



Allameh Tabataba'i University
Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages
Department of English Translation Studies

A Study of Humor Translation: A Linguistic and Cultural Approach

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts (MA)
in English Translation Studies

By: Mehrnaz Piltan

Advisor: Dr. Gholam-Reza Tajvidi

Reader: Dr. Hussein Mollanazar

June 2010
Tehran, Iran



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چکیده-

الف- موضوع- و طرح- مسئله- (اهمیت- موضوع- و هدف):
طنز به عنوان یکی از موضوعات غالب در زندگی روزمره از جنبه های مختلف مورد بررسی قرار گرفته است. با این وجود در حوزه ی مطالعات ترجمه بررسی آن تنها به رویکرد های زبانشناختی محدود شده است. پژوهش حاضر تلاشی است در جهت بررسی طنز از دیدگاهی زبانشناختی و فرهنگی.

ب- مبانی- نظری- شامل- مرور- مختصری- بر- منابع-، چارچوب- نظری- و پرسش-ها و فرضیه- ها:

تا کنون رویکردهای متفاوتی نسبت به بررسی طنز ارائه شده است که مهمترین آن ها عبارتند از (1) نظریه ی عمومی طنز کلامی (2) نظریه ی معناشناسی چارچوبی، در این پژوهش نمونه های طنز در پرتو نظریه ی معناشناسی چارچوبی مورد بررسی قرار گرفت و به سوالات زیر پاسخ داده شد:

1) کدام یک از انواع چارچوب های معنایی در ترجمه ی متون طنز انگلیسی به فارسی بیشتر مورد استفاده قرار گرفته است؟

2) استفاده از چارچوب های معنایی چه تاثیری در پذیرش متون طنز انگلیسی ترجمه شده به فارسی دارد؟

3) کدام یک از انواع چارچوب های معنایی در ترجمه متون طنز انگلیسی ترجمه شده به انگلیسی بیشترین مشکل را ایجاد می کند؟

پ- روش- تحقیق- شامل- تعریف- مفاهیم-، روش- تحقیق-، جامعه- مورد- تحقیق-، نمونه- گیری- و روش- های- نمونه- گیری-، ابزار- اندازه- گیری-، نحوه- اجرای- آن- شیوه- گردآوری- و تجزیه- و تحلیل- داده- ها:

نمونه های طنز در سه کتاب طنز انگلیسی جمع آوری شدند. سپس با استفاده از مدل ارائه شده بر اساس نظریه معناشناسی چارچوبی که دارای چهار زیرمجموعه بود ویژگی

های نمونه های طنز در متون مبدا و معادل فارسی آن ها مورد بررسی قرار گرفتند و موارد ناهمخوان در قالب شش گروه کلی جمع آوری شدند.

ث- یافته های تحقیق:

بررسی نمونه های طنز و معادل های آن ها در متون ترجمه شده ی فارسی نشان داد که از میان نمونه ها بیشترین تعداد به چارچوب دیداری تعلق دارد. بر اساس این تحقیق، چنانچه مترجم در ترجمه چارچوب های دیداری موفق عمل نکند این امر منجر به تضعیف تصاویر ذهنی خوانندگان متن مقصد می شود. ترجمه ناموفق چارچوب موقعیتی موجب سردرگمی خواننده و درک نادرست از متن مبدا می شود. ترجمه ناموفق چارچوب متنی تا حد زیادی میزان طنز در متن مقصد را کاهش می دهد. ترجمه ناموفق چارچوب اجتماعی باعث عدم توازن در میزان رسمیت متن می شود. عدم موفقیت در ترجمه چارچوب نهادی از دسترسی خوانندگان متن مقصد به چارچوب های متن مبدا و همچنین درک متن مبدا جلوگیری می کند و در نهایت ترجمه ناموفق چارچوب نوعی موجب می شود تا خواننده متن مقصد در درک شخصیت های پرداخته شده در متن مبدا دچار مشکل شود.

ث- نتیجه گیری و پیشنهاد ها:

دیگر پژوهشگران می توانند موارد زیر را مورد بررسی قرار دهند:

- بررسی انواع دیگر متن ها با استفاده از نظریه ی معناشناسی چارچوبی
- بررسی متن های طنز با استفاده از نظریه ی معناشناسی چارچوبی و یک نظریه ی زبانشناختی (نظریه ی عمومی طنز کلامی) و مقایسه ی نتایج بدست آمده از این دو رویکرد
- استفاده از نظریه ی معناشناسی چارچوبی در برنامه آموزشی دانشجویان رشته ی مترجمی و بررسی تاثیر این روش بر کیفیت ترجمه آنها
- استفاده از نظریه ی معناشناسی چارچوبی در ارزیابی ترجمه و بررسی تاثیر آن
- بررسی متون با استفاده از طبقه بندی های دیگر نظریه ی معناشناسی چارچوبی
- بررسی مشابه متون طنز با تغییر جهت ترجمه
- بررسی مقایسه ای ترجمه های متفاوت از یک متن مبدا و بررسی شیوه رویارویی

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صحت اطلاعات مندرج در این فرم بر اساس محتوای پایان نامه و ضوابط مندرج
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رئیس کتابخانه:

و زبانهای خارجی

Dedication

Dedicated to my parents, without whose patience, understanding, support, and most of all love, the completion of this work would have been impossible.

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Finally, words alone cannot express the thanks I owe to my parents, for their precious love and support. I also offer my regards and blessings to all of those who supported me in any respect during the completion of the project.

Abstract

The present study was aimed at investigating the translation of cultural elements in humorous texts under a model presented by Rojo (2002). Rojo's model is inspired by a semantic theory known as 'Frame Semantics'. As a descriptive-analytical study, this work resorted to six general categories of frames proposed by Rojo (2002) to study cultural elements within humorous texts and spot the problematic translated instances. The parallel corpus developed for the purpose of this study consisted of three humorous books including "*Side Effects*" by Woody Allen (1980), "*Getting Even*" by Woody Allen (1978), "*Funny in Farsi: a Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America*" by Firoozeh Dumas (2003) and their Persian translations. Upon analysis of the texts, some 212 problematic cases were detected. The extracted examples were then classified according to the six categories of frames proposed by Rojo (2002) along with their relevant translations.

Based on the comparative analysis of the data and their translations into Persian, it was revealed that *Social Frames* category ranked the first, with 87 cases out of a total of 212 examples, which approximately included %41 of the whole data. Generally, it could be concluded that the translators' failure to render Social Frames of the ST into equivalent ones in TT results in an imbalance in the level of formality of TT in comparison with that of the ST. The next category was related to *Visual Frames* with 75 instances accounting for approximately %35 of all the examples found. The translators' failure in this case led to a poor mental image of the visual information incorporated in the text, i.e. the gestures, movements, scenes, images etc. The third category went to *Institutional Frames* with 29(\approx %13) instances, in most cases of which the distortion of the frames resulted in blockage of the TT readers' access to ST frames and consequently incomprehension of the text. The next category was

that of *Situational Frames* with 9(≈%4) instances, the wrong translation of which resulted in a confusion or misunderstanding of the text. *Generic Frames* comprised 7 (≈% 3) general instances, the distortion of which prevented the translator to achieve similar prototypes similar to the ones created by the ST narrator. And finally, *Text Type Frames* with 5(≈%2) instances. Although other frames outnumbered this type of frame, it is significant to consider that ignorance of their existence distorts the humorous effect to a great extent. The study concludes that, since "*Frame Semantics*" goes beyond the word level and the linguistic limitations of the traditional theories, it can be regarded as a very useful framework in translation and analysis of humorous text.

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Abbreviations

SL.....	source language
TL.....	target language
ST.....	source text
TT.....	target text
TS.....	Translation Studies
GTVH.....	General Theory of Verbal Humor
F.I.F.	Funny in Farsi
G.E.	Getting Even
S.E.	Side Effects

ع.س.ع.ک.عطر سنبل عطر کاج

ع.ج. عوارض جانبی

ح.ب.ش. حالا بی حساب شدیم

م.د.م.مرگ در می زند

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Overview

The use of humor is a complex and intriguing aspect of human behavior. Humor has always been a high profile throughout the world. The number of books, films, plays, and other activities involved with this concept is a proof to the fact. In general, it can be claimed that humor is an inseparable part of human lives. According to Alison Ross (1998) "humor is influential from political satire to joking as a way of establishing friendship and excluding others." Verbal humor is a phenomenon prevalent in everyday discourse. Not only does it occur in formal but also in informal situations. In addition, it is manifested in spoken or written situations. It can take the various forms of canned jokes, witticisms, teasing or humorous lexemes. (Dyner, 2008) Humor is of different advantages. A university professor of communications named John Parrish sprowl holds that from a managerial perspective: "we make people less nervous with humor, we make situations more " cop-able" with humor, and we make people feel included with humor- most effective managers know how to do that."(Raphaelson-west, 1989) humor is an inseparable part of the world and different procedures have

been developed to report it. (Vandaele, 2002) This study also aims at investigating humor from both a cultural and linguistic perspective.

1.1 Background of the Problem

The research done on humor is as diverse as the number of the existing scholarly fields and the number of approaches taken towards the phenomenon. For the most part the literature on humor, consists of "semantic mechanisms and cognitive-perceptual, translation, as well as sociological and pragmatic analysis of humor in various types of interaction." (Dyner, 2008) the most prevalent methods for the study of humor in translation studies have been the General theory of verbal humor (GTVH). This method was first proposed by Attardo and Raskins (1991) which takes a linguistic approach to the matter. The other recently promoted method is the one which resorts to Frame Semantics proposed by Fillmore(1976) and allows the study of cultural changes of the issue.(Rojo, 2002)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Raphaelson-west jokes are generally divided into three categories (1989, p. 130):

- a) linguistic jokes, such as puns
- b) cultural jokes, such as ethnic jokes
- c) universal jokes, such as the unexpected

She goes on saying that the degree of translatability increases when moving from top to the bottom of the list. She (1989) asserts "the nature of the joke and the relationship between the jokes in questions are main factors in translating such [linguistic] jokes." Regarding the second type of jokes Raphaelson-west (1989) maintains that although semantically such jokes could be regarded

similar, they are pragmatically and culturally untranslatable. The easiest of all these categories is the universal one. However, Raphaelson-west (1989) is a bit hesitant about distinguishing another category as universal jokes, yet she (1989) reasons that since there exist "semantic universals, I venture to say that there are a good number of cultures who would find certain situations funny."

Consequently, it can be claimed that the translation of humor can be very difficult. Therefore, the farther the languages and the cultures the more difficulty the translator might go through in the process of translation and the less equivalence is perceivable. As a matter of fact, there exist a wide variety of instances of humor which have been left away because of the very ignorance of one or the other aspect of the whole humorous structure.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Having demonstrated the prevalence of humor in human life, and taken into consideration the voluminous bulk of work done in humor, either in the form of a film, a novel or a play, it can be realized that this field is in need of particular attention. Unfortunately, it is frequently observed that translated humor does not enjoy a similar degree of appreciation as the original works. The study of humor is part of a lot of different fields, including anthropology, linguistics, philosophy, psychology and sociology. Similar to many other disciplines, scholars in Translation Studies (TS) have made several attempts at explaining the phenomenon from the point of view of their field of study. However, for the most part, the studies have revolved around linguistic problems of translating humor. Therefore, TS has not been very successful to answer certain vital questions regarding the translation of humor. This concept is of some novelty in the field of Translation Studies and in comparison with other subfields in TS, fewer attempts have been made at its study. It is hoped that this research can present a comprehensive and wholesome attempt at description of humor and