

## Translating Irony: A Four-Dimensional Analysis of Arabic-English Translation in al-Māzīnī's '*Mīdū wa Shurakāh*' and Hutchins' '*Mīdū and His Accomplices*'

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### Abstract

This study examines the translation of irony from Arabic into English in Ibrāhīm al-Māzīnī's novella *Mīdū wa Shurakāh* (1943) and its English translation, *Mīdū and His Accomplices* (2006), by William Hutchins. Using a four-dimensional framework, it integrates Chakhachiro's discourse model, Halliday's functional theory, Grice's cooperative principle, and Austin's speech act theory. It analyses how register shifts, maxim violations, and rhetorical devices affect irony translation. The study explores challenges in rendering ironic registers, titles, overstatements, and the narrator's voice, emphasizing verbal and situational irony. A mixed-method analysis, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, reveals Hutchins' reliance on adaptation strategies to bridge cultural gaps while maintaining fidelity and readability. The findings underscore the translator's role in reducing temporal and cultural distances, enhancing accessibility for English-speaking readers. More broadly, this study contributes to translation studies by demonstrating how adaptation strategies shape cross-cultural literary reception while balancing fidelity and readability.

**Keywords:** Adaptation strategies, al-Māzīnī, four-dimensional model, irony, translation.

### 1. Introduction

The translation of ironic utterances assists us in acquiring a more profound comprehension of both translation and irony (Barbe 1995, 145). Booth (1974, 33) points out, "Reading irony is in some ways like translating, like decoding, like deciphering, and like peering behind a mask." Ironic texts, regardless of their written or spoken form, inherently embody complexity, thereby posing significant challenges in translation. Verbal irony, in particular, exhibits substantial variations influenced by factors such as geographical context, societal norms, and individual idiosyncrasies, thereby rendering its translation a formidable task (Barbe 1995, 147-8).

Scholars have debated the most effective approach to translating irony, with some advocating a literary approach (e.g. Friedrich and Dryden cited in Shulte and Biguenet 1992; Lefevere 1992b; Steiner 1975) and others favoring a linguistic approach (e.g. Nida 1964; Catford 1965; House 1977; Wilss 1982; Newmark 1988; Hatim and Mason 1990) (Chakhachiro 2018: 84). This study utilizes a linguistic methodology since it is in accordance with Chakhachiro's claim that a linguistic approach is advantageous from three perspectives: prescriptive, evaluative, and descriptive. Prescriptive as it offers specific

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recommendations for translators to follow during the translation process. Evaluative since it examines the quality of completed translations. Additionally, it is descriptive as it depends on observation and empirical data (Chakhachiro 2018, 84).

The existing research literature reveals a notable scarcity in scholarly investigations concerning the translation of irony between English and Arabic. Raymond Chakhachiro (2007; 2009; 2018) developed a framework for translating irony between English and Arabic, integrating discourse analysis, speech act theory, and cooperative principles to assess irony's rhetorical and pragmatic functions. July De Wilde (2010) has directed her attention towards methodological issues pertaining to the analysis of translated literary irony. Furthermore, specific studies have explored the translation of verbal irony in Arabic dubbed versions of *The Simpsons* (Fathy 2019) and *Monsters Inc.* (Yahiaoui et al. 2019). Daniel Linder (2001) has examined the translation of irony in popular fiction through an analysis of Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. Zsuzsanna Ajtony (2015) has delved into the translation of irony in Hungarian subtitles of *Downton Abbey*. Angela Kamyansets (2017) has explored the translation of irony in media texts from a relevance theory perspective. Magdalena Źochowska (2021) has conducted research on translation strategies and techniques employed by Polish translators in translating irony in *Pride and Prejudice*. This study advances the understanding of irony translation between Arabic and English by providing a nuanced, multidimensional analysis that bridges linguistic and cultural disparities—an area that remains underexplored in translation studies.

## 2. Background

This section explores the literary contributions of Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Māzīnī (1890 – 1949), specifically examining his novel "*Mīdū wa Shurakāh*" as the primary focus of the study. The examination encompasses al-Māzīnī's impact as a humorist, and novelist within the context of Egyptian literature.

### 2.1. Al-Māzīnī's Literary Contributions

Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Māzīnī, a prominent Egyptian literary figure, was renowned for his contributions as a humorist, essayist, poet, critic, and translator. Transitioning from a teaching career, al-Māzīnī dedicated himself to literary and journalistic pursuits until his passing in 1949. Considered a representative of Egyptian literary modernism, his collaboration with ‘Abbās Maḥmūd al-‘Aqqād on "*Al-Dīwān*" (1921) solidified his role within this movement. (Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī and Hutchins 2006: vii). While al-Māzīnī's works often conveyed a sense of humor, scholars such as Moosa (1997, 327-28) have noted an underlying pessimism veiled by his comedic approach. Themes of love pervade his writings, and the titles of several of his books reflect his introspective and troubled psyche. Al-Māzīnī's complex disposition intertwines pessimism, gloom, optimism, and humor, leaving his perspective on life somewhat uncertain. His humor serves as a façade for his underlying gloom and pessimism. In light of his intricate personality, it is inferred that al-Māzīnī possessed eccentric tendencies, marked by a delicate balance between humor and cynicism. (Moosa 1997, 330). According to writer and critic M.M. Badawi, his humor endures due to its deep-rooted connection to social reality (Badawi 1973, 127).

## 2.2. Narrative Style and Humor

Al-Māzīnī is indeed among our exceptional writers who have successfully crafted a novel Egyptian literature, characterized by profound contemplation, intense emotions, and biting irony (Ḍayf 1992, 264). His writings exhibit a distinctive, delightful, and ironic style characterized by a fusion of informal language with traditional Arabic, rooted in a diverse cultural background. Central to his craft is a subtle sarcasm that reflects the authentic Egyptian sense of humor. His style is defined by several key characteristics: simplicity of expression through familiar words and idiomatic expressions, the use of common proverbs to depict the Egyptian environment, a concise and cohesive flow of words and phrases, the incorporation of Western vocabulary for sarcasm and irony, the introduction of precise and humorous similes, and a commitment to preserving the linguistic framework. Together, these elements contribute to the unique and captivating nature of al-Māzīnī's writing, showcasing his skillful navigation of language and his ability to engage readers with his witty and ironic prose. (Abū dhīkrī 1982, 259).

From 1931 onwards, Al-Māzīnī dedicated himself to writing stories, producing a range of works such as *Ibrāhīm Al-Kātib* (Ibrahim the Writer). In 1943, he wrote *Ibrāhīm al-Thānī* (Ibrahim the Second), *Thalāthat Rijāl wa Imra'a* (Three Men and a Woman), *Mīdū wa Shurakāh* (Mīdū and His Associates), *'Awd 'alā Bīd'* (Starting all Over Again). (Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī and Hutchins 2006, vii). According to Peters, al-Māzīnī, and Hutchins (1984), al-Māzīnī's creative writing exhibits a refreshing, vigorous, and humorous quality that appeals to English-speaking readers. Historically, al-Māzīnī holds a significant position at the forefront of the modern Egyptian novel, pioneering stylistic innovations. He skillfully combines modern standard Arabic with Egyptian colloquial language and expressions, maintaining a natural dialogue flow while adhering to the norms of literary Arabic. In this sense, al-Māzīnī's contribution to modern Egyptian fiction can be likened to Mark Twain's impact on American fiction. While employing psychological realism with "Freudian overtones" to depict individualized characters, Al-Māzīnī remains distinctly Egyptian, drawing upon his intimate knowledge of himself, personal experiences, and the nuances of Egyptian life, especially within the Cairene middle class. Through the portrayal of characters, their comical predicaments, intricate familial and social relationships, practical jokes, and the effective use of humor through exaggeration, wordplay, and repartee, the author's work is inherently Egyptian (Peters, Al-Māzīnī, and Hutchins 1984).

## 2.3. Overview of *Mīdū wa Shurakāh*

The novel "*Mīdū wa Shurakāh*" effectively blends humor and romance, showcasing an interesting narrative technique employed by al-Māzīnī. Adopting the role of a *raconteur*, the author establishes a close relationship with the reader, fostering an ironic detachment that allows for the humorous portrayal of characters' follies and idiosyncrasies. (Badawi 1973, 136). The author skillfully weaves his comic creations and humorous situations around a plot that is weak and somewhat implausible (Moosa 1997, 333-34). In fact, the plot merely serves as a pretext or opportunity for showcasing the author's talent for humor. The humor predominantly stems from the portrayal of characters and the circumstances they find themselves in. The characters in the novel can be classified into two categories: caricatures and somewhat

idealized, likable individuals who are occasionally subjected to the author's playful jests. For instance, Aḥmad al-Badī' insists that everyone in the household, including the servant, address him in classical Arabic, only resorting to colloquial language in moments of great stress or loss of self-control. Another example is the portrayal of Ḥanīfa, Aḥmad's sister, who is depicted as being so large that she is always referred to in the plural form by Shākīr and the author. Similarly, the character of 'Abdu is described as gauche, standing at six feet tall, wealthy but lacking refinement and sophistication. (Badawi 1973, 139-40).

The depictions of the lovers, on the other hand, are devoid of deep emotional intensity. They are all charming and attractive, falling in love at first sight and generally finding success in both love and life. Al-Māzīnī deliberately focuses on the comic complications arising from love, finding delight in highlighting the moderate absurdities, harmless idiosyncrasies, and amusing behaviors of the upper-middle-class Egyptians, regardless of age. Even the impulsive idealism of youth is affectionately ridiculed. The novel does not seek to preach a moral lesson or convey a social message. Considering the time of its creation, the world depicted in "*Mīdū wa Shurakāh*," despite its artificiality, emerges as a surprisingly stable realm where bourgeois values reign supreme. It is a hierarchical society where, for instance, servants like Sayyid understand their place and, as is often the case in al-Māzīnī's work, are treated with a certain degree of condescension. Although the author playfully mocks this society, he never gives the impression of rejecting its value (Badawi 1973, 141-2). The military trajectory of Mīdū, the protagonist, foreshadows the concurrent ascent of the middle class and the military in Egypt, as well as their temporary alliance during the post-revolutionary period (Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī and Hutchins 2006, ix).

#### 2.4. Translation and Translator

Al-Māzīnī, being a man of letters, finds greater affinity with the roles of an essayist and critic rather than that of a novelist. Nonetheless, he stands as one of the precursors who ventured into the realm of novel writing during its nascent stages as a viable literary genre. The intricate plots he employs, characterized by uninhibited and licentious amorous exploits, indicate the profound influence of Western fiction upon him. However, these narratives prove incongruous with the deeply conservative nature of the Egyptian society to which he belongs (Moosa 1997a, 339). In this study, this paper has undertaken an analysis of select humorous and ironic passages in "*Mīdū wa Shurakāh*" and its English translation, "*Mīdū and His Accomplices*," employing a pragmatic framework. By examining these instances, it sought to shed light on the pragmatic aspects of humor and irony in translation, thereby contributing to the broader field of translation studies. The novel is translated by William Maynard Hutchins, an American academic and translator of contemporary Arabic literature, is renowned for his translation of Naguib Mahfouz's *Cairo Trilogy*, a highly regarded work in Arabic literature (Martin 2022).

### 3. Data and Methods

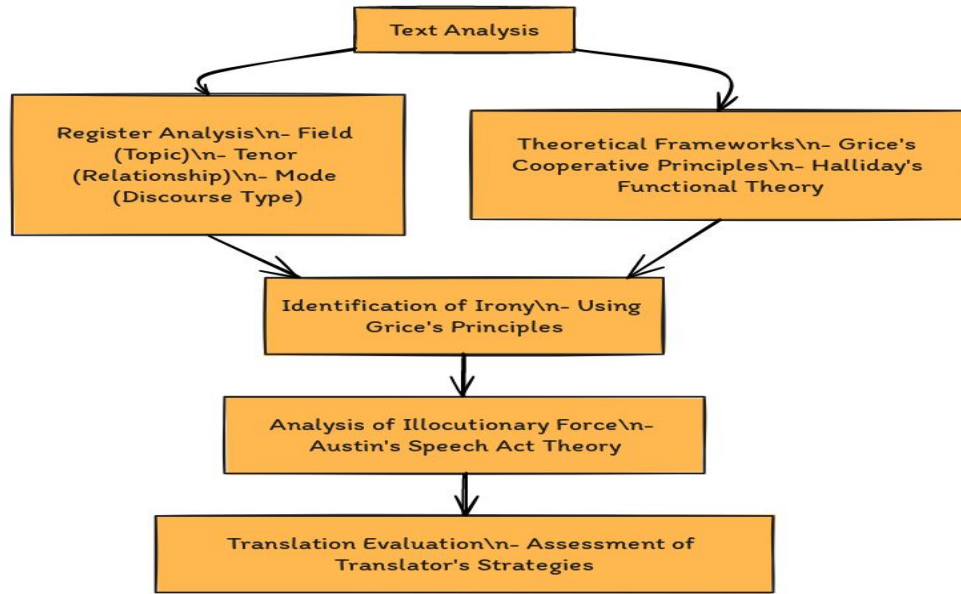
The present study draws its data from al-Māzīnī's *Mīdū wa Shurakāh*, originally published in 1943, and its English translation, titled *Mīdū and His Accomplices*, translated by William M. Hutchins in 1983 (Peters, al-Mazini, and Hutchins 1984, 659) and republished again in 2006 (Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī and

Hutchins 2006). The selection of data aims to identify significant instances of irony that faithfully represent al-Māzīnī's ironic style. This research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze instances of irony in the original Arabic text and to evaluate how they are rendered in the English translation, highlighting the translation strategies used.

The study explores the challenges and subtleties involved in translating irony from Arabic to English. A primary objective is to investigate the translator's strategies in handling these nuances and assess whether the English version effectively captures al-Māzīnī's ironic style within the context of Cairene society in the 1940s. Additionally, the study considers the temporal gap of 80 years between the novella's publication and the contemporary readers' ability to engage with its language and style. Even modern Egyptian readers may find it challenging to comprehend and process the linguistic and stylistic elements, posing an even greater difficulty for English readers and the translator tasked with conveying this antiquated ironic style to a modern English-speaking audience. The study also aims to test new linguistic theories and approaches in the analysis and evaluation of ironic texts.

The research employs Chakhachiro's (2018, 106) discourse model, with necessary adaptations, as it offers a structured approach to analyzing irony through linguistic and pragmatic dimensions. By integrating Halliday's functional theory, Grice's cooperative principle, and Austin's speech act theory, the model provides insights into how register shifts, maxim violations, and speech acts contribute to ironic meaning in translation. While Chakhachiro originally applied his framework to political commentary, this study extends its scope to literary texts, demonstrating its broader applicability. The model's foundation in discourse analysis and pragmatic theories makes it particularly relevant for examining the challenges of translating irony across languages and cultural contexts (Chakhachiro 2018, 299).

The study systematically analyzes ironic expressions in the source text (ST) and target text (TT) as depicted in Figure 1. Initially, both texts undergo analysis using Halliday's functional theory (Halliday and Hasan 1976) to assess field, mode, and tenor, which elucidate the linguistic context and facilitate irony comprehension. The field addresses the discourse topic, tenor the interrelationships among participants, and mode the communication medium (Hudson 1996: 46). Following this, Grice's cooperative principle aids in identifying ironic utterances by examining the maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner, pinpointing deliberate violations that signal irony (Mey 2009, 406). The subsequent phase evaluates the illocutionary force of these utterances via Austin's speech act theory, distinguishing between their literal meanings and intended impacts (Richards and Schmidt 2013, 542). The final analysis assesses the translation's success in conveying the original Arabic text's ironic tone, examining the translator's strategies for accuracy and effectiveness in replicating the irony.



**Figure:** Hierarchical Analysis of Irony in ST and TT

#### 4. Analysis

This section employs a four-step methodology to investigate and analyze the stylistic features of al-Māzinī's ironic style in *Mīdū wa Shurakāh* and its English translation, "*Mīdū and His Accomplices*." These features include the shift of register and the use of colloquialism, titles and honorifics, ironical overstatement or exaggeration, and aesthetic irony.

##### 4.1 Shift of Register and the use of Colloquialism

The transition from formal to colloquial register strategically undermines communicative norms, engendering irony (Chakhachiro 2018, 124, 152, 181). Al-Māzinī employs both classical Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) and Egyptian colloquial language to accentuate contrasts in dialogue. He characterizes Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi' as a fervent proponent of *fuṣḥā*, who disparages colloquial speech as "silly" (Al-Māzinī, 1943, 8). This linguistic dichotomy is highlighted when Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi' chastises his servant for using informal language while discussing his nephew Mīdū's whereabouts, thereby reinforcing his commitment to formal language use.

(1) A

احمد : م م ..متى .. أو بلغتك العامية السخيفة امتى؟

الخدم: يجى ساعة دلوقتى

احمد: وهل تعرف اين نهب؟

الخدم: راح يشوف واحدة

احمد: واحدة!! هل تعنى سييدة؟

الخدم: ست صغيرة

احمد: فتاة .. ؟ من تكون؟

الخدم: ما أعرفهاش .. بس شفته بيص لها؟

احمد: هل قلت بيص لها .. أو يبصص لها؟

الخدم: لا.. بيص بس

(Al-Māzinī 1943, 8-9)

(1) B.

Aḥmad: Wh..wh ...when? Or would you understand better if I say 'wen'?

The servant: Bout an 'our ago.

Aḥmad: Do you know where he went?

The servant: He went looking for some chick.

Aḥmad: Chick! Do you mean 'lady'?

The servant: A young woman.

Aḥmad: A girl? Who might she be?

The servant: I ain't met her. I just seen him look at her.

Aḥmad: Do you mean he looked at her or ogled her?

The servant: No, just look. (Al-Māzinī and Hutchins 2006, 5)

In this scenario, Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi' engages in a verbal exchange with his servant concerning his nephew, Mīdū's location. The mode of communication is primarily spoken, with Mr. al-Badi' asserting authority through a formal tone as he reproaches his servant for using informal language. The servant's colloquial responses violate the Quantity Maxim by providing vague answers, and the lack of formality in Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi's speech violates the Quality Maxim by undermining his usual adherence to formal language. These violations contribute to the ironic tone by subverting expectations about how formal discourse should unfold.

The translation adeptly navigates the distinctions between formal and informal language, exemplifying this through the accurate rendition of colloquial terms such as "أيوه" to "yeah" and formal terms like "نعم" and "بلى" to "yes" and "verily." Similarly, the translator's choices—converting "امتى" to the colloquial "wen" and "متى" to the formal "when," alongside translating "واحدة" and "ست صغيرة" to "a chick" and "a young woman," respectively—faithfully preserve the text's contrasts and enhance its ironic undertones. Strategic uses of quotation marks further emphasize linguistic disparities, enriching the translation's humor and irony. The translation from Arabic to English occasionally fails to fully capture the nuances of irony present in the original text. Notably, the translation of "أو بلغتك العامية السخيفة امتى؟" as "Or would you understand better if I say 'wen'?" omits the critical element of "silly colloquial language" (العامية السخيفة), thereby diminishing the layer of irony. Moreover, the wordplay involving the verbs "يبيص" and "يبصص" is inadequately rendered in English. In Arabic, the playful intensification by

doubling the letters in "ييصبح" adds humor and emphasizes an exaggerated gaze, indicating a flirtatious look as described by 'Umar (2008, 210). However, the English phrases "looked" and "ogled" fail to convey this playful effect, instead simply contrasting a neutral gaze with a more intense, amorous glance (Merriam-Webster 2024b).

Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi' is portrayed as a highly formal and articulate character, reflecting societal expectations that link Standard Arabic to education, authority, and prestige. His sudden switch to colloquial Arabic in moments of shock or frustration stands in contrast to his usual linguistic precision, making these instances inherently ironic. In the context of Arabic culture, formal speech is often equated with high status, and the sudden switch over to colloquial speech typically implies loss of restraint or loss of self-command. This conflict between the expected act and the spontaneous expression of emotions not only creates humor but also highlights the situational irony—where the person endowed with linguistic authority briefly abandons the very norm he enunciates. Paradoxically, even though he often plays the role of scolding and admonishing the other interlocutors, he himself lapses into colloquialism, especially when faced with the inciting proposition made by 'Abduh to steal his manuscript:

(2) A

ونعنى أنه لفرط زهوله انطلق يتكلم بالعامية " بتقول ايه؟ .. انت بتقول ايه؟ .. ببيبيبتقول !!! اسمح لك بأيه..؟ " فكانت دهشة عبده من سماع الاستاذ البديع يتكلم بالعامية أشد من دهشة ذاك لاستئذانه فى السرقة...

(Al-Māzini 1943, 151)

(2). B

We mean that his shock was so great that he burst out speaking in the local dialect "Wacha sayin? Wachya sayin? Sayyyyyyyin! Letchya do wat?" 'Abduh's astonishment at hearing Professor al-Badi' speak dialect was greater than the latter's at being asked permission for a theft. (Al-Māzini and Hutchins 2006, 100)

This interaction between Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi' and 'Abduh, seeking permission to steal a manuscript, is conducted mainly through spoken language. It is apparent that a power struggle ensued between the two by observing the changes in language level and formality in the interchange. Mr. al-Badi' adheres to the formal linguistic norms but, on occasions of shock or anger such as this example, resorts to colloquial language. This is actually an ironic turn in the opposite direction from his previous regular criticisms of such linguistic deviations. In this case, the translator has faithfully rendered the colloquial Arabic expressions through the English version of the novella. For example, the translator captures Mr. al-Badi's sudden switch to local dialect by translating his informal expressions like "بتقول ايه؟" and "اسمح لك بأيه؟" with their equivalents (Wacha sayin?) and (Letchya do wat?). In doing so, the English translation manages to maintain the underlying character of colloquialism in the original. It also shows the sudden informality, and 'Abduh's surprise and shock at the linguistic switch.

The main interrogative speech act in both Arabic and English texts indicate Mr. al-Badi's shock and disbelief. This speech act would be in violation of the quality maxims as it uses colloquial language, not supposed to be in the formal linguistic register of the character. Further, the repetition of the colloquial

words is against the maxim of manner since it overemphasizes the emotional state rather than being clear. These choices of language underline the irony of a character noted for his formal language, suddenly using colloquial expressions, hence adding a certain depth to the character and underlining effectively the absurdity of the scene. The locutionary force illustrates Mr. Ahmad al-Badi's stern criticism of deviance from classical Arabic, even as he himself lapses into colloquial usage. Illocutionary force underlines the need for studying and maintaining the Egyptian dialect side by side with its classical part. In fact, al-Māzinī believes that both registers have an important place in their academic and social contexts. (Ibrahim Al-Māzinī and al-Ziyyāt 1938, 1721-3).

#### 4.2 Titles and Honorifics

In Arabic literature, the strategic naming of characters serves as a crucial ironic device, influencing reader perception and contributing to textual focalization (Stephens 1992: 94). Al-Māzinī employs titles and honorifics to craft irony and humor, notably in the naming of Dr. Sārah. Preferring the masculine "دكتور" over the feminine "دكتورة سارة", she subverts traditional gender roles, a choice that becomes a source of humor and irony, particularly highlighted when her brother Shaker introduces her to his enamored friend Mīdū (Chakhachiro 2018, 126):

(3) A.

وقالت سارة "مضحك ان اكون دكتورا .. اليس كذلك" وكانت تنظر الى ميدو، فاضطر ان يقول شيئا فقال "لا لا لا بالعكس.

أعنى انى استحسن هذا .. انك . ولم لا .."

فقال سارة "نعم لم لا . دكتور سارة .. اليس هذا حسنا"

قال ميدو "بالطبع ..حسن جدا .. وجميل ايضا"

وقال شاكرا "دكتورة سارة."

فقال سارة معترضة "من فضلك .. - دكتور - سارة .. انى لا افهم هذا التعنت منك"

(Al-Māzinī 1943, 41-2)

(3) B.

Sārah asked, "It's laughable for me to be a doctor .... Isn't that so?" She was looking at Mīdū, so he was forced to say something. He replied: "No, no, no, to the contrary. I mean I think this is excellent ... that you .... Why not?"

Sārah said, "Yes, why not, Dr. Sārah, isn't that fine?"

Mīdū said, "Of course. It's really fine, and beautiful too."

Shākīr said, "Sārah the woman doctor."

Sārah objected, "Please, Dr. Sārah. No feminine. I don't understand why you should be so stubborn."

(Al-Māzinī and Hutchins, 27-8)

The dialogue between the characters involves the violation of the maxim of quality (truthfulness) and the maxim of manner (clarity and directness). Sārah's initial statement, "مضحك ان اكون دكتورا .. اليس

"كذلك rendered by the translator as "It's laughable for me to be a doctor... Isn't that so?" violates the maxim of quality as it is presented in an ironic manner. Sārah's statement contradicts her true belief, as she is actually proud of being a doctor. This violation creates an ironic effect, conveying her sarcastic tone. Mīdū's response, "لا لا لا بالعكس. أعنى انى استحسن هذا .. انك . ولم لا .." rendered in English as "No, no, no, to the contrary. I mean I think this is excellent... that you... Why not?" violates the maxim of manner. His response is intentionally vague and evasive, using repetitive negation and incomplete sentences. This violation adds to the irony by contrasting with Sārah's sarcastic statement and further emphasizing the humorous tone.

The English translation does an excellent job of bringing out the content, meaning, and irony of the Arabic original, with all its humorous effects. However, it should be noted that some aspects of the language, for example, certain formalities and a clear-cut differentiation between the masculine and feminine forms of address, cannot be maintained in English. The translator, therefore, had to use contextual cues as much as possible to communicate the irony and humor in the source language. For instance, Shakir uses the feminine form of "دكتورة"—"duktura" in referring to Dr. Sārah in the Arabic text. Dr. Sarah, on the other hand, won't accept anything less than the masculine version "دكتور." The translation keeps the feminine form of Arabic by using "the woman doctor." Through "No feminine," after Dr. Sarah in his rendition, however, the translator sticks to the male form. By use of this paraphrase method, the translator ensures that the English translation faithfully captures the humor and irony in Dr. Sarah's rejection of the feminine form.

The translator employs a similar strategy in another instance when Shākīr playfully comments on Mīdū and Dr. Sārah driving together, disregarding him. Shākīr's mischievous gaze and remark (Al-Māzinī 1943, 46) "طبعاً طبعاً من الأبله الذى يفكر فى شاكر والى جانبه الدكتورة" ساره .. ؟" rendered in English as "what simpleton would think of Shākīr when he has **Sārah the woman doctor** by his side?" (Al-Māzinī and Hutchins 2006, 30) violate the maxim of quantity by providing less information than expected. Shākīr teases Mīdū, suggesting that Mīdū's attention is solely focused on Dr. Sārah, Shākīr's sister. This teasing is done in a playful manner, indicating familiarity and camaraderie between the friends. Additionally, Shākīr's remarks express a mild form of jealousy or feeling left out, humorously exaggerating Mīdū's admiration for Dr. Sārah while emphasizing his own absence from the scene. The Arabic phrase Shākīr says "استغفر الله..الدكتور ساره!" which is translated into "I ask God's forgiveness: Dr. Sarah!" may be considered insincere or exaggerated in the context of the quality maxim. But this violation adds humor and irony, as Shakir replies in a tone of mock disbelief or expresses disbelief about the very possibility of his sister being called "Dr. Sārah" in the context of Mīdū's admiration. While the translated English text of the original Arabic piece enjoys success, there are very few losses or differences in gender nuance. For instance, the translation of "دكتورة" (specifically denoting a female doctor or woman doctor) to be "Dr. Sārah" (a gender-neutral title in English) necessarily loses the female gender specificity of the original.

The ironic dialogues in al-Māzinī's text illustrate a locutionary force that humorously portrays Dr. Sārah's preference for a male professional title, reflecting a challenge to the gender norms of 1940s Egypt. The illocutionary force reveals a deeper contradiction between her expressed preferences and her true pride in her professional identity, which opposes the era's restrictive views on gender roles. This use of male titles for a female character not only injects humor but also critiques the rigid gender expectations of the time, effectively using linguistic devices to comment on broader societal issues (Ibrāhīm Al-Māzinī 1943, 69). Dr. Sārah's insistence on using the masculine title 'دكتور سارة' rather than the grammatically feminine 'دكتورة سارة' is a deliberate act of defiance against gender norms in 1940s Egypt. At the time, women's access to higher education and professional careers was still highly restricted, and linguistic markers often reinforced traditional gender roles. The title 'دكتور' carried greater authority and prestige, as professional titles for men were associated with expertise and leadership, while their feminine counterparts were often perceived as diminished in status.

By rejecting 'دكتورة,' Dr. Sārah asserts professional equality, demanding recognition on the same level as her male peers. This linguistic choice serves as a form of ironic resistance, exposing societal contradictions—where women were allowed to pursue intellectual achievements yet remained linguistically and culturally confined by gendered expectations. This ironic linguistic resistance, in fact, mirrors broader struggles for professional recognition among Egyptian women (Botman 1999; Goldschmidt 2000; Nelson 1996; Radwan 2012).

#### 4.3 Ironic Overstatement or Exaggeration

Muecke emphasizes the use of "overstatement" and "exaggeration" as tools to enhance ironic contradictions in discourse (Muecke 2021, 81). This is exemplified by Shākīr's use of the plural form "السيدات" rather than "السيدة" when referring to Mrs. Hanfia, intending to magnify praise while actually ridiculing her (Al-Māzinī 1943, 66). This ironic technique involves verbal irony, where the positive is exaggerated to reveal a negative implication, achieving a semantic reversal (Seto 1998, 245; Weigand 2008, 173). Shākīr's exaggeration, translated as "the Mesdames" (Al-Māzinī and Hutchins 2006, 44), humorously amplifies Mrs. Hanfia's perceived importance, violating the maxim of quantity by providing excessive praise and the maxim of quality through insincere exaggeration. These rhetorical strategies serve to underscore the humor and irony in Shākīr's discourse, effectively highlighting the ironic contradiction in his speech:

(4) A.

"... اذا سارت فى الطريق العام فانه يصبح خاصا - أى نعم - تزحمه لأنها زحام. واذا كانت فى دار للسينما - وحدها - ولم يكن هناك سواها فالسينما تكون غاصة وأن لم يفدها ذلك ربها ولكن المظاهر تخدع يا فتاتى. وهذا أعظم دليل على خداع المظاهر، وعلى غلط النحو الذى يعدها مفردة. ولو أنها ذهبت تستمع الى محاضر لخيلى الى المسكين أنه يخاطب السواد

الأعظم من الأمة، ولسره ما يبدو من الرغبة في الاستفادة، والحرص على الانتفاع والتحصيل. ولو نزلت الى البحر - البحر -

الأعظم من فضلك - لأحدثت مدا هائلا قد ينقلب طوفانا"

فقال سارة مقاطعة وهي تضحك "هل فرغت؟ هل نضب المعين؟"

قال "كلا .. لا يمكن ان ينضب معين له مدد من السيدات حنيفة"

(Al-Māzinī 1943, 67-8)

(4) B.

When she walks on the public road it becomes private. Yes indeed, she crowds it, because she is a crowd. If she is in a movie theater, all by herself, alone, the theater is packed, even if that does not turn a profit. But appearances are deceiving, my girl. This is the greatest proof that appearances are deceiving and that it is a mistake to refer to her as with a singular. Otherwise, she could go to hear a lecturer and he would imagine, poor fellow, that he was addressing the great majority of the nation. He would be delighted by the desire for learning displayed and by the wish for improvement and the acquisition of knowledge. If she were to descend into the ocean, the greatest ocean, if you please, she would create a formidable swell that could change into a tidal wave."

Sārah laughingly interrupted, "Have you finished? Has the spring run dry?"

He replied, "Certainly not. It's impossible for a spring with the backing of the Mesdames Hanifa to go dry." (Al-Māzinī and Hutchins 2006, 45)

Rhetorical devices like overstatement, understatement, and irony are crucial in creating conversational implicature, often defying the maxim of accuracy to imply meanings that extend beyond the literal. Overstatement typically infringes the maxim of quantity through its exaggerated assertions (Colston 1997: 45). In the case of Shākīr, both the Arabic and English narratives present his exaggerated, ironic portrayals of Mrs. Hanifa, humorously amplifying her presence to an improbable degree—such as a single person crowding a road or filling a theater. These hyperbolic descriptions intentionally breach the maxim of quality to achieve comedic effects. Furthermore, Shākīr's narratives violate the maxim of manner by employing elaborate, intricate explanations that veer into tangents and excessive detail, thereby straying from succinct communication. These rhetorical flourishes not only enhance the irony but also significantly contribute to the humor embedded within the dialogue.

The English translation successfully captures the overstatement inherent in the original Arabic text, utilizing phrases and descriptors that amplify Mrs. Hanifa's influence. For example, the translation of Mrs. Hanifa's effect on her surroundings, "When she walks on the public road it becomes private" from Arabic "إذا سارت في الطريق العام فإنه يصبح خاصا", adeptly emphasizes the semantic reversal inherent in overstatement, where a positive description is exaggerated to imply its negative counterpart. Similarly, the translation effectively captures the exaggeration in the description of Mrs. Hanifa's impact on the movie theater, stating, "If she is in a movie theater, all by herself, alone, the theater is packed, even if that does not turn a profit" for "وإذا كانت في دار للسينما - وحدها - ولم يكن هناك سواها فالسينما تكون غاصة وأن لم ("يفدها ذلك ربحا"). The translation successfully conveys overstatement and its humorous effects by using

emphatic phrases such as "the greatest proof that appearances are deceiving" and "the greatest ocean, if you please," from the Arabic "وهذا أعظم دليل على خداع المظاهر" and "البحر الأعظم من فضلك" respectively. These elements underscore the hyperbolic depiction of Mrs. Hanifa, enhancing her portrayal as an exaggeratedly significant figure and effectively transmitting the intended irony and humor to the English-speaking audience.

The translation skillfully captures the nuances of understatement from the original Arabic, exemplified by the term "poor fellow" ("المسكين") to describe the lecturer, reflecting the subtlety of the original understatement and preparing for a contrasting overstatement. This dynamic is vividly portrayed in the translated passage: "Otherwise, she could go to hear a lecturer and he would imagine, poor fellow, that he was addressing the great majority of the nation" ("ولو أنها ذهبت تستمع الى محاضر لخييل الى المسكين أنه " ( "يخاطب السواد الأعظم من الأمة"), which effectively communicates the understated description of the lecturer while emphasizing the ironic exaggeration of his perception. Additionally, the translation maintains the structural and rhetorical elements of the Arabic, using the phrase "the desire for learning displayed and by the wish for improvement and the acquisition of knowledge" to translate "الرجبة في الاستفادة، والحرص على " "الانتفاع والتحصيل," thereby preserving the parallelism and repetition of the original text.

The translation skillfully retains the overstatement from the original Arabic, notably in its depiction of Mrs. Hanifa's exaggerated effect on the ocean: "If she were to descend into the ocean, the greatest ocean, if you please, she would create a formidable swell that could change into a tidal wave" ("لو نزلت الى " ("البحر - البحر الأعظم من فضلك - لأحدثت مدا هائلا قد ينقلب طوفانا"). The translator accurately preserves repetition and superlatives found in the Arabic phrase "البحر - البحر الأعظم" by rendering it as "the ocean, the greatest ocean." The terms "a formidable swell" for "مدا هائلا" and "a tidal wave" for "طوفانا" effectively convey the intended overstatement. Additionally, figurative language enhances the ironic tone, with expressions like "Has the spring run dry?" ("هل نضب المعين؟") and "It's impossible for a spring with the backing of the Mesdames Hanifa to go dry," ("لا يمكن ان ينضب معين له مدد من السيدات حنيفة") capturing the original's humor and sarcasm.

The translation of "وعلى غلط النحو الذي يعدها مفردة" as "and that it is a mistake to refer to her as with a singular," results in a significant loss of specificity regarding the term "غلط النحو" (grammatical error), which denotes a grammatical mistake, highlighting a deviation from both linguistic norms and social or cultural expectations. The English rendering simplifies this to "a mistake," omitting crucial grammatical context, which could diminish the reader's understanding of the error's nature and gravity. Additionally, the translation of "السيدات" as "the Mesdames" may not capture the intended irony and humor as effectively as "the Ladies" or "the Women" might, given that "Mesdames" is less familiar in English and lacks equivalent connotations of exaggeration and humor. These alternatives would preserve the plural

nature of the original while enhancing clarity and maintaining the ironic tone. In the narrative, the locutionary force illustrates Shākīr's use of the plural "السيدات" (al-sayyidāt) over the singular "السيدة" (al-sayyida) to initially commend, then satirize Mrs. Hanfia. The illocutionary force emphasizes Shākīr's strategic overstatement and exaggeration, aimed at ridiculing her disproportionate influence within the story. This rhetorical technique effectively mocks her purported dominance, positioning Mrs. Hanfia as a caricature of a powerful woman in a middle-class Egyptian household, emblematic of broader societal roles (Badawi 1973, 140).

#### 4.4 Aesthetic Irony and the Role of Raconteur

Skorov (2017, 94-5) argues that the ironic author intentionally interrupts the narrative flow and destroys the illusion of reality in order to make the reader aware of the act of reading. This method is known as aesthetic irony. Badawi (1973, 136) highlights that in *Mīdū wa Shurakāh*, al-Māzīnī assumes the position of a raconteur, effectively reminding his readers of the narrative nature of the text. In the following example, the author deviates from the narrative of the novel to interpose personal viewpoints concerning his character, Dr. Sarah, whom he labels as "فتاة عصرية" (a modern woman). Notably, at the culmination of this intrusion, the author comically reassures the readers that he is not composing an essay but rather narrating a story. It is worth noting that al-Māzīnī, despite his status as a prominent novelist, held significant acclaim as an essayist during his era:

(5) A.

وصحيح أنها في سيرتها - كفتاة عصرية - قد خرجت على التقاليد التي كانت مرعية. ولكنها لم تخرج وحدها وإنما خرج معها جمهور كبير من الأمة - من المتعلمين وانصاف المتعلمين والاميين - وليس لها في هذا ذنب. وإنما هو سير الحضارة السريع وان كان للسفور عيب، أو منه ضير، فإن الحجاب أعيب وهو لا يمنع ضيرا يجره السفور. على انا لا نكتب مقالا ، وإنما نروى قصة فليأذن لنا القارئ ان نعود الى ما استطرنا عنه فان هذا أولى بجهدنا.

(Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī 1943, 99)

(5) B.

It is true that her conduct she, as a modern woman, had departed from traditions previously observed, but she had made this departure in association with a great multitude of the populace, the educated, half-educated, and the illiterate. This was not a breach of hers, but rather the swift march of civilization. If discarding the veil open to criticism or has caused some harm, veiling is much more to be criticized and never prevented whatever harm abandoning the veil may bring. We are not, however, writing an essay, but relating a story, so the reader should allow us to return to where we were before we digressed. This is a more fitting task for us.

(Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī and Hutchins 2006, 65-66)

The author uses self-irony as a rhetorical device to comment on his writing style. Initially, he critiques the deviation of the character Dr. Sarah from established traditions, but then absolves her by portraying her actions as part of a broader societal movement. This departure is attributed to the rapid advancement of civilization rather than solely blaming Dr. Sarah. The author further argues that if

criticism of discarding the veil is valid, then veiling itself deserves greater scrutiny. Finally, he critiques his argumentative style, clarifying to readers that he is narrating a story, not writing an essay. Within Halliday's framework, the discourse field centers on societal norms and civilization's evolution, focusing on the shift away from tradition. The narrative mode predominates, with the author recounting events and offering commentary on societal trends. In fact, the tenor seems to reflect the author's authority and knowledge insofar as he gives analyses and criticisms regarding Dr. Sarah and other social issues.

The word 'سفور' (sufūr), an act that describes casting off the veil, really carries with it great cultural connotations and ideological weight. It signifies not only the act of unveiling but also discussions in nationalist and modernist debates over gender and identity in the Egyptian society at that time. Actually, Hutcheon (1994) highlights that irony is often used to subvert dominant narratives, which is relevant to al-Māzīnī's ironic commentary on women's roles in early 20th-century Egypt. In fact, he uses irony in discussing sufūr as a critique of traditionalists who opposed it as well as modernists who failed to grasp its more complex layers. Notably, such practice was firstly initiated in the Arab East by Egyptian women in 1932—a movement in response to Qasim Amin's call for the emancipation of women by uncovering the face ('Umar 2008, 1072). In the English translation of the text, "discarding the veil" is an equivalent of "سفور," but it does not encompass the deep history and rich culture captured in that term. Thus, the focus in translation—whether on the sensual or the physical act—misses a further societal change that 'سفور' implies, a major role reversal of gender dynamics and societal expectations among early-twentieth-century Egyptians. When translating the conveyed action, it does so without the necessary nuances that will help represent the socio-cultural impact of the term; something that should help in the understanding of the full amplitude of changes that such a term would imply.

In fact, sufūr was not simply something an individual did but part of a larger movement challenging social expectations regarding the roles of women in education, employment, and public life. The debates about sufūr were closely tied to nationalistic and modernist discourses in which both secular reformists and conservative voices contested its implications (Ahmed 1992; Moosa 1997; 'Umar 2008). Conversely, *ḥijāb* (حجاب), translated as "veil," has also wandered beyond its primordial meaning. Having previously referred to a more generic concept of "barrier" or "seclusion," it became intertwined with Islamic modesty and identity. Nowadays, it is often employed by many Muslim women as a means of asserting their faith and religious independence and cultural identity; views that subvert Orientalist thinking that assumes the veil simply as a symbol of oppression. In fact, the English rendering of *ḥijāb* as "veil" can be quite misleading as it could dilute its varied additional meanings in spiritual, social, and political contexts and reduce it to a mere trivialization of Islamic faith and identity. Translators will again face the challenge of balancing linguistic fidelity against cultural richness—whether to offer a literal translation that deprives a term of its historical resonances or an explanatory equivalent which runs the risk of being over-interpretive. Given the history of sufūr and *ḥijāb* and their cultural significance, leaving the terms in transliteration with contextual clarification might ensure that their full ideological weight is not lost.

The English translation does not at all reflect the parallelism and repetition present in the source text, especially through the verb "خرجت" used in different tenses. The analysis identifies minor deviations from Grice's maxims, notably in Quantity due to extensive repetition and parallelism, and in Manner where certain phrases could be simplified for clearer communication. Nonetheless, the translation retains the overall relevance and coherence of the text. The source text employs a rhetorical strategy rich in repetition, parallelism, contradiction, paradox, exaggeration, and satire to support Dr. Sarah's break from traditional norms and to address significant societal issues like "السفور" (Al-sufūr) and "الحجاب" (Al-ḥijāb). This method persuades readers of the validity of these societal shifts while employing self-irony to critique the author's narrative approach. Although the author is more renowned for his essays than his fiction (Moosa 1997a, 339), the translation strives to maintain these rhetorical nuances. Despite some loss in rhetorical depth, the translation successfully conveys the illocutionary intent to advocate for societal change.

In an example, akin to an epilogue speech in classical theater, al-Māzīnī concludes his novel by directly addressing his readers:

(6) A.

بقى ان نقول اننا نترك خيريه غير مستقرة على رأى، لأنها كانت - كما قالت للدكتورة سارة - "موزعة"  
ونعد القارىء أن نبغله ما سيكون من أمرها، بعد الحرب ان شاء الله فان استعجل فليأتنا بورق. (بالفتح أو بالكسر) سيان  
والسلام عليه، والشكر له، والى الملتقى باذن الله

(Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī 1943, 168)

(6) B.

It remains for us to say that we leave Khayriya with her mind undecided, because she – as she told Dr. Sarah – is “torn.”

We promise the reader that we will inform him of what happens to her, after the war, God willing. If he is impatient, he should bring us some paper – white or green-backed, it is all the same. Peace and thanks, till we meet again, with God's permission. (Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī and Hutchins 2006, 111)

The field of the source text and its translation pertains to the conclusion of a novel, specifically addressing the fate of a character and expressing gratitude to the reader. The mode employed in both the source text and translation is that of a direct address or speech, reminiscent of an epilogue in classical theater. It aims to engage the reader and effectively convey the author's message. The tenor of the source text and its translation is ironic, polite, clear, and maintains a positive rapport with the reader. The author expresses gratitude and assures the reader of further updates.

While the translation generally captures the overall meaning, some instances highlight the challenges faced by translators in conveying specific cultural and linguistic elements. In Arabic, "موزعة" (muwaz'a) crucially conveys the character's internal conflict and social dynamics. As defined in "Al-Mu'jam al-Wasit," it implies division and metaphorically reflects divided loyalties. Additionally, it suggests enticement or habituation to conflicting pressures (Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabīyah 1990, Vol.2: 1028-

29), highlighting her psychological struggle. The translation of "موزعة" as "torn" simplifies these complexities, reducing the narrative depth and the portrayal of her emotional and societal fragmentation. The original Arabic text employs wordplay with the term "بورق" *bīwaraq*, signifying papers "bil-fath" (with an **a** vowel) and an old silver Arabic coin "بورق" *bīwarīq* "bil-kasr," (with an **i** vowel.) (Ibn Manzūr 1994, 374). In the translation, the same wordplay is attempted, with "white paper" corresponding to *bīwaraq* and "green-backed" representing *bīwarīq*, denoting U.S. paper dollars colloquially termed as such due to the green ink used in their printing, originating from the mid-1860s (Merriam-Webster 2024a). The translator's choice to include "green-backed papers" serves to provide a culturally resonant equivalent in the target language. The author adeptly employs wordplay to convey ironic commentary on the economic conditions prevailing in the Egyptian state during the period of the Second World War, specifically highlighting the scarcity of both paper resources and financial means.

In this passage, the author utilizes conversation maxims to conclude his novel effectively. By directly addressing the reader in a manner reminiscent of an epilogue in classical theater, the author ensures narrative continuity by promising future insights about Khayriya's fate post-war. This approach adheres to the maxim of relevance, providing pertinent information to the reader. Additionally, the author's polite and clear request for patience, "If he is impatient, he should bring us some paper," supports the maxim of manner.

Although both texts effectively communicate the conclusion of the narrative and maintain their illocutionary functions, they exhibit violations of the Maxim of Quantity through excessive repetition and elaboration. In the Arabic source text, for instance, the phrase: 'فان استعجل فليأتنا بورق. (بالفتح أو بالكسر) ' (If he is impatient, he should bring us some paper—white or green-backed, it is all the same. Peace and thanks, till we meet again, with God's permission.'). It demonstrates an overabundance of information by providing unnecessary clarification of 'ورق' (paper), explaining its possible pronunciations 'بالفتح أو بالكسر' and elaborating on its colors, despite the irrelevance to the central message. Similarly, in the English translation, the phrase 'white or green-backed, it is all the same' maintains this unnecessary elaboration, reinforcing the redundancy present in the source text. Additionally, the closing phrase 'والسلام عليه، والشكر له، والى الملتقى باذن الله' (Peace and thanks, till we meet again, with God's permission) mirrors this effect by over-explaining gratitude and farewell, rather than conveying a concise closing remark. These instances reflect a deliberate violation of the Maxim of Quantity, where more information than required is provided, not for clarity, but for rhetorical and stylistic emphasis. Such violations contribute to the ironic tone of the text, as they contrast with the expectation of a straightforward conclusion, instead offering an overly formal, almost exaggerated farewell.

## 5. Results and Discussion

This study undertakes an exploration of the challenges encountered during the translation of irony within the context of al-Māzīnī's "*Mīdū wa Shurakāh*" (1943) and its translation by Hutchins, titled "*Mīdū and His Accomplices*" (1983, 2006). Specifically, it focuses on the issues arising from the shift of register and the utilization of colloquialism, titles and honorifics, ironical overstatement or exaggeration, as well as aesthetic irony. The primary aim of this research is to propose a comprehensive four-dimensional model, derived from Chakhachiro's (2018, 106) discourse model, which facilitates the analysis and evaluation of irony in both the Arabic and English versions of the novel. The theoretical framework of this model draws upon Halliday's functional theory, encompassing the dimensions of field, mode, and tenor. Additionally, it incorporates Grice's cooperative principle, which takes into account the cooperative nature of communication and the transgression of conversational maxims. Moreover, Austin's speech act theory applies to the analysis of locutionary meaning and illocutionary force contained in the ironical utterance. At the fourth and last level of analysis, the emphasis is put on the evaluation of irony translation, where the fidelity of the English translation to the original Arabic text is carried out.

### 5.1. Register Analysis

A register analysis reveals that all ironic utterances, without exception, invoke the pragmatic function of humor and laughter among readers in unison. The analysis shows how dialogue serves as a primary means of communication, promoting dynamic and humorous interactions between characters. The frequent shifts from formal to informal registers, such as in the exchanges between Mr. Ahmad al-Badi' and his servant or between 'Abduh and Mr. al-Badi', create comic irony that lightens the narrative tone and adds depth to the characters. The planned and purposeful use of language playfulness aims to strengthen the comedy within the narrative; this further increases the appeal and makes the characters more human and down-to-earth. The light approach from the author is humorous and exaggerated, like that of teasing about the choice of the title of Dr. Sarah and another title for Mrs. Hanfia. The narrative mode is full of sarcasm and irony, more so when he indulges in the mockery of some of the societal norms and civilization. The approach criticizes some social absurdities but also invites the reader to look at the inanity of some norms with the same irony and humor.

At the conclusion of the novel, Al-Māzīnī speaks to the reader directly, in an approach similar to what is usually at the epilogue in classical theater. This stylistic choice does not just conclude the story, but it does so in a voice that is wonderfully polite and engaging, subtly bringing some humor into its formal closure. This technique highlights how deft the author is in the use of humor as a critical stylistic element, deftly woven across different narrative segments. Through this varied use of humor, from playing with language to sarcasm and engaging narrative closure, al-Māzīnī elevates thematic expression in his works and increases reader engagement to a high level, cementing humor as an integral and functioning part of his narrative style. Table 1 summarizes the findings of the register analysis in this study.

**Table 1:** Register Analysis of ST and TT

<b>Field of Situation</b>	<b>Mode of Communication</b>	<b>Tenor</b>
<b>(1) ST and TT</b> Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi' reprimanding a servant about Mīdū's location	<b>(1) ST and TT</b> Dialogue	<b>(1) ST and TT</b> Formal + Informal
<b>(2) ST and TT</b> 'Abduh seeking permission to steal a manuscript from Mr. al-Badi'	<b>(2) ST and TT</b> Dialogue	<b>(2) ST and TT</b> Shift in Linguistic Formality Formal → Informal
<b>(3) ST and TT</b> Playful teasing between characters regarding Dr. Sārah's title preference	<b>(3) ST and TT</b> Dialogue	<b>(3) ST and TT</b> Sense of Familiarity and Camaraderie
<b>(4) ST and TT</b> Selection of a title for Mrs. Hanfia by Shākīr and Sārah	<b>(4) ST and TT</b> Dialogue	<b>(4) ST and TT</b> Playful Exaggeration and Light-Heartedness
<b>(5) ST and TT</b> Societal norms and civilization's evolution	<b>(5) ST and TT</b> Narrative	<b>(5) ST and TT</b> Sarcasm and Irony
<b>(6) ST and TT</b> Conclusion of a novel	<b>(6) ST and TT</b> Direct address to the reader akin to epilogue	<b>(6) ST and TT</b> Polite and clear

## 5.2. Maxim Violations

Irony translation presents unique challenges as it relies on contextual incongruity and deliberate maxim violations. Attardo (2000) argues that irony functions as "relevant inappropriateness," where the speaker deliberately creates a contrast between literal meaning and intended meaning. This aligns with Grice's cooperative principle, as irony often arises from violations of the maxims of Quantity and Quality, which are central to this study's analysis. Barbe (1995) further stresses that irony must be interpreted within its discourse context, reinforcing the need to consider cultural and situational factors when translating irony.

Table 2 below provides an analysis of the rhetorical features and violations of maxim in the source text (ST) and target text (TT). For example (1), it is evident that both the ST and TT exhibit maxim violations in quality and quantity, together with the rhetorical devices of formal vs. informal, repetition, questions vs. clarification, and some degrees of quotation use. The TT is successful in reproducing the maxim violations and rhetorical devices of the ST in examples (1) and (2). Similarly, example (2) contains both the maxims of quality and manner violations in ST and TT and is rich with repetition, hyperbole, contrast, sarcasm, and interrogative speech acts. The TT effectively reflects these violations of maxims and rhetorical strategies found in the ST.

Moving on to example (3), the ST shows the violation of maxims related to quality and manner through verbal irony, repetition, negation, incomplete sentences, vagueness, contrast, and emphasis, along with politeness markers and sarcasm. The TT, however, managed to extrapolate these maxim violations and rhetorical devices into its text, though with minor differences in the wording used. For instance, in (4), quantity, quality, and manner maxim violations are shown in both the ST and TT. The violations would then cover contrast and paradox, exaggeration and assertion, overstatement and understatement,

repetition and parallelism, sarcasm and mockery, wordplay and allusion, figures of speech, and superlatives. The TT provides a faithful reproduction of the original violations of maxims and rhetorical devices from the ST.

Example (5) illustrates the maxim violation on quantity and manner. It cites the usage of such self-irony, argumentative, and wordplay styles, persuasion using puns, repetition, and parallelism, contradiction and paradox, exaggeration, satire, and the participation of the reader. The translation captures very competently the maxim violations and rhetorical devices therein. The only difference is in the execution in the ST and the same in the TT. Lastly, example (6) is clear that the ST and TT have violations in quantity maxim. They are characterized by rhetorical devices such as irony, wordplay, persuasion, reader involvement, politeness, and closure. The TT brings these rhetorical devices evident in the ST accurately.

**Table 2:** Analysis of Maxim Violations and Rhetorical Devices in ST and TT

<b>Maxim Violations</b>	<b>Rhetorical and Stylistic Devices</b>
(1) A. ST: Quality and Quantity	(Formal vs informal)-(Repetition)-(Wordplay)-(Questions vs Clarification)
(1) B. TT: Quality and Quantity	(Formal vs informal)-(Repetition)-(Questions vs Clarification)-(Strategic use of Quotation Marks)
(2) A. ST: Quality and Manner	(Repetition)- (Exaggerated use of language)-(Contrast: sudden switch from the formal to the informal)-(Sarcasm)-(Interrogative speech act)
(2) B. TT: Quality and Manner	(Repetition)- (Exaggerated use of language)-(Contrast: sudden switch from the formal to the informal)-(Sarcasm)-(Interrogative speech act)
(3) A. ST: Quality and Manner	(Verbal Irony)-(Repetition)-(Negation)-(Incomplete Sentences)-(Vagueness)-(Contrast and Emphasis)-(Politeness Markers)-(Sarcasm)
(3) B. TT: Quality and Manner	(Irony)-(Repetition)-(Negation)- (Incomplete Sentences)-(Vagueness)- (Contrast and Emphasis)-(Politeness Markers)-(Sarcasm)
(4) A. ST: Quantity, Quality, and Manner	(Contrast and paradox)- (Exaggeration and Assertion)-(Overstatement and Understatement)- (Repetition and Parallelism)-(Sarcasm and Mockery)-(Wordplay and Allusion)-(Figures of speech)-(Superlatives)
(4) B. TT: Quantity, Quality, and Manner	(Contrast and Paradox)- (Exaggeration and Assertion)-(Overstatement and Understatement)-(Repetition and Parallelism)-(Sarcasm and Mockery)-(Wordplay and Allusion)-(Figures of Speech)-(Superlatives)
(5) A. ST: Quantity and Manner	(Self-Irony)- (Argumentative Style)-(Persuasion)-(Wordplay and Puns)- (Repetition and Parallelism)-(Contradiction and Paradox)-(Exaggeration)-(Satire)-(Reader Engagement)
(5) B. TT: Quantity and Manner	(Self-Irony)- (Argumentative Style)-(Persuasion)-(Repetition and Parallelism)-(Contradiction and Paradox)-(Exaggeration)-(Satire)-(Reader Engagement)
(6) A. ST: Quantity	(Irony)-(Wordplay)-(Persuasion)- (Reader Engagement)-(Polite)-(Closure)
(6) B. TT: Quantity	(Irony)-(Wordplay)-(Persuasion)- (Reader Engagement)-(Polite)-(Closure)

The analysis presented in Table 2 elucidates the intricate translation dynamics between the source text (ST) and target text (TT) across various examples. It demonstrates a consistent pattern in the translation process where both the ST and TT display a sophisticated use of rhetorical and stylistic devices, along with strategic maxim violations that contribute to the richness of the narrative and dialogue. These elements not only enhance the depth of character portrayal and narrative engagement but also preserve the humor and thematic essence of the original text. Importantly, the TT's ability to closely mirror these aspects of the ST, despite the inherent challenges of linguistic and cultural transference, showcases the translator's proficiency and sensitivity to both the text's stylistic nuances and its broader communicative goals. This fidelity in translation underscores the translator's role in bridging cultural and linguistic divides, ensuring that the humor, irony, and stylistic subtleties transcend linguistic boundaries and resonate with a wider audience. This effective replication of maxim violations and rhetorical strategies across texts reinforces the translator's critical role in the successful conveyance of the author's original intent and literary finesse.

### 5.3. Locutionary and Illocutionary Meaning

In table 3, the examination of locutionary and illocutionary meaning has been highly significant in identifying ironic meaning. In the first and second examples, Mr. Aḥmad al-Badī's fervent rebuke of those deviating from classical fuṣḥā, occasionally lapsing into colloquialism, exemplifies the locutionary force. The illocutionary force underscores the importance of studying and preserving the Egyptian dialect alongside classical fuṣḥā. Despite the translator's commitment to preserving the locutionary meaning in the target text, he has encountered challenges in replicating the inherent locutionary force embedded within the original Arabic source text. In the third instance, the locutionary meaning humorously depicts Dr. Sārah's inclination to be addressed as a male doctor, evident in both the source and target texts. However, the illocutionary force that highlights her pride as a female doctor and challenges the prevailing societal norms of the 1940s, which limited this profession to men, is not clearly conveyed in the target text. In the fourth instance, Shākīr's use of the plural title "السيدات" (al-sayyidāt) to praise Mrs. Hanfīa demonstrates the locutionary aspect, while his use of overstatement and exaggeration to ridicule her exemplifies the illocutionary force in the narrative in both the source and target texts.

In the fifth occurrence, the author employs an argumentative style in the source text using repetition, parallelism, contradiction, paradox, exaggeration, and satire. This approach effectively supports Dr. Sarah's departure from traditional norms and addresses sensitive societal issues in Egypt at that time. The illocutionary function of the text seeks to persuade readers of the validity of this departure while incorporating self-irony to mock the author's writing style. Notably, the author's expertise lies in essay writing rather than fiction. In the target text, the locutionary force conveys a similar message, albeit with a slight reduction in rhetorical richness resulting from translation choices. However, the illocutionary force remains intact, aiming to persuade readers about the importance of societal change and the need to challenge traditional norms. In the sixth instance, both the Arabic source text and its English translation exhibit a locutionary force aimed at conveying the conclusion of the storyline, promising readers further

updates, and expressing gratitude. The illocutionary force of both texts serves the purpose of informing, assuring, and expressing gratitude. Table 3 provides an analysis of both the locutionary and illocutionary meanings present within the source text, while concurrently evaluating the accuracy of their replication in the target text.

**Table 3:** Analysis of Locutionary and Illocutionary Meaning in ST and their Replication in TT

Example	Locutionary Meaning	Illocutionary Meaning	Target Text Accuracy
1	Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi's rebuke of colloquialism and preservation of classical fuṣḥā	Importance of studying and preserving Egyptian dialect alongside classical fuṣḥā	Challenges in replicating locutionary force
2	Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi's rebuke of colloquialism and preservation of classical fuṣḥā	Importance of studying and preserving Egyptian dialect alongside classical fuṣḥā	Challenges in replicating locutionary force
3	Humorous depiction of Dr. Sārah's desire to be addressed as a male doctor	Challenge to societal norms limiting female participation in the medical profession	Partial conveyance of illocutionary force
4	Use of "السيدات" (al-sayyidāt) to praise Mrs. Hanfia; Overstatement and exaggeration to ridicule her	Locutionary praise and ridicule	Successful replication of both locutionary and illocutionary forces
5	Employment of argumentative style with repetition, parallelism, contradiction, paradox, exaggeration, and satire	Support for Dr. Sarah's departure from traditional norms and addressing societal issues	Reduction in rhetorical richness; Preservation of illocutionary force
6	Conclusion of storyline; Promise of further updates; Expression of gratitude	Informing, assuring, expressing gratitude	Successful replication of both locutionary and illocutionary forces

#### 5.4. Translation Strategies

Translation choices can, in fact, play an important role in shaping the reader's perception of ironic meaning and cultural context. House (2015) posits that translation quality assessment must distinguish between overt as well as covert translation strategies—a framework that applies to Hutchins' approach in translating *Mīdū wa Shurakāh*. His use of adaptation and paraphrasing works to improve the readability of the text; however, in doing so, he often alters the rhetorical function of irony in the target text. Likewise, Venuti (2013) critiques the invisibility of translators. He points out that translation choices can subtly reshape ideological meanings. In fact, this is clearly evident in Hutchins' translation of "*Shurakāh*" as "*Accomplices*," where the neutral connotation of "associates" in Arabic is replaced with a criminal undertone in the English version of the novel.

Before delving into the translator's strategies, it is important to highlight some general observations regarding the English version of the novel translated by Hutchins. According to Peters, Al-Māzīnī, and Hutchins (1984, 659), the translation remains faithful to the original by successfully reproducing the ease and conversational flow of its style. However, criticism is directed towards the translator's choice of rendering the word "*Shurakāh*" in the title of the novel as "*Accomplices*." This choice is deemed unfortunate as the characters in the novella are not accomplices in a crime, but rather, as indicated in the Arabic, "associates" or "company." The translation thus introduces an unintended legal overtone, which alters the perception of the characters' relationships. A more accurate rendering could be, for instance, "*Mīdū and His Associates*" which preserves the neutral and flexible nature of *Shurakāh* while keeping the

social dynamic intact. One more rendition could be "Mīdū and His Partners" which stresses collaboration while allowing for ironic undertones. Also, "Mīdū and His Companions" is another translation that retains the sense of camaraderie without the legal or criminal implication.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the neutral title "استاذ" (Mr.) in the Arabic text is inaccurately rendered as the academic term "professor" in the English version, without any justification or evidence from the novel itself. It is important to clarify that Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi' is simply a man of letters (Badawi 1973, 140 ; Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī 1943, 98), not an academic professor as implied in the English translation of the novel. A more appropriate translation would be "Mr. Aḥmad al-Badi'", ensuring that his professional identity is not misrepresented. These translation shifts, while seemingly minor, have a notable impact on characterization and thematic interpretation. By refining such lexical choices, the translation could better reflect the nuances of the source text while maintaining stylistic fluency and narrative coherence.

Table 4 presents a detailed analysis of translation strategies employed in the target text (TT), aiming to replicate linguistic features found in the source text (ST). The examples showcase a range of techniques utilized by translators to convey meaning across languages effectively. In the first example (1A. B), the strategy of transliteration and cultural adaptation is evident, where the Arabic terms "امتى" and "متى" are transliterated as "wen" and "when" respectively, to accommodate both the phonetic and cultural aspects of the original expressions. Additionally, the translator employs omission and simplification to streamline the target text, adjusts the linguistic register to match the intended audience, and utilizes paraphrasing for clarification purposes. These strategies collectively ensure semantic equivalence between the ST and TT, facilitating understanding for the target audience.

**Table 4:** Translation Strategies Employed in TT with Examples

Examples	Translation Strategies Employed
<b>(1) A. B</b>	
"wen" for "امتى" and "when" for "متى"	Transliteration and Cultural Adaptation
"Or would you understand better if I say 'wen'?" "أو بلغتك العامية السخيفة امتى؟"	Omission and Simplification
"Bout an 'our ago" for "يجى ساعة دلوقتى"	Linguistic Register Adjustment
"Chick! Do you mean 'lady'?" for "واحدة!! هل "تعنى سيدة؟"	Paraphrasing and Clarification
"a young woman" for "ست صغيرة"	Semantic Equivalence
"Do you mean he looked at her or ogled her?" for "هل قلت يبص لها .. أو يبصص لها؟"	Omission and Simplification
"wen" for "امتى" and "lady" for "سيدة"	Strategic Application of Quotation Marks
<b>(2) A. B</b>	
"Wacha sayin?" for "بتقول ايه؟"	Transliteration and Cultural Adaptation
"Sayyyyyyyin!" for "بيبيبيبتقول !!!"	Repetition and Clarification
"astonishment" for "دهشة" (shock)	Semantic Equivalence
"Wacha sayin?" and "Letchya do wat?" for "انت "بتقول ايه؟ .. بيبيبيبتقول !!! اسمح لك بأيه..؟"	Linguistic Register Adjustment and Cultural Adaptation

Examples	Translation Strategies Employed
<b>(3) A.B</b> "Please, Dr. Sārah. No feminine. I don't understand why you should be so stubborn." for "من فضلك .. - دكتور - سارة .. انى لا افهم هذا التعنت منك" "No, no, no" and ""Yes, why not"" for "لا لا لا" and "نعم لم لا" "Dr. Sārah" for "دكتورة سارة" "Sārah the woman doctor" for "دكتورة سارة" "I mean I think this is excellent" for "انى استحسن هذا"	Retention of Arabic Names (Characterization) and Cultural Adaptation Repetition and Clarification Omission and Simplification Paraphrasing Expansion
<b>(4) A.B</b> "When she walks on the public road it becomes private," for "اذا سارت فى الطريق العام فانه يصبح خاصا" "Otherwise, she could go to hear a lecturer" for "ولو أنها ذهبت تستمع الى محاضر" "If she is in a movie theater..." for "واذا كانت فى دار السينما" "If she were to descend into the ocean..." for "ولو نزلت الى البحر" "This is the greatest proof" for "وهذا أعظم دليل" "poor fellow" for "المسكين" "the desire for learning displayed and by the wish for improvement and the acquisition of knowledge," for "الرغبة فى الاستفادة، والحرص على الانتفاع والتحصيل" "the ocean, the greatest ocean," for "البحر - البحر الأعظم" "Has the spring run dry?" for "هل نضب المعين؟" "and that it is a mistake to refer to her as with a singular," for "وعلى غلط النحو الذي يعدها مفردة" "The Mesdames" for "السيدات"	Semantic Reversal and Paraphrasing Paraphrasing Paraphrasing Paraphrasing Overstatement Understatement Parallelism Repetition and Superlatives Figurative Expressions Omission Cultural Adaptation
<b>(5) A.B</b> "discarding the veil" and "veiling" for "السفور" and "الحجاب" "If discarding the veil open to criticism or has caused some harm," for "وان كان للسفور عيب، أو منه ضير" "departed" and "departure" for "خرجت", "تخرج", "خرج"	Explicitation Parallelism and Paraphrasing Repetition
<b>(6) A.B</b> "white paper" and "green-backed" for	Wordplay and Cultural Adaptation

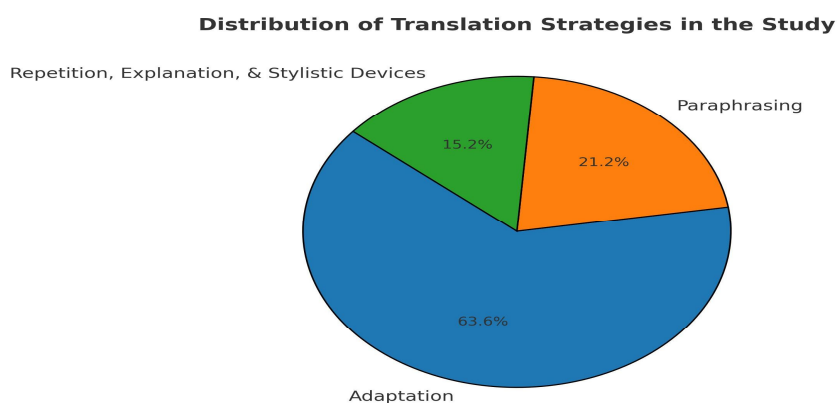
Examples	Translation Strategies Employed
"بورك" <i>bīwaraq</i> and "بورق" <i>bīwarīq</i>	
"torn" for "موزعة"	Cultural Adaptation
"Peace and thanks, till we meet again, with God's permission" for "والسلام عليه، والشكر له، والى الملتقى"	Cultural Adaptation
"بازن الله"	
"it is all the same" for "سيان"	Explication

In example 2A. B, the translator renders the colloquial Arabic expression "بتقول ايه؟" as "Wacha sayin?" He uses both transliteration and cultural adaptation to reflect the informal quality of the Arabic text in his English rendition. The speaker's shock is intensified by the repetition and emphasis of the phrase "Sayyyyyyyin!" Actually, these translation strategies aid in maintaining semantic equivalence between the source text and the translated version. In example 3A and B, on the other hand, the translation technique consists of preserving Arabic names for the purpose of characterization, while adapting cultural features to better appeal to the intended audience. Clarification and repetition assist in efficiently communicating the intended meaning, while simplification and omission streamline the language. Finally, paraphrasing is employed by the translator in an attempt to improve clarity and promote a thorough comprehension of target text.

In example 4A. B, the translation strategies involve employing both literal translation and semantic reversal in order to maintain the core meaning of overstatement in the original Arabic text. Furthermore, paraphrasing is employed to modify phrases for the purpose of fitting them into the target language while preserving their rhetorical effectiveness. The utilization of overstatement and understatement strategies contributes to the overall rhetorical impact, while the implementation of parallelism and superlatives enhances the linguistic depth of the translated text. In addition, the use of figurative terms and cultural adaptation helps to guarantee that the translated text maintains semantic equivalence and cultural relevance. Example 5 A.B, on the other hand, demonstrates the utilization of explication and parallelism through paraphrase to successfully portray the subtle meaning of the Arabic terms. Actually, the use of repetition enhances the reinforcement of important concepts, while cultural adaptation guarantees the appropriateness of phrases in the intended context. Finally, in example 6A. B, the translator employs wordplay and cultural adaptation to effectively communicate the desired meaning in his translation. Cultural adaptation is utilized by the translator to guarantee the appropriateness of expressions in the intended context. Also, incorporating commentary with cultural adaptation strengthens the cultural significance of the translated work. In fact, adaptation and explication strategies help to clearly convey the original idea, thereby promoting effective communication between different languages.

The statistical analysis of translation strategies in this study, as demonstrated below in figure 2, reveals some insights into the translator's use of various adaptation techniques. Actually, the term adaptation in this study includes cultural adaptation, transliteration, omission, simplification, expansion, linguistic register adjustment, retention of Arabic names, and wordplay. Notably, adaptation constitutes the highest percentage around 61.76% in this study according to the statistical analysis of the tables. This,

in fact, underscores the deliberate efforts by the translator to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps in his English version of the novella. Paraphrasing, on the other hand, constitutes approximately 20.59% of the deployed strategies. It demonstrates the translator's proficiency in conveying subtle meanings and idiomatic expressions. Additionally, the use of repetition, explanation, and various stylistic and expressive devices, each accounting for about 11.76% to 14.71%, emphasizes a meticulous focus on detail and the skillful manipulation of language to enhance both readability and accuracy. This study points out that the translator strategically employs techniques such as "Omission and Simplification," "Linguistic Register Adjustment," and "Paraphrasing" to effectively handle linguistic complexities and cultural nuances, thereby lessening the temporal gap between modern English readers and the Arabic source text.



**Figure 2:** Distribution of Translation Strategies in the Study

## Conclusion

This paper investigated the difficulties in translating irony from al-Māzīnī's Arabic novella "*Mīdū wa Shurakāh*" to Hutchins' English translation "*Mīdū and His Accomplices*". Problems of translating ironic utterances produced by shifts in register, use of colloquialism, titles and honorifics, ironic exaggeration or overstatement, and aesthetic irony were examined in this study. A four-dimensional model based on the discourse model of Chakhachiro was proposed. Actually, this model incorporated speech act theory by Austin, cooperative principle by Grice, and functional theory by Halliday. It proved helpful in the examination and assessment of irony in the novel's Arabic and English translations.

The register analysis, in this study, highlighted the dynamic shifts between formal and informal language use. It demonstrated how these variations fulfill specific narrative functions and enhance the humorous tone of the text. The examination of Grice's conversational maxims sheds light on the strategic violations necessary to effectively convey irony. Preserving these violations—especially those of the maxims of quality and manner in the corpus of this study—are necessary to maintain the ironic tone of the original text. Furthermore, the paper takes into account the perlocutionary and illocutionary forces of the ironic utterances. It pointed out whether the translation stayed faithful to the original text or strayed

from it. The last stage of analysis in this paper highlighted the use of translation strategies such as cultural adaptation, and paraphrasing. Actually, the translator used these strategies in an attempt to attain equivalence in the target language.

This paper contends that translating irony involves more than mere direct translation of words, particularly when dealing with a language as linguistically and culturally rich as Arabic. Successful maintenance of the ironic impact in translation requires a deep understanding of the original author's objectives, language subtleties, and cultural contexts. This paper emphasizes the role of the translator as a cultural mediator, who needs to overcome language and cultural obstacles in order to make the text meaningful and understandable to the target audience.

The present four-dimensional model is a systematic approach to the process of translating irony beyond Arabic-English literary texts. Such a model could be applied to political satire, media discourse, and audiovisual translation in future studies, in which irony takes a pivotal role in forming pragmatic meaning and audience perception. Irony, being regarded according to Attardo (2000), Hutcheon (1994), and House (2015), as not simply a stylistic device but also a process of cultural negotiation, finds its translation apt for studies within intercultural communication.

تحليل لغوى لترجمة المفارقة (السخرية) فى (ميدو وشركاه) من العربية الى الإنجليزية  
لكل من المازنى و هتشينز

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المخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة ترجمة السخرية من اللغة العربية إلى الإنجليزية في رواية المازنى (ميدو وشركاه) (1943) وترجمتها الإنجليزية "ميدو ومرافقيه" (2006) من قبل هتشينز. تستخدم الدراسة نموذجاً لغوياً رباعياً الأبعاد يستند إلى نماذج ونظريات تحليلية مثل نموذج تحليل الخطاب الساخر لتشاكاشيرو، نظرية الوظيفية لهاليداي، مبدأ التعاون لغرايس، ونظرية الفعل الكلامي لأوستن. يبحث البحث في تأثير تغييرات مستوى اللغة في النص، خرق القواعد اللغوية في الحوار، و استخدام الأساليب البلاغية على ترجمة السخرية. يتناول البحث التحديات المتعلقة بترجمة العبارات العامية، الألقاب الساخرة، والدور المعقد للراوي. يلاحظ أن المازنى يعتمد على المزج بين السخرية اللفظية و المفارقة الموقفية ، مما يجعل الترجمة عملية معقدة. دفع هذا الأسلوب المترجم إلى التكثيف فى استخدام استراتيجيات التكيف (التصرف) لسد الفجوات الثقافية، مع الحفاظ على الامانة وسهولة القراءة. تؤكد النتائج على أن جهود المترجم فى استخدام استراتيجيات التكيف و الشرح أثمرت فى تقليل الفجوات الزمنية والثقافية بين النص العربى و الجماهير الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية الترجمة، السخرية، النموذج الرباعي الأبعاد، المازنى، استراتيجيات التكيف.

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