983: 22).

Anyone reads about the release theory of humor will come across Herbert Spencer's and Freud's theories of humor. Let us start with Spencer's version of the theory. In his essay "On the Physiology of Laughter." Spencer's theory is found. From Spencer's viewpoint, our emotions are nervous energy. And, there is a close relation between nervous energy and our mechanical nervous system. When we feel angry at a person, we apt to make small hostile movements; we tighten our fists, for example, and squeeze our other muscles getting ready for taking an action. And in case the anger reaches a high level that we cannot control it, we physically attack the other person. According to Spencer, Laughter does not work the same as the usual forms of releasing emotional energy, because the muscular movements in laughter are not the primary steps of more actions. Laughter does not lead for any further actions. Actually, it makes the laugher incapable of taking any other action.

The release of energy through laughter is accomplished, according to Spencer, when feelings are built up but then are seen to be inappropriate. The superfluous energy of those feelings is released first through the muscles "which feeling most habitually stimulates," viz., the muscles connected with speech. If this channel of release is not adequate to handle all the nervous energy being discharged, then that energy will spill over into "less habitual" channels the diaphragm and muscles associated with respiration will be stimulated to hearty laughter and then, if still more energy is to be released, the person may clap his hands, sway back and forth, etc. (Morreal, 1983: 23-24).

After examining Spencer's version of the release theory of humor, let us examine Freud's. The basic work of Freud on the theory of laughter is in his *Jokes and Their Relation to the*

Unconscious book. He differentiates, in this book, between three forms of laughter situations: "*jokes*," "*the comic*," and "*humor*." The main idea of his theory is that in all laughter situations we save a certain amount of emotional energy, energy that we have called for some psychic purpose but eventually we find out that it is unnecessary, and this extra energy is satisfied in laughter. He states that, in joking, we save energy that is normally used to express forbidden thoughts and feelings; in responding to the comic we save an amount of energy in thought; and concerning humor, we save an amount of energy in emotion (Morreal, 1983: 28).

It is worth to say that as the superiority and incongruity theories of humor cannot be considered as a comprehensive theories of humor, it is impossible to take the release theory as a comprehensive theory of humor. The reason is that there are some humorous situations such as seeing a man with an unjustifiable ego slip and fall on the ground. Such a situation does not belong to the release theory of laughter (Morreal, 1983: 37).

4. Forms of Humor

The main aim of humor is to stimulate audience laughter. However, there are many forms of doing so, including puns, satires or parodies, jokes, and irony. The following sections are dedicated to the elucidation of these forms of humor.

According to Longman (1995), "*Puns*" is the use of phrases or words with two meanings, or the use of words with the same sound but different meanings, to elicit amusement. Another definition of puns listed in Merriam- Webster's Dictionary (1993) is "*the usually humorous use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more of its meanings or the meaning of another word similar in sound*". In her MA thesis, Broeder (2007: 55) maintains that a pun is the intended use of one or more specific words or phrases in a context which produces two or more different meanings to evoke laughter on

the part of the audience. Further, Delabastita (1996) defines puns as "*the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) are used in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings*" (cited in Spanakaki, 2007).

According to Merriam - Webster Dictionary, *Parody* is "*to imitate (a composition, author, etc.) for purposes of ridicule or satire.*" *It is any humorous imitation as of a person, event, etc. Panek (2009: 31) maintains that parody may occur when there is inappropriateness between the content and the style of speech, or between specific words used in a text. "[parody is] a literary (...) work in which the style of an author or work is closely imitated for comic effect or ridicule"* (Merriam-Webster, "Parody"). Broeder (2007: 9) defines parody as an imitation of the features and / or style of a specific author, groups of authors, or a specific work, in which some form of discrepancy is produced. Whether the parodist has a negative, positive or neutral position to the imitated original character, his aim is always to amuse others. Satire, on the other hand, criticizes community conventions. Satire's main aim is not only to entertain but it also aims at improving humanity and its institutions. It is a literary work that aims at provoking the people's condemnation of an object. (Cuartero, Satorius and Donaldson, 2015).

Nash (1985) asserts that *Irony* is a case in which the overt appearance of the speaker's or writer's message is divergent to his/her actual actions; namely what he/she says or does (i.e.. the covert reality) (cited in Panek, 2009: 30). In other words, irony is to say or write something which is construed in one way, but actually means the opposite. *Irony* can be difficult to grasp because of its ambiguity. It is most often appreciated by an intelligent audience

with a common shared knowledge between themselves and the communicator. It can be argued that people who know each other well more easily understand messages and jokes between themselves, regardless of how ambiguous these messages might seem to outsiders. Attardo (2001: 61-62) maintains that *Jokes* are usually short, easy to collect, and simple stories which are told for amusing an audience. He mainly classifies two kinds of jokes: *Narrative/Canned Jokes* are classically told by a narrator who often introduces the joke with an announcement of the humorous nature of the coming sentences. This kind of jokes are “rehearsed” i.e., they have been heard or created by the narrator before the telling. , Narrative/Canned jokes are generally isolated from the context in which they are told. *Conversely, conversational jokes* have the following features: Conversational jokes are told as an ordered turn in conversation, without prefixing. They are generated by the teller and are highly context-dependent.

Exaggeration is a form of humor. Sentences that implies exaggeration are perceived as humorous in some contexts. According to (Literary Devices, www), exaggeration is used to make fun of something or basically for underlining our points. Exaggeration is to make something looks worse, or better than it truly is. Speakers and writers, in literature and oral communication, use it as a literary method for further stress.

5. Humor and Translation

For translators, humor is a challenge that requires linguistic and cultural qualifications to overcome. It is often viewed as a standard case of untranslatability. Humor befalls when a rule has been violated (when there is a violation for Grice's maxims), (for more details see chapter three), when an expectation is made and not confirmed, when the incongruity is fixed in an unconventional way. In some cases humor produces superiority feelings which may be

accepted if contributors agree that the humor is basically a form of social comedy rather than absolute hostility (Vandaele, 2005: 49). Further, (Diot, 1989) states that the operation of translating humor, proves to be as hard as that of translating poetry. The difficulty of translating humor is usually associated with cultural and linguistic aspects (Cited in Vandaele, 2005: 49). It is important to note that there is a universal humor which is understood by all people no matter from where they are. Such a humor is not firmly rooted in specific culture or language and so it is understood everywhere and consequently is not problematic for translators. Faithful translation could be used when the translator is faced with such a humor. According to (Newmark 1988b) faithful translation is to produce the exact contextual meaning of the ST taking into account the TL grammatical structures' constraints. (Cited in Ordudari, 2007). It implies expressing the ST meaning and being as close as possible to the original author but not by being a slave for the ST grammar and style.

All in all, Translating humor involves taking into account two distinct languages and cultures. In jokes that have language- or culture-specific elements, the translator may have to deal with a lack of linguistic or cultural references. He or she can generate a different joke that fits the action and gets the humor across in the case of untranslatable jokes,. This implies that the aim of the humor is preserved, but the meaning is altered. As a result, the humorous effect should be attained very simply in the translated product, which is in line with the principle of ideal relevance. In conclusion, the final product is determined by the individual translator's skill (Panek, 2009: 33)

5.1. Problems of Translating Humor

Kalaga (1997) suggests three comic situations having different degrees of translatability:

- i. when humor is set in the language and is derived from the language (e.g. in wordplay);
- ii. when humor has a non-linguistic form and is derived from the model or the image of the world and the language functions only as a carrier (e.g. humor contained in the action seen on the screen); and
- iii. when humor is derived from the model of the world which is conveyed not only via language (a carrier) but is also contained in the language (e.g. humor is based on language and cultural references) (cited in Panek, 2009: 34).

Concerning the first situation, (Hejwowski 2004) explains that the basis of wordplay (linguistic aspects like phonetics or polysemy), may barely be translatable. For instance, a particular English word, e.g. *fire*, which has several meanings in English (burn, strong feeling, shoot by using a gun and dismiss an employee from a job), does not have an equivalent polyseme, i.e. a word having multiple meanings, in Arabic (Cited in Panek, 2009: 34).

With regard to the second situation, audiovisual translation implies images. The meanings of them are either universal or culturally determined. So a picture can show and exemplify elements of culture that may cause untranslatability. The third situation refers to linguistic and cultural differences which may lead to untranslatability. There can be a short of grammar categories like tenses or numbers, with regard to the differences between languages. With regard to cultural differences, the existence of an equivalent phenomena (e.g. names, habits, institutions, etc.) in the target culture may be impossible (Panek, 2009:35).

5.2. Solutions to Problems of Translating Humor

Panek (2009:36) maintains that when the translator is faced with language-related humor, s/he can use *compensation* to compensate the loss of an untranslatable component with another translatable component in order to create an understandable joke in the target

language. The final result is thus accustomed to target audience requirements, which is described as a *target-oriented translation*. Regarding culture-related issues in humor, Tomasziewicz (2006) suggests three kinds of translation strategies to deal with cultural untranslatability:

i. Naturalization, which means looking for alternatives for the source items in the target culture, which can be identified as target-oriented translation.

ii. Exotization, which keeps the source culture's elements. This strategy is characterized as **source-oriented translation**. This means that the items from the source text are kept and overt in the translated text.

iii. Neutralization, which implicates using broad terminology or, in other words, universal language. These three strategies are suggested by Tomasziewicz (2006) (Cited in Panek, 2009: 36).

6. A Model of Translation Analysis and Assessment

In order to avoid subjective analysis of the translation of any text- literary, scientific or communicative text- a model of analysis and assessment must be adopted. The model that is adopted in the present paper is Riess's model. It is worth mentioning that Catharina Riess is a German Linguist and translation scholar. She is famous due to her significant work on translation criticism. Reiss (2000: 2-3) states that the evaluator of any text should make a comparison between the source text and the target text in order to judge the translation. She believes that the text type is the basic criterion for the evaluation of the translation. That is, identifying text's type enables the critic or the evaluator of identifying the function of the text. She believes that the transmission of the major function of the source text is the determining factor by which the target text is judged.

6.1. Translation Methods

Munday (2001, 73) states that Reiss proposes specific translation methods according to text type as follows:

- a. The translation of an informative text should have the same conceptual content that the ST has. The translation should be in 'plain prose', without redundancy.
- b. The translation of an expressive text should preserve the aesthetic form of the ST. The translator should adopt the perspective of the ST author.
- c. The translation of an operative text should yield the same effect on the target receivers as that which the ST makes.
- d. Audio-medial texts require the 'supplementary' method, supplementing written words with visual images and music".

Method number two is what the present study focuses on. Moreover, Reiss is of opinion that the critic should have a perfect knowledge of the text types and how the translation should be formed according to the text types. For instance, if the ST was literary so the translation should convey the same or similar aesthetic effect in the target language, and so on. Furthermore, Reiss (2000, 68) states that the critic must not only examines linguistic (i.e. Syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic) elements, but s/he must examine the extra- linguistic determinants: time, Author, intent, as well.

6.2.Data Analysis

This section aims to identify and analyze the research data contained within this paper. The data to be analyzed is Mark Twain's novel "*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*" مغامرات توم سوير. The source text was written in English in 1876 by the American writer Mark Twain. It was translated into Arabic by Maher Naseem in 1963.

1. Parody and Satire: Source Text

- ‘Say — what is dead cats good for, Huck?’
- ‘Good for? Cure warts with.’
- ‘No! Is that so? I know something that’s better.’
- ‘I bet you don’t. What is it?’
- ‘Why, spunk-water.’
- ‘Spunk-water! I wouldn’t give a dern for spunkwater
- ‘ You wouldn’t, wouldn’t you? D’you ever try it’?
- ‘ No, I hain’t. But Bob Tanner did’.
- ‘ Who told you so’!
- ‘ Why, he told Jeff Thatcher, and Jeff told Johnny Baker, and Johnny told Jim Hollis, and Jim told Ben Rogers, and Ben told a nigger, and the nigger told me.
- There now!’ (Twain, 2016: 68)

Target Text :

- أخبرني يا هاك . ما هي فائدة القطّة الميتة؟
- فاندتها ؟ انها تشفي السنط!
- أحقا ؟ إنني أعرف طريقة أحسن من ذلك
- أراهن أنها ليست أحسن .. لكن ما هي؟
- الماء المتخلف عن المطر .
- ماء المطر : هذا سخف ..
- لماذا ؟ هل سبق لك أن جربته ؟
- كلا .. ولكن بوب تانر جربه .
- من قال لك ذلك؟
- هو قال لجيف تاتشر ، وجيف قال لجوفي بيكر ،
- و جوفي قال لجيم هوليس ، و جيم قال لبن روجرز و بن قال لصبي زنجي والزنجي
- قال لي ..
- (P: 61)

Analysis:

Through this ST, readers are exposed to superstitions that people believed in St Petersburg, where Tom Sawyer was living at this point in the story. In this passage, Twain is highly **satirizing** how blindly people believe in what they hear from others without questioning or trying to prove it. People are gullible and can be made to believe in what they have not seen themselves. Such a conversation provokes reconsideration of all the superstitions people might believe in. In the ST, both Tom and Huck presuppose that dead cats and spunk water can heal warts because someone told them it was true – and backed up their claim by dropping the names of several of Tom's friends. There is no factual evidence to prove that spunk water and dead cats heal warts; only gossip. The TT produces the same presupposition and thus it is also humorous. **Faithful translation** has been used by the translator for the humor in this example is universal.

2. Irony: Source Text

Tom: "If you'll try this thing just a while longer you'll come to like it.

Huck: Like it! Yes — the way I'd like a hot stove if I was to set on it long enough. No, Tom, I won't be rich, and I won't live in them cussed smothery houses. I like the woods, and the river, and hogsheads, and I'll stick to 'em, too." (Twain, 2016: 350)

Target Text:

"ثم انك اذا ما احتملت هذا الاسلوب الجديد من الحياة فترة أطول، فسوف تألفه!
-آلفه! نعم – مثلما آلف الموقد الساخن اذا ما اضطررت النى الجلوس فوقه فترة
كافية! كلا يا توم لن أكون ثريا ولن اقيم في تلك المنازل البغيضة التي تكتم الانفاس.
انني احب الغابات والنهر والبراميل وسأظل احبها". (P: 288).

Analysis:

Irony is the form of humor produced in the present example. The implied meaning of the underlined sentence is that it is impossible for Huck to get used to the life of rich. That impossibility is figuratively expressed to produce humorous and powerful effect. By resorting for the **faithful translation**, the TT produces the same figurative expression and consequently is highly successful.

3. Jokes: Source Text

" How many of my readers would have the industry and application to memorize two thousand verses, even for a Dore Bible? And yet Mary had acquired two Bibles in this way — it was the patient work of two years." (Twain, 2016: 42).

Target Text:

بيد أنه كان من النادر أن يظفر غلام أو فتاة بهذه الجائزة لأن ذلك كان يستلزم حفظ ألفي آية من الانجيل- ورغم ذلك فقد استطاعت ماري ان تحصل على انجيلين منها وكان ذلك نتيجة مجهود شاق بذلته خلال عامين متتاليين. (P: 41)

Analysis:

The ST contains a surprising and rhetorical question from the author (Mark Twain) to his readers. With such a question, he has implied that none of his readers is able to memorize two thousand verses even for a coveted Dore Bible (a Bible with lavish illustrations and considered more precious than other Bibles of the time). Here, **implicature** has been employed to express the real intended meaning. Moreover, it is as if the writer is hinting that people in the past were so ignorant as to spend long hours memorizing large numbers of verses. In other words, he is saying that religion is torturing people by asking them to memorize the nearly impossible. However, such a text could be viewed as a **joke**.

On the other hand, this humorous text belongs to the release theory of humor: criticizing forbidden subjects humorously. The translator has omitted the rhetorical question in TT. Instead, the translation focuses upon the difficulty of finding anyone who can memorize a huge number of Bible verses. Therefore, the TT divulges only the meaningful translation adopted by the translator of this novel (Maher Naseem). Thus, the TT is not humorous because the implicature is absent.

4. Exaggeration: Source Text

"And such a luxury to him was this petting of his sorrows, that he could not bear to have any worldly cheeriness or any grating delight intrude upon it; it was too sacred for such contact; and so, presently, when his cousin Mary danced in, all alive with the joy of seeing home again after an age-long visit of one week to the country, he got up and moved in clouds and darkness out at one door as she brought song and sunshine in at the other. (Twain, 2016: 33)

Target Text:

و ظل هذا حاله الى أن اقبلت ابنة عمته ماري من الخارج وهي ترقص في سيرها، وقد امتلأت فرحا وسرورا لعودتها الى المنزل بعد أن قضت سبعة أيام في زيارة بالمدينة. عند ذلك نهض توم من مكانه وغادر الغرفة لينفرد بالأمه وأشجانه بعد أن ضاق بما جلبته ماري معها من جو كله بهجة ونعم ونور!

(P: 33-34)

Analysis:

There is a very dark expression in the ST. It is almost poetic. The event is one in which Tom has been punished by his aunt – and not to the degree the text presupposes. A good deal of **exaggeration** is used here which makes the ST funny instead of making it sad. There is a figurative language used in the present text. Clouds represents sadness and darkness represents hopelessness, while song and sunshine represents happiness and hope. It is worth saying that

the translation of this text to the TL readers does not capture the figurative exaggerated expressions. Exaggeration is what makes the ST humorous, thus taking that exaggeration away from the TT, killed its humor.

٧. Conclusions

In the light of the previous analysis the researchers have found the following concluding remarks:

1. If a translator is confronted with culture-bound or language-bound humor, the key to a successful translation lies in the translator's ability to locate similar expressions or references which exist in the TL and will therefore produce the same or similar humorous effect. Strategies like naturalization and neutralization and exotization are used to successfully translate such sort of humorous texts.
2. If a translator can find no expressions or references in the TL that produce the same humorous effect as the SL, then the translator can resort to explaining the joke; thereby sacrificing the humor.
3. When a translator encounters text regarded as universal humor (i.e.. humor that is not culture-bound) the best way to preserve its humorous qualities is through exacting, faithful translation.

All in all, in the case of culture-bound humor or linguistic humor, the translator has to deal with the difficulties that result from the linguistic and the cultural differences. This means that a prosperous result is only derived due to the hard and innovative work of a qualified translator.

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