

## Applying Cultural Linguistics to Translation Studies: A New Model for Humour Translation

Georgina Heydon, Sajjad Kianbakht\*

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Corresponding Author: Sajjad kianbakht, E-mail: Sajjad.kianbakht@rmit.edu.au

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### ABSTRACT

The present research intends to illustrate the contributions, the newly developed multidisciplinary field of research known as Cultural Linguistics can make to the Translation Studies and the translation of humour as a culturally constructed element. The study starts with explaining the aims and objectives of the research and the key concepts that constitute our model of analysis. Then, as the main objective of this study, we propose a new model for the translation of humour encompassing a typology of conceptual structures for the analysis of humour translation, a large step in Translation Studies, that contributes to the on-going research in translation theory and practice. Later on, we describe how the proposed model and its typology of conceptual structures can be applied to the analysis of examples extracted from novels in translation between English and Persian in comparative studies.

### INTRODUCTION: THE RESEARCH GOAL

Our aim is mainly to apply the cutting-edge field of enquiry, Cultural Linguistics to Translation Studies, and the translation of humour as a culturally constructed element, for the first time in translation academic history. We apply the analytical framework of cultural conceptualisations which is the specific property of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b), to the translation of humour in order to illustrate the benefits of our Cultural Linguistics approach for the translator's daily task. In short, we intend to demonstrate some of the contributions of the Cultural Linguistics approach to the translation of humour in narrative texts i.e. novels, and test its applicability. The main objective of the study is to propose a new translation model that contributes to the on-going research in translation theory and practice. As Attardo (2017b) emphasizes the interplay of underlying cultural layers in humour translation (a) is very complex, and (b) is largely unexplored (Attardo, 2017b; cf. Zabalbeascoa, 2019). There are two main reasons behind this long-lasting translation problem as Sharifian often argues: (a) scholars who are exploring the relationship between language and culture instantiated in the translation of humour, have faced at least two significant challenges regarding the notion of culture, (1) its abstractness, and (2) the various multifaceted, multilayered and complex assumptions often associated with it (Sharifian, 2015, 2017a, 2017b). And (b) that

although translators have had various tools at their disposal, what has not been available to them is an analytical model for breaking down cultures and examining their components (Sharifian, 2015, 2017a, 2017b), so that the culturally-constructed conceptual aspects underlying humour could be reconstructed into the new linguistic reality of the target text, a significant step in translation studies (see Zabalbeascoa, 2019) that the present research, for the first time, attempted to take.

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Translators face no bigger challenge than culture-reliant humorous references, especially when their working languages come from cultures distant and different. Vandaele (2010, p. 149) in the *Handbook of Translation Studies* stresses this view by arguing the relative untranslatability of humour due to its underlying inseparable and intertwined cultural aspects. Moreover, so long as the dominant approach to translation is still linguistic (Haddadian-Moghaddam et al., 2019), the successful translation of culture-reliant humorous references is likely to remain elusive (Stankic, 2017). Sierra and Zabalbeascoa (2017, p. 12) argue that "nonetheless, the specialised literature devoted specifically to the topic of humour translation is conspicuously scarce" which suggests that the translation of humour is an area of research with much potential that requires more attention.

Humour is deeply embedded in the specific cultural context in which it is produced, and it is a part of everyday language use and a component of many literary works in any linguistic community. The way people use humour shows not only their ability to play with language but also indicates the shared beliefs and culture common to the speakers of a language, their communicative norms and style (Stankic, 2017). Therefore, the translation of humour is rooted in the specific relationship between language and culture, which attracts the attention of many scholars. These scholars who have been interested in exploring the relationship between language and culture exemplified in the translation of humour, have faced at least two significant challenges regarding the notion of culture (1) its abstractness and (2) the various multifaceted, multilayered assumptions often associated with it (Sharifian, 2015, 2017a, 2017b). Although translators have had various tools at their disposal, what has not been available to them is an analytical model for breaking down cultures and examining their components (Sharifian, 2015, 2017a, 2017b), so that the culture-reliant conceptual aspects underlying language features and linguistic expressions could be rendered across the source language to the target language.

In addition, since humour is configured through the interplay of a series of shared cultural assumptions, translating it needs an interdisciplinary approach. When analysed through the prism of Translation Studies, the linguistic components of humour are hardly sufficient to explain its configuration and *raison d'être* (Dore, 2019b; Munoz Basols, 2012). In other words, finding an equivalent that makes the translation comprehensible and simultaneously humorous and functional in the target culture is very challenging due to the notable differences between particular languages and cultures. It is here that translators face significant problems, since humour that does not come across as sufficiently humorous and functional in the target text may represent a failure (Dore, 2019a; Munoz Basols, 2012). Hence, to translate humour, the translator needs to be aware of not only the language but also, more importantly, the culture in the source text. They need to break down cultures and analyse their components in the source text so that both the language and the culture can be reconstructed into the new linguistic reality of the target text. Therefore, as several scholars argue (Koskinen, 2004, 2010, 2014; Sharifian, 2015, 2017a, 2017b) the existence of humour needs to enable and, at the same time, reconcile the two fields of language and culture, which have thus far remained at odds in Translation Studies (Koskinen, 2004, 2010, 2014). A new model for the translation of humour must, therefore, address the theoretical challenge of translating humour from both a cultural and linguistic perspective by applying a coherent multidisciplinary approach that treats language and culture as intertwined, interdependent and inseparable. Before we describe our proposal for such a model, we will first situate our research in a theoretical framework that facilitates an approach to translation, and specifically to the translation of humour. We will first expand on Sharifian's notion of Cultural Linguistics which will provide this research with a theory of language and culture. Then we will turn to theories of humour before delving into one of the fundamental translation theories, Translation Functionalism, and finally our proposal for

a new model of humour translation that accounts for cultural and linguistic elements of the texts. Our proposed model will be illustrated with examples from current research that addresses the difficulties of translating humour between English and Persian in narrative texts.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As Gambier & Van Doorslaer, the authors of *Handbook of Translation Studies* series, often discuss "from the very beginnings of Translation Studies, the discipline explicitly referred to various influences from other fields, both methodologically and contentwise" (Gambier & Van Doorslaer, 2016, p. 1). In this section, hence, first of all, we will describe the methodological framework of the study, and propose a new model, including a typology of conceptual units for the analysis of examples. Second, we will explain the key concepts that constitute our model of analysis. Third, we will describe the implementation of the model, indicating first the criteria for the selection of our corpus. Afterwards, we will explain the method of data analysis in this model and the procedure used to compare the source texts and the target texts.

### Framework of the Study

#### *Cultural linguistics & translation of humour*

Cultural Linguistics is a current multidisciplinary field of research developed by Sharifian (2017a, 2017b) that explores the relationship between language and *cultural conceptualisations* (see also Sharifian, 2003, 2011, 2012, 2015). "*Cultural conceptualisations* are the tools Cultural Linguistics uses to study aspects of cultural cognition and its instantiation in language" (Peeters, 2016, p. 1). Sharifian explains that Cultural Linguistics (a) assumes that features of human languages communicate and embody conceptualisations, and (b) focuses on the analysis of conceptualisations that are culturally constructed (2011, 2012, 2017a, 2017b). This is highly relevant to this research since culturally constructed elements such as humour are subject to significant influence from cultural contexts in which they are used. Sharifian (2011) further maintains that the advent of this multidisciplinary area of research "has shifted focus from the relationship of individual cognition and language as highlighted in the cognitive approaches to language, to the relationship between language, cultural conceptualisation and cognition" (Sharifian, 2011, p. 3).

For Cultural Linguistics "language is a cultural form, and that conceptualisations underlying language and language use are largely formed by cultural systems" (Yu, 2007, p. 65). *Cultural conceptualisation* as a central concept here is used in the present research to indicate "patterns of distributed knowledge across the cultural group" (Sharifian, 2011, p. 3), which also covers Strauss and Quinn's (1997) schematization and schemas, and Lakoff's (1987) categories and metaphors, which are of particular importance for the analysis of the translation of humour as a culturally constructed element. By moving beyond the current cognitive and linguistic theories and with the aim of analysing the relation-

ship between language and *cultural conceptualisations* for describing embodied and culturally embedded phenomena such as humour, Cultural Linguistics (2017a, 2017b) provides coherent multidisciplinary analytical tools in the form of conceptual, analytical units such as *cultural categories*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural schemas*, which are collectively called *cultural conceptualisations*, that will be applied in this research, for the first time in the entire translation academic history, to Translation Studies and the translation of humour.

*Cultural conceptualisations* as Sharifian (2017a, 2017b) argues, capture all aspects of human life such as the conceptualisations of life and death, to conceptualisations of emotion, body, and humour encoded and communicated through language features (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b). These language features are of particular importance for the translator such as lexical items which may not have equivalence in the target language, semantic and pragmatic meanings of culturally constructed elements such as humour, morpho-syntactic features of embodied and culturally embedded phenomena like humour, and other language features such as the use of specific dialects, for instance, as a typical mechanism of creating humour, which may pose significant problems for the translator.

Humour is generally known to be deeply rooted in culture and consequently, for understanding and translating humorous discourse, different types of cultural presuppositions are required (Stankic, 2017). Notwithstanding the fact that verbal humour, the humour found in novels, is typically created by ambiguity or playing with different levels of language structure (Attardo, 2017c; Chiaro, 1992, 2017, 2018). For this reason, in order to understand and translate particular humour, the translators need to be aware of and unpack both the language and the cultural context of the source text to which that particular humour refers so that both the language and the culture can be reconstructed and repacked into the new linguistic reality of the target text (Munoz Basols, 2012; Stankic, 2017).

What is of particular importance here is that (a) this cultural context underlying language features, is shared by the members of a linguistic community collectively, and that (b) within a specific linguistic community, there are conventional and acceptable ways of saying things (Kecskes, 2015, p. 114). Therefore, understanding humour and translating it depends deeply on its cultural specificity, in the sense of what is humorous and functional inside a specific culture (Antonopoulou, 2004, p. 224). The explanation for this is connected to the fact that as Sharifian (2011, p. 5) maintains language is deeply rooted in a group-level cognition that emerges from the interactions between members of a cultural group. Since language and culture are inseparable, intertwined and closely related, it is evident that language is one of the tools for storing and conveying *cultural conceptualisations* that emerge from the group-level cognition across time and space. Considering verbal humour, it should be emphasized that “*cultural conceptualisations* mark not only humorous discourse itself in terms of different levels and units of language (e.g. speech acts, idioms, metaphors, grammar, etc.), but also language use and community practices (e.g.

when it is (in)appropriate to joke and which form of humour to use in the given situation)” (Stankic, 2017, p. 100).

Taking into account the translation of verbal humour, it should be noted that as often Chiaro (2010b) argues this type of humour is created to amuse different target groups of readers that may not essentially fit into a same linguistic and/or cultural community; as for example in the case of internationally best-selling books published in the US for the global audience. Hence, the authors of this kind of discourse for absorbing a larger audience not only should have in mind the perception of humour by the individual audience, but also the audience as a group. Cultural Linguistics plays a crucial role and accounts for this collective conceptualisation (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b). Human conceptualisation as Sharifian (2017a, pp. 2-4) argues moves beyond the level of the individual mind, and therefore is collective at the level of a cultural group, and these collective *cultural conceptualisations* form cultural cognition. This collective characteristic of *cultural conceptualisations* is highly relevant to research on the translation of humour which is often overlooked in current linguistic and cognitive approaches, which tend to focus merely on the individual level of conceptualisations (see also Attardo & Raskin, 2017; Chovanec & Tsakona, 2018; Stankic, 2017). That is to say, for instance, in order to account for different types of humour— for example, ethnic humour or register humour—and their translation, it is essential to take into account not only the individual level of conceptualisations but also the level that is common to a cultural group (Stankic, 2017, p. 100; see also Sharifian, 2017a).

Since, as mentioned earlier, the present study compares two languages and cultures through the prism of Translation Studies, it seems necessary at this point to describe what is the *tertium comparationis* in this comparative analysis. Leuven-Zwart (1989, 1990) maintains that in the comparative analysis, the basic textual units entering into comparison are called *transemes*. These are units of a relational nature which do not exist *a priori* since they are only valid for the compared texts (Santoyo, 1986; Santoyo & Rabadan, 1991; see also Rojo Lopez, 2002, 2015). As Rojo Lopez (2002, p. 312) argues “the fact that these translation units are established *a posteriori* does not mean that we cannot previously formulate a general hypothesis that serves as ‘*tertium comparationis*’ in the analysis” (see also Hermans, 2019), hence bearing in mind that the present research deals with the translation of humour as a culturally constructed element, the hypothesis that performs as *tertium comparationis* between the source text and the target text is the notion of *cultural conceptualisations*. *Cultural conceptualisations* are conceptual, analytical structures such as *cultural categories*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural schemas* which not only exist at the individual level of cognition but also at the level of cultural group cognition that are negotiated across time and space within a cultural group (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b). *Cultural categories*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural schemas*, the analytical tools of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b) will be discussed in the following sections before moving to the method of data analysis in our model and comparing the source text and the target text.

### Cultural categories

Cultural categories are a class of *cultural conceptualisations*, grounded in cultural cognition. They are culturally constructed conceptual categories that are reflected in the lexicon of human languages (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b). Cultural categories are rooted in people's cultural experiences gained from their situatedness in a particular culture, and they mirror the structure of attributes perceived in the world which inevitably shape people's thoughts (Polzenhagen & Xia, 2014), such as *emotion categories*, *event categories*, *colour categories*, *age categories*, *food categories*, or *kinship categories* (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b).

### Cultural metaphors

Cultural metaphors are “cognitive structures that allow us to understand one conceptual domain in terms of another” (Sharifian, 2013a, p. 1591). Cultural metaphors shape the way people think and act in intra-and-intercultural communication, and are categorised as fundamental to human thought and action (Sharifian, 2015, 2017a, 2017b). For example, the cultural metaphor for marriage in Persian language and culture is *‘khāne-ye bakht’* [literal translation: ‘house-of-fate’] (Sharifian & Bagheri, 2019), which refers to marriage, so that mentioning that in Persian *cultural conceptualisations* ‘Marriage Is Two Birds Coming Together To Make A Nest’ which is different conceptually from English cultural metaphor ‘Marriage Is A Journey’ (see also Sharifian & Bagheri, 2019), which should be taken into consideration during the translation process.

### Cultural schemas

The notion of *schema* has a very high explanatory power to effectively explain its subject matter (Sharifian, 2001, 2017a, 2017b; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). In particular, schemas are “building blocks of cognition that help organise, interpret, and communicate information” (Sharifian, 2016, p. 507). Cultural schemas are a subclass of schemas that are shaped by culture and function as a foundation for communicating and interpreting cultural meanings (Sharifian, 2015, 2017a, 2017b; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). They include *event schemas*, *role schemas*, *image schemas*, *proposition schemas*, or *emotion schemas* entrenched in cultural knowledge and experience, which are explained as the following:

1. *Event schemas* are “abstracted from our experience of certain events” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 8), such as the event schema of Persian Wedding Celebration.
2. *Role schemas* are “knowledge about social roles which denote sets of behaviours that are expected of people in particular social positions” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 9), such as role schema of a university professor.
3. *Image schemas* are “intermediate abstractions between mental images and abstract propositions that are readily imagined, perhaps as iconic images, and clearly related to physical or social experiences” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 10), for example in a humorous utterance such as ‘he has gone off the rails’ we are drawing on the image

schema of the ‘path’ to capture the conceptualisation of the domain of ‘thinking.’ The ‘path’ image schema in this phrase shows the application of this image schema to the domain of ‘thinking’ (cf. Sharifian, 2011).

4. *Proposition schemas* are “abstractions which act as models of thought and behaviour and specify concepts and the relations which hold among them” such as Persian *cultural conceptualisation* of ‘*khoshbakhti*/happiness’ as pre-destined fate (Sharifian, 2011, p. 10; see also Sharifian & Bagheri, 2019).
5. *Emotion schemas* pave our way to “define, explain and understand emotions primarily by reference to the events and situations in which they occur” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 11), such as Persian cultural emotion schema of ‘*khejālat*’ which is multilayered and overlaps with three different cultural emotion schemas in English namely embarrassment, shyness and shame (Sharifian, 2017a; Sharifian & Bagheri, 2019).

### Developing the Framework for Translation of Humorous Novels

Considering that this research focuses on the translation of humour as a culturally constructed element, we selected novels as the corpus for our analysis since novels and literary books reinforce the relation between linguistic elements and the cultural context in which they are produced (Chiaro, 2010a, 2010b; Rojo Lopez, 2002). Moreover, we gave priority to humorous discourse, since humour is often a rich source of culturally constructed elements, and cultural problems in translation (Rojo Lopez, 2002; Stankic, 2017), and as discussed before, the way people use humour shows not only their ability to play with language but also indicates the shared beliefs and culture common to the speakers of a language, their communicative norms and style (Stankic, 2017).

For the purpose of translating humour, our method requires that humorous instances in the data are first identified using the General Theory of Verbal Humour framework (GTVH; Attardo, 2002, 2017a). Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo (1991; Attardo, 2002, 2017a) developed a list of parameters, called Knowledge Resources that can be used to model individual instances of verbal humour, such as those found in novels. They integrated Raskin's concept of Script Opposition (SO), developed in Semantic Script Theory of Humour (Raskin, 1985), into the General Theory of Verbal Humour as one of its six levels of independent Knowledge Resources (KRs) (Lew, 1996). These Knowledge Resources are Script Opposition, Logical Mechanism, Situation, Target, Narrative Strategy and Language. The framework postulates that verbal humour can be identified in light of these six parameters (see below for how it works), and that the Script Opposition is the most determining parameter, and the Language Knowledge Resource is the least determining parameter in this model:

1. Script opposition (SO) implies an opposition between two scripts considered contradictory and overlapping in a certain way in humour, which causes incongruity. It should be noted that the Script Opposition is the most important of all Knowledge Resources that accounts for

the fact that all Knowledge Resources can be collapsed into this one (Attardo, 1994, p. 226), which means that the Script Opposition is the most determining parameter in identifying humour.

2. Logical mechanism (LM) is a parameter that resolves the incongruity, which is evoked by the humorous text in the mind of the reader. In other words, it enables the reader to move beyond the Script Opposition existing in the humorous text and to decide which script is intended. Logical Mechanisms can range from juxtapositions to false analogies, or figure-ground reversals (Attardo, 2002, 2017a).
3. Situation (SI) explains that what the humorous instance is about “changing a light bulb, crossing the road, playing golf, etc.” (Attardo, 2002, p. 179). The Situation includes objects, activities, and instruments of a humorous instance. Attardo (2002, p. 179) further explains a stenography Situation in a joke through the following example: “Can you write shorthand? Yes, but it takes me longer.”
4. Target (TA) is the aim of the humorous reference. It can conjure up in the mind of the reader, the names of groups or individuals as well as ideologies or ethnic minorities with humorous stereotypes. Consider the following joke that targets Poles, as stereotypical targets for jokes in America taken from Krikmann (2006, p. 37): “How many Poles does it take to empty the ashtray of a car? Ten, to turn the car upside down.”
5. Narrative Strategy (NS) can be seen as a “rephrasing of what is known in literary theory under the name genre” (Attardo, 1994, p. 224). It is responsible for the syntactic-semantic organisation of a joke. In other words, a joke has to be narrated in some form of an idiom or a slang, a proverb or a simple narrative, a dialogue or a riddle.
6. Language (LA) is the parameter that accounts for the linguistic instantiation of humour in the text (Attardo, 1994, p. 223).

As discussed before, the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) will be used as the framework in this study to identify humorous instances. Therefore, for illustration purposes, we apply the GTVH to the following instance of humour: ‘The Doctor’s Wife Joke’, taken from Attardo (2008) & Raskin (1985, pp. 117- 127). ‘The Doctor’s Wife Joke’ will be presented here as a help in understanding how the GTVH works in identifying the humour instances:

“A: ‘Is the doctor at home?’ the patient asked in his bronchial whisper.

B: ‘No,’ the doctor’s young and pretty wife whispered in reply. ‘Come right in’” (Raskin, 1985, pp. 117- 127; see also Attardo, 2008).

A semantic interpretation of this example can be loosely read as: a patient who has been previously treated for some diseases asked about the presence of a doctor at the doctor’s place of residence, with the aim of being treated for an illness that is apparent from the patient’s whispering voice (Attardo, 2008; Raskin, 1985, pp. 117- 127). The doctor’s wife, who is a young and pretty woman whispers that the doctor is not at home, and invites him to enter the house. Here, the target read-

ership is faced with a dilemma: if the aim of the man’s question is the desire to be cured for his illness; why is the doctor’s wife asking him to come into the house? As the doctor is not at home, and the Script for ‘DOCTOR’ necessitates doctor’s physical presence for examination and curing the disease! The Situation of this example leads the audience to start looking for another Opposing Script to make sense of the story (Raskin, 1985, p. 125), i.e., an alternative evaluation of the story. The reader will thus sit back and re-interpret the story. The doctor’s wife’s gender and her explanation will be taken into consideration, as well as the absence of the doctor (her husband). This interpretation will conjure up the ‘LOVER’ Script in the mind of the audience, which allows the activation of the Logical Mechanism that an improper relationship is going on, without the knowledge of the legitimate partner (Attardo, 2008; Raskin, 1985, pp. 117- 127). In view of the ‘LOVER’ Script, the doctor’s wife’s behaviour becomes meaningful, i.e. either the doctor’s wife, misuses her husband’s absence for having an affair with another man, or the rasping quality of the patient’s voice has been misinterpreted by the doctor’s wife as sexually suggestive and conspiratorial. The example is, therefore, found to be compatible with two Opposing Scripts (DOCTOR vs. LOVER), which are opposing each other based on ‘SEX/NO SEX’. Thus, the example satisfies the requirements of the GTVH (SO: doctor vs. lover; LM: an adulterous relationship be acted upon without knowledge of the legitimate spouse; SI: meeting the doctor’s wife; TA: improper relationships; NS: conversation; LA: English) and therefore, is assessed as humorous (Attardo, 2008; Raskin, 1985, pp. 117- 127).

### **Method of data analysis/comparing the source text & the target text**

#### *Unit of translation*

The basic translation unit for our analysis is a single conversational turn, as the smallest unit in the dialogue of the novels (Sinkeviciute & Dynel, 2017). Following Dynel (2011), a conversational turn is defined as an analytical unit that can differ in size, and that includes the flow of speech of an interlocutor, followed by a pause and the next interlocutor’s turn in narrative texts, novels and literary books (cf. Stankic, 2017). In our corpus, the conversational turn is equal to an utterance (cf. Stankic, 2017).

#### *Context in translation*

Context as Martin (1995) discusses, is the mental contribution of the person who interprets an utterance, and from the Cultural Linguistics point of view, the cognitive context is conceptual structures that are culturally constructed which exists in the speakers’ mind (Sharifian, 2017a). It includes information from the physical environment and information that can be retrieved and inferred from our mental stores (see also Rojo Lopez, 2002, p. 315). Language plays an important role here since it serves as a primary mechanism for storing and communicating conceptualisations that are culturally constructed, acting both as a memory bank and a fluid vehicle for the transmission of *cultural conceptualisations*

underlying culturally constructed elements such as humour (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b). Humour as Nash (1985, p.12) maintains “characterises the interaction of persons in situations of cultures, and our response to it must be understood in that broad context” (see also Rojo Lopez, 2002). Therefore, considering that the humorous instances in the corpus of this study are context-bound and typically not translatable without their contextual information, they will be interpreted within their relevant context.

### *Functional equivalence*

Before proceeding to explain the procedure of data analysis, it is necessary to discuss functional equivalence in translation, which is highly relevant to the method of analysis proposed in this study. Shuttleworth and Cowie in the *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (1997, p. 64) argue that functional equivalence is the kind of equivalence reflected in a target text which aims to adapt the function of the original source text in order to suit the specific context for which it has been produced (see also Nord, 2018).

In general, when translators find a culturally constructed element like an instance of humour in the source text, they assign a function to that instance within an overall skopos of the translation task (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014) and use this function to find solutions they consider adequate (Rojo Lopez, 2002, 2015). Such solutions may or may not be acceptable to the target readers of the translated text. Hence, here we are not dealing with a total equivalence, but with a correspondence that may or may not be acceptable to the readers of the target text. From this perspective, the important issue is not to ask whether the semantic import of the target language instances is or is not a total equivalent of that of the source language instances, but whether their textual function as activators of *cultural conceptualisations* is or is not equivalent to that of the source text instances (Rojo Lopez, 2002, 2015). In this way, based on Nord’s Functionalism in translation (2010, p. 186), the instances of the target text are considered as functional equivalents of that of the source text if these instances comply with the textual function involved and if there is a high degree of correspondence between the semantic-pragmatic and stylistic information of the conceptual structures, e.g. *cultural categories*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural schemas* they activate (see also Nord, 2018, pp. 219-230). Based on this assumption (Rojo Lopez, 2002, p. 316) that the translation of a humorous element should be compared to the ‘cognitive profile’ of the source text’s humorous element; that is, to the *cultural conceptualisations* it activates, then the important step here is to analyse the function carried out by source text’s element within the source culture (see also Rojo Lopez, 2002). This way, the source text element’s ‘conceptual profile’ forms a norm which serves as a framework to decide the adequacy of the target text’s element based on the *cultural conceptualisations* it activates within the target culture (see also Rojo Lopez, 2002; 2015; Wilson et al., 2019).

For operationalizing the method of data analysis, we have designed a table (see appendix 1). The data analysis will be conducted in multiple essential phases. In the first

phase, we locate analysing textual items, i.e. instances of humour based on the GTVH Knowledge Resources framework, and analyse them accordingly. The *GTVH Knowledge Resources* in the table denote the presence of each parameter of the General Theory of Verbal Humour framework in each example.

The next phase is the *analysis section*, which entails the context-specific information about the events, objects and persons of the dialogues of the texts including the participants (their statuses and roles); action (the participants’ action); and other relevant features of the context (the surrounding objects and events). The *analysis section* also offers a comparative analysis of the instances of humour detected in the source text implementing the proposed model, and their translation counterparts in the target text applying the analytical framework of Cultural Linguistics which focuses on *cultural categories*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural schemas* activated in the mind of the readers. The researchers discussed which *cultural categories*, *cultural metaphors* or *cultural schemas* these instances invoke in the mind of readers, whether they are the same or not, and what their similarities and differences denote in terms of the cultural values that are upheld in each particular language and culture; which led to patterns and *cultural conceptualisations* underlying the translation of humour as a culturally constructed element and allowed the researchers to describe how translators dealt with the challenges these *cultural conceptualisations* imposed and what translations methods adopted in confronting these challenges. The *CuL Conceptual Structures* in the table signify the Cultural Linguistics analytical structures instantiated in each case.

The *Translator’s Approach*, *Translation Method* and *Functional Equivalent* are the three dimensions of the final phase of the analysis in our model. In the final phase of the analysis, we discuss the translator’s approach, and the translation method adopted for each case, and whether they are adequate functional translations or not. Before moving to the next sections, where we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of implementing the model, we would like to comment on the translator’s role in the translation of humour as a culturally constructed element.

### *Translator’s role*

Susan Bassnett in *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* discusses that the Functionalist approach is broadly also said to be a cultural approach, which has been applied by translators, as cross-cultural mediators, to a wide range of texts such as the literary and alike (Bassnett, 2011, p. 81). According to the Functionalist approach, as Nord (2010) argues:

In order to make their texts work, text producers will try to provide them with (linguistic or non-linguistic) markers indicating the function the text is intended for, such as [a] particular format, specific syntactic structures or stylistic devices (Nord, 2010, p. 186).

This means that as Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer in *Towards A General Theory of Translational Action: Skopos Theory Explained* (2014) discuss, based on the Functionalist

approach, the intended function (skopos) of a text should be the main focus of the translator as a cross-cultural mediator. The function is transferred to the target readers by the translated text which creates conceptual structures/*cultural conceptualisations* in the mind of readers to enable them to receive the target text in the same way as it was intended for the source text readers (see also Nord, 2018).

Therefore, the basic role of the translator in our proposed model is to mediate the *cultural conceptualisations* of source text senders and target text receptors in the translation task (see also Neubert & Shreve, 1992; Rojo Lopez, 2002, 2015). The aim of this translation task as a purposeful activity (Nord, 2018), is to achieve a ‘cultural-linguistics equivalence’ in translation in order to transfer concepts across the source language to the target language, which consequently balances two important notions in translation: the linguistic expressions and the *cultural conceptualisations* they invoke. This viewpoint is supported by several other scholars such as Wilson and colleagues (2019), and it is in line with the current shift towards conceptual transfer in translation, language and cultural studies (Brekhus & Ignatow, 2019; Sharifian et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2019; Strandell, 2019).

This translation task, as discussed before, requires the translator to be aware of not only the language but also, more importantly, the culture in the source text. They need to break down cultures and analyse their components in the source text so that both the language and the culture can be reconstructed into the new linguistic reality of the target text (see also Munoz Basols, 2012). In other words, the translator needs to be aware of not only the differences between the source text audience *cultural conceptualisations* and the target text audience *cultural conceptualisations* but also of how textual and linguistic processes are linked to ‘cultural conceptualisation-based-knowledge’, that is the link between the linguistic expressions and the *cultural conceptualisations* they invoke.

By proposing Cultural Linguistics as a model of analysis in Translation Studies, the present research intends to facilitate the translator’s task by using a new model based on the interaction between the text (textual, linguistic knowledge) and the *cultural conceptualisations* (extra-linguistic knowledge) of the text interpreter. The translator’s role in this model is to mediate their analysis to the comprehension process, taking into account that their task is to project the source language *cultural conceptualisations* (e.g. *cultural schemas*, *cultural categories*, and *cultural metaphors*) onto the target language linguistic elements that invoke a *cultural conceptualisation* which should be, as much as possible, semantically, pragmatically and stylistically equivalent to that activated by the source text elements (see also Sharifian, 2014, 2017a). Only if the target text linguistic elements activate the relevant *cultural conceptualisations* for the interpretation of the text in the mind of the readers, will then target audience be able to draw the correct cultural contextual inferences on the basis of their system of *cultural conceptualisations*. From this standpoint, the translator becomes a kind of ‘cultural linguistics mediator’ between two different systems of *cultural conceptualisations* that each linguistic community has (see also Sharifian, 2018).

## Contributions of the Study

In spite of the difficulties related to the novelty of the model proposed here, there are some important contributions that the model based on Cultural Linguistics have for Translation Studies. In the following sections, we set out briefly some of the contributions and implications that we consider most relevant.

### Providing an overarching approach

A Cultural Linguistics analysis as the one proposed here provides an overarching, coherent multidisciplinary approach in Translation Studies since it helps us to relate a series of translation problems to *cultural conceptualisations* underlying language features in a systematic way, as demonstrated in this study. The approach proposed here in this study, relates culturally constructed elements to their underlying *cultural conceptualisations* that capture all aspects of human life such as the very conceptualisations of life and death, to conceptualisations of emotion, body, religion, gender, marriage, politics and humour (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b) encoded and communicated through language features that are of special importance for translators in their daily task (Slavova & Borysenko, 2018; Wilson et al., 2019). The approach proposed here provides a unified, coherent and systematic explanation of the translation problems that arise when translating between two languages that come from cultures distant and different.

### Systematizing the culturally constructed elements

Despite the methodological novelty that the analytical tools of *cultural conceptualisations* may have, an approach like the one proposed here is very useful for the translator as a framework to systematize explicitly problems related to the *cultural conceptualisations* that arise when translating across the source language to the target language. Although the proposed model does not guarantee the possibility to find a solution to all translation problems, however, at the very least, it provides the translator with a coherent multidisciplinary analytical framework to systematize translation problems in an explicit way. Moreover, it also raises awareness about the *cultural conceptualisations* underlying language features in Translation Studies for the first time. A phenomenon “that needs desperate attention and exploration, perhaps more than ever in the history of human interaction” (Sharifian, 2015, p. 1; see also Sharifian et al., 2019). We further believe that such a *cultural conceptualisation*-based analysis of translation moves Translation Studies over and beyond the current still language-oriented analyses (cf. Dabbagh, 2017).

### Associating language features to the underlying cultural conceptualisations & cognition

One of the most important contributions of this study is applying Cultural Linguistics for the first time to Translation Studies, and its capability to explain translation problems over and beyond still language-oriented approaches’ word

and sentence level analysis. In current translation approaches, the *cultural conceptualisations* have been ignored; the *cultural conceptualisations* that are, however, crucial for the translator's daily task in this globalized world society (see also Bachmann-Medick, 2012; Wilson et al., 2019).

The proposed Cultural Linguistics approach to translation is motivated by the principle that as several scholars argue texts draw upon various kinds of *cultural conceptualisations*, e.g. *cultural schemas*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural categories*; and that their meanings cannot be explained by language features and lexical items alone (Ehrlich, 2019; Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b). Therefore, this research has focused on the exploration of the relationship between language, *cultural conceptualisations* and cognition in Translation Studies to propose an approach in which the relationship between aspects of cultural cognition and its instantiation in language moves beyond the limitations of existing linguistic analysis by means of the notion of *cultural conceptualisations*.

The new model as discussed earlier proposes that *cultural conceptualisations* are the *tertium comparationis* in the translation of culturally constructed elements; and to translate these elements in the source text, the translator needs first to identify the *cultural conceptualisations* that support them in the source text's culture. Then they need to identify the equivalent *cultural conceptualisations* in the target text's culture and subsequently, they need to recreate the culturally constructed element as a target text using the appropriate language resources for the target readers' cultural conceptualisations (see also Sharifian, 2014; Wilson et al., 2019). All in all, we maintain that the globalization of world society, makes it no longer possible to ignore how crucial *cultural conceptualisations* and their analysis have become for Intercultural Communication and Translation Studies (see also Bachmann-Medick, 2012; Wilson et al., 2019) and considering that studies of translation have already gone through the cultural turn (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1998), we cannot expect language-oriented approaches to Translation Studies and translation training, to result in efficient functional translations. As discussed earlier, we also maintain that the Cultural Linguistics approach proposed here in this study moves over the linguistic limitations of the existing approaches, beyond the word and sentence level, to incorporate *cultural conceptualisations* underlying language features in Translation Studies for the first time in the translation academic history. The approach proposed here can help the translator to associate the underlying *cultural conceptualisations* to the linguistic expressions that invoke such conceptualisations, and consequently lead to efficient functional translations; hence, it can be considered as a very useful model in the translation of culturally constructed elements and translation studies in general.

## CONCLUSION

As a concluding remark, we would like to acknowledge that the Cultural Linguistics is an emerging field of research, and still is in its embryonic stage; hence, to continue researching seems crucial. However, despite its novelty and limita-

tions, it is no longer possible to ignore how crucial *cultural conceptualisations* and their analysis have become for Translation Studies and Intercultural Communication, which call upon further research into the relationship between language, culture and cognition in Translation Studies and Intercultural Communication. At a theoretical level, Cultural Linguistics provides a view of the "language as a cultural form, and that conceptualisations underlying language and language use are largely formed by cultural systems," which is completely in line with the most recent findings about human cognition. At a practical level, the notion of *cultural conceptualisations* allows us to analyze, schematize and categorize *cultural metaphors*, *cultural schemas* and *cultural categories* underlying language features in Translation Studies for the first time, and incorporate them into the analysis of the linguistic information. The model, therefore, is applicable and it is found fit for purpose in deconstructing the translation of culturally constructed elements such as humour across the source language to the target language.

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**Appendix One**  
**Humour Translation Analysis Table**

<b>Book Title</b>	<b>GTVH Knowledge Resources</b>						
	<b>SO</b>	<b>LM</b>	<b>SI</b>	<b>TA</b>	<b>NS</b>	<b>LA</b>	
<b>Source Version</b>							
<b>Target Version</b>							
<b>Analysis</b>							
<b>CuL Conceptual Structures</b>	<b>Cultural Category</b>	<b>Cultural Metaphor</b>			<b>Cultural Schema</b>		
<b>Translator's Approach</b>	<b>Translation Method</b>			<b>Functional Equivalent</b>			