

Dissecting the types and functions of religious humor in Nasreddin Hoja short-stories

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ABSTRACT

Humor is a significant element in funny stories. This study aims to analyze the types and functions of humor in selected Nasreddin's short stories from the book *Nasreddin's Funniest Stories* (2011) by Priyasudiarja and Purwaningsih. By using the descriptive qualitative method, the study adopts textual analysis to examine the materials. Based on the analysis, the findings of this present study revealed that the types of humor applied in the stories are joke, sarcasm, satire, replies to rhetorical question, clever replies, and double entendres. However, these short-stories lack some other typical types of spontaneous conversational humor used in short stories' texts: puns and self-deprecation. Meanwhile, unintentional humor is also not found in the Nasreddin short stories because it is raised from the speaker's misspellings, mispronunciations, errors in logic, and Freudian slips. Further reading shows that the underlying use of humor in these stories is dominated by social management: to control and mediate readers. This present study will provide the practical benefit of using religious humor from short stories in English for Islamic Studies-related courses in an EFL context, specifically in the language education program at an Islamic university. The vital contribution of this study will have a significant theoretical impact on developing a body of knowledge in literature, discourse analysis, and semantic and pragmatic courses and recommend its appropriate use in a manner that can improve performance in reading comprehension for EFL students. This paper should link its title/content with the EFL context to meet the journal's aims and scope.

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1. Introduction

Humor is one of the most common forms of communication strategy to pass profound messages across without hurting others or to connect with others in a light-hearted way. Many writers choose humor in their works for similar purposes, gaining the effect of laughing. Humans find laughing as a form of releasing stress, and they do so regardless of whether in a group or alone when they find something funny on television, in a comical writing, or when they remember a funny personal experience. Shuqin (2013) argues that humor is divided into visual humor, verbal humor represented through pictures and actions funny utterances, respectively. Stories that apply humor present specific values, norms and particular messages (Kasunic & Kaufman, 2018). Psychologically, humor does not only reduce stress and achieve positive effects in our behavior and mental health, but it also brings positive outcomes and acts as a coping strategy to reduce stress in human interactions (Berk, 2015).

As a part of human life and experience, Oring (2003) argues that humor is culturally universal. Humor is universally thought as mood booster and mood changer, and exciting construction of happier life (Rizzolo et al., 2011). Although its universality remains unchallenged, Martin and Ford (2018) believe that the way humans perceive humor is not the same. Different societies or cultures understand humor differently; if it is funny here, it does not mean funny elsewhere (Chovanec & Tsakona, 2018). In addition, Rahman, Hidayat, and Alek (2021) also agree that everyone interprets humor in a different way; it may be amusing to one but not to another. These habitual variances are created over time through community members' behaviors, attitudes, experiences, consensus and idiosyncratic personality (Schneider et al., 2018).

Humor can be presented in any form of media, such as stand-up comedies, short stories, cartoon strips, cartoon series, or situation comedy. Martin and Ford (2018) suggest that humor exists in several forms; joke, spontaneous conversational humor, and unintentional humor. In a study conducted by Yaman (2017), the writer states that a teacher offered humor stories from Nasreddin Hoja's short-stories as materials in English classroom. In this sense, humorous elements potentially work to motivate students to learn the English language. According to Akmal and Hadi (2015), storytelling and narration are two teaching methods that can be employed to enhance students' reading and speaking skills. Therefore, this study focuses on the narrative in Nasreddin Hoja's short stories that can be used for language teaching or learning purposes, especially to humanize, encourage, reduce anxiety and keep people thinking (Torok et al., 2004).

Nasreddin Hoja, or Hodja, or Hoca, or Mullah Nasreddin, is a Turkish Sufi known for his comical tales and spiritual therapy (Mukholik & Luthfi, 2019). His funny but divined anecdotes were famously told in book, radios, and homes over centuries and

generations. It has started to become popular in Turkey and the Middle East in the thirteenth centuries (Shah, 2004), before internationally recognized following the decision by UNESCO to mark the year of 1996 and 1997 as the International Nasreddin Year to mark the seven hundredth anniversary of the Turkish humorist (Cesran International, 2022).

In Turkish folk tradition and most Muslim cultures and literatures, Nasreddin Hoja humor is famous as it addresses educational values (Asilioglu, 2008; Erdoğan, 2013), wisdom, and critical thinking (Corrao, 2016; Ozdemir, 2010) reflect mundane human nature interaction and psychology (Temiz et al., 2019; Torusdağ & Aydın, 2020). Others went further and discussed the implementation of Nasreddin humorous texts in EFL Classroom for children (Cevik & Spahiu, 2013) or its use for designing drama activities for students (Ekmekçi, 2017). According to Karadağ (1998), Nasreddin Hodja folk stories are short, real and simple and able to offer reflection on daily life pieces of human beings.

Moreover, we have identified that humor in language and literature educations has relationship with societal transformation, at least in values and attitudes. Yet, the lack of empirical evidence of what types and functions of humor on the contribution of how amusing short-stories like the ones from Nasreddin Hoja in changing personal and societal point of view is thus restricted. In this study, the goals are to dissect the types and functions of humor contained in Nasreddin Hoja short-stories and to assess their potential for the modified language literature classroom in Islamic university contexts.

For language learning purposes, Tuncay (2007) suggests that humor is an essential additional element in the process, and it can be implemented in various ways in classroom setting. Yaman (2017) adds that “Nasreddin’s Funniest Stories” by Priyasudiarja and Purwaningsih (2011) is a well-known textual material in eastern Islamic regions cultures. His works are famous for the nature of the tales, which are dynamic, amusing, relatable to all ages, efficient, and pedagogical. For this reason, we found that humor in Nasreddin Hoja’s short stories fits the aim of the study. However, in the selected short stories for this study, not all forms of humor are found in the texts selected. Nasreddin contextually uses humor. Readers need to have a certain level of background information before they can catch the author’s sense of humor. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to get a clearer understanding of the different types and functions of humor in “Nasreddin’s Funniest Stories” (2011) book.

2. Literature review

To define humor, we must first embrace the idea that humor is dynamically constructed and negotiated in human interaction (Chovanec & Tsakona, 2018). Martin and Ford (2018) argue that humor is a broad, multifaceted term, and therefore psychologically represents funny actions or sayings and can make people laugh. It is essential to understand that humor is substantially beyond textual or literal notions and

requires a contextual opinion to experience. Henman (2001) further underlines that humor is a coping mechanism and a symbol of human resilience. People often laugh and thus represent a form of social or at least imagined social context either alone or in public setting.

Its compelling nature and powerful trait has made humor is unsurprisingly subjected to various analytical observation and researches. Meyer (2020), for example, introduces four functions of humor in communication; identification, clarification, enforcement and differentiation. Meyer additionally proposes three main theories of humor; relief, incongruity, and superiority. Relief theory explains how humor release tension, incongruity is basically against definite patterns, and superiority stresses the importance of triumph. Earlier, Attardo (1994, 2017) an Italian linguist, promotes another four types of humor function, something different from the latest four functions proposes by Meyer, namely: social management, decommitment, mediation, and defunctionalization.

The term humor also refers to the interactive experience of interpersonal understanding deriving from the alternative interpretation of social regulation (Goel & Dolan, 2007; Rosenheim, 1974). To denote humor, we need to associate it with human expression. In addition to involving emotions in humor, Harper (2016) claims that humor is elusive as each has different interpretations and appreciations on what is denoted as funny or not. This concept of absurdity becomes a useful construct in humor research, as Forabosco (2008) notes that humor's most important component, though not always sufficient, is often its incompatibility to every culture and society.

In short stories, narratives and literature, studies on humor are rich. In different countries and cultures, humor in short stories is a major topic for discussion. Chłopiczki (2017) brings forward the idea of how humor and narrative are inseparable in literature tradition when discussing three basic tendencies in short stories humor: escalation, variation, and accumulation. At the same time, Triezenberg (2008) mentions that humor are simply bizarre and inexplicable. Such creativity in writing humor requires the comic mind (Rishel, 2002) to be able to examine which one consequence or cause in short stories (Snauwaert, 2018). Humor is often established to brings people closer together for solidarity, shared common views and interests among the speakers at work (Omar & Jan, 2013), or provides relief, contestive or reprieve in adversarial and formal courtroom interaction (Ibrahim & Nambiar, 2011).

2.1. Types of humor

According to Martin (2006), a person's identity is determined by the amount of comedy they generate in their daily encounters with others. The majority of people appreciate the positive outcomes of excitement so much that they respect those skilled at making others laugh. These are the individuals who are frequently requested to partake in humorous activities and those who are actively seeking friendships. Some people use their talents to make others laugh so much that they become professional

humor producers, assembling a team of humorous writers, cartoonists, stand-up comedians, comedy writers, and actors. The billions of dollars spent on various forms of comedy demonstrate the high value of money placed on entertainment associated with humor (Crawford & Gregory, 2015).

Martin and Ford (2018) divide humor that occurs in the everyday situations into three general types: (1) jokes, which are prepackaged humorous stories that people learn by heart and pass on to one another with typical excellence (Oring, 2017); (2) spontaneous conversational humor, which is created purposefully by persons throughout the sequence of a community interface, and can be either verbal or nonverbal that indicate the existence of paradox and ambiguity of a problem and solution (Hatch & Erhlich, 1993); and (3) accidental or unintentional humor, is also unintentionally delivered coming from the script overlap (Farghal, 2006).

As such, apart from these three most-used categorizations of humor types, Martin and Ford (2006) also explain several other types of humor, ranging from irony to puns. In irony, the opposite of what is really stated is intended. A speaker makes a statement whose literal meaning is inconsistent with its intended meaning, such as manifested in the case of situations, acts, or remarks. The irony is, by far, the most pragmatic model of humor in literary text or the figurative language of literary products (Hirsch, 2011; Reyes et al., 2012).

Satire is next in their typology. It is antagonistic humor that ridicules public institutions or policies. It highlights the underlying cultural principles and provides them for critique (Martin, 2006). This critique presents societal interpretations and questions regarding contemporary cultural practices using the cultural sociology approach (Tesnohliidkova, 2021). Satire includes comedy that emphasizes race relations, sexual discrimination, and nonspecific popular culture depictions. Satire develops humor by providing shared commentary on a problematic situation. There is a very close link between sarcasm and irony, as literary philosophers frequently treat sarcasm as simply the crudest and least exciting practice of irony (Martin & Ford, 2006).

Thereafter is hyperbole, another term for overstatement and exaggeration (Turayevna, 2019). To use hyperbole is to exaggerate beyond what is required. A speaker can utilize it to disregard the principle of excellence (Cutting & Fordyce, 2021). On the other hand, understatement adds humor to an otherwise serious circumstance (Ma'yuuf & Hasan, 2021), as a weaker sort of strength than what is typically assumed. Commonly, an understatement is intended to be humorous in the form of hedging, to display a sense of politeness and to diminish the seriousness of the impact. Nonetheless, a negative syntax of understatement can also be utilized for humor, as is frequently observed in litotes. A litotes is a sort of understatement that expresses a positive assertion by negating its contradictory assertion (Mokhlosa & Mukheefb, 2020).

Self-Deprecation is another humorous remark targeting oneself as the object of humor. This may be done to display modesty, put the listener at ease, or curry favor with the listener (Long & Graesser, 1988). Examples of self-deprecation include

highlighting physical imperfections, discussing prior failures, and admitting faults (Matwick & Matwick, 2017). Then there is teasing, a humorous comment made at the listener's physical appearance, habits, or personality traits. As opposed to sarcasm, the intention of irony is not to insult or offend severely but rather to maintain self-control and serve educational purposes (Franzén & Aronsson, 2013).

The following type of humor is replies to rhetorical question. Rhetorical questions are not intended to elicit a response. Answering the one that violates a conversational expectation and surprising the person who posed the question is the function of this type of humor (Schaffer, 2005). Subsequently, clever responses connect to the responses to the rhetorical questions stated above. "Clever" refers to inappropriate or ridiculous responses to a statement or inquiry that was intended to be taken seriously (Long & Graesser, 1988). The statement is intentionally misinterpreted so that the speaker responds to an alternative meaning.

Martin and Ford (2006) and Kiddon and Brun (2011) state that double entendres are a form of humor in which a remark is intentionally misrepresented to invoke a twofold meaning. When used intentionally, double entendres can be amusing, as their purpose is to elicit laughter from those who understand the second meaning and those who do not. Next is the transformation of frozen expression. Transformations of frozen expression happens when a speaker transforms common phrases, clichés, or adages into unique utterances (Martin & Ford, 2006). Last is the pun, witty use of a word that inspires a second meaning. It is mostly based on a homophone, a word with different meaning that sounds identical (Dhiaa & Abbas, 2016).

2.2. Functions of humor

Humor serves not only an entertaining purpose but also numerous societal purposes. The principal consequences of humor in conversation are those that the speaker can achieve directly by employing hilarious passages or texts in his or her speech (Attardo, 2017). In the same light, according to Zekavat (2017), the functions of humor in the communicative process can be grouped into four classes: social management, decommitment, mediation and functionalization.

The *social management* functions are the first function of humor. It addresses all situations in which humor is utilized to facilitate in-group contact and strengthen in-group bonding or out-group rejection. Social management examples include social controls, social norms transmission, ingratiation, discourse management, common ground establishment, intelligence, social play, and repair.

In terms of social control, the speaker uses humor as a social remedial to disconcert or daunt the members of the group to correct their social actions (Graham et al., 1992). Humor can also become a standardized means to form social norms as the speaker uses humor to attract attention to taboos or unacceptable behavior. Nilsen (1994) notes that white, middle-class, suburban women aim wit or sarcasm at each other to control sexual behavior.

Ingratiation satisfies the social management function of humor since it explains the motivation behind the speaker's attempts to garner attention and promote likeability. It demonstrates and fosters unanimity when two or more individuals laugh together. By being more likable, the speaker is deemed more influential in the public realm and the workplace (Cooper, 2005).

The following example of the social management function of humor includes discourse management. In this regard, humor can be used for initiation, termination, passing, and exchange of control, topic shift, and checking. The ability of an individual to appreciate other humors and to create humor is necessary to be skilled in discourse management in the workplace (Holmes et al., 2003).

Common ground establishment is the subsequent social management function where a speaker can use the hearer's reaction to humor to establish attention, understanding, and degree of involvement. In intercultural interaction, Ladilova and Schröder (2022) further claim that this aspect is central to avoiding misunderstandings in the communication of something they formerly disagreed with.

Cleverness in humor demands additional processing, production, and comprehension. In general, Gimbel (2018) states that humor should have good connotations in society, as it resembles a fun show of intelligence. The *Social play* generated through such play may improve social relationships and foster group cohesion (Long & Graesser, 1988). For women, humor serves as a technique of controlling commonality and intimacy, while for men; it functions as dominance (Kotthoff, 2006). Repair in unfavorable situations may be defused by amusing remarks, signifying a good attitude, in-group cohesion, and the exuberance of a bad joke (Bell, 2017).

Decommitment is the second function of humor. Attardo (1993) defines decommittment as the denial of any harmful intent for action and the declaration by the speaker that he or she did not plan to continue, carry out, or take seriously an action that had been initiated. The premise underlying the decommittment function is that humorous communication is retractable, for instance, the speaker can retract his or her statement without losing face (Attardo, 2009). Decommittment strategies consist of questioning and attempting to remove the speaker from what he or she is saying by making a joke that is becoming socially offensive (Attardo, 1993).

There are two sub-types of decommittment; *probing* and *salvaging*. Humor's *probing* function allows a speaker to elicit information by making a humorous utterance. According to Eastmond (1992) *probing* is the balancing function of humor that attempt to discover facts that others do not want you to know by asking careful and indirect inquiries. The use of this humor is to communicate implicitly serious material. It serves as a tool for discussing topics that may be too risky to address. In the instance of hostile humor, however, humor can be utilized to convey an explicit message of agreement or disagreement towards a person or group (Salvatore Attardo, 1993).

The next sub-type of decommittment is *salvaging*. Salvaging is a humorous function in which the speaker attempts to improve a negative situation. Attardo (1993)

explains salvaging as a situation in which a person who is about to suffer an unfavorable social setting may seek to save the situation by expressing that the proposed or past conduct was merely a joke to protect the speaker's reputation. This places the responsibility of initiating an awkward social interaction on the audience and provides the speaker with an out, such as "I did not mean it seriously."

The third function of humor is *mediation*. Mediation in humor is used either to introduce or carry out potentially embarrassing or confrontational situations. In brief, humor is viewed as a mechanism for mediating conflict, whereas teasing is viewed as a device for criticizing a person without directly attacking them. It is because they are not connected to the quality maxim that the speaker can disavow accountability for what he or she is saying. If the speaker's remarks are deemed socially inappropriate, he or she can deny their legitimacy by asserting that they were hilarious. Since joking is an approved style of communication, the speaker does not have to confront the repercussions of his/her remarks. In other words, the speaker may argue that he or she was merely joking (Mulkay, 1988). In the sense that its future serious nature can always be denied, humorous discourse bears less responsibility for the speaker, according to Mulkay. Teasing or joking is utilized to evaluate possibly socially inappropriate behavior and to address emotionally sensitive topics.

The last function of humor is *defunctionalization*. Humor, especially nonsense humor or puns, can be seen as a defunctionalization of language (Attardo, 2020). Defunctionalized language is not intended to transmit information but rather for amusement reasons. This argument is based on Freud's observation that hilarious use of language is comparable to children's enjoyment of playing with words. In addition, Guiraud's approach to the defunctionalization of humor explains that humor is viewed as a form of language play, which shifts the emphasis from language as a means of communication to language as a ritual and, eventually, language as an art (Attardo & Raskin, 2017). The notion that linguistic humor will be governed by the rules of the funny game as opposed to those of language is compatible with the metalinguistic position of puns and humor in general. The speakers are aware of the entertaining potential of language and the metalinguistic freedom from its constraints that humor permits; they may choose to take advantage of these potentials for amusing reasons.

3. Method

A qualitative research design was used in this study. The corpus in this study is derived from selected short stories in Nasreddin's Funniest Stories collection compiled by Yusup Priyasudiarja and Y. Sri Purwaningsih (2011) published in Bandung, Indonesia. This study specifically applies Martin and Ford's (2018) analysis of humor and Attardo's (2008) four theories of humor functions cited in Mietusch (2013).

3.1. Research design and approach

This study's data can be gathered from words, sentences, and conversations contained in the selected book of Nasreddin Hoja's short stories. Ashley et al. (2012), Mackey and Gass (2005), and Johnson and Christensen (2004) note that qualitative design in educational social research involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data in an effort to extract meaning from the data. Qualitative research design and approach, according to Tufford and Newman (2012), focuses on the interpretation or development of meaning in specific contexts, emphasizes phenomena, and relies on assumptions, explanations, and descriptions.

3.2. Material of analysis

Short stories, novels, poems, poetry, drama, and other literary-related objects are viable objects of analysis in literature studies for education. The short story is one of the research materials that can demonstrate the explicit and implicit meanings conveyed. The analysis material in this study comprises selected short stories from Nasreddin Hoja compiled by Priyasudiarja and Purwaningsih (2011) in the collection of Nasreddin's Funniest Stories. The book was chosen because it is an enjoyable read for youngsters, adolescents, and adults alike (Ohebsion, 2004). Each story demonstrates distinct moral ideals and funny stories with profound meaning. Also, the stories are told in a simple manner to have an effective pedagogical effect on EFL learners of any level.

3.3. Data analysis

There will be several steps in collecting data for this present study. First, the writer chose some short stories from Nasreddin Hoja's short stories book as the source for analyzing the types and functions of humor they contain. Second, the writer read the whole text in each part to understand the stories. Then, the writer chooses which type and function of humor to apply in each sentence. Finally, the data were analyzed based on the theory of function and type of humor proposed by Martin and Ford (2018) and Attardo (2008), four theories of humor functions.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Types of humor by Martin (2018)

Humorous lines support the development of narrative as well as provides for entertainment. Martin (2018) explains that each individual may generate humor in their everyday exchanges with others. Most individuals relish the encouraging results of excitement and value individuals who are good at making them laugh. In this light, Martin and Ford (2018, p. 30) differ humor that transpires in daily collective interfaces into three general groupings: (1) jokes, which are pre-packaged humorous anecdotes that the public remember and disseminate to others; (2) spontaneous conversational humor, which is shaped purposefully throughout mutual communication, it can: verbal or nonverbal; and (3) unintentional humor.

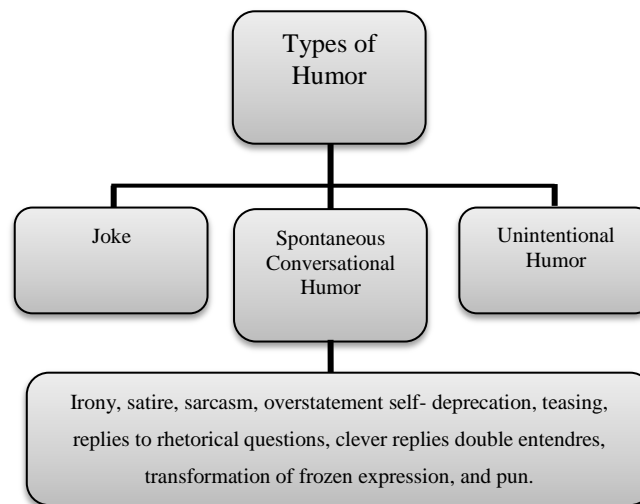


Figure 1. Types of humor by Martin and Ford (2018)

In this discussion, the writers find Martin’s theory on the three types of humor and the functions according to Attardo’s theory in Nasreddin’s Funny stories book. Each short-story contains different types of humor. In Nasreddin’s short-stories, the common types of humor found are joke, spontaneous conversational humor, and unintentional humor. In spontaneous conversational humor, there are eight categories: irony, sarcasm, satire, overstatement, self-deprecation, teasing, replies to rhetorical questions, clever replies, and double entendres. While the list is comprehensive, some of the categories are not found in Nasreddin’s selected works. This study will highlight the categories discovered in excerpts from short stories of Nasreddin's Funniest Stories by Priyasudiarja and Purwaningsih (2011) that will be elaborated below:

4.1.1. Joke in “Chocolate cake” short-story (pp. 303-304)

According to Martin and Ford (2018), first type of humor, which is Joke consists of a setup and punch line that stipulates a preliminary outline or arranged reasonable probabilities about the state of affairs. The image of individuals amused as a reaction to punch lines constructs bizarre destruction of expectations. An example of Joke:

Punch line	{	<p>“Do you have some flour?” Nasreddin asked the grocer. “I certainly do, Nasreddin,” the grocer replied “Do you have eggs?” Nasreddin asked again. “Yes, I do,” “What about sugar?” Nasreddin asked again. “What’s up, Nasreddin? How much do you want?” the grocer puzzled.</p>
Set up	{	<p>“So then, what are you waiting for, my friend? Go and make yourself a delicious chocolate cake and eat it! And I’d love to taste a bit.”</p>

The conversation above happens when Nasreddin goes to the supermarket to find ingredients to make a chocolate cake. He asks the grocer whether he had sugar, flour, eggs, and chocolate. When Nasreddin continues to ask the grocer to make a him a chocolate cake, this got the grocer puzzled. Nasreddin's dialogue is categorized as a Joke because the setup is when Nasreddin asked the grocer for the flour, egg and sugar. It created the grocer's expectations about how the condition must be understood while the grocer asked him how much he wanted. The punch line is when Nasreddin asked the grocer to make a chocolate cake to him. Unexpectedly moves the meaning in an unanticipated and lively manner, making the insight of non-serious absurdity required for humor to happen.

4.1.2. Sarcasm in "A big lie" short-story (pp. 19-20)

Pexman (2018) defines sarcasm as an aggressive type of humor in which the speaker says the opposite of what he or she means, usually with a unique tone of voice, in to be humorously critical. Sarcasm relies on its consequence on nasty, scathing, and other mocking languages that are typically focused on a person.

"I am sorry, my father isn't at home."

"Kid, listen to me! Tell your father, every time he goes out, he should go with his head, not leaving his head by the window. Is that clear?" Nasreddin replied.

Nasreddin receives an invitation from a rich man who has a bad reputation among the villagers because of his unfriendliness. When Nasreddin arrives at the rich man's house, the rich man's son opens the door but does not let him in and instead tells him that his father is not at home. Nasreddin sees through the corner of his eyes that the rich man is peeping behind the window. Nasreddin becomes furious and tells the son that if his father wants to go out next time, "he should go with his head and not leaving it by the window." Nasreddin uses sarcasm to embarrass the rich man who refuses to see him. The use of sarcasm is sometimes concentrates on social out-casts as a subtle way of asserting cohesion among members of the social group. Nasreddin does not really mean to ask the rich man to literally leave his head at the window before he leaves the house, he knows that the action is impossible, but what he means is he wants the rich man to really think of the effect of his actions before doing anything.

4.1.3. Satire in "An expensive outfit" short-story (pp. 45-46)

Satire is considered as hostile humor that discloses problems in personalities or social societies through calculated mockery (Martin & Ford, 2018). Satire includes humor that underlines racial affairs, sexual judgment and non-specific cases of popular beliefs. Satire created humor by raising public interpretation. An illustration of satire is found in the excerpt below:

"You have to drink it, too." Nasreddin said to his outfit as he dipped his outfit into wine glass.

"Nasreddin, try this roasted Turkey, you'll like it," the host said

"Sure, I will," Nasreddin replied. He took a piece of roasted turkey, chewed it a bit then fed the rest to his outfit.

"Nasreddin, why are you feeding your outfit and dipping it into your wine glass?"

"Well... you know why I have to feed my outfit. To tell you the truth, this outfit is the one which helps me get this wonderful treatment and delicious food," Nasreddin explained happily.

Nasreddin can secure an invitation from a rich family's party. He decides to wear the best outfit that he has. The outfit is plain and basic for an elite party. Due to this, he receives bad treatment at the party. Realizing that it is because of the unbefitting outfit, he decides to return home and borrow one of his friend's to come back to the party and impress the host. When he arrives there, everyone changes their attitude towards him. They welcome and respect him. They serve him the best food and drink at the party. Seeing how pretentious everyone is, Nasreddin begins to feed his coat with the food and "gave" his coat some wine "to drink". Everyone who saw this was shocking. When they asked him, he finally answered that they invited his coat and not him. Nasreddin's behavior is considered satirical. His satire is a hostile humor that pokes fun at people's behavior who likes to discriminate against those who lack material possessions and care only for outer appearance.

4.1.4. Replies to rhetorical question in "Dove feast" short-story (pp. 239-240)

Rhetorical questions are not questioned with the prospect of a response (Martin & Ford, 2018). Responding to one interrupts a conversational expectation and surprises the person who posed the question. This can be categorized as hilarious, and the purpose is typically to amuse a speaking partner.

"Sublime Allah," he spoke, looking up.

"It's such an amazing bless that you gave life to those cooked doves, but how are you going to pay me for the butter, salt, tomato and sugar I used?"

Nasreddin seldom hosts parties, but one day, he decides to host one. He invites his friends over dinner and they are delighted to receive his invitation. However, they want to prank Nasreddin. They ask him what he is planning to serve for dinner. Nasreddin says that he is going to serve doves for dinner. During the feast, Nasreddin appears from the kitchen with the doves served on a large thin platter, the meal is covered with a lid. When Nasreddin goes back to the kitchen, his friends mischievously replace the cooked doves with some living ones. As Nasreddin opened the lid, the doves

flew away. His friends waited anxiously to hear what Nasreddin was about to say. Taking the joke lightly, he only replies with praises to God, and to get back to his friends; he asks his friends how they will pay him for the ingredients he had used to prepare the meal now that the birds are gone? His question is a rhetorical question in which an answer is not needed.

4.1.5. Clever replies in "First preach" short-story (pp. 127-128)

According to Martin and Ford (2018, p. 30) in the psychology of humor an integrative approach, clever replies are often witty, odd, or ridiculous answers to declarations or requests intended to be serious. When an assertion is offered, the speaker on the receiving end replies in an entertaining manner which is the opposite of the meaning other than the intended one:

"Do you know what I am going to talk about?" Nasreddin questioned

"No, we don't, Nasreddin," they responded.

"If you don't know what I am going to talk about, then I have nothing to tell you," Nasreddin replied.

"Do you know what I am going to tell you today?" Nasreddin questioned again.

"Yes, we do, Nasreddin," they answered.

"If you have already known what I am going to tell you, then I have nothing to tell you," said Nasreddin.

"Do you know what I am going to tell to you?"

Some of them say *"Yes, we do"* and some others said *"No, we don't"*

"Well, in that case, those who know should tell those who do not know," Nasreddin answered.

Nasreddin always wanted to be an imam. He tries to get a lot of knowledge and trains in how to speak in front of many people. After working hard, he finally has a chance to lecture on his first day as the village's imam; Nasreddin sat on the elevated bench, ready to deliver a lecture. Everybody was curious to listen to what he had to say. Nasreddin turns very worried. He is not prepared of any kind to deliver a lecture. Then he tries to make a dialogue with them. He asks them whether they already knew what he was going to say. They reply that they do not know. Then Nasreddin told them that he would not tell them anything if they do not know anything. The following day, they say that they know what Nasreddin is going to tell. Once again, Nasreddin says that he does not have to tell them anything because they already know. On the third day; some say they know what his content is, some say they do not know. Nasreddin replies that those who have known should tell those who have not. In reality, Nasreddin has not prepared his speech, so he poses questions and ambiguous responses. He never answers them directly but only swerves his responses in clever replies.

4.1.6. Double entendres in “Stingy rich man” short-story (pp. 27-28)

Declarations or words are intentionally misperceived or misconstrued to conjure a twofold denotation, with one often speak of double entendres (Martin & Ford, 2018). When used with intent, it may be entertaining and engaging because the impression is to get a laugh both from people in the know and people who do not even know of its double meaning. An example is found in the excerpt below:

“Give me your hand! Give me your hand!” the people yelled.

“Nasreddin you should do something. Hasan, the rich, has fallen into the river. He is going to get drown, but he doesn’t let us save him,” one of them spoke to Nasreddin.

“Let me try,” Nasreddin responded.

“Hasan, Hasan, take my hand!” Nasreddin screamed to the sinking man. The man instantaneously grasped Nasreddin’s arm.

“How could you make it, Nasreddin?” one of the village dwellers questioned.

“It’s easy. He is quite stingy, right? He’s better at taking than giving. So use the word ‘take’ not ‘give’,” Nasreddin answered serenely.

In the story, a wealthy man drops some coin into the river. Because he is a stingy man, he does not want to let his coin go. He tries to reach the coin in the river but loses his balance and falls into the river. People see what happens and try to rescue him. They ask him to ‘give’ his hand but to their surprise, he does not want to ‘give’ his hands to them to get the help. The rescuers keep asking him to give them his hands, but he keeps refusing. Nasreddin happens to pass the scene and wants to help. Upon learning the situation, Nasreddin then asks the man to ‘take’ his hand and astonishingly, the rich man follows Nasreddin’s instruction and ‘takes’ it. When everyone asked Nasreddin about it, he only answers that the rich and stingy man is not used to ‘give’ to others but only knows to ‘take’. In the story above, ‘take’ has a double meaning; taking Nasreddin’s hand literally so that he can be rescued from drowning and also taking materials, gifts, or anything that increase his wealth without thinking of giving back to those who gave.

4.1.7. Humor functions by Attardo (1994)

Humor not only has an amusement function but also has many communal functions. The primary function of humor in the talk is the positive effects on the listeners that the speaker may accomplish unswervingly by applying this entertaining element in humorous speech or texts. The following section discusses the functions of humor in Nasreddin’s shortstories. According to Attardo (1994) as cited in the book of *Humor Across Cultures Research on Transcultural Humor in Intercultural Coaching and Training Setting* by Mietusch (2013, p. 12), the functions of humor on the

communicative process can be clustered into four types, they are social management, decommitment, mediation, and defunctionalization.

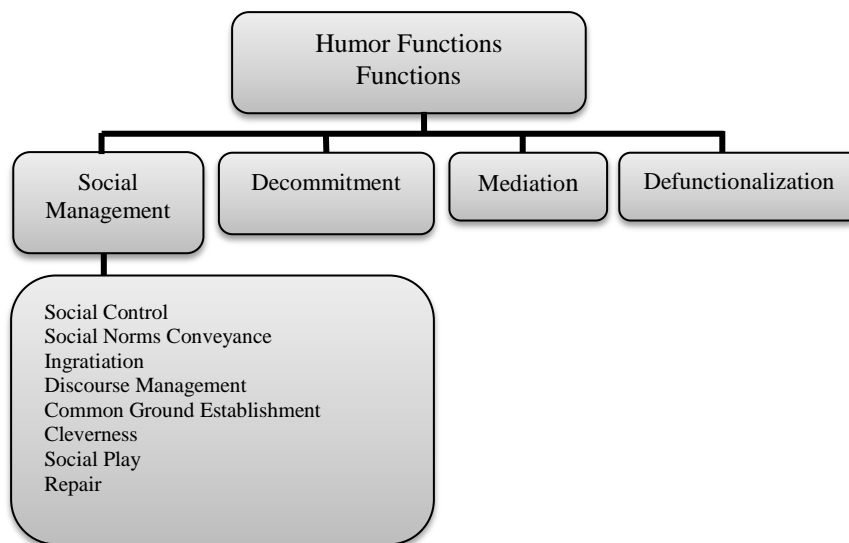


Figure 2. Humor functions by Attardo (1994)

4.1.8. Social management in “An expensive outfit” short-story (pp. 45-46)

Attardo’s report (as cited in Mietusch, 2013) reveals that “The social management function of humor covers all the cases in which humor is used as a tool to facilitate in-group interaction and strengthen in-group bonding or out-group rejection”. The following discussion will discuss social management that is found in Nasreddin’s short stories:

“Nasreddin, why are you feeding your outfit and dipping it into your wine glass?”

“Well... you know why I have to feed my outfit. To tell you the truth, this outfit is the one which helps me get this wonderful treatment and delicious food,” Nasreddin explained happily.

Nasreddin uses humor as a social management since he used humor as an instrument to enable in-group communication. He conveys thoughts that contain moral messages and the logic of language that should exist in every individual. Unconsciously, social criticism conveyed by Nasreddin subconsciously makes his audience ponders on their actions and behaviors in real life. Based on the context of the utterance delivered by Nasruddin in the above excerpt is to directly make the party attendees think about their social biases on appearance and indirectly teach his readers to think the same. Alternatively, Nasreddin is asking his readers not to judge someone by his appearance only; he invites his readers to treat all people with the same respect they have on themselves. The social management function in this type of humor is also considered as social control.

4.1.9. Mediation in *'Climbing up the roof'* short-story (pp. 249-250)

Humor is used either to make the object known to or carry out hypothetically humiliating or hostile relations. In other words, humor is perceived as a facilitating method. Mediation-humor is used to check behavior that is possibly socially intolerable and to agree with enthusiastically exciting subjects (Attardo, 1994 as cited in Mietusch, 2013).

"Could you share some money with me?" the man reiterated.

"OK. But you have to come up there with me," he said.

"Once they got to the rooftop, Nasreddin turned to the man and said, "I don't have money."

The context of the conversation above occurred on a rainy day when Nasreddin and his family are meeting in the living room, his wife points out to the leaking from the roof. The following day, Nasreddin borrows a ladder from his neighbor. He climbs the ladder very carefully. As he is about to commence working, he hears somebody knocking on the door. He then looks down from the edge of the roof and sees an unfamiliar person in front of the door. Nasreddin shouts to tell the man that he is on the roof. Then, the man asks Nasreddin to come down because he has something important to talk to Nasreddin without telling him directly what it is. Following the man's request, Nasreddin climbs down the ladder to meet him. Nasreddin again demands the man to tell his intention, but his answer makes Nasreddin speechless. The man requests for some money to Nasreddin. Nasreddin agrees to his request but he asks him to climb up the roof together. Once they are on the roof top, Nasreddin turns to the man and admits that he has no money to lend. The function of this humor is mediation, which is buying some time for both of them to think about the request. Nasreddin rejects the man's request without being impolite or embarrasses both of them. Therefore, he resorts to this hard humor in the form of mediation.

6. Conclusion

This paper argues that humor in Nasreddin Hoja short stories are primarily spontaneous conversational humor. This study found that joke, sarcasm, satire, replies to rhetorical question, clever replies, and double entendres. Thus, the types of spontaneous conversational humor that are not found are irony, overstatement, pun, self-deprecation, transformation of frozen expression. Meanwhile, unintentional humor is also not covered because unintentional humor is raised from speakers' slips, misstatements, errors in logic, and Freudian slips. Regarding the functions of humor, social management and mediation are uncovered in Nasreddin Hoja short stories. This study is expected to be a small yet meaningful contribution to humor research in the study of language communication, education and humanities, and we believe that the

path to examine many other rich and complex aspects of humor in short stories or other products of literature must be deliberately studied.

This study attests that language and humor is explicably important to pass the main values to the pupils, especially when the normal language classroom was unable to do it. The modified language classroom whereby humor and short stories are intertwined at the beginning and at the end of the class design and management can help boost the overarching moral, educational and religious values that the teacher wanted to pass to the pupils. The knowledge disparity of how a value can be understood in humor in literature class is simultaneously enthralling. However, this present study certainly has its limitation. As once can see, this work did not provide close reading on how the actual personal and societal transformation takes places in the short-stories, but rather, a highlight on some selected short-stories in Muslim literature with some available and accessible readings on it that is linked with the already established types and functions of religious humor for English Language Teaching purpose in Introduction to Literature, Linguistics, Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis courses.

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