

Translating Laughter: The Impact of Humor Translation on Readers' Engagement in Mahfouz's Zuqāq al-Midaq

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate whether the translator of Zuqāq al-Midaq has preserved or modified the intentional humor from Arabic into English. It explores the maxims that have been flouted by the joke teller in the target text (TT) and identifies the most effective microstrategies in rendering intentional humor into the TT. It is a qualitative study that explores the impact of translating humor on readers' engagement in the novel genre. The theories adopted in this study are Raskin's (1985) Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) and Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP). The corpus comprises 12 humorous utterances of Naguib Mahfouz's (1947) Zuqāq al-Midaq and its translation, Midaq Alley, by Trevor Le Gassick (1975). The findings of the study demonstrate that the translator has aptly rendered the ST humorous effect to the target reader in most of the selected utterances. Adaptation and oblique translation constitute the most effective microstrategies, whereas condensation and explicitation may render the ST laughter to a certain extent due to cultural nuances. Direct translation may render intentional humor except for culture-specific items. Grice's quality maxim is the most flouted in translation. The study instigates translation practitioners to explore how translating humor may influence the characterization and plot of the novel genre.

1. INTRODUCTION

Humor is a communicative human act that depends largely on the engagement between the joke teller, hearer, and butt simultaneously. In this sense, humor can be tackled from a socio-cultural perspective although it is characterized by its multidisciplinary nature. For instance, it has been elaborated by discourse analysts (e.g. Al-Khatib, 1997; Al-Wasy & Mohammed, 2024). To clarify the meaning of humor, Westwood (2008) defines this concept as “a ubiquitous, pervasive, and universal phenomenon potentially present in all situations in which people interact” (p. 62). Vandaele (2010) defines humor as “what causes mirth, amusement, and spontaneous laughter or even a smile” (p. 147). Accordingly, intentional humor is a non-bona-fide linguistic phenomenon whose primary objective is to make the hearer laugh (Raskin, 1985).

As far as linguistics is concerned, humor can be classified into intentional and accidental. In intentional humor (the type under investigation in this study), the joke teller exploits Grice's (1975) maxims for a communicative purpose, i.e. laughter. Thus, the speaker *flouts* one or more of Grice's maxims—quality, quantity, manner, and relation. In this type, the speaker is *conscious* about the humorous mode of communication while producing a hilarious situation.

On the other hand, in accidental humor, the speaker *infringes* one or more of Grice's maxims, being unconscious about the humorous mode of communication. The study investigates the maxims that have been *flouted* by the joke teller whether in the ST and the TT, as well as their impact on translation.

Naguib Mahfouz, the Nobel Prize Laureate in 1988, uses humor in his novels strategically. It is used as a social tool to expose corruption, class division, and gender inequality. In this sense, humorous dialogues among lower-class characters reflect their struggles, resilience, and wit. Interestingly, Mahfouz uses humor as a shield to tackle controversial topics such as sex, religion, and politics in a less confrontational way. Humor is a salient characteristic in Mahfouz's literary style in that he discusses humor in many novels such as *Al-Qahira Al-Jadida* (1945), *Midaq Alley* (1947), *The Thief and the Dog* (1961), and *The Harafish* (1977).

From the perspective of linguistic theories, there are Semantic Script Theory of Humor (Raskin, 1985) and General Theory of Verbal Behavior (Raskin & Attardo, 1991), henceforth GTVH. The first theory tackles the concept of humor from a semantic and pragmatic perspective in that there should be a kind of cooperation between the speaker and hearer to make the latter optimally perceive the utterance or script as a joke. In other words, this theory is largely pertinent to Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and his above-mentioned maxims. The other theory, which has been developed by Raskin and Attardo, provides a linguistic model for researchers to analyze jokes. This theory comprises six parameters that are called Knowledge Resources, including language, narrative strategy, target, situation, logical mechanism, and script opposition. In this sense, this study confines itself to Raskin's SSTH (1985).

The significance of the study emanates from exploring this type of humor in a literary novel which has not been investigated before. Pedagogically speaking, the study provides translation trainees and researchers with an approach to render *intentional* humor to facilitate interlingual and intercultural communication. It is worth noting that the study underscores which one of Grice's (1975) maxims has been mostly flouted in the TT. Understanding the microstrategies which render intentional humor may enrich the field of Translation Studies. As a corollary, it is more likely to consolidate the cross-cultural communication between the East and the West.

The objectives that the study aims to achieve include the following ones. First, it identifies the extent to which the translator has been successful in rendering intentional humor in Mahfouz's *Zuqāq al-Midaq*. Second, it investigates the flouted maxim(s) in the TT. Last, it explores the employed microstrategies in rendering intentional humor in the TT. For this end, the study poses the three following questions: (1) How does translating humor impact readers' engagement with literary novels? (2) Which maxim(s) of Grice's conversational implicature has/have been flouted in the TT? (3) How effective are the translation microstrategies used by the translator to render *intentional humor* in Mahfouz's *Zuqāq al-Midaq*? In what follows is the related literature regarding the theories of humor discussed in the study and microstrategies of translation employed by the translator, i.e. Le Gassick.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Of the theories that have tackled humor from a linguistic perspective are Raskin's (1985) Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH) and Raskin and Attardo's (1991) General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH). According to the first theory, a text can be considered a single-joke-carrying text if it suffices two conditions: "(1) the text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts, and (2) the two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite" (Raskin & Attardo, 1991, p. 99). From the perspective of semantics, Raskin (1985) regards script as "a large chunk of semantic information surrounding the world or evoked by

it” (p. 81). The other theory highlights six parameters: script oppositions, logical mechanisms, situations, targets, narrative strategies, and language. In this sense, this study confines itself to this theory in that it is more likely to contribute to investigating tendentious humor as a fundamental tool of interlingual communication between Arabic and English.

According to SSTH, there are three categories of opposition between ‘real’ and ‘unreal’ situations. The first category underscores actual and nonactual situations. In the actual situation, the joke teller “finds himself or, somewhat more generally, in which the joke is actually set” (Raskin, 1985, p. 111). However, in the non-actual situation, there is some sort of incompatibility with the actual scenario of the joke. The second category includes normal and abnormal situation in that the formal contends with the hearer’s expectations compared with the latter. The last category comprises possible and impossible situations. For instance, when we assimilate a worm with an elephant, although it is impossible, it is used to evoke a humorous situation.

As far as GTVH is concerned, six knowledge resources have been identified by Raskin and Attardo (1991). These knowledge resources are script oppositions, logical mechanisms, situations, targets, narrative strategies, and language. The first parameter of joke difference is language. It includes “the difference in the choice of words and syntactic constructions” (Raskin & Attardo, 1991, p. 297). The third parameter is target in that there is there is a certain individual or group for which a joke is uttered. The fourth parameter is ‘situation’ in that the situation of the joke should be simple to be perceived by the target (audience). The fifth parameter is logical mechanism in that there should be some sort of logicity in telling the joke. The last parameter is script opposition in that the scripts of the joke are opposed to each other in a certain way. Thus, “the number of oppositions exhibited by the joke is finite and limited” (309). However, one of the limitations of SSTH is that it oversimplifies the complexity of humor and may not fully account for cultural variations in humor perception (Vandaele, 2010) to the extent that it may not be fully applicable to translation.

In addition to Raskin and Attardo’s (1991) GTVH theory, Grice’s (1975) Cooperative Principle assumes that there should be some sort of interaction between the speaker and the hearer. By way of elaboration, in intentional humor, the speaker may blatantly *flout* one or more of the maxims during an exchange between interlocutors. In this sense, Grice’s (1975) maxims of conversation, in non-bona-fide mode of communication (Raskin, 1985), will be as follows: (1) maxim of quantity: the speaker gives sufficient information to the joke, (2) maxim of quality: say what is compatible with the joke, (3) maxim of relation: say only what is relevant to the joke, and (4) maxim of manner: tell the joke efficiently (Raskin, 1985). According to the CP of non-bona fide communication (Raskin, 1985), the hearer does not expect the speaker to provide relevant information or tell the truth. Rather, the hearer perceives the speaker’s utterance to make him/her laugh. Accordingly, the hearer will look for the ingredients of the joke, i.e. overlapping and opposing scripts.

To examine the translatability of Arabic jokes from Arabic into English, El-Yasin (1997) conducts a study. He indicates that linguistic and cultural differences pose a tremendous challenge for translators. He concludes that linguistic jokes in Arabic cannot be easily and straightforwardly rendered into English. He argues that jokes based on incongruity can be translated in TT with minor problems compared with the linguistic jokes that pose a challenge for a translator. He indicates that “the absence of equivalent linguistic units in English constitutes a serious problem for the translator” (El-Yasin, 1997, p. 675). One strength of this study is that it discusses the linguistic and cultural constraints in translation regarding incongruity theory, which is relevant to SSTH.

Little research has been conducted to investigate how intentional humor can be rendered from Arabic into English in the literary narrative. For instance, Farghal (2006)

examines accidental humor in international public notices displayed in English. He indicates that the initiator infringes one or more of Grice's maxims. Besides, the receiver is more conscious about the joke more than its producer. "Humor arising from interlingual communication has been shown to be a clear example of accidental humor" (Farghal, 2006, p.1). Besides, intentional humor, the joke teller *flouts* one or more of Grice's (1975) maxims, whereas he or she *infringes* them in accidental humor. One strength of Farghal's paper is discussing accidental humor from a pragmatic perspective since humor is communicated implicitly.

Al-Kharabsheh (2008) investigates unintentional humor in the translation of Jordanian shop signs by indicating that "unintentional humor hinges upon the interaction between the mediated script and the receiver" (p.1). He reveals that the translator's incompetence in interlingual communication is a major source of unintentional humor. The data of the study included 467 digital photos of Jordanian shop signs. The discussion tackled misspelling, semantic accuracy in TT, lexical gaps, morph-phonological resemblance, word order, and denormalizing normality. Additionally, he points out that "the communicator's translation incompetence in cross-language communication is a primary source for unintentional humor" (15).

Dowaidar (2016) probes the translation of humor in Naguib Mahfouz *Al-Qahira Al-jadida* (Cairo Modern). Humor is something innate in the Egyptian culture in the daily life and local expressions. He indicates that puns, idioms, and double meanings are frequently untranslatable. In other words, translators may employ explanations or substitutions to render humor, but by doing this, they may reduce or modify the function of humor. The strategies that translators may use to render humor are explication, substitution, omission, and domestication vs. foreignization. He concludes that rendering humor poorly may modify the character and the author's intent.

Mohammed (2019) explores the translation of humorous expressions into Arabic with reference to loss, gain, and compensation. He selects 10 humorous quotes and jokes from different episodes, movies, and plays. His study has shown that translating humorous expressions encounters loss, gain, and compensation. The types of loss in translation include "lexical, syntactic, phonological and pragmatic ones" (p. 21). Besides, he has indicated that rendering humorous expressions into Arabic is challenging due to lack of equivalence in the target language. He concludes that a translator is required to choose the proper strategy to diminish the divergence between SL and TL. Although Mohammed discusses theories of translating humor, incongruity, superiority, relief, and linguistic theories of translation, he adopts neither of them in his study.

Whereas Vinay and Darbelnet's direct microstrategies (1958) include literal, calque, and borrowing, their indirect microstrategies comprise transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. This study adopts Schjoldager's (2008) translational microstrategies: direct transfer, calque, direct translation, oblique translation, explication, paraphrase, condensation, adaptation, addition, substitution, deletion, and permutation. According to Schjoldager (2008), direct transfer is to "transfer the translation without changing it" (p. 92). For instance, rendering proper names as well as 'borrowing' from Arabic into English. Calque is a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression from another, then translates literally each of its elements. Direct translation involves a word-for-word procedure. Oblique translation means sense for sense translation by employing a functional equivalence. Explication is to make the implicit information of the ST explicit in the TT. Paraphrase means "using different words to express the meaning of one word so that it becomes clear" (Baker, 1992, p. 27). Condensation is to make the ST explicit meaning implicit in the TT. Adaptation is to find a cultural equivalent in the TT. Addition is to add chunks or segments to clarify the

ST meaning. Substitution is to replace a SL word with another in the TL. Deletion, according to Baker, is to delete a unit of meaning from the ST. Permutation is to translate in “a different place in the target text” (p. 98).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study investigates an everyday sociocultural phenomenon, i.e. intentional humor. It is a qualitative study that explores the impact of translating humor on readers' engagement. The corpus of the study comprises 12 humorous utterances of Mahfouz's *Zuqaq al-Midaq* (1947) and their translation by Trevor le Gassick (1975). Due to space limitations, the chosen utterances were no more than 12 ones. These utterances were chosen as ‘representatives’ of other humorous ones in the novel. The criteria for identifying humorous elements were the utterances that evoke laughter, express something unexpected, include incongruity between what is said (explicit) and is meant (implicit). It is worth noting that Le Gassick's translation was a modified version of his first translation to *Zuqaq al-Midaq* in 1966.

The theory employed in analyzing the 12 utterances is Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH), along with Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicatures. In this regard, the study analyzes intentional humor to examine the extent to which the translator's rendering was effective in transferring it to the TT. The reason for choosing Raskin's SSTH is that it is a linguistically and cognitively oriented framework, allowing researchers to analyze humor mechanisms and evaluate how those mechanisms impact readers' engagement. Additionally, the translation microstrategies, employed by the translator, follow Schjoldager's model (2008) as mentioned earlier in the Introduction. Schjoldager's model serves as a comprehensive framework that involves direct and indirect microstrategies. The process for analyzing translation strategies was based on the definition of each strategy and its applicability to the humorous expression, and its effect on the target reader. In what follows is a table including the definition of translation microstrategies according to Schjoldager's (2008) model:

Table 1. Schjoldager's Translation Microstrategies (2008, p. 109)

Microstrategy	Definition
Direct transfer	transfers something unchanged (e.g. names of places).
Calque	transfers the structure or makes a very close translation.
Direct translation	is a word-for-word procedure.
Oblique	translation in a sense-for-sense procedure, i.e. functional equivalence.
Explication	makes implicit information in the ST explicit in the TT.
Paraphrase	translates rather freely.
Condensation	makes explicit information implicit.
Adaptation	recreates the ST effect, entirely or partially.
Addition	adds a unit of meaning to the TT.
Substitution	putting one word with a wider or narrower meaning in place of another.
Deletion	leaves out a unit of meaning.

The objective of selecting this model is that it covers all the strategies that the translator (Le Gassick) applied in his translation.

4. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

It is worth noting that each utterance of the selected ones will be discussed in accordance with the following steps. The first step is to highlight the humorous segment in the ST and the TT. The second step is to provide a literal gloss between two brackets and the translator's rendering. The third step is to provide a linguistic analysis of how and why the segment is humorous. The last step is to elaborate whether the translator preserved or removed the humorous meaning to the target readers. In what follows is the analysis of the utterances taken from the narrative in question.

Utterance (1):

SLT: قالوا له ستموت بغتة وسيقتلك الشحم الضاغط على قلبك وراح يقول ذلك مع القائلين ولكن ماذا يضيره الموت وحياته نوم متصل؟! (ص7)

Lit: [What will death harm him and his life is a prolonged sleep?]

TLT: People are always telling him he will die suddenly because of the masses of fat pressing round his heart. He always agrees with them. *But how will death harm him when his life is merely a prolonged sleep?* (p. 3)

The highlighted Arabic utterance, 'ولكن ماذا يضيره الموت وحياته نوم متصل' [lit: what will death harm him and his life is a prolonged sleep?], expresses a humorous sense. In other words, even though death is supposed to terminate Kamil's life, yet his death and life are alike in that he spends most of his life sleeping. Thus, the humorous sense emanates from the conflicting scripts of life and death. Linguistically, although the word 'life' contradicts the word 'death', the narrator uses them to make them similar as the common factor between them is sleep. The interrogative sentences in the ST and the TT evoke a sense of humor resulting from describing two contradictory things as if they were the same, i.e. life vs. death. Hence, the joke teller (the narrator) uses exaggeration in Kamil's prolonged sleep to create a humorous situation; thus, making the audience laugh.

The italicized English utterance, '*But how will death harm him when his life is merely a prolonged sleep?*', arouses an intentional humor. To elaborate, the joke teller indicates that uncle Kamil's life is merely a prolonged sleep. Thus, his life has no difference from his death as both are sleep. The hilarious situation arouses from the contradiction between considering life as death although they are contradictory. According to the script opposition, utterance (1) refers to the second category of opposition, i.e. normal vs abnormal situations. Thus, it is something abnormal that uncle Kamil's life is like his death.

As far as translation is concerned, the joke teller is engaged in a non-bona-fide mode of communication (Raskin, 1985), i.e. intentional humor, in that uncle Kamil's death is not different from his life as (to him) both are sleep. Regarding translation, le Gassick *flouts* the maxim of quality (by being metaphorical about uncle Kamil's life). The translator renders the question word 'ماذا' [what] as 'how' applying oblique translation—functional equivalence to the ST. In so doing, he preserves the humorous effect of the author. Besides, the translator adds an adverb to the TT, 'merely' to transfer the humorous meaning well to the target reader. He maintains both conflicting scripts in translations, life and prolonged sleep. By employing 'oblique translation', the translator seems to *effectively* convey the humorous sense to the target reader.

Utterance (2):

SLT: وضحك الدكتور بوشي وخاطب عم كامل قائلاً: لا تفتأ تذكر الموت وتالله لتدفننا جميعاً بيديك (ص 15).

Lit: [You are still mentioning death! By God, you will bury all of us by your hands]

TLT: Dr. Booshy laughed and addressed Uncle Kamil. "*Are you still harping on dying? By God, you'll probably bury the lot of us with your own hands!*" (7)

The highlighted utterance in the source language text (henceforth SLT), 'لا تفتأ تذكر الموت و تالله لتدفننا جميعاً بيديك' (lit: you are still mentioning death! By God, you will bury all of us by your hands), indicates that the joke teller, Dr. Booshy, produces a humorous situation. In other words, Kamil's continuous mentioning to death and Dr. Booshy's presumption that Kamil probably lives longer than his friends. Linguistically, the humorous sense in the SLT emanates from the script opposition between mentioning death by an old man (Kamil) who will probably live longer than others. The joke teller (Dr. Booshy) refers to the contradiction between old age and living longer than others. From this opposition arises the sense of humor (Attardo: 2001).

The italicized utterance in the target language text (henceforth TLT), "*Are you still harping on dying? By God, you will probably bury the lot of us with your own hands!*", refers to a humorous situation. The word 'harping' means 'playing on a harp' in that the context of this utterance indicates that Kamil is still mentioning death as if he were harping on dying. In other words, the conflicting scripts are the old man who keeps mentioning death will bury people younger than him. Although the declarative sentence in the SLT 'لا تفتأ تذكر الموت' [You are still mentioning death] has been rendered as an interrogative one, this modification has emphasized the humorous sense to make humor more intelligible to the target reader.

When it comes to translation, Le Gassick flouts the quality maxim (he says what he believes to be true) in that he asserts that uncle Kamil will live longer than his friends although he is too aged. The translator creates an image 'harping' to express the continuous mentioning of death by uncle Kamil. Besides, he changes the declarative sentence into interrogative. However, he maintains the humorous effect in TT by preserving the opposing scripts, i.e. still harping on dying vs. burying the lot of us with your hands. Thus, the translator employs oblique translation, sense for sense translation. Applying this microstrategy appears to transfer the humorous sense appropriately to the target reader.

Utterance (3):

SLT: استطاعت أن تقول وهي تضحك لتداري ارتباكها: أصوم وأفطر على بصل! (ص 28)

Lit: [I fast and break a fast by an onion].

TLT: She was able to say, laughing to hide her embarrassment, "*What, break a fast by eating an onion?*" (13)

The highlighted Arabic utterance, 'أصوم وأفطر على بصل' (lit: I fast and break a fast by an onion), evokes a sense of humor. In Islam, when Muslims fast in Ramadan, for instance, they generally expect a tasty meal after abstaining from food or drinks from dawn to sunset. Similarly, Mrs. Saniya has been a widow for a long period of time. Thus, she expects a young bridegroom to compensate her for being a widow for long, not an old man. In other words, marrying an old man, to Mrs. Saniya, is like breaking a fast by eating an onion. The conflicting scripts emanate from fasting and breaking fast by eating an onion. Thus, utterance (4) is a hilarious one as it expresses a disappointing reward.

The English utterance in italics, '*What, break a fast by eating an onion?*', conveys a hilarious sense to the target reader. The translator uses two contradictory things: fasting and

breaking a fast by eating an onion as this expectation is far away from fasting by Muslims. Besides, he uses an interrogative sentence instead of a declarative one as in the SLT to give more astonishment to the hearer. In other words, it is impossible for Mrs. Saniya to marry an old man after being a widow for several years.

From the perspective of translation, the translator flouts the quality maxim in that Mrs. Saniya is metaphorical by assimilating the old bridegroom to the Muslim who breaks a fast by eating an onion. The translator changes the ST exclamative sentence into interrogative in the TT. The translator adds the interrogative word 'what' to express astonishment in the opposing scripts: breaking a fast' vs. 'eating an onion'. He does some sort of adaptation to preserve the humorous effect of the ST by refusing Umm Hamida's suggestion indirectly. In this sense, the translator uses adaptation to convey the humorous effect in the ST. Thus, le Gassick seems to effectively convey the hilarious effect to the target reader.

Utterance (4):

SLT: (72) كان عملاقاً قوياً فدهش زبيطة لمنظره وسأله: أنت بغل بلا زيادة ولا نقصان فلماذا تروم احتراف الشحادة؟! (72)

Lit: [You are a mule, no more no less. Why do you want to become a beggar?]

TLT: He was a giant of a man, and Zeita, amazed to see him there, asked, "*You are an ox of a man! Why do you want to become a beggar?*" (32)

The highlighted utterance in Arabic, 'أنت بغل بلا زيادة ولا نقصان فلماذا تروم احتراف الشحادة؟' (Lit: You are a mule, no more no less. Why do you want to become a beggar?), evokes an intentional humor. To elucidate, the man who came to Zeita, the cripple maker, is a very strong man. Yet, he desires to be handicapped for the sake of becoming a beggar. The humorous situation emanates from that strong man, who comes to Zeita, is willing to become a beggar even if it caused him a disability. According to the script opposition, there is a contradiction between normal and abnormal situation in this case. The conflicting scripts are strength and beggary. In other words, the word 'بغل' (mule) implies strength whereas 'شحادة' (beggary) refers to weakness and disability.

The italicized utterance in English, '*You are an ox of a man! Why do you want to become a beggar?*', refers to intentional humor. In other words, the joke teller, Zeita, is astonished about how insistent the sturdy man who came to him to become a beggar. Analogous to the highlighted utterance in Arabic, the translated utterance uses contradictory words to evoke humor, i.e. 'an ox of man, beggar'. In other words, there is no need for an able-bodied man to be handicapped for the sake of being a beggar. There is an opposition between normal and abnormal situations regarding script opposition.

Zeita is engaged in a non-bona-fide mode of communication (Raskin: 1985), an intentional humor. The humorous situation arises from Zeita's astonishment of the giant man who desires to be crippled. Zeita flouts the quality maxim by calling the man an ox. Translationally, the translator uses the expression 'an ox of a man' to express the physical ability of the word 'بغل' which means literally a mule. Besides, he deletes the Arabic expression 'بدون زيادة أو نقصان' (no more, no less) as it does not affect the author's humorous intention. In other words, he uses adaptation by using the expression 'an ox of a man' and deleting the afore-mentioned Arabic expression. Thus, the translator well transfers the ST hilarious effect to the target reader.

Utterance (5):

SLT: (118) فقال لها الشاب مرتعداً: من أنت يا ستي ماذا فعلت حتى؟ من أنا؟ ألا تعرفني؟! أنا ضرتك. (118)

Lit: [Don't you know me?! I am your fellow wife.]

TLT: The youth, trembling violently, answered, "Who are you? What have I done so as to "Who am I? *Do you not know me? I am your fellow wife . . .*" (53)

The highlighted utterance in Arabic, 'أنا ضرتك ألا تعرفني؟! (lit: Do not you know me?! I am your fellow wife), arouses a sense of intentional humor. By way of elaboration, Kirsha's wife suspects him of preparing to make a sexual relationship with the man who was invited to Kirsha's café. The word 'ضرة' (fellow wife) indicates that Kirsha is a homosexual person. In other words, Umm Husein, Kirsha's wife, regards that young man as if he were her fellow wife. Her usage of the word 'fellow wife' implies sarcasm in a humorous way. In this sense, the conflicting scripts are Umm Hussein as a wife and the man who is invited to Kirsha's café as a fellow wife.

In the same vein, the English sentence in italics, '*Do not you know me? I am your fellow wife*', evokes a sense of intentional humor. Umm Hussein uses the lexeme 'fellow wife' to make the audience laugh, although she uses it sarcastically. Thus, there is a kind of opposition between being a man and a fellow wife at the same time. In this sense, it is something abnormal for a man to be a fellow wife according to the script opposition of Raskin (1985).

The joke teller, Umm Hussein, addresses the man who may be a prey of her husband's sexual intentions as her husband, Kirsha, is homosexual. Thus, she regards that young man as her fellow wife. In this sense, she flouts the quality maxim and manner maxims, whose utterance seems to be ambiguous to that man. Le Gassick maintains the interrogative sentence 'ألا تعرفني' in his translation (Don't you know me). Besides, he renders the word 'ضرة' as a fellow wife to expose the homosexual inclinations of Kirsha. Thus, the translator uses direct translation. Yet, he appears to be successful in transferring the humorous sense to the target readers.

Utterance (6):

SLT: لا تفتأ تندب حظك وتقول مالي أضرب من دون الرجال جميعاً! أرايت كيف يضرب أسيادك وأسياد من خلفوك؟! (120)

Lit: [Did you see how your masters and masters of your parents are beaten?]

TLT: "You're always moaning about your bad luck and asking why you're the only husband who is beaten! *Did you see how even your betters are beaten?*" (54)

The highlighted utterance in the SLT, 'أرايت كيف يضرب أسيادك وأسياد من خلفوك؟' (lit: Did you see how your masters and masters of your parents are beaten?), produces a sense of humor. Umm Hussein shows Jaada, the baker, how severely she beats her husband. Thus, Jaada should thank God in that his wife, Husniya, does not punish him as Umm Hussein does with her husband. The humorous sense emanates from the contradiction between the words 'يضرب، أسياد' (masters, be beaten) in that a master beats slaves, for instance, but not be beaten!

The italicized utterance in the TLT, '*Did you see how even your betters are beaten?*', arouses a humorous situation. In other words, Kirsha's wife tells Jaada that even her husband, the owner of the café, is beaten by her. Thus, Jaada should not have been depressed as even those men who are better and richer than him are beaten. According to script opposition, there is a reference to the third type of opposition, i.e. possible vs. impossible. The words 'betters' and 'beaten' trigger an intentional humor on the part of the hearer. The humorous situation arises from the fact that whether a proprietor or baker, they will be mercilessly beaten by their wives: Umm Hussein and Hussniya.

From the translation perspective, the translator uses an interrogative sentence, compared to that in the original. The joke teller, Umm Hussein, flouts the quality maxim—to say what is

compatible with joke. The translator uses condensation (partial omission of the ST) to render the expression 'أسيادك وأسياد من خلفوك' (your masters and your parents' masters) as 'your betters'. Accordingly, the microstrategy employed, condensation, preserves the humorous effect in the TT.

Utterance (7):

SLT: (122) يا معلم امرأتك قوية فيها من الرجولة ما يعوز الكثيرين من الرجال هي ذكر وليست أنثى فلماذا لا تحبها؟!

Lit: [She is a male, not a female. Why don't you love her?]

TLT: "O Kirsha, your wife is a strong woman. Indeed, she has a masculinity which many men lack. *She is really a male, not a female. Why don't you love her, then?* (54)

The highlighted utterance in the SLT, 'هي ذكر وليست أنثى فلماذا لا تحبها؟!' (Lit: She is a male, not a female. Why do not you love her?), evokes a sense of intentional humor to make the audience laugh. In this sense, Sheikh Darwish, the joke teller, knows that Kirsha is homosexual. After attending the quarrel between Kirsha's wife and the young man who was invited to Kirsha's café, Sheikh Darwish suggests humorously that Kirsha does not need to make a sexual intercourse with that man as his wife has masculine characteristics. The conflicting scripts are being female and having masculine characteristics (Kirsha's wife).

The italicized utterance in the TLT, '*She is really a male, not a female. Why don't you love her, then?*', refers to a hilarious situation. By way of elaboration, Sheikh Darwish regards Kirsha's wife as a male due to her aggressive and insolent nature. The humorous situation arouses from likening Kirsha's wife to a man, and owing to her masculine characteristics, Kirsha should love her instead of making forbidden relationships with men. In comparison with the SLT, the TLT refers to the second type of opposition in script opposition: normal vs. abnormal situations.

From the perspective of translation, Sheikh Darwish flouts the *quality* maxim as Umm Hussein is not a male. The translator maintains the negative interrogative sentence in his translation to indicate that Kirsha does not love his wife. In this regard, the translator employs oblique translation by rendering the humorous sense into the TT. Oblique translation seems to convey the same humorous effect on the target reader. Thus, the translator is more likely to convey the intentional humor of the ST in the TT.

Utterance (8):

SLT: (124) ودعت أم حميدة له ثم داعبت عم كامل قائلة: وأنت يا عم كامل متى تنوي وتتوكل على الله! (124)

Lit: [And you, uncle Kamil, when will you put your faith in God?]

TLT: Umm Hamida said a prayer for him and then turned jokingly to Uncle Kamil and asked, "*And you, Kamil, when are you intending to marry?*" (55).

The highlighted sentence in Arabic, 'وأنت يا عم كامل متى تنوي وتتوكل على الله' (lit: And you, uncle Kamil, when will you put your faith in God?), evokes a humorous situation. Pragmatically, the expression 'متى تتوكل على الله؟' implies a question about marriage in that the literal meaning has nothing to do with what is meant by Umm Hamida. Umm Hamida, the joke teller, asks uncle Kamil when he intends to marry because Abbas has engaged to her stepdaughter, Hamida. Umm Hamida knows well that uncle Kamil is too aged to marry again, but she uses this utterance to make him laugh. The opposing scripts are old age and marriage. Thus, Uncle Kamil is impossible to think of marriage as he is too decrepit.

The English sentence in italics, '*And you, Kamil, when are you intending to marry?*', refers to an intentional humor. In other words, Umm Hamida asks uncle Kamil when he intends to marry although she knows well that this idea, regarding him, is far-fetched. The opposition between what is possible and impossible (uncle Kamil's marriage) makes the audience laugh according to the script opposition.

Umm Hamida flouts the maxim of quantity about the information provided in her utterance about instigating uncle Kamil to marry. From the perspective of translation, the translator renders the expression 'تتوكل على الله' as 'intend to marry' in that the literal meaning of this utterance (put your faith in God) has nothing to do with what the speakers really mean. The translator renders the author's implied meaning well. To convey the humorous meaning to the target reader, the translator makes what is implicit in the SLT explicit in the TLT. Namely, the microstrategy employed here is explicitation in that it effectively transfers the ST humorous effect to the target reader.

Utterance (9):

SLT: فتأوهت أم حسين قائلة: الله يرحمك يا أبي لقد كنت فقيهاً وقوراً فالتفت نحوها بوجهه المربد وقال: فقيه! كان قارئ قبور يتلو السورة بميليمين! (136)

Lit: [an Islamic jurist! He was a reciter of Qur'an at burials for two pennies!]

TLT: Kirsha turned his pale face toward her and commented, "*A pious, learned man indeed! He recited the Qur'an at burials! Why, he would recite a whole chapter for a penny!*" (61).

The highlighted utterance in the SLT, 'كان قارئ قبور يتلو السورة بميليمين!' (Lit: an Islamic jurist. He was a reciter of Qur'an at burials for two pennies.), evokes an intentional humor. To elucidate, Kirsha devalues his wife's father by showing that he was reciting the Qur'an at burials for a penny. The opposition that evokes humor in this utterance emanates from the fact that an Islamic jurist (a pious, learned person) does not recite a whole chapter of Qur'an for a penny. The opposing scripts are being a pious, learned person and reciting a whole chapter of Quran for a penny.

The italicized utterance in the TLT, '*A pious, learned man indeed! He recited the Qur'an at burials! Why, he would recite a whole chapter for a penny!*', refers to a humorous situation. Kirsha, the joke teller, is astonished that his wife calls her father 'a pious, learned person'. Thus, he makes fun of her by telling her that her father was reciting a whole chapter of Qur'an for only a penny. Similar to what has been shown in the highlighted utterance in the SLT regarding script opposition, the highlighted utterance in English expresses discrepancy between normal and abnormal.

From the perspective of translation, the translator conveys the humorous utterance of the joke teller who flouts the quality maxim. In this regard, the translator uses adaptation in that he renders 'قارئ قبور' into 'he recites Qur'an at burials', and the word 'سورة' [Sura: a set of verses in the Holy Qur'an] as a chapter. Thus, he seems to transfer the intentional humor effectively to the target reader. In other words, adaptation could preserve the humorous effect in the TT.

Utterance (10):

SLT: فنظرت إليها بتحد وقالت بغیظ: بل رفضت شاباً واخترت شيخاً. فضحكت أم حميدة ضحكة مججلة وتمتمت الدهن في العتافي (171)

Lit: [She murmured: There's plenty of fat on an old rooster.]

TLT: On the contrary, I've refused a young man and chosen an old one. "*There's plenty of fat on an old rooster!*" roared her foster mother. (76).

The highlighted utterance in Arabic, 'الدهن في العتاقى' (the gold can be found in the old), evokes an intentional humor. By way of elaboration, Umm Hamida (the joker teller) uses a proverbial expression to express the humorous response to Hamida. She indicates that a wealthy old man such as Salim Ridwan is a better husband to Hamida than a poor young man, i.e. Abbas. The humorous situation arises from the preference of the rich old man to a poor, young man. Linguistically, the literal meaning of this proverb does not convey the intentional humor of the joke teller. However, from a pragmatic perspective, this proverb implies that it is better to choose a wealthy decrepit husband than a poor, young one.

The highlighted utterance in English, 'There's plenty of fat on an old rooster!', does not convey the intentional humor in the SLT. To elaborate, the situation of having too much fat on old roosters seems to be ambiguous to the target reader as what has been conveyed in translation is the superficial meaning of the Arabic utterance. Without having a cultural background of this proverb, it is more likely to mystify the reader with the intended meaning; thus, affecting comprehensibility.

Regarding translation, the translator renders the highlighted utterance literally in that he conveys only the superficial meaning and ignores the implied meaning that would transfer the intentional humor of the SLT. The joke teller flouts the *quantity* maxim by saying less than expected. Le Gassick uses direct translation although it does not convey the same humorous meaning to the target reader. Employing adaptation could be more effective in rendering such a proverbial humorous expression: i.e. "old is gold."

Utterance (11):

SLT: (182) يا سيدنا الشيخ ادع لي. فخرج الشيخ درويش عن صمته قائلاً: الله يخرّب بيتك!

Lit: [May God destroy your home!]

TLT: "Please pray for me, Sheikh. "Emerging from his silence, Sheikh Darwish spread his hands wide in blessing and intoned, "May the devil take you!"

The highlighted utterances in the SLT, 'الله يخرّب بيتك' (May God destroy your home!), evokes a humorous situation in that Sheikh Darwish, the joke teller, responds unexpectedly to the candidate's request to supplicate God for him. Contrary to the candidate's expectations, Sheikh Darwish supplicates God against him in a humorous way that makes the audience laugh. Sheikh Darwish (the joke teller) is engaged in intentional humor. According to script opposition, this utterance refers to the second type of opposition, i.e. normal vs. abnormal. In other words, it is abnormal to pray against someone, and he tells you the opposite! The candidate expects that Sheikh Darwish says, 'God bless you', but the latter astonishes him by his unexpected response (to make the audience laugh). Pragmatically, the speaker *flouts* the relation maxim as the response is not related to the candidate's request.

The highlighted utterance in the TLT, 'May the devil take you!', arouses an intentional humor in that Sheikh Darwish deliberately desires to make the audience laugh. His response to the candidate's request is unexpected. The joke teller, Sheikh Darwish, exploits that he is a pious old man, so no one will blame him even if his response was unsatisfactory for others. From the perspective of script opposition, Sheikh Darwish makes the abnormal normal by praying against the candidate, not for his benefit. From a pragmatic perspective, Sheikh Darwish flouts the relation maxim by providing a response unrelated to the candidate's request. The opposing scripts are praying for someone and praying against him.

Translationally, the translation chooses an equivalent to the Arabic expression, 'الله يخرّب بيتك' which is 'May the devil take you'. In this sense, the translator employs *adaptation* to render the ST humorous meaning. This microstrategy conveys effectively the cultural nuances

by providing an equivalent utterance to the ST. Accordingly, the translator seems to employ an effective strategy that transfers the humorous situation to the target reader.

Utterance (12):

SLT: لا تؤاخذني. أثقلت عليك؟ مزاج رقيق عز وجهه، ارحموا عزيز قوم بال (252).

[lit: Have a mercy on a gentleman who has urinated.]

TLT: "Don't be angry with me. Have I upset you? It was only a little joke. All glory and honor to you. *Have mercy on these fine people down on their luck* (109).

The highlighted utterance in the SLT, 'ارحموا عزيز قوم بال' (Lit: Have a mercy on a gentleman who has urinated), arouses an intentional humor. This utterance is modified from an Arabic proverbial expression, 'ارحموا عزيز قوم ذل' (lit: Have mercy on a gentleman who has been humiliated). Here, we have a kind of wordplay to create humorous effect. The joke teller, Kirsha, uses contradictory words to convey the humorous situation, 'عزيز قوم، بال' in that a gentleman occupies a high position in society. However, the word 'بال' (to urinate) is derogatory in this context. According to script opposition, this utterance refers to a second type of opposition, normal vs. abnormal. To contextualize, it is abnormal for Kirsha's son, Hussein, to live a humble life after living a prosperous life in the city. Pragmatically speaking, Kirsha flouts the quality and manner maxims.

The italicized utterance in the TLT, '*Have mercy on these fine people down on their luck*', conveys an intentional humor expression. The humor arouses from the contradiction between the high position of a gentleman and asking mercy to this would be gentleman (Hussein) because of losing his job in the city. The opposing scripts are gentlemen and asking mercy for them.

Regarding translation, the translator uses an idiomatic expression 'down on their luck' to render the implied meaning of the verb 'بال' (experiencing financial difficulties or hardships). le Gassick employs explicitation by making the implicit in the ST explicit in the TT. Thus, the humorous situation was rendered well to the target reader. Accordingly, the microstrategy used seems to be effective in rendering humorous effects to the target reader.

The study has investigated the impact of translating humor on readers' engagement. Based on the findings of the study, *intentional* humor is a non-bona-fide mode of communication (Morreall: 2004) in that the joke teller is *conscious* about the humorous situation. The objective of using this mode of communication is to achieve a communicative purpose, i.e. to make the hearer or the audience laugh. In this sense, both the communicator and the receiver of the joke or humorous situation are engaged in creating it by encoding a funny message by the speaker and decoding it by the hearer. Some microstrategies render humorous effects translation largely such as adaptation, oblique and explicitation, and condensation. However, direct transfer, calque, and direct translation may distort the humorous effect, especially when rendering culture-specific items, such as proverbs or idiomatic expressions. Thus, the microstrategy employed may decrease or increase the readers' engagement with literary narrative. Based on the analysis, the translator, le Gassick, was highly successful in rendering the humorous meaning into the TT. As a corollary, he has transmitted the humorous effect (semantically and pragmatically) to the target reader.

From the perspective of Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humor (1985), the joke teller *flouts* one or more of Grice's maxims (quality, quantity, manner, relation). Based on this theory, the joke tellers of this study *flouted* one or more of Grice's maxims. The joke teller is conscious about the humor he or she utters. The predominant flouted maxim was quality maxim in that the joke teller is either not telling the truth or being metaphorical. The other flouted maxims

are organized respectively as follows: quantity, manner, and relation. The joke teller may flout more than one maxim when uttering a joke as can be seen in utterance 12 of this study (quality and manner).

When it comes to effectiveness of the microstrategies employed in the TT, le Gassick has used those which were used in Schjoldager's (2008) taxonomy. The microstrategies that regard the cultural nuances are more effective in rendering humor to the target text. In other words, when using adaptation, a translator may add or delete certain items to compensate for the loss in meaning. Oblique also renders the functional equivalent in the SL, which makes it appropriate in rendering cultural idiosyncrasies. Explication makes the implicit in the ST explicit in the TT. This strategy could be effective in rendering culture-specific items (proverbs, idioms, ...). It could enable a translator to use different words to make the meaning more intelligible. Direct translation could be employed in rendering humor if it does not have unfamiliar cultural items. Regarding the frequency of the microstrategies used, the most frequent microstrategy employed by the translator was *adaptation translation*, 41.5%. The other strategies are arranged as follows: oblique (25%), direct transfer (16.5%), explication (8.5%), and condensation (8.5%). Hence, *adaptation* and *oblique* could increase readers' engagement with the literary narrative more than explication, condensation, and direct translation.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study has analyzed the *intentional humor* in the translation of Mahfouz's *Zuqāq al-Midaq*. Whereas unintentional humor lacks the intentionality of making the hearer/reader laugh, the purpose of the intentional humor is to trigger laughter. In this sense, intentional humor can be seen as a non-bona-fide mode of communication (Raskin, 1985). Besides, the study has investigated the impact of translating humor on readers' engagement with the novel genre. In this regard, some microstrategies such as adaptation, calque, explication, and condensation appear to *increase* readers' interaction with the literary text, whereas others seem to *decrease* it, i.e. direct translation, especially when rendering cultural nuances.

Regarding the most flouted maxim in the TT, the study has shown that the quality maxim was the most frequent one. The other maxims have also been flouted but with different degrees as follows: quantity, manner, and relation respectively. Flouting one or more of Grice's maxims implies that the joke teller *deliberately* does not preserve those maxims to generate a non-bona-fide mode of communication (Raskin 1985), with the result of triggering laughter. Accordingly, the translator's flouting of one or more of Grice's maxims in addition to employing the effective microstrategy apparently convey the ST laughter to the target reader.

In terms of the effectiveness and frequency of the microstrategies employed in the TT, the study has revealed that adaptation and oblique are appropriate for rendering the humorous effect to the target reader. Addition and deletion can be embedded within adaptation to compensate for loss in meaning. Condensation can be used to translate humor by making implicit information explicit in the TT. Employing direct translation to render culture-specific items, such as proverbs distorts or nullifies the humorous effect in the ST. Translationally, Le Gassick appears to be largely successful in rendering the humorous meaning in the TT. Most of the microstrategies employed seem to be effective in preserving the humorous effect on the target reader. Adaptation is the most frequent translation microstrategy, 41.5%. The other strategies are arranged as follows: oblique (25%), direct transfer (16.5%), explication (8.5%), and condensation (8.5%). The study has concluded that intentional humor is a key type of interlingual communication in that it essentially depends on intralinguistic (semantic, pragmatic) and extralinguistic factors (culture, translator's inclinations) to perceive this linguistic phenomenon. Rendering humor requires linguistic and cultural awareness of humor

in both languages. The study opens the door for translators to probe the mysteries of humor, whether intentional or accidental from different approaches or perspectives.

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