

In the Name of God



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**Procedures Used in Translation of Mulla Nasrudin's
Jokes from Persian into English**

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**A thesis Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science in Translation Studies (M.Sc.)**

September 2013

To:

This thesis is dedicated to the stars of the sky of my life, my very precious father and my angel like mother, for whom my presence is a reason to be worrying about all the time, whereas their presence for me is nothing but love, to the ones who dedicated their lives to me to flourish, to stand tall, the ones whose glamorous looks and heart touching words are the never ending treasures of my life.

I would whole heartedly offer them my entire respect and kiss their hands in appreciation of their nonstop efforts.

Acknowledgment

At first I am grateful to God for his help all during my life, and also for doing this study.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Roohparvar and my advisor Mrs. Ferdowsi for their patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge and helpful pieces of advices .Their guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis.

I would like to thank my referees Dr. Sistani and Mr. Homayounfar for reading my thesis so carefully.

I am profoundly indebted to my family for supporting me in every step of this process, especially to my precious father, my angel like mother and, my two lovely sisters, teaching me how important it is to have a sense of humor and, to always look on the bright side of life.

I am grateful to my friends for their helps from choosing the topic to doing this study, most specially, Mrs. Mazaheri and Ms. Armat and Ms. Askari.

Finally, I hope that the readers of this study enjoy it as much as I did while working on this topic. I hope they discover, as I did while

collecting all the humorous examples contained in this study, how interconnected we are as a planet despite the many different languages we speak, and how, in spite of the cultural differences across the globe, our perception and representation of humor has so many features in common.

Abstract

In this study, the researcher attempted to decide on the applicability of Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) procedures for translation of jokes from Persian into English. In order to conduct the study, according to the categorization of jokes by different scholars, some cultural and universal jokes from *Mulla Nasruddin's* book (1350) were extracted and analyzed with their English translation based on the procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995). The results of the research showed that five out of seven procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) were applied by the English translator, with the modulation, to be the most frequent one. In addition, among different parts of modulation, particular to general was used by the translator most frequently.

Key words:

Humor, joke, translation strategies, particular to general.

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List of Abbreviations

SL.....	Source Language
ST.....	Source Text
TL.....	Target Language
TT.....	Target Text
VEH.....	Verbally Expressed Humor

Chapter 1

Introduction

1-1- Introduction

All human beings are capable of using some type of language to express their thoughts and share their understanding. Still, translation from one language into another is not easy to be carried out and it is a common fallacy to consider it as an easy task. In fact, almost all translators have encountered different kinds of translation problems. According to Holms (2000), "there is a complex of problems clustered round the phenomenon of translating and translation" (p. 173).

One of the most challenging problems facing all translators is finding the proper equivalents for the elements that are not known in the receptor language. According to Miremedi (1993) "translation is a two-way process; from one culture to the other; and from other culture into one's own culture. In other words, there is a give and take process involved" (p.23).

Humor is an essential part of everyday communication and an important component of innumerable literary works of art in general. It is rooted in a specific cultural and linguistic context, but it is also an indispensable part of intercultural communication and mass entertainment.

When trying to translate humor, culturally opaque elements and language-specific devices are expected to make the translator's work difficult, while some elements are ultimately not transferred at all. Humor, in its many manifestations, appears to be one of the most defining aspects of humanity. Repeated attempts have been made to define the essence of humor from sociological and psychological, as well as from linguistic perspectives. Although humor has been approached from several angles, it has rarely been systematically studied as a specific translation problem. Humor has various levels of applicability that are partly universal, cultural and linguistic, or individual. It is the level of applicability, which often makes it a tangible problem for a translator.

Additionally, humor, as an everyday phenomenon, is increasingly a part of the context of intercultural communication. Translators often face the task of having to translate seemingly untranslatable humor, while not reducing the meaning effect, which invariably tests their capability for finding creative solutions. No matter how ordinary or commonplace humor seems to be in everyday life, it is found to be much more problematic and indefinable as a theoretical concept. This has not, however, prevented scholars of various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, pedagogy and linguistics, from exploring the

issue humor, which has, more often than not, resulted in "epistemological hairsplitting" (Attardo, 1994, p.1).

The problems involved when it comes on defining humor, are that some scholars have doubted that an all-embracing definition of humor could be formulated (Attardo, 1994). Additionally, we could say that one of the difficulties in defining humor derives from the fact that the terminology used to describe it is not explicit. A number of scholars such as Schmidt-Hidding (1963) and Attardo (1994), have attempted to clarify various other, significantly different definitions. It goes without saying that the definition of humor ultimately depends on the purpose for which it is used.

Humor translation requires enormous care and sensitivity. According to many translators, humor wins the first prize along the cline of complexity. Maher (2008) asserted that "the translation of humor is a notoriously difficult endeavor not least because of the close links between humor and identity and between humor and culture" (p.14).

A humorous text can contain allusion, hilarious names, ambiguous words or structures, puns, and verbal irony to name a few which can make it so challenging for translators. According to Kussmaul (1995),

translators may be easily lost in action when dealing with the source language restrictions and target language demands. A humor translation should recognize the humorous quality of a text and create or invent a trigger that aims to produce the similar feeling of excitement in the recipient.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

We know that some elements such as the style of the joke and its play on words are what make a joke what it is. When faced with the translation we must take these details into consideration and attempt to adapt the original sense of humor or idea to our language.

Leo Hickey (2012), in his essay entitled "A Pragmalinguistic Approach to Translating Humor" affirmed that "it's a well-known fact that humor does not travel well; it tends to wilt across the shortest of spans, arriving unraveled, if not deceased, when moving from one language to another". When translating a joke, we must be ever mindful not to produce a literal translation. The key is to carry the joke to the target culture of the particular translation. Not even within

the same language, can a joke be translated the same way from one country to another.

The study of humor in the field of translation has always been a rather complicated matter. This is likely because the nature of humor is so very complex to begin with. Often, even amongst people who speak the same language, a joke is not always obvious; in fact, certain parties may not even find it funny.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Humor is an inseparable component of any language, and in its manifestation appear to be one of the most defining aspects of humanity. Although there are several approaches to define humor from psychological and sociological as well as linguistic ones, humor has_rarely been systematically studied as a specific translation problem (Palmer, 2005).

According to Schmitz (2002), "the presentation and study of humor should be an important component in foreign language and translation courses. The use of humor in language courses, in addition to making classes more enjoyable, can contribute to improving students'

proficiency. Humor is useful for the development of listening comprehension and reading"(p.1). According to Raphaelson-West (1989) and Alyssa Paris (2007) jokes can be divided into three main categories: (1) universal or reality- based humor, (2) culture-based humor and, (3) linguistic or word-based humor. This grouping serves as a pedagogical framework for teaching humor in both language and translation classrooms. Learners and tyro translators should deal first with the relatively straightforward universal humor, continue with cultural humor, which demands more of learners and translators, and finally deal with linguistic humor that offers serious challenges to students of foreign languages and translation. The study of humor presents translators with the opportunity to exercise their creativity. Word-based or linguistic humor serves as a test of what can and cannot be translated and may entail a change in script if the "new" humorous discourse is to evoke laughter or at least a smile on the part of the target language audience. (Schmitz, 2002).

1.4. Objectives of the Study

This study intends to investigate how Mulla Nasrudin's jokes in Persian have been translated into English. There are two objectives for

this study. Firstly, it is sought to identify procedures applied in the translation of Mulla Nasrudin's jokes from Persian into English. Secondly, it is intended to find out which procedure has been used most frequently by the translator.

1.5. Research Questions

This thesis is intended to search for the answers of the following questions:

1. Which procedures are applied in the translation of Mulla Nasrudin's jokes from Persian into English?
2. Which procedure is mostly frequent and applicable in translating Persian jokes?