

Problems of Lingua-Cultural in Translation of Arabic Humor Texts

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Abstract: Scholars seem to agree that qualitatively the translation of humor is different from other types of humor translation. One of the differences is that in the translation of humor, the humorous effect must be maintained. Then, besides that, it should be noted also, the problem is its cultural lingua. because the problem that is considered difficult in translating humor is the translation of humor in the form of word play and humor that contains a special culture. Based on this, this article discusses the issue in Arabic-language humorous texts. After examining several Arabic humor texts, it was found that when viewed from the lingual aspect, there was a type of Arabic humor which was indeed difficult to translate, including al-la'bu bi al-'alfaz (play of word form) and al-la'bu bi al- ma`na (play of word meaning), so that its humorous effect cannot be obtained. Also, when viewed from its cultural elements, many cannot be translated, because they contain new words that can be understood with the help of explanation. In a problem like this, what kind of humor cannot be specified that contains the problem, but in all types of humor in which there are particular cultural elements.

Keywords: translation, humor, Arabic linguistics, culture, discourse analysis

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I. INTRODUCTION

Vandaele said that translating is reconstructing the purpose of a source text and encoding it back to the target text with the aim of equating the effect. So translation is considered a cognitive phenomenon whose source text and translation text have the same or similar effect. If this theory is applied to humorous texts, the effect that must be obtained is the humorous effect called "humorous effect". If the translator is faced with a funny situation in bad humor, the translator must be able to decide to translate it into something better or replace it with another. (Panek, 2009: 32).

According to Chiaro, to be able to translate humor successfully, must have knowledge of signs and sociocultural, because there are two languages and cultures, different which must be understood, so that a translator is faced with a lack of linguistic and cultural references, especially in humor containing elements special language or culture. When humor is found that cannot be translated, a translator can create another humor that is in accordance with the humor that is translated. This means that the funny goal must be maintained, even though the meaning is changed. The important thing is that the humorous effect can be easily obtained in the translation. Anyway, the end result depends on the intelligence of the translator (Panek, 2009: 32).

In any form, humor that is expressed verbally made, changes between the sources language and target language, will be a difficult task. Attardo and Raskin mention that verbal humor translators must try to recreate the original humor, that is by matching linguistic ambiguity to source language with the same ambiguity in the target language and discovering the culture that exists in the original humor that is often used, because cultural lingua problems become obstacles what needs to be faced in translating humor that is expressed verbally. (Chiaro, 2010: 2)

One of the most prominent challenges in translating humor is the translation of wordplay and punning. John Schmitz considers humor based on words or linguistics to be the most difficult type to translate compared to humor based on reality and culture. Though according to Peter Newmark, translating punning is not so important and its appeal is less. Many comments about the translation of wordplay suggest that using compensation as the main strategy, namely replacing punning, does not fulfill its function if translated literally. Most agree on the effect of humor that is on humor must be a priority, although it must change the meaning of punning. According to John Rutherford, the function must be prioritized rather than the accuracy of its meaning. (Maher, 2011: 6)

Scholars seem to agree that qualitatively, the translation of humor is different from other translations. Jeroen Vandaele sees four main differences, namely:

First, the translation of humor must create a humorous effect, causing people to laugh or smile. This task is more difficult for an interpreter than when translating other texts.

Second, making humor, is different from understanding or judging humor, and not being seen as a skill that can be learned.

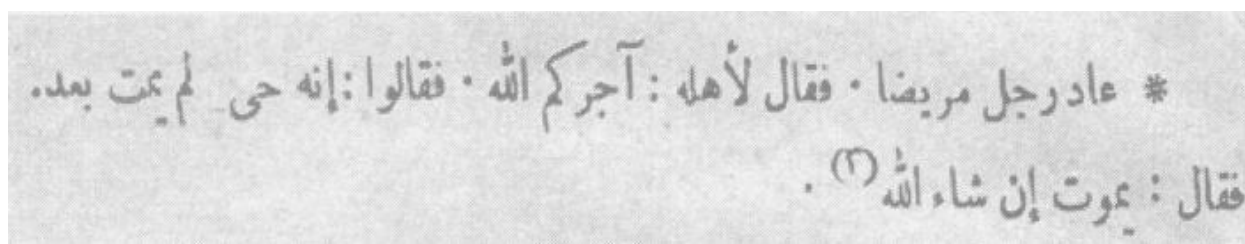
Third, the translator's sense of humor is different from the author, so it is not necessarily a translator, can make humor like what the author did.

Fourth, the enormous rhetorical effect of humor has made it difficult for translators to understand it (Chantler, 2009: 86).

So are some opinions about matters relating to the translation of humor. In the next sub-chapter, we will discuss how to apply the above theories with humorous texts in Arabic.

II. TRANSLATION OF ARABIC HUMOR TEXTS

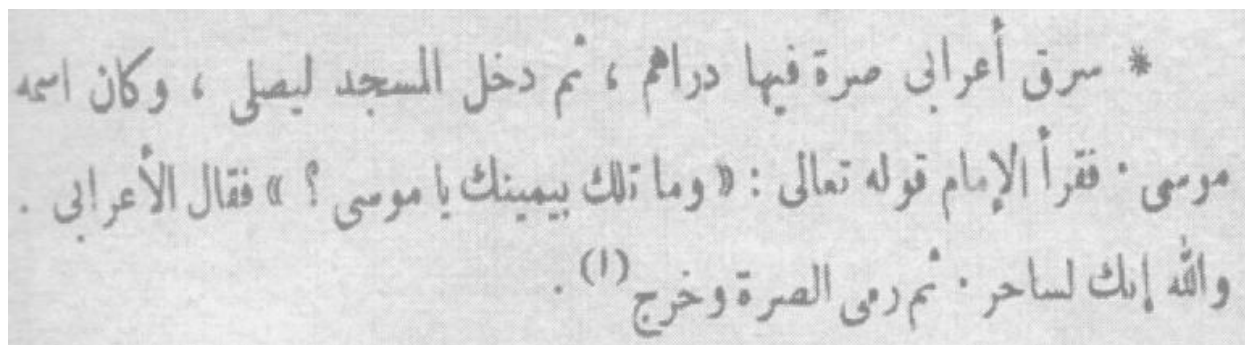
Al-Hufi divides humor into Arabic culture into several types. In this sub-chapter, examples of each type will be displayed. The first is the type of *al-gafila wa at-tagaful*. that is humor that occurs because of forgetfulness or pretending to be done by someone (Lesmana, 2009: 47). One example is as follows:



(Al-Hufi, 1956: 31)

If you look at the short form of the text and its general words, it does not contain specific expressions or terms, the humorous text above is not difficult to translate. This text tells of a man who visits someone who is sick (*'Ada rajulum maridan*). Then, he said to the family of the sick, so that his family would be rewarded by God (*fa qala li alihi: ajarakumullah*). Because the person who was sick had not died, heard the prayer, the family replied that the person who was sick had not died (*'innahu hayyun, lam yamutu ba'd*). Then, the person who visits it says again that the person who lives will die (*yamutu, 'insa' Allah*). Thus the contents of the text above. We can retell the text into English, with the same content without losing the humorous effect.

The next text is the type of *at-tanaqud*, which is humor that occurs, because the attitude carried out by someone is contrary to what is already common (Lesmana, 2009: 47) one example is as follows

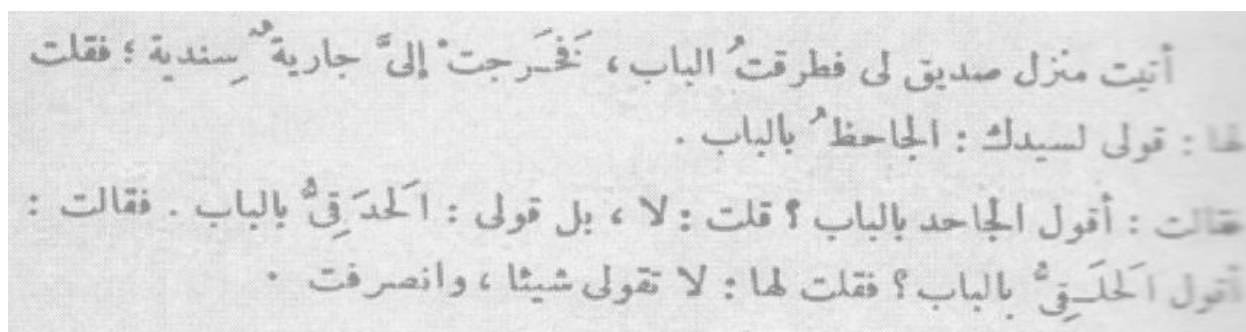


(Al-Hufi, 1956: 42).

This text tells of a Bedouin Arab who stole a bag in which there was a dirham. (*saraqatun fiha darahim*). Then, he entered the mosque. (*summa dakhala al-masjida li yusalli*). But the thief was Moses. (*wa kana ismuhu Musa*). When he enters, the Imam is reading one of the verses of the Qur'an which reads (*fa qara`a al-'imamu qawluhu ta'ala*): *ma tilka bi yaminika ya Musa*. The meaning of the verse is "What is on your right, O Moses". Hearing the priest's reading, the thief was shocked. He thought, the priest knew the loot in his right hand. Then, he said to the priest, "By Allah, you are truly a shaman." (*Fa qala al-'a'rabiyyu, wallahi innaka lasahirun*). Then the Bedouin threw away the bag, and came out of the mosque. (*summa rama*

asarra wa kharaja). This text is also short and not difficult to translate, because the words are general and there are no specific elements of language and culture that are difficult to translate.

Other texts are as follows:



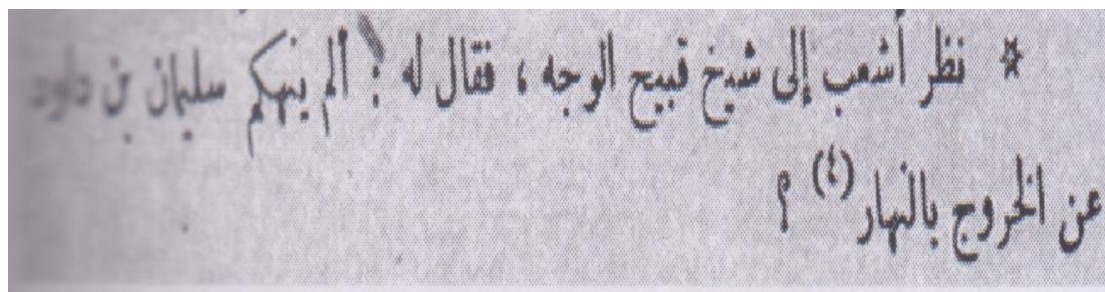
(Al-Hufi, 1956: 51)

The text above tells of someone who came to his friend's house (*`ataytu manzila sadiqin li*). Then the person knocked on the door. (*fa taraqtu al-baba*). Then, came out a slave girl from Sindh (*fa kharajat `ilayya jariyyatun sindiyyatun*). Then, he told the slave (*fa qultu laha*) to tell his master that at the door there was al-Jahiz (*qawli li sayyidika: al-Jahiz bi al-bab*). Apparently, the slave was not clear enough to hear the man's words, then he asked the person, was he told to say that at the door there was al-Jahid (*qalat fa: `aqulu al-jahid bi al-bab*). Then the person answered not, and explained that the slave must say al-hadaqiyyu at the door (*bal qawli: al-hadaqiyyu bi al-bab*). Then, the slave said again, should he say *al-hadaqiyyu* at the door (*fa qalat: al-hadaqiyyu bi al-bab*). Finally, the person said to the slave girl so that she did not say anything to her employer, then the person left. (*fa qultu laha: la taqulu syai'an wa insaraftu*).

Thus the story in the humor text above, for those who understand Arabic, actually the story above is funny. Because in it, there is a play on words that Hufi calls *al-`al'ab bi al-`alfaz*, which is humor that occurs, because of one's intelligence in playing with words. (Lesmana, 2009: 47). The humorous text above tells of a prominent writer of the Abbasid era, namely al-Jahiz who was visiting his friend's house. The name of the writer is Amr bin Bahr bin Mahbub al-Kinani al-Laysi. His title is Abu Usman, but better known by the name al-Jahiz, because his eyes protruded out (Lesmana, 2009: 55). is the meaning of the name literally, *Al-Jahiz* means "whose eyes stand out" so that when he does not clearly hear it, the word that appears is a word similar to that, only one letter different, namely *al-Jahid*, which means "infidels" Understanding the innocence of the slave girl, al-Jahiz replaced it with another word, namely *al-hadaqiyyu*, which means the same, namely "one whose eyes stand out." But the slave again did not clearly hear it, so he thought al-Jahiz said *al-halaqiyyu*, which means "barber". Hearing that, with regret, al-Jahiz told the slave not to say anything and immediately left.

The text above is one example of a humorous text that is difficult to translate, because it deals with language problems, namely word play. As above, to translate this text there is a need to clarify the words.

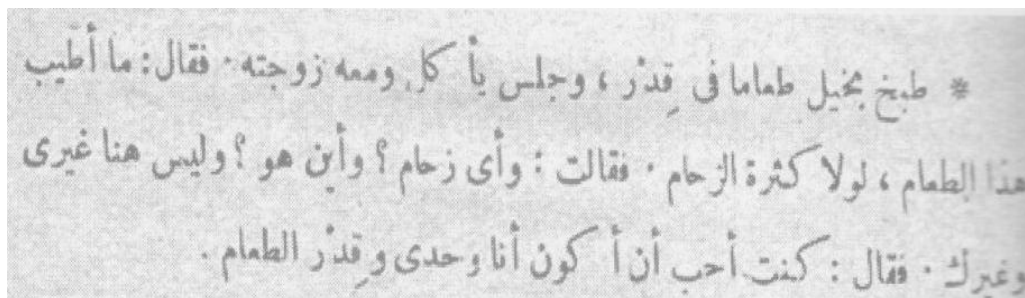
The next text is:



This text tells about the Ash'ab who met an old man whose face was ugly (*nazara 'As'ab ila syaikha qabih al-wajhi*). Then, he mocked him with words: Was Sulayman ibn Dawd ridiculed when he left at noon? (*fa qala lahu: `a lam yanhakimu sulayman ibn dawud' an al-khuruji bi an-nahar*). The purpose of the words of Ash'ab is that having an ugly face does not come out during the day, because people will surely be ridiculed.

The fun was questioned, whether Sulayman ibn Daun would be ridiculed if, surely the answer was no, because Sulayman ibn David was not as bad as the old man. al-Hufi included this in the category of *at-tahakkum bi-al-`uyub al-jasadiyya*, namely humor that occurs because of one's intelligence in making fun of the physical shortcomings of others (Lesmana, 2009: 47).

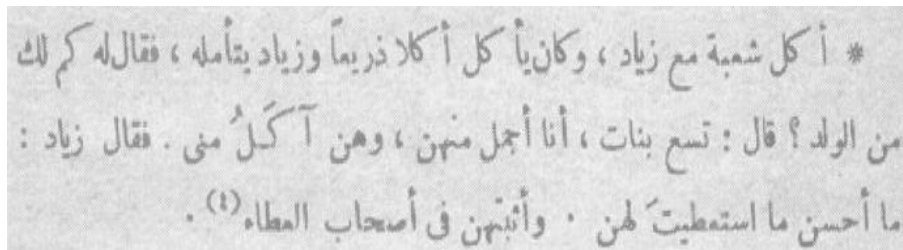
To find this humorous effect of humor, it is rather difficult, because it uses indirect words and special cultural elements that the translator needs to know. What is meant by the rhetorical question. Who is Sulayman ibn Daud? What does Sulayman mean is Sulayman as a prophet? Why is Sulayman made a comparison? The next example of humor text is



(Al-Hufi, 1956: 73)

The text above tells of a very stingy Arab. One day he cooked food in a pan (*tabakha bakhilun ta`man fi qidrin*). Then, he sat down with his wife to eat the food. (*wa jalasa ya`kulu wa ma`ahu zawjatuhu*). Then, he said, it would be nice if this food was eaten without jostling. (*ma ataba haza at-ta`am law la kasrat al-zuham*). Then, his wife asked, how was it crowded? Because there was only she and her husband (*fa qalat: wa `ay ziham? wa ayna huwa? wa laysa huna gayri wa gayruka*.) And the Arab replied that he would prefer if there was only he and the cooking pot (*fa qala: kuntu` uhibbu `an` akuna `an wahidy wa qadri at-ta`am*). This text is not difficult to translate, because the words are general, there are no special phrases or terms and it is not difficult to look for the effect of their humor, namely how stingy the Arabs are, eating just does not want to be with his wife. This kind of humor by al-Hufi is referred to as *at-tahakkum bi al-ubuyub al-khalqiya wa nafsiya*, which is humor that occurs because one's intelligence in mocking the lack of morals and souls of others (Lesmana, 2009: 47).

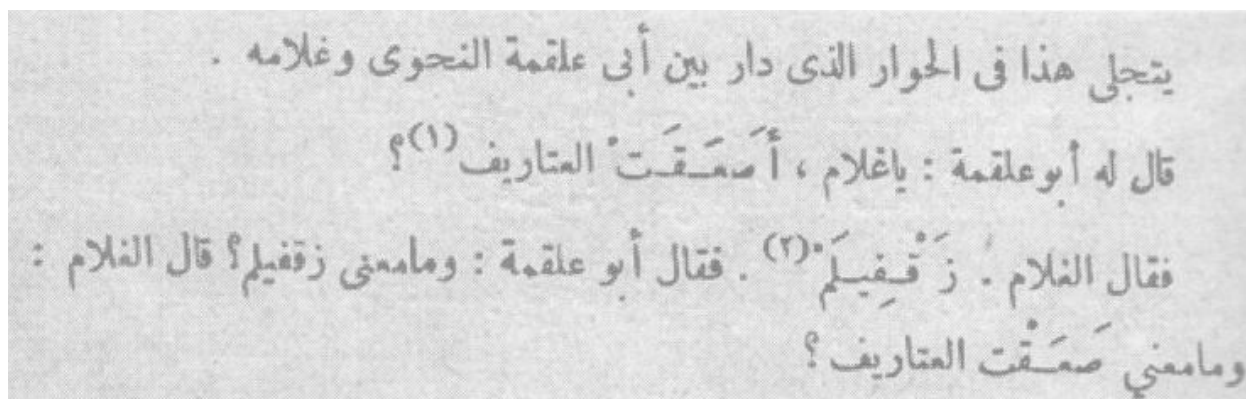
The next text is:



(Al-Hufi, 1956: 110)

The text above tells of Syu'bah who ate with Ziyad (*`akala su`bah maa ziyad*). He ate heartily, while Ziyad watched him (*wa kana ya, then aklan zari`an wa Ziyad yata`amaluhu*). So, ask him about the number of children (*fa qala lahu: kam laka min al-`awladi*). Syu'bah replied that his children had nine daughters (*qala tis`a banat*). So he felt the most handsome among them (*`ana` ajmalu minhunna*). and he said they ate more than they did (*wa hunna akalu minni*). Then Ziyad asks again, who is the best among those who like him to ask for gifts and always give presents (*fa qala lahu Ziyad: ma ahsana ma lista`tayta lahunna wa asbatahunna fi ashabi al-`ata`*). When viewed from the contents, this text is not difficult to translate, because there is no word play and special culture that is displayed. All words are general. al-Hufi calls humor like this as *at-tahakkum as-sakhsi bi nafsihi*, which is humor that occurs because of the actions of someone who makes himself like someone else. (Lesmana, 2009: 47).

The next text is



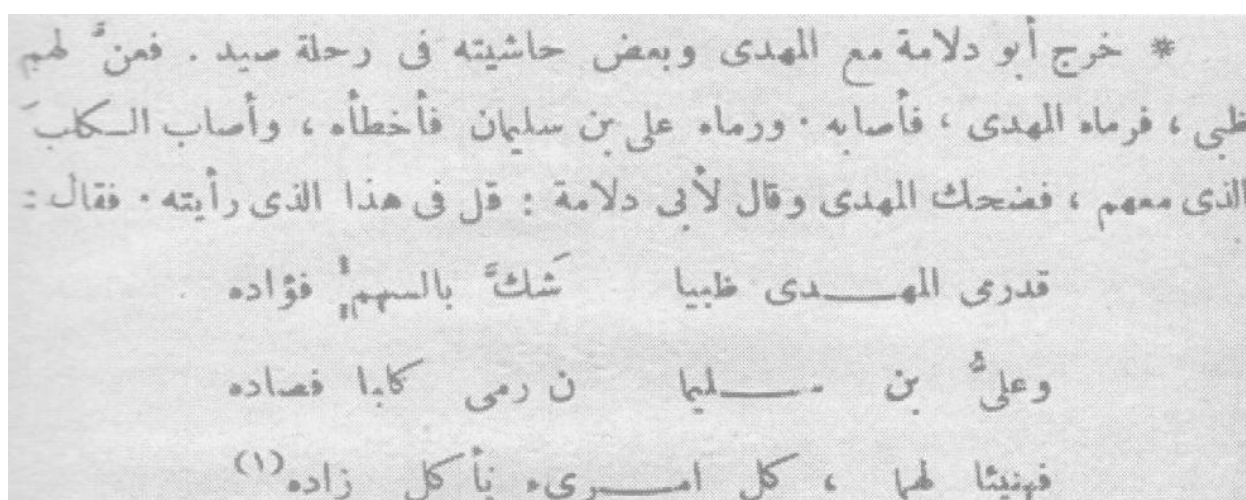
(Al-Hufi, 1956: 138)

The above text tells of the dialogue between Abu Alqamah an-Nahwi with his slave (*yatajala haza fi al-hiwar al-lazi dara bayna` abi`alqaah an-nahwiyy wa gulamuhu*). The dialogue is as follows:

Abu Alqamah said to his boy: 'As'aqat al-'atarif?
(*qala lahu ash alqama: ya gulam, `as'aqat al-'atarif*)
The boy replied: zaqfilam
(*fa qala al-gulam: zaqfilam*)
Abu Alqamah asked: What is zaqfilam?
(*fa qala abu Alqama: ma ma; na zaqfilam*)
The boy replied: `as'aqat al-'atarif?
(*qala al-gulam: ma ma'na `as'aqat al-'atarif*)

If we look at this text in a glance, we will think that this text can not be translated because there are words that can not be translated, such as `as'aqat al-'atarif and zaqfilam into another language. However, if further examined, the words are meaningless. So, not a wordplay, one word has a variety of meanings. This kind of humor by al-Hufi is referred to as *al-hazalaqa*, which is a humor that occurs in the attitude of someone who is smart, or has more ability, but it turns out otherwise. (Lesmana, 2009: 47)

The next text is



(Al-Hufi, 1956: 138)

The text above tells of Abu Dulamah and al-Mahdi and his aides coming out to hunt (*kharaja` abu dulama ma'a al-mahdi wa ba'du hasiyatuhu fi rihla saydi*). Then a deer appears in front of them, (*fa na anna lahum zabiyyun*). Then, Mahdi arched him and hit him (*wa ramahu al-mahdi, fa asabahu*). At the same time, Ali ibn Sulayman, also arched, but was wrong, even regarding the dog he was carrying. (*Wa rahu ali ibn sulayman fa `akhta`hu, wa` asaba al-kalba al-lazi ma'ahum*). Seeing the incident, al-Mahdi laughed, and said to Abu

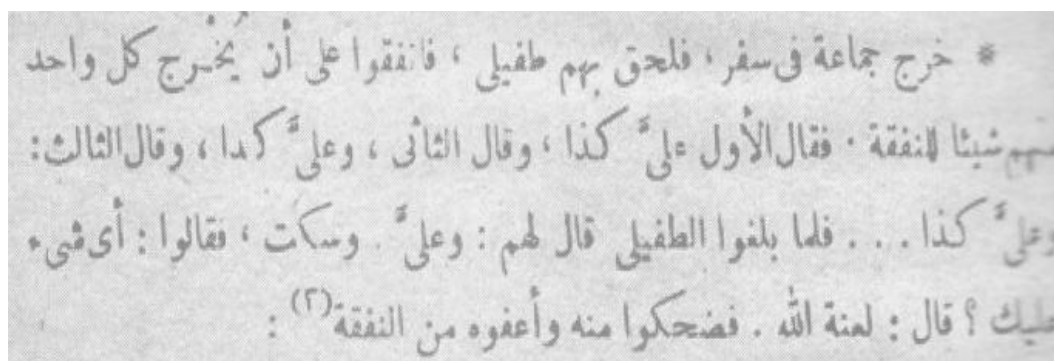
Dulamah, that Abu Dulamah commented on the events he had seen. (*fa dahaka al-mahdi wa qala li`abi dulama: qul fi haza al-lazi ra`aytuhu*). Abu Dulama also commented: (*fa qala*).

al-Mahdi arched an arrow deer through his heart
(*qad rama al-mahdi zabiysakka bi as-Saham fu`adahu*)

and Ali bin Sulayman shot the hunting dog
(*wa abi sulaymanrama kalban fa sadahu*)

Congratulations for both of them, each of them has provisions to eat
(*fa hanian lahumakullu 'umara' ya`kulu zadahu*)

When looking at the form, which is a mixture of prose and poetry. we will think that this text will be difficult to translate, but it turns out it isn't, because there are no difficult word games to translate or cultural elements that need to be explained. Everything contains common and ordinary words, so the cuteness effect can be easily obtained. Al-Hufi, put humor like this into the type of ad-du`aba, which is humor that occurs, because one's intelligence in joking to be able to bring down his humorous opponent. (Lesmana, 2009: 47). The next text is:

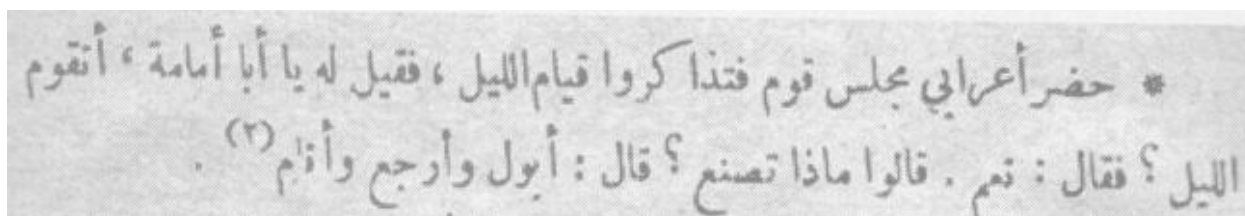


(Al-Hufi, 1956: 167)

This text tells about a group that is conducting a journey (*kharaja jama'atun fi safarin*). Then came a tufaili (*fa lahiqa bihim tufailiyyun*). They agreed, so that each of them, issued something to spend. (*fattafiqu 'ala`an yukhriju kulla wahidin minhum sai`an lilnafaqati*). The first one says that he contributes so much, the second contributes so much and the third contributes ... (*fa qala al-`awalu` alayya kaza, wa qala as-sani wa` alayya kaza, wa qala as-salis wa` alayya kaza*). Upon arriving at Tufayli, he said that he would contribute, but he did not mention the amount. (*fa lamma balagu at-tufaylli, qala lahum: wa 'alayya wa sakata*). Then they asked the Bedouin Arabic: what did he want to donate? (*fa qalu: `is sayin 'alayka?*). Tufayli also replied that he would donate God's curse. Hearing these words, they laughed and let the Bedouin did not contribute (*why my minu wa 'a'fuhu min an-nafaqati*)

This text is rather difficult to translate, because there is a *tufayli* word that is only understood by translators who know ancient Arabic culture. If you don't understand the meaning, the cuteness effect will not be found. Once in Kufa, there was a descendant of Abdullah ibn Gatafan who was named tufayl. It is called *tufayl*, because it likes to go to wedding parties, wherever and as far as anything, to get free food. This title is actually only given to him, not to others. But, gradually, everyone who likes to go to a wedding party to get food for free, is called *tufatli*, which means "Tufayl followers". (Lesmana, 2009: 251). This kind of humor by al-Hufi is referred to as *at-takhallusu al-fakihu*, which is humor that occurs, because someone is smart in finding answers when the person is in a pinch (Lesmana, 2009: 47).

Another type of humor is *al-qalbu wa al-aksu*, which is humor that occurs because someone turns around, or u contrasts a situation with another situation (Lesmana, 2009: 47). One of the example is

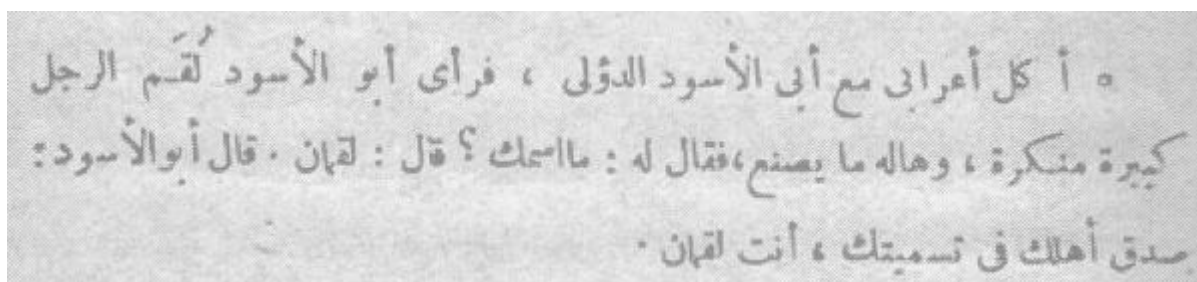


(Al-Hufi, 1956: 23)

The text above tells of a Bedouin Arab who was present in the assembly of a people (*hadara `a`rabiyyun majlisa qawmin*). At that time they were discussing the theme of *qiyam al-layl* (*fa tazakaru qiyam al-layl*). Then the Bedouin Arab was asked, did he like *qiyam al-layl* (*fa quyila lahu: yes `aba` amama, `a taqumu al-layl?*). The Bedouin Arab replied: Yes (*fa qala: na`am*). Then, they ask again: what are you doing? (*fa qalu: maza tasna`?*). So, the Bedouin Arab replied that he urinated and slept again (*qala: `abulu wa` arju wa `anam*).

The text above is funny for people who understand the term *qiyam al-layl*. Literally, the phrase *qiyam al-layl* means "wake up at night", but in Islamic terms, what is meant by the phrase is: wake up at night to perform *tahajjud* prayers ". Therefore, to be able to translate it well, besides being needed knowledge of languages, especially in semantic terms, also about the teachings of Islam.

The same thing is found in the text below:

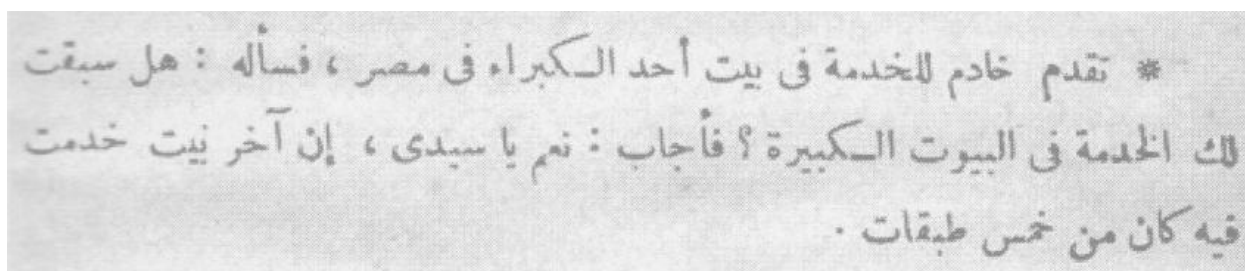


(Al-Hufi, 1956: 23)

The text above tells of a Bedouin Arab who ate together with Abu Aswad ad-Duali (*`akala` a; rabiyyun ma`a abi al-`aswad ad-du`ali*). Abu Aswad saw the bribe of the man who was large and irregular, making him afraid (*fa ra`a luqama ar-rajuli kabiratan munkiratan wa halahu ma yasna`u*). Then Abu al-Aswad asks about his name (*fa qala lahu: ma ismuka?*). The Bedouin replied that his name was Luqman. (*qala: luqman*). Then, Abu Aswad commented: it is not wrong for his family to give him a name like that, because he is indeed luqman (*qala Iabu al-`aswad: sadaq ahluka fi tasmiyatuka, anta luqman*)

To be able to translate this text also requires language understanding, which is about the meaning of the word *Luqman*. Usually, the word *luqman* is used for a name, but in this text there is another meaning, namely "one who is a big bribe." (Al-Jahis, 2004: 29). al-Hufi calls humor like this with the name *al-la`bu bi al-ma`ani*, which is humor that occurs because of differences in perceptions in understanding the meaning of a word, majaz or intrinsic, denotative or connotative.

The last type of humor is *al-`ijabat gayr al-matlub*, which is humor that occurs because people answer questions with unwanted answers (Lesmana, 2009: 48). One of them is the following text:



(Al-Hufi, 1956: 43)

The text above tells of a servant who came to work at a house of one of the Egyptian officials (*taqaddama khadimu li al-khidmati fi bayti `ahadi al-kubara` fi misr*). By the official, he was asked: had

previously worked in large houses? (*fa sa`alahu: things sabaqta laka al-khidmata fi al-buyuti al-kabirati?*). The maid replied that she had been. Finally he worked in a five-story house (*fa `ajaba: na'am sayyidi` an `akhi bayti khadamtu fhi kana min khamsi tabaqat*).

The text above is not difficult to translate, because the words in it are general. not in the form of word play and not a special cultural element in it. Translators can easily get the funny effects that are in it and re-express them into the target language.

After examining a number of Arabic humor it can be concluded that when viewed from the lingual problem, there are types of Arabic humor that are difficult to translate, among them are *al-la'bu bi al-'alfaz* (play of words) and *al-la'bu bi al 'ma'na* (meaning play), so the humorous effect cannot be found.

Likewise, when viewed from the cultural aspect, many cannot be translated, because they contain new words that can be understood with the help of explanation. in problems like this, what kind of humor cannot be specified which contains the problem, but in all types of humor in which there are particular cultural elements.

III. CONCLUSION

In closing, this article would like to convey Niedzielski's view, which says that to translate humor, an translator or interpreter must be able to overcome cross-cultural obstacles created by differences in norms, expectations and dissatisfaction in the two cultures. They are forced to have to match it by selecting the similarities between art, expression and visual representation in the source and target communities. This means that they have to find situations in both languages, even though they are not the same to bring up the same concepts, feelings, emotions or reactions.

To find a match, it can be done through analysis of components below

1. Dissect source language text into smaller parts
2. Analyzing the meaning and etymology of these parts
3. Look for equivalents in the target language
4. Check the phrases that will be used in the target language
5. Select the paraphrase that will be used in the target language

(Larson, 2008: 141)

According to Kalaga, there are three funny situations, which lead to the emergence of three different levels of translation, namely:

1. Funny situations that are contained in puns. In situations like this, the linguistic aspects, such as phonetics and polisemy, which are the foundations of word play can hardly be translated.
2. A funny situation in the form of action seen on the screen. In a situation like this, a humorous effect is obtained from an image or visible object on the screen. The function of language is only a tool to convey the essence of humor to the audience. So, there is no serious problem in the translation, unless there are problems related to a specific language or culture.
3. Situations that contain linguistic and cultural differences. In a situation like this, it tends not to be translated, because of the existence of linguistic differences, for example in grammar categories, not the same as the number, and the time in both languages. and the existence of cultural differences, for example in terms of environment, name and institution.

(Larson, 2008: 141)

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