Translating Linguistic and Situation-based Jokes from Arabic into English: An Integrated Approach

Tawffeek Abdou Saeed Mohammed
Associate professor of Translation Studies, Department of Foreign Languages, University of the Western Cape, South Africa
E-mail: tawffeek@gmail.com
tmohammed@uwc.ac.za

ABSTRACT:
Jokes have increasingly become the medium through which people in different Arab countries express their concerns. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are full of jokes tackling various spheres of life. Those jokes serve as a secure resort for people to raise issues they may not be able to express openly. The present study deals with the complications involved in the translation of Arabic jokes in general, and political jokes in particular into English. It sheds some light on the extent to which the translations of those jokes retain the force of their originals. The corpus of this study consists of 100 jokes that have been collected from different websites. The theoretical framework is eclectic, as it considers theories of translation and linguistics. It is based on Hans Vermeer's *skopos* theory (Nord, 1997; Reiss and Vermeer, 2014; Vermeer, 1989), and Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1985/1994). This study concludes that understanding a joke and then reproducing and translating it depends on a combination of linguistic and extralinguistic factors. The joke tellers may embrace various ideologies, and translators are required to be familiar with those ideologies to render the text adequately. The fidelity of translation will never be preserved unless all those aspects are taken into consideration.
Keywords Translation, political jokes, *Skopos*, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Arabic, English

1. Introduction

Jokes, a human-specific phenomenon (Bergson, 1956; Raskin, 1984), are defined by Wilson (1979:2) as "any stimulation that evokes amusement and that is experienced as being funny". The concept of funniness is relative in the sense that what may appear funny for someone or for a particular audience may not be funny for another. Similarly, the concept of humour, under which the genre of jokes is classified, is elusive and difficult to be defined. Vandaele (2010:153) argued that due to the complexities involving humour, the monumental task of defining it "has

driven some desperate scholars (e.g. (Escarpit, 1991)) to give up on any attempt at defining humour".

Jokes have increasingly become the medium through which people in different Arab countries express their domestic and national concerns. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are full of jokes tackling various spheres of life. Those jokes are often used as a safe medium to ridicule the notoriously oppressive regimes of the Middle East. That is, jokes are a secure resort for raising issues that many Arabs may not be able to express openly. Jokes not only bring a sense of release from social tensions and sexual repressions (Freud, 1960:37), but also often serve as a medium through which certain socio-political issues that are likely to be inviolable elsewhere are raised. Joke-tellers can safely state their cases/stances and are shielded from political or social sanctions that are likely to be imposed by ruling regimes and by the community, on members with opposing views (Mohammed and Banda, 2018). Hence, jokes have become a major way to vent social, political, economic, and religious problems in the Arab world. In Yemeni society, for instance, *qat* (a plant containing a mild stimulant consumed by chewing) gatherings are the perfect place for jokes to thrive. Ironically enough, political gatherings are rarely devoid of jokes about attendees. Additionally, some jokes about political figures have reverberated on the tongues of the politicians themselves. It is clear then, that in stark contrast to other humour-related political genres, politicians show more tolerance towards jokes. For this reason, jokes represent a secure medium for potentially dissident attitudes, ideas and stances that cannot be overtly expressed in the press or in formal speeches. Besides, jokes can potentially reach a wider audience that media may not be able to. Most major events in Yemen and other Arab countries, whether general or political, rarely escape being the subject of ridicule through jokes. Humour is a constructive weapon in the hands of the people for criticizing the unsatisfactory performance of the authorities and political parties. Social media has greatly influenced the popularity of this genre in the sense that it facilitates the smooth circulation of sarcastic comments, and the localization and internationalization of jokes. A considerable number of jokes have been borrowed and modified to suit a variety of contexts in many Arab countries. It is no wonder then, that certain jokes have been part and parcel in the Arab Spring. For example, the Egyptian uprising has been known as *Al-Thawrah Al-Ḍahikah* (the laughing revolution). The same description has been extended to include other Arab uprisings. It can be argued that political jokes are used as an effective tool to criticize authoritarian and oppressive regimes of the Arab world in width and breadth. An Egyptian actor has aptly described the powerful effect of jokes on the Egyptian uprising saying, "It was the valiant guerrilla that penetrated the palaces of the rulers and the bastions of the tyrants, disturbing their repose and filling their heart [sic.] with panic." (Salem and Taira, 2012:186).

The sociolinguistic diversity in the Arab World has played a vital role in the dissemination and popularity of jokes. Arabic is the official

language of more than twenty countries in the Middle East and East Africa, in addition to dialects of Arabic which tend to be more commonly used. Many jokes appear in both standard and colloquial Arabic; some are hardly intelligible to speakers of other varieties of Arabic. This makes the intra-lingual, let alone inter-lingual translation of jokes, a challenging task.

2. Statement of the Problem

The humorous effect of a joke in translation is not always based on the linguistic competence of a translator and their familiarity with a particular variety of Arabic alone. Apart from various linguistic challenges, jokes are often deeply rooted in culture, and are told by people of different cultural, ideological, and educational backgrounds. Unlike some other forms of communication, jokes are not the monopoly of the educated elite, but composed by any person possessing a sense of humour. Defeated expectations constitute the backbone of almost any joke, and they take place at different linguistic levels and at the levels of register and genre (Goatly, 2012). Hence, the understanding of a joke and translating it must consider all of these levels. Unlike Anne Leibold (Leibold, 1989:109), who argues that translating jokes is an act that primarily poses linguistic challenges, it is argued in this paper that understanding a joke and then reproducing and translating it depends on a combination of linguistic and extralinguistic factors. The translation of jokes therefore requires a modal that includes translation, humour, and linguistics theories.

3. Objectives of the study

The present study deals with the difficulties involved in the translation of Arabic jokes in general, and political jokes in particular into English. It sheds some light on the extent to which the translation of those jokes retains the force of the original and achieves its *skopos*. The use of the concept of *skopos* here does not exclude the well-known concept of equivalence, but complements it.

4. Literature review

Although studies on humour-related genres have been conducted across the humanities, studies on the translation of humor texts, such as cartoons and jokes, are relatively few. What follows is a survey of some of these studies, which helps to demonstrate how this study differs from them.

Zabalbeascoa (1996) investigated the translation of jokes in Catalan and Spanish-dubbed versions of the English TV comedy series *Yes, Minister*. The study mainly focused on problems involving the translation of wordplay in television comedies. It proposed six types of jokes, namely: international jokes, national-culture-and-institutions jokes, national-sense-of-humour jokes, language-dependent jokes, visual jokes, and complex jokes.

Popa (2005) tackled the cultural component in the translation of English and Romanian jokes. The study concluded that jokes uniquely encompass linguistic, cultural, and situational features. The translation of jokes can be very challenging to the translators, who must render those features in the target language in a way that preserves the translation *skopos*. Undoubtedly, a translator rarely has ready-made solutions, and a

successful transfer of the features of the source joke into the target language may not necessarily indicate that the translation is successful.

In a similar vein, Low (2011) dealt with the problems of translating language-specific jokes and looks at puns in particular. The study suggests that the translator of humour is allowed to use language creatively. Such license may enable the translator to handle outrageous jokes. The study also indicates that while translating culture-specific jokes, which are different from 'universal humour', translators need to bridge cultural gaps in a way that does not ruin the joke. While compensation can be necessary in the translation of jokes, Han's study of translations in English and Chinese (Han, 2011) points out that in an attempt to achieve the *skopos* of a humorous source text, translators often fall into the trap of over-compensation in their translations.

In so far as the strategies adopted by translators while translating jokes are concerned, Sippola (2010) dealt with the strategies followed by translators while translating culture-specific verbal humour from English to Finnish in some episodes of the TV series *Friends*. The study concluded that six strategies were adopted: cultural replacement, explanatory addition, deletion, universal translation, explanatory translation, and word-for-word translation.

The difficulties involving the translation of Arabic jokes into English were also investigated. For instance, Mahdjoubi and Djafour (2015) dealt with the problems of translating the linguistic and cultural elements of jokes from English into Arabic, and vice versa. The study lists several strategies for translating jokes, such as literal translation, and providing an explanation of source jokes in a footnote. In another study, Al-Rawabdeh (Al-Rawabdeh,2009) discussed some challenges of translating jokes from Arabic into English. Forty-eight Master's students were asked to translate thirty jokes into English. The translations were given to native speakers of English to determine the extent to which translations triggered humorous effects. The study concluded that puns and culture-specific jokes were lost in translation. Situation-based jokes, however, were translatable with minor problems. In a similar vein, El-Yasin (2002) dealt with the translatability of linguistic jokes from Arabic into English. The study discussed the translation of jokes that utilize puns, homonyms, rhymes, and frozen expressions, such as idioms and collocations. The study concluded that Arabic linguistic jokes cannot be straightforwardly translated into English due to linguistic differences. Moreover, Abu Ya'qoub (2013) examined a corpus of seven English-Arabic humour TV shows to find out whether the translation differs in relation to the target audience (i.e., children or family). The study concluded that seeking formal equivalence while translating humour hardly reflects the intended effect. To compensate for this loss, and to accommodate the age, cognition, and culture of the target audience, translators followed various strategies such as addition, omission, modulation, and euphemism.

Apart from linguistic theories, the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) was also used to investigate the translation of puns (Attardo, 2002). The approach compares the source joke and its translation based on six parameters, namely: language, narrative strategy, target(s), situation, logical mechanism(s) and script opposition(s). The study concluded that humorous translation is not always attainable.

The above survey of studies demonstrates that research on the translation of jokes focuses mainly on the linguistic and culture-specific challenges involved in their translation, as well as the strategies adopted by translators to overcome these. The focus is primarily on rhetorical features such as puns, rhymes, homonyms, and the like. Other studies argue that jokes, unlike many other genres, are untranslatable to a great extent and thus translators should aim for functional equivalence in translation. Others are of the view that the translation of jokes requires creativity, because literal translation often spoils the humor. This study argues that the translation of jokes requires a holistic "down-up" approach that considers the various linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the text. In other words, form, function, and context all play vital roles in the generation of humour, and all need to be considered. In this sense, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1985; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) and functional translation theories (Nord, 1997; Reiss and Vermeer, 2014; Vermeer, 1989) together constitute an ideal approach to the translation of humour genres, as combining these gives equal attention to all aspects of translation.

5. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study utilizes a theoretical framework based on a combination of Hans Vermeer's *skopos* theory (Nord, 1997; Reiss and Vermeer, 2014; Vermeer, 1989) and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1985; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

Skopos theory is a key translation theory that was introduced by Vermeer, a German scholar and translator. *Skopos* is a Greek word that means 'purpose'. Unlike equivalence-oriented theories, the *skopos* theory is a target language-oriented approach that gives paramount significance to the purpose of a translation. In the words of Vermeer:

Each text is produced for a given purpose and should serve this purpose. The *skopos* rule thus reads as follows: translate/interpret/speak/write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function (Nord, 1997:29).

In a subsequent publication (Reiss and Vermeer, 2014), the following rules were given for the *skopos* theory:

1. A target text (TT) is determined by its *skopos*
2. A TT is a message in a target culture (TL) concerning a message in a source culture/SL
3. A TT is not clearly reversible
4. A TT must be internally coherent
5. A TT must be coherent with the ST

Hence, *skopos* theory shifts the attention from the source text and the purpose which was assigned to it by its author to the "prospective function or *Skopos* of the target text as determined by the initiator's, i.e. client's needs" (Schäffner, 1998). As a result, the *skopos* is heavily influenced by the target text user (reader/listener), as well as his/her situation and cultural background. In this sense, the translator needs to create a target text that is communicative and is easily comprehended by the TL audience. Translation in *skopos* theory is treated as a creative process in which translators are viewed as active participants and target text authors whose creativity and expertise have liberated them from "the constraints and restrictions imposed by a narrowly defined concept of loyalty to the source text alone" (Schäffner, 1998:238).

In a word, the purpose of a translation determines the methods and strategies that need to be adopted by a translator when he or she comes across a difficulty. Therefore, a translator of jokes should try their best to achieve the *skopos* or intended aim of the source text. As Popa (2005:50) points out:

For the sake of clarity, it is worth distinguishing between two levels of translation. The first level is the pragmatic function of translations of humorous texts. This involves the genre-related function of humour in general, namely, to produce amusement and even cause laughter. The second level concerns the interpersonal functions involved at the moment joke translation goes further than to amuse. This works in the target-language socio-cultural context. As a function, it may illustrate how laughter builds consensus (the ingratiation function) […] or repairs by dissolving awkward situations or teases by introducing criticism […] just to mention a few interpersonal representations. Usually, the two levels co-exist in jokes.

Rendering these two levels of translation requires a full understanding of the source text. Any lack of understanding may ultimately annul the humour of a joke in the target language. In this regard, this study's contention is that Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1985; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) can bridge the gap and help a translator to achieve an adequate target text that preserves both the pragmatic and interpersonal functions of the original.

Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a language theory centred on the concept of language function. Unlike, structural theories of language, it priotrizes the function of language over the elements of language and their combinations. A key concept in SFL is that of stratification, with language being analyzed in terms of four strata: Context, Semantics, Lexico-Grammar, and Phonology-Graphology.

Context is central in SFL, and it is of two types: the context of situation and the context of culture. The former is the immediate and specific social situation in which the text is being used. The context of culture, on the other hand, refers to the wider social, historical, political, or ideological context. The context of situation comprises three components:

field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to "what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place" (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:12). Mode is concerned with "what it is that the participants [of a transaction] are expecting language to do for them in that situation" (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:12). Tenor relates to who is taking part in the transaction, as well as the "nature of the participants, their status and roles" (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:12).

SFL not only focuses on the extra-textual concept of context, but it also pays special attention to meaning which is at the heart of the process of translation. Field, tenor and mode are linked to three main semantic meta-functions that language construes. These, therefore, affect our language choices. The field of discourse activates "ideational meanings"; "tenor" determines "interpersonal meanings", and "mode" triggers "textual meanings" (Manfredi, 2008:41).

In SFL, the clause is the grammatical unit that we use to construct the world, enact interpersonal relationships, and manage the flow of discourse across a text. The ideational/experiential metafunction of language views the clause as an instrument of thought. That is, language is used to represent or conceptualize the experiential world including the inner world of our own consciousness. Transitivity is the primary grammatical element identified by Halliday as constituting the ideational metafunction of language. It is the overall resource for constructing experience and it stands for the verbal group in the clause. In terms of transitivity, a clause consists of three components, namely: participants, process and circumstance (For a more detailed description, see (Halliday, 1985; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The interpersonal metafunction portrays clause as having mood and residue – clause as an exchange. The textual metafunction of the clause, on the other hand, portrays it as having a theme and a rheme – clause as a message. The textual metafunction emphasizes how language is used to structure discourse and establish continuity and flow in our texts and conversations. It serves both linguistic and social functions in language use. The theme is the message's starting point because the message begins there, whereas the rheme is the rest of the message.

Lexico-Grammar is concerned with the syntactic organization of words into utterances. Utterances are analyzed in terms of roles such as Actor, Agent/Medium, Theme, Mood, etcetera. (For a more detailed description, see (Halliday, 1985; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

Hence, a thorough understanding of these three register variables and their related semantic meta-functions is fundamental for the translator. If a translator identifies them clearly, she or he will be able to reproduce them in the target language and produce a text which is "functionally equivalent to the source one, even though the structures are different – because languages are different" (Manfredi, 2008:40). In other words, functional, rather than formal equivalence, is what translators of jokes should prioritize. This study concurs with Halliday's argument that the context decides the value of different strata. As a guideline for translators,

Halliday (Halliday, 2001:17) stipulates a "principle of hierarchy of values" in seeking equivalence, saying:

Equivalence at different strata carries differential values; ...in most cases the value that is placed on it goes up the higher the stratum—semantic equivalence is valued more highly than lexico-grammatical, and contextual equivalence perhaps most highly of all; but ...these relative values can always be varied, and in any given instance of translation one can reassess them in light of the task.

Based on the above, equivalence in the translation of jokes needs to be sought at different formal, functional, and contextual levels. This is demonstrated in figure 1, adapted from Butt et al. (2000):
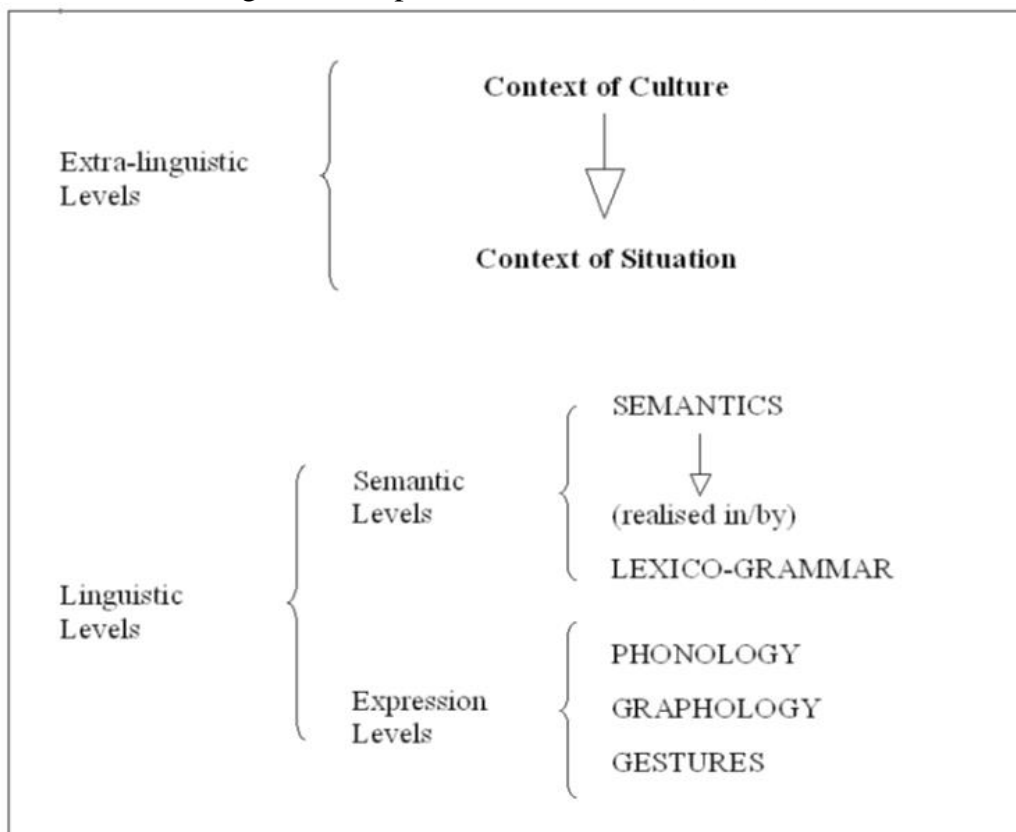

Figure 1. The multi-coding system of language (Butt et al., 2000).

The translation of a joke often takes place at the linguistic, extralinguistic, or at both levels. At the linguistic level, equivalence should be sought at an expression level (i.e., phonological, graphological, semiotics) or at the semantic levels (i.e., lexico-grammtical). At other times, equivalence should be sought at an extra-linguistic level. In some cases, the *skopos* of the text cannot be achieved if the translator fails to take into consideration all the above strata. Hence, a holistic approach to the translation of jokes is needed. This approach can be shown in Figure 2.
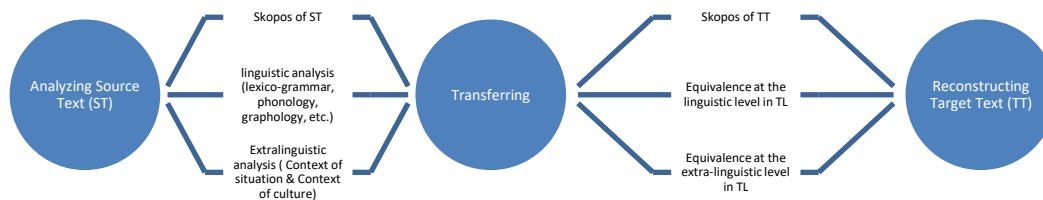
Figure 2. An integrated approach to the translation of jokes

In other words, translators should not focus solely on lexico-grammatical problems in the text. They should be careful to consider context-based problems, various strands of meaning, and the relevant genre conventions. All these elements have a role to play in the generation of humour.

In our discussion section, some examples of how SFL praxis can be effectively used in the translation of jokes, and perhaps other humour genres, are provided.

6. Methodology

The corpus of this study consists of 100 jokes that have been collected from different websites using some key search terms such as *nukat* (jokes), *nukat siyāsiyah* (political jokes), *nukat ʿan al-ruʾsāʾ* (Jokes about presidents), *nukat ʿan al-aḥzāb* (jokes about political parties), *nukat Al-Thawarāt Al-ʿarabiyah* (Arab uprisings jokes) and the like. The search rendered thousands of results. The corpus was refined by excluding some jokes that may contain profanity (i.e., swear words or taboo terms) and by deleting repeated jokes. The final refined corpus includes 100 jokes. A snapshot of the corpus is given in Figure 3.

59	164	-35	-35
60	165	One time, a visitor to Dhamar witnessed "traditional Yemeni funeral, whereby the "body wrapped in loose cloth - was put in a wooden casket carried on the shoulders of funeral pallbearers".	مرة سائح بذمار حضر جنازة, وقد لف شيئ ما في كفن ووضعوه في النعش و حملوه على الأكتاف .
61	166	And since Yemeni religious culture requires people to participate in any funeral to "win the reward of God," the young visitor joined the funeral.	المسكين قام مشي بعدهم بحسب العرف و الدين طلباً للاجر و الثواب
62	167	When he asked about the parents of the deceased, they told him it was a funeral for the foundation stone of a university that was supposed to be built in the city.	عندما سالهم عن والد من الميّت, قالوا له الجنازة لحجر جامعة في المدينة.
63	168	The president had laid the stone at a ceremony years ago, but work on the university had yet to be launched.	كان الرئيس قد وضعه في اختفال منذ سنين, غير أنّ العمل في الجامعة لم يبدأ أبداً.
64	169	Thus, residents considered it a "dead project" that should be buried.	لذلك, اعتبر مقيمات هو "مشروع ميّتة" أنّ سوفت كنت دفنت.
65	170	-36	-36
66	171	"The republic has issued a decision today to raise the age of 'youth' in Yemen to 60 years, and these youth are handling all the portfolios in the new government".	أصدر رئيس الجمهورية قرار اليوم يرفع بموجبه عمر الشباب في اليمن إلى 60 سنة, وهؤلاء هم من عينوا في الحقائب الوزارية في الحكومة الجديدة
67	172	-37	-37

Figure 3. A snapshot of the corpus

The selected jokes revolve around different issues and political figures in the Arab World. Arab ex-presidents, leaders of political parties, political parties' policies, ministers, governors, and international decision-makers all receive their share of ridicule in these jokes. The corpus shows that the translators have followed various local and global strategies to render these jokes in a communicative manner in the target language. Among the strategies followed by the translators, literal and explanatory translations are the most frequent, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Strategies of jokes translation in the corpus

It is important to emphasize that these jokes are widely circulated in social media platforms, and they are not necessarily translated by professional translators or linguists. Hence, this study does not aim to assess the translation quality or to determine the strategies followed by translators

while translating. This study aims to suggest an approach, or a checklist that might be used by translators when translating this genre of humour. A monolingual corpus of 100 jokes will, therefore, generally be sufficient and representative of many types of jokes. The selection for this study, takes into consideration different linguistic, cultural, and situational aspects that need to be addressed while translating. Although the majority of political jokes tend to be situation-oriented, some political jokes that are linguistic-based (i.e., puns, ambiguous jokes, etc.) were selected for this study. Figure 5 gives the types of jokes represented in the corpus.
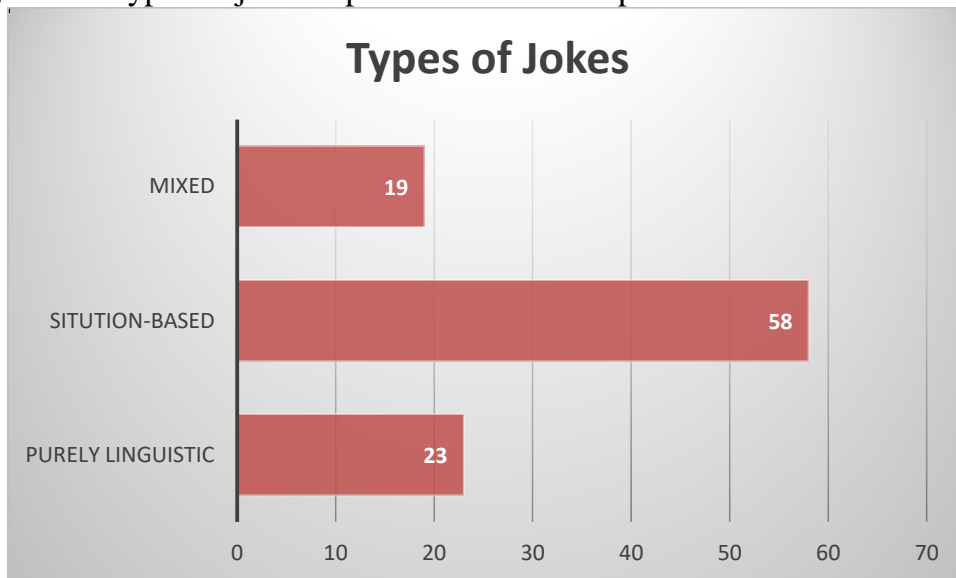

Figure 5. Types of jokes in the corpus

The following section discusses the translatability of Arabic jokes into English with special reference to some jokes from the corpus. In the discussion, the following methodology is followed:

1. The source joke is given and transliterated into Latin script.
2. A translation gloss of the joke is given.
3. A register, linguistic, and contextual analysis of the source are provided.
4. A possible translation is suggested.

7. Data Analysis

7.1. Translatability of Linguistic Jokes

Although most of the jokes in this study's corpus are situation-oriented, some linguistic jokes are used occasionally. The translation of the latter can be very challenging and are sometimes lost in the translation. This loss is attributed to the unique use of phonological, lexical, or rhetorical features in the original joke. For example, puns, homonyms, and rhymes are very common in standard and colloquial Arabic jokes. A joke may be generated using phonological devices such as minimal pairs as shown in Example (1) below.

Example 1:

ST: *man huwa wazīr al-kahrabā' fī al-yaman*

Saleh Šumeiʿ.

Gloss: Who is the minister of electricity in Yemen?

Salah Shumeiʿ.

In terms of field and mode, this is a joke that is delivered in an interactive face-to-face oral situation. As for the tenor, the teller of the source joke could be an ordinary person speaking in a casual, informal setting to another friend or a group of people. The joke is told in dialect which is indicated by the use of a colloquial term, although the term is a diminutive of a standard Arabic word (i.e., *Shumeiʿ* vs *Shamʿah.*). It might be difficult to find a similar word in the target language that reflects the same degree of informality.

The source joke refers to a Yemeni politician and former minister of electricity in Yemen, Saleh Sumea, who was accused of being responsible for the frequent power cuts in Yemen. It was rumored that he was an agent for a Chinese company selling electric generators. Another rumor accuses him of receiving commissions from candles factories, which benefited significantly from rolling blackouts by increasing their sales. The joke in (1) is in the replacement of the voiceless fricative alveolar /s/ with the voiceless affricate alveolar /ʃ/. As a result, the proper noun *Sumeiʿ* has become *Shumeiʿ* which is used sarcastically to mean 'candle'. To capture the humour, this can be translated as:

A: Who is the minister of electricity in Yemen?
B: Mr Shumeiʿ 'Mr. Candle'.

Hence, a translator must pay attention to the expression linguistic level when translating the joke. There will be a definite mismatch in the target language when rendering the social dialect of the source text in translation. That is, the focus on the transfer of the ideational meaning alone may not sufficiently render the humor, and thus fail to achieve the pragmatic function of the joke. The *skopos* of the source joke is to criticize the corruption that marred the Yemeni Ministry of electricity at that time. The country experienced rolling blackouts on a daily basis during the tenure of the abovementioned minister.

Similarly, the source of humour in Example (2) is phonological and graphological and it is likely to be lost in the translation. It is a classical standard Arabic joke about an eloquent Arabic speaker who used to sit in the gatherings of one of the Caliphs. He was a man of expressive language and sound argument, but he has a difficulty in the pronunciation of the /r/ sound. Some envious people in the gathering devised a plan to embarrass him, so they asked the Caliph to let him announce some news to the populace.The news is hardly devoid of the /r/ sound, and it reads as in example (2).

Example 2:

ST: *faqālu lahu : ʾamra ʾamīr alumrāʾ wazīr al-wuzarāʾ biḥafr bʾir fī al-ṣaḥrāʾ liyašrab minhu al-šārid wa al-warid. faṣāḥ al-rajul ʿala al-faūr fī al-ḥuḍūr : ḥakma ḥakīm al-ḥukmāʾ nadīm al-nudamāʾ bišaq jub fī al-baydāʾ ·liyasqī minhu al-ġādī wa al-bādi!*

Gloss: They said to him: "The Prince of Princes ordered the Minister of Ministers to dig a well in the desert so that people who are coming and going can drink."

The man immediately shouted to the audience: "The wisest of the wise ordered his minister to split a pit in the desert so that up and down travellers drink."

Understanding the joke requires first having the phonological and semantic knowledge of the source text. The text includes about 12 /r/ sounds, and the rendition of this phonological feature in the target language is not attainable. The punchline of the joke, however, comes when the respondent replaced all words with /r/ in the announcement with words that include no /r/, but still are synonymous. Even though the rendition of synonymy in the target language is possible, the translation will look repetitive and cannot retain the phonological and semantic features of the original joke. The rendition of the joke as "The Prince of Princes ordered the Minister of Ministers to dig a well in the desert so that people who are coming and going drink" is no longer humorous. Hence, a translation of the joke that preserves the phonological and lexico-grammatical aspects of the source text is not possible. Only explanation can make this joke communicative to the target reader. Even in this case, the translation still fails to reflect the same field, tenor, and mode of the original joke.

In addition, puns using proper nouns are very common in Arabic jokes. In Example (3), a Somali refugee was interviewed in the wake of the 1994 civil war in Yemen about the situation of Somali refugees there. He responded:

Example 3:

ST: *aḥmar yaḍrib…abyaḍ yaḍrib…Akhaḍar yashūf…Aswad yamūt.*

Gloss: Red is shooting... White is shooting... Green is watching... Black is dying.

By sheer coincidence the first names and surnames of the four people involved in the joke are also the names of colours. The *skopos* in this example is not to generate humour, but to comment on the tragic situation of hundred thousands of Somali refugees who fled their country because of the civil war to find themselves stranded in a fiercer war between the forces of the former president of Yemen, Ali Abdulah Saleh, whose surname is Al-Ahmar which means "red", and his deputy, Ali Salim Al-Beid, whose surname means "white". The United Nations, which is charged with looking after displaced people, did nothing but send a convoy by the name of Al-Akhathar Al-Ibraheemi, whose first name means "green". He watched helplessly while Somali refugees were dying. Thus, while the ideational meaning is made clear in the target language, the source of humour cannot be retained without the preservation of the phonological and rhetorical aspects of the original. The joke can be translated as:

Mr. Red (i.e. president Saleh of Yemen) is shooting.

Mr. White (i.e., Saleh's Deputy) is shooting back.

Mr. Green (i.e., the UN convoy Al-Akhaẓar Al-Ibrahīmī) is watching helplessly.

Mr. black is dying.

Here, equivalence was considered at the expression, lexico-grammatical, and register levels. The additions between brackets are necessary to clarify the context of culture.

Thus, some linguistic jokes are simply untranslatable. This is due to the fact that different languages rarely use the same surface structures or phonological and morphological combinations (Aarons, 2012:39). A literal translation of a joke may therefore yield a translation that neither captures the humour of the original, nor achieves its pragmatic and immediate functions in the target language.

7.2. Translating Situational Jokes

So far some of the problems involving the translation of jokes at the expression and semantic levels have been discussed. However, it is a firm contention in this paper that even in a one-liner joke, such as the one given in (1), more than one problem co-exists in the same text. A faithful, functionally equivalent rendition of some jokes is not possible should the translator fail to consider the linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects of a joke. Consider, for instance, the political joke in (4):

Example 4:

ST: *Sālū al-yamanī kayfa al-awḍāʿ fī al-yaman? fa-qāl alyamanī: wa Allah ya akhī kharbānah.*

Talbis thaub qaṣīr yaqtuluk al-Houthi
Talbis badlah ʿaskariyah taqtuluk al-Qaedah
Talbis banṭalūn yaqtuluk al-salafī
Talbis janbiyah wa fuṭaah yaqtuluk al-ḥirākī
ma talbis shay yaqtuluk al-bard.
yaʿnī maqtūl, maqtūl.

Gloss: *A Yemeni was asked about the conditions in Yemen. "It is chaotic, bro. If you wear shorts, the Houthi will kill you. If you wear a military uniform, the Qaeda will kill you. If you wear a dress and carry a jumbia, the Southern movement members will kill you. If you wear trousers, a Salafi will kill you. If you wear nothing, the cold front will kill you. In Sum, you are going to be killed. You are going to be killed.*

The translation of the above joke may not pose any challenges at the linguistic (i.e., expression or lexico-grammatical) levels. However, it abounds with allusions and presuppositions that may be unfamiliar to an unversed reader. Nevertheless, the above joke summarizes the political situation in war-torn Yemen. In this country, there are various political and religious players who are to blame for the deterioration of the security situation in the country. The country has been known as a haven in the Arabian Peninsula for the extremist group known as *Al-Qaeda*. Durig the last two decades, Yemen has also witnessed the emergence of the Houthi movement. At the time this study was conducted, the group controlled the heavily populated areas in the north of Yemen. Amidst the fierce war between the Houthi movement and the coalition-backed Yemeni government led by Saudi Arabia, another political group known as the Southern movement emerged. The latter calls for the separation of the south of Yemen from the north. Therefore, the field of the previous joke is a

political joke. The mode is an interactive face-to-face one, although it can be delivered in either written or multimodal modes, and the tenor of the joke seems to be informal, and symmetric to some extent. Understanding the context of the situation by analyzing the three register variables gives an indication of how the translation should look in the target language. Additionally, the context of culture will help convey understanding of the joke and translate it in a way that preserves the force of the original and its ideational meaning. The ideational meaning of the joke cannot be appreciated unless the reader understands why people would be killed based on the clothes they wear. The material processes in the above joke need to be clarified. The first one means if you wear a short dress, you will be identified as a *Salafi* by the *Houthi*s and you may be killed. *Al-Qaeda* is known for its bloody attacks on military personnel, who they consider to be disbelievers who must be killed. Thus, whoever wears a military uniform might be targeted. The Southern movement members may associate anyone who carries a *jumbia* (a traditional Yemeni dagger) as a northerner on the pretext that the latter are believed by the Southern movement to be responsible for their misery. The *Salafis* are known for their criticism for those who wear long pants simply because they do not follow the prophetic tradition. Thus, the punchline is the last material process which shows that even if you are not affiliated to any of the above political or religious groups and you are naked, you will also be killed because the cold weather and the forces of nature await you.

Another example of the problems involving the translation of context-based jokes is given in (5).

Example 5:

ST: *qadima rajulāan ṭāʿinanā fī alsin kafīf al-baṣar ʾila markiz al-taṣwiyīt wahuwa yaṣīḥ min baʿīd: (al-shajarah wiynā,warunī līhā, ʾnā dāyir al-shajarah bas, ḥata dakhla ʾila ġurfat al-taṣwiyīt faṭalaba min al-muwẓaf ʾan yaḍaʿ lahu ʾiṣbaʿhu ʿla mauqiʿ al-shajarah fī biṭāqat al-taṣwiyīt, fafaʿal al-muẓaf, faqāla lahu al-rujul al-musin: (baʿd dih īshkhat ʾayī ḥājah tānī ġayr al-shajarah dī.*

Gloss: *An aged deaf man approached the electoral poll center while shouting from a distance: "Where is the tree? Show me where is it? I just want the tree. When he entered the poll room, he asked the officer to place his finger on the tree position in the electoral form, which the officer did. "Now, tick anything other than this tree!!", the blind man said.*

The joke is related to the elections in Sudan, although it depicts the moral crisis that characterizes elections in many Arab countries, as well as the fraudulent actions practiced by the regimes to manipulate these elections. The joke must be translated in a way that preserves the field of the joke (i.e., it needs to be read as a political joke in English) and should it be told verbally, its effect should be similar. The colloquialism of the original joke also needs to be preserved, by retaining colloquial and slang expressions. In addition, the translator should be familiar with the cultural

context of the text, to render the ideational and interpersonal meanings of the original.

The *skopos* of the source joke shows the people's disappointment with the regime as well as the lack of trust in the transparency of the elections. The blind man is not interested in politics, and he is not aligned with any political group. He is fed up with the fraudulent elections practiced by the regime, and that is why he insisted to cover the emblem of the ruling party with his finger. Hence, the literal translation of the source can be sufficient for the rendition of the lexico-grammatical aspects of the source joke, but not for understanding the ideational and interpersonal meanings or for the generation of humor by a reader or listener unfamiliar with the politico-cultural context of the joke.

Arabic jokes sometimes utilize complex mechanisms such as Quranic intertextuality to generate humour. Many schematic structures necessary for making sense of jokes are culture specific. For example, Quranic knowledge is needed to make sense of the joke in (6).

Example 6:

ST: *Shamālī fī al-mukalā dakhal yuṣalī al-maġarib fī al-masjid wa al- imām qām yaqrʾa baʿd al-fātiḥah wa aṣḥāb al-shimāl ma aṣḥāb al-shimāl.*

qāl al-shamālī ʾamā ḏalḥīn zayadtumuhā yā ḥaḍārim ḥita fī al-ṣalāt aṣḥāb al-shimāl

Gloss: *A Northerner in Mukala went to Mosque for Maghrib prayer. After the opening, the Imam read " wa aṣḥāb al-shimāl ma aṣḥāb al-shimāl" [And the Companions of the Left Hand,- what will be the Companions of the Left Hand?*

The Northerner responded, that is too much*, Hadramites, even in prayers you complain about us."*

The translation of the above joke will be challenging should the reader not become familiar with the cultural context before comprehending the ideational meaning. A literal translation spoils the humour of the joke. The joke refers to the political division that destabilized the unity of Yemen over the last decade (i.e., the 2010s). Southern Yemenis commonly blame the northerners for the problems and the institutional failures in the south of the country. This crucial fact may go unnoticed by an unversed reader or listener. An understanding of relevant cultural and political background is therefore necessary. The source of humour in the original joke lies in the Quranic expression of "*ashab al-shamal*", which refers to the people condemned to hellfire in the Qurʾān. Its literal meaning can also be translated as "the people of the north". The ideational meaning requires the translation of the material and verbal processes in the original text as follows:

A northerner in Mukala (i.e., a city in the south of Yemen) goes to Mosque for Maghrib prayer. After the opening, the imam reads the Quranic verse "wa ashab al-shimal ma ashab al-shimal [lit. the people of the north,

woe onto the people of the north]and the companions of the left hand, - what will be the companions of the left hand?

The northerner responded, " you went to the extreme, you Hadramites, even in prayers you complain about us."

Familiarity with the cultural context and with Quranic intertextuality is essential for deciphering the ideational meaning of the joke, as well as for producing a functionally equivalent translation. Exploratory additions and even footnotes might be needed. The *skopos* of the joke is not only amusement but also criticism; the joke teller is critical of the unjustified accusations against northerners and the troubles they face in the south of Yemen due to these unfounded accusations.

In a similar vein, knowledge of the schematic structures of Islamic *khatabaha* and sermons is significant to make sense of the joke in (7).

Example 7:

ST: *ḥakā ʿumar al-bašyīr, rajul al-ʾinqāḏ alʾawal, wāḥidah min al-nikāt al-siyāsiyah al-kathirah altī qīlat fī dawlatih, watuʿabir ʿan al-jamāʿah (al-zahjānīn min al-inqāḏ) ̣fayqūl: kāna aḥad hʾulāʾ fī al-masjd, wa al-imām yadʿū fauq al-minbar: rabanā wa lā tusalaṭ ʿalinā biḏunūbinā man lā yakhāfuka wa lā yarḥamunā, faqāl al-rajul (al-zahjān min al-inqāḏ): (laqad salaṭah ʿalinā wa antahā, walakin salhu takhfīf al-qaḍāʾ.*

Gloss: *An anti-Basheer Sudabese was in the mosque, and the imam was praying on the pulpit: Our Lord, and do not give power over us with our sins who neither fears you nor has mercy on us The man (who was displeased with the regime) said: (He has given him power over us and the matter is over, but ask Him to mitigate the destiny).*

The above joke was narrated by the former president of Sudan, Omar Al-Basheer and it is one out of many jokes the Sudanese circulated about Al-Basheer's regime. In terms of the context of situation, this is a political joke, which can be delivered verbally in a friendly informal or in a formal setting, or it can be delivered in a written form. In this context, the joke was told by Al-Basheer in a formal speech. The fact that the Sudanese were not happy with the Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation (RCCNS-Sudan), the governing body of Sudan following the June 1989 coup, and the stories of corruption and electoral fraud are shared widely on social media. The reader, however, might not be familiar with the expression "*al-jamaʿah al-zahjānīn min al-inqāḏ*" (people fed up with the salvation regime), which refers to the opposition members. The reader might also be unfamiliar with the intertextuality of the source text which resides in the prayers that are commonly chanted by Muslims while asking God to change the destiny. The same prayers are also recited in Friday sermons towards the end of the second sermon. Hence, when the preacher reads "oh God do not give power over us to those who will not have mercy on us", the anti-regime man interrupted him saying, "God has already decreed that this unmerciful regime should rule over us but ask God to ease His destiny by mitigating its (i.e., the regime) power". The rendition of the joke at the expression and lexico-grammtaical levels may not be sufficient. The exploratory additions may be necessary to familiarize the

reader with the cultural context of the joke, and hence to understand its ideational and interpersonal meanings. The translation should also reflect the critical overtones of the original joke.

Here, it seems that the ideational field plays the most significant role in the joke followed by the interpersonal tenor. The translation of the verbal and material processes is essential to achieve the *skopos* of the translation. The interpersonal aspect of colloquialism may be compensated for through the use of abbreviations and colloqueil expressions such as "Oh, bro", or "Hey, dude". A suggested translation could be:

An anti-Basheer Sudabese was in the mosque, and he heard the imam saying from the pulpit: Our Lord, do not give power over us because of our sins to those who neither fears you nor has mercy on us. The man (who was not pleased with the regime) responded: "Hey, dude. He has given him power over us and the matter is over, but ask Him to mitigate the destiny."

The COVID-19 pandemic and its related lockdowns generated a considerable number of jokes about the measures taken by the Yemeni government, as shown in (8):

Example 8:

ST:

WHO: li-muwajahat al-fayrūs, awqifū al-dirasah.
MOH: qad-hī muwaqafah min zamān
WHO: awqifū al-nashaṭ al-rīyaḍī
MOH: al-nashaṭ al-rīyaḍī muwaqaf min zamān.
WHO: Aghliqū al-masāriḥ wa dūr al-sināmā
MOH: mā ʿinanā lā masāriḥ wa lā dūr sināmā
WHO: awqifū al-sīyāḥah.
MOH: Al-sīyāḥah muwaqafah minḏū ʿuqūd
WHO: ʾiḏan awqifū ḥarqat al-qiṭarāt wa al-mitrū wa al-muṣalāt al-ʿamah
MOH: ma ʿindanā lā qiṭarāt wa al-mitrū wa lā muṣalāt ʿamah
WHO: ʾiḏan ma baqā ladyakum li-yatim ʾiqāfih
MOH: kul shai muwaqf ḥata al-muratabāt wa al-kahrabā wa al-māʾ
WHO: hal anta mutaʾkad anakum maʿanā ʿala kaukub al-ʾarḍ ʾam fī kaukub ʾākhar/
MOH: naḥnu maʿakum fī al-ʾarḍ wa fī makān ʾistrātījī.
WHO: mā dām waḍʿakum hakaḏ falimā takhafūn min al-kūrunā?
MOH: ʾaṣalt ʿashān ʾaṭaman anahū ma bish ʾighlāq li-aswāq al-qāt.

Gloss:

WHO: to face the virus, you need to close schools.
MOH: schools have been suspended for years.
WHO: stop sport activities.
MOH: sports activities have been closed for a long time.
WHO: close theatres and cinemas.
MOH: we have no theatres or cinemas anymore.

WHO: stop tourism؟

MOH: tourism has been stalled for decades.

WHO: reduce the movement of trains, metro, and public transportation.

MOH: we don't have trains, metro, or public transportation.

WHO: so what do you have left to stop؟

MOH: everything is suspended already, even salaries, electricity, and water.

WHO: are you sure that you inhabit Earth like us, or do you come from another planet?

MOH: we live on Earth and in very strategic place.

WHO: as long as your situation is like this, why are you afraid of Corona [virus]؟

MOH: I just want to make sure that the qat markets will not be closed.

A register analysis of the text shows that it is a political joke that was told in an informal, casual context by a friend to another or others. Although the context of this joke can be universal and similar versions were circulated in many Arab countries with minor modifications, understanding the ideational meaning of the joke is not possible without understanding the last line, which constitutes the punchline of the joke. While many countries in the world declared lockdown measures and closed schools, businesses, theatres and other art venues, and imposed strict measures on trains and other means of transportation for the purpose of social distancing and sanitization, a reader unfamiliar with the Yemeni context may not understand why schools were closed for years, why tourism was suspended for decades, and how salaries, water and electricity stopped. The receiver of the joke needs to be aware that due to the war that broke out in 2015 in Yemen, hundreds of schools were destroyed or closed or became military bases. Salaries of state employees were stopped in various provinces due to the ongoing conflict between the waring parties, as well as the transfer of the operations of the central bank of Yemen from the capital, Sana'a, to Aden. Electricity and water supplies have not been readily available since approximately 2015. Tourism, which was the backbone of the economy, has been paralyzed by attacks and abduction incidents *Al-Qaeda* terrorists. However, the minster of health is not worried about any of these problems. His main concern is that qat markets should not be affected by lockdown measures. Qat is classified as a drug of abuse in many countries. The plant is chewed by people in Yemen and many neighboring African countries. The joke can be rendered as follows:

WHO: To face the virus, you need to close schools.

MOH: Schools have been suspended for years [because of the war].

WHO: Stop sport activities.

MOH: Sports activities have been closed for a long time [due to budget constraints].

WHO: Close theatres and cinemas.

MOH: We have no theatres or cinemas anymore.

WHO: Stop tourism.

MOH: Tourism has been at stalled for decades [because of terrorist attacks and abductions].

WHO: Reduce the movement of trains, metro, and public transportation.

MOH: We don't have trains, metro, or public transportation.

WHO: So what do you have left to stop؟

MOH: Everything is suspended already, even salaries, electricity, and water.

WHO: Are you sure that you inhabit Earth like us or do you come from another planet?

MOH: We live on Earth and in very strategic place.

WHO: As long as your situation is like this, why are you afraid of Corona[virus]؟

MOH: I just want to make sure that the qat [a plant containing a mild stimulant consumed by chewing] markets will not be closed.

The *skopos* of the original text is to criticize the corrupt Yemeni officials, who lead a comfortable, luxurious life but they do not concern themselves with the massive destruction wrought by war, and the suffering of the people. Although the above translation accurately renders the linguistic and contextual aspects of the source joke to a great extent, the interpersonal function might be lost in translation.

8. Discussion

It is clear from the above analysis that the achievement of accurate equivalence while translating jokes from Arabic into English can be very challenging partly due to the structural and typological differences between the two languages. This finding of the study supports other studies that tackled the translation of jokes from and into various languages, including (Low, 2011 ; Han, 2011 ; Popa, 2005; El-Yasin , 2002) among others.

In addition, a source joke may not have an equivalent meaning or a *skopos* in the target language and culture. This study concurs with the view of Salem and Taira (2012:183) that "the very function and use of humour and jokes may be different from one culture to another". The translator's attempt to preserve the functional or communicative equivalence of the original text may not necessarily guarantee the preservation of a joke's genre conventions, and hence may not necessarily lead to the translation of humour into the target language. It is a contention of this study that a translator should not only focus on lexico-grammatical problems in the text; she/he needs to pay adequate attention to context-based problems, the various strands of meanings, and the genre conventions. All these elements have a role to play in generating humour. This finding is in line with other studies that were conducted on the translation of other humour genres such as cartoons (Mohammed and Banda, 2018) and jokes (Popa, 2005).

Furthermore, this study has shown that an analysis of a source text is necessary to determine which aspect of it contributes most to amusement. If humour stems from the expression level (i.e., phonological, graphological, prosodic features or gestures), a translator should pay attention to these

features and render them in a way that reflects these in the target text. In some cases, these features may be lost in translation and hence the translator should find strategies to compensate for the loss. In other cases, the source of humour in a joke may be found in its extralinguistic levels, such as the context of situation or culture. The translator should therefore provide contextual information to assist the target reader or listener to understand the ideational and interpersonal meanings construed in the source text. In this respect, the ideational meaning remains central in the translation of any jokes. As the analysis above has shown, although the jokes included in this study have mainly used formal linguistic and rhetorical features to create humor, ideational meaning was the medium through which humour is created in the target language. Although jokes may underestimate ideational field (referential function) and highlight textual mode (poetic, metalingual) and interpersonal tenor (phatic, expressive) (Goatly, 2012; Norrick, 1993), ideational field should be prioritized in the process of translation. If the ideational meaning of the joke is not understood by the receiver of the joke, the humour is lost. It goes without saying that equivalence at the linguistic and extra-linguistic levels while translating jokes and other humour-related genres should not be viewed as a search for sameness but rather a search for approximation. Sameness is not attainable even between two target language versions of a source text, let alone between a source text and its target translation (Bassnett, 2013; Newmark, 1981).

9. Conclusion

        This study dealt with the challenges involved in the translation of Arabic jokes in general and political jokes in particular into English. It adopted an approach drawn from key translation and linguistics theories such as equivalence, *skopos*, and Systemic Functional Linguistics. This study concluded that there is no single approach for the translation of jokes; untranslatability of some jokes is also possible. A translator of jokes will need first to identify whether the humour of a joke stems from its expressive, phonological, orthographical qualities, or from its lexico-grammatical usage, or from other extra-linguistic levels such as the context of culture. In some cases, understanding a joke and then reproducing and translating it depends on a combination of linguistic and extralinguistic factors. Joke tellers may embrace various ideologies, and a translator is required to be familiar with those ideologies to render the text adequately. The fidelity of translation will never be preserved unless all relevant aspects are taken into consideration.

        While some studies undermine the role of the ideational level and argue that jokes have little to do with the efficient exchange of information, this study concluded that the referential function is of paramount significance in the translation of jokes. Even in jokes where the textual mode and interpersonal tenor play the central role in generating humour, a translator may be obliged to implement local and global strategies to accurately render these aspects of the text. In most cases, the effect of these features may not be attainable if the ideational meaning of the text is

neglected. After all, meaning is the crux of the matter in any translation process.

Although this study applied a holistic approach to the translation of Arabic jokes into English, it nevertheless has some limitations. The approach used in this study is mainly linguistic and did not consider theories of humor in other fields of the humanities. Further studies might adopt the approach used in this study in conjunction with sociological or psychological theories of humour. Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) is one of these theories that complements linguistic theories of humour. The identification of Raskins's six knowledge resources, namely language, narrative strategy, target(s), situation, logical mechanism(s) and script opposition(s), may assist the translator to produce a communicative translation of a joke. However, the identification of these knowledge resources can be extremely difficult unless a translator is familiar with the context, which should be part and parcel of the translation process. Other studies may look into the difficulties of translating various types of jokes and the strategies used by professional translators to overcome these difficulties. Jokes not only circulate on social media, but they are also widely used in traditional and mainstream media, and sometimes in formal discourse across the humanities. An annotated corpus that includes jokes collected from different sources and genres might help in understanding how the translation of jokes may differ across genres, age groups, and audiences.

Bibliography

Aarons, D. (2012). *Jokes and the linguistic mind*. London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203814741

Abu Ya'qoub, S. (2013). *Audience types in translating humor in TV shows from English into Arabic* [PhD Thesis]. Palestine: An-Najah National University.

Al-Rawabdeh, M. S. (2009). *Translating Arabic jokes into English* [Article, Yarmouk University]. http://repository.yu.edu.jo:80/jspui/handle/123456789/9359

Attardo, S. (2002). Translation and humour: An approach based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH). *The Translator*, *8*(2), 173–194. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2002.10799131

Bassnett, S. (2013). *Translation studies* (4th ed.). London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203488232

Bergson, H. (1956). Laughter. In W. Sypher (Ed.), *Comedy*. New York: Garden City.

Butt, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S., and Yallop, C. (2000). *Using functional grammar: An explorer's guide*. Macquarie University: National Centre for English language Teaching and Research.

El-Yasin, M. K. (2002). The translatability of Arabic jokes into English. *Meta*, *42*(4), 670–676. https://doi.org/10.7202/002706ar

Escarpit, R. (1991). *L'Humour*. Presses Universitaires de France - PUF.

Freud, S. (1960). *Jokes and their relation to the unconscious*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Goatly, A. (2012). *Meaning and humour*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511791536

Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar* (1st ed.). London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K. (2001). Towards a theory of good translation. In E. Steiner and C. Yallop (Eds.), *Exploring translation and multilingual text production: Beyond content* (Vol. 3, pp. 13–18). Walter de Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110866193.13

Halliday, M. A. K., and Hasan, R. (1985). *Language, context, and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Victoria, Australia: Deakin University.

Halliday, M. A. K., and Matthiessen, C. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.

Han, Q. (2011). On over-compensation and principles of linguistic humor in EC Translation. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *2*(4), 832-836.

Leibold, A. (1989). The translation of humor; Who says it can't be done? *Meta: Journal Des Traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal*, *34*(1), 109–111. https://doi.org/10.7202/003459ar

Low, P. A. (2011). Translating jokes and puns. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, *19*(1), 59–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2010.493219

Mahdjoubi, N., and Djafour, S. (2015). *Translation of jokes: The possibility of linguistic & cultural rendering* [Master Thesis]. Ouargla: Algeria: KasdiMerbah University.

Manfredi, M. (2008). *Translating text and context: Translation studies and systemic functional linguistics. Vol. 1 Translation Theory.* [Available   online] *http://amsacta.unibo.it/2393/1/Manfredi_2008_Monografia.pdf*

Mohammed, T. A. S., and Banda, F. (2018). Translating Yemeni cartoons into English: A Systemic Functional Linguistics approach. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics Plus*, *55*(0). https://doi.org/10.5842/55-0-779

Newmark, P. (1981). *Approaches to translation (Language teaching methodology senes)*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Nord, C. (1997). *Translating as a purposeful activity: Functionalist approaches explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315760506

Popa, D.-E. (2005). Jokes and translation. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, *13*(1), 48–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/09076760508668963

Raskin, V. (1984). *Semantic mechanisms of humor*. Dordrecht, Boston and Lancaster: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Reiss, K., and Vermeer, H. J. (2014). *Towards a general theory of translational action: Skopos theory explained*. London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759715

Salem, H., and Taira, K. (2012). *al-Thawra al-DaHika*: The challenges of translating revolutionary humour. In S. Mehrez (Ed.), *Translating Egypt's revolution: The language of Tahrir*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.

Schäffner, C. (1998). Skopos theory. In M. Baker and G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Vol. 17, pp. 235–238). London and New York: Routledge.

Sippola, J. (2010). *The translation of culture-specific verbal humour in the TV-series Friends* [Master's thesis]. Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä.

Vandaele, J. (2010). Humor in translation. In Y. Gambier and L. V. Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 1, pp. 147–152). John Benjamins Publishing.

Vermeer, H. J. (1989). Skopos and translation commission. In A. Chesterman (Ed.), *Readings in translation theory* (Vol. 29). Finnlectura.

Wilson, C. (1979). *Jokes: Form, content, use and function*. London: Academic Press.

Zabalbeascoa, P. (1996). Translating jokes for dubbed television situation comedies. *The Translator*, *2*(2), 235–257. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.1996.10798976

مستخلص:

أصبحت النكات على نحو متزايد الوسيلة التي يعبر من خلالها الناس في مختلف البلدان العربية عن همومهم. وتمتليء منصات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مثل Facebook وTwitter بالنكات التي تتناول مختلف مجالات الحياة. وتتناول الدراسة الحالية التعقيدات التي تنطوي عليها ترجمة النكات العربية بشكل عام والنكات السياسية بشكل خاص إلى اللغة الإنجليزية. وإلى أي مدى يمكن تحقيق التكافؤ الترجمي في اللغة الهدف وتحقيق الغرض الأصلي من النكات، والذي لا ينحصر فقط على المرح و إمتاع الجمهور. وتتكون مدونة هذه الدراسة من ١٠٠ نكتة تم جمعها من مواقع مختلفة.

واستخدمت الدراسة إطارًا نظرياً انتقائيًا، يأخذ في الاعتبار نظريات الترجمة الحديثة كالنظرية القصدية أو سكوبوس لهانز فيرمير، والنظريات اللغوية الحديثة، كنظرية هاليداي في اللسانيات الوظيفية (SFL) (هاليداي، ١٩٨٥/١٩٩٤). وخلصت هذه الدراسة إلى أن فهم النكتة ثم إعادة إنتاجها وترجمتها يعتمد على مجموعة من العوامل اللغوية وغير اللغوية، ويجب أن يكون المترجم على دراية بالسياق اللغوي والثقافي و ربما الأيديولوجي لتقديم النص بشكل مناسب. ولن يتم الحفاظ على دقة الترجمة أبدًا ما لم يتم أخذ جميع هذه الجوانب في الاعتبار.