# HUMOR IN THE HEBREW BIBLE
## Some types, their linguistic features and observations on some of their translation in the Indonesian context

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ABSTRACT

Humor is such a fundamental aspect of human nature. Humor was found in ancient near eastern texts and inevitably it is found too in the Hebrew bible. Humor is dependent upon the cultural conventions of the moment and so while humorous line evokes the intended response in one society, it does not have the same effect in another. However, by paying attention to certain linguistic aspects, it is possible to identify different types of humor in a particular text.

The paper will identify the types of humor and their linguistics aspects (pun, irony, satire, etc.) in the Hebrew Bible. The setting of a situation, appearances etc. that contribute to humor will be identified. I will examine too the rendering of some types of humor in the formal Indonesian Version and offer some suggestions for rendering humor in translations into Indonesian languages.

Efforts to investigate humor in the Hebrew bible are not simple. However, there are at least two dissertations on humor, which were published almost a half-century ago,[1] and many articles on this topic are increasing recently.[2] This article will demonstrate the existence of humor in the Hebrew bible, although it may or may not as funny as contemporary humor. I will, a bit, notice of contemporary humor theories, particularly in regard with psychology in order to look for reasonal factors why humor sounds funny and why some not. Then, I establish its connection with both the linguistical forms and characters of the humor by giving examples according to the division of linguistics features. Forms and characters of humor in the Hebrew bible that might be detected will be provided and at the same time I will observe its Indonesian translation.

In modern sense, there are seventeen kinds of humor either in verbal or action. They are: incongruous, spoonerisms, puns, hyperbole, comic/daffynitions, satire, irony, epigram, stereotyped role, parody, malapropism, anecdote, farce-slapstick-buffoonery-mimicry (situational, visual), the tall tale, the tongue twister and the freudian slip (Eisenberg, 1973:26-29). They mark that humor is a part of human life and has been rooted since long time ago. Indeed, humor is such a fundamental aspect of human nature (Herion, 1992:325-326); everybody has his or her sense of humor, which is their property (Screech, 1999:1-5).

Renaissance, even, obliviously stated that a man is a laughing animal, thus no wonder if Erasmus and Rabelais had spread their religious ideas through laughter (Sreech, 1999:xxii-xxiii). Indeed, humor may take as a tool for didactic, moralistic and vivid (Stinespring, 1962:660 ff) but in other way around it may function as a tool to despise certain group of people, and it may be a medium of critics, etc (Blumenfeld, 1986:177; Day, 1965:iv; Eisenberg, 1973:23-26). In short, a humor is a communication vehicle and it will be a powerful vehicle for making important points,[3] either to entertain or to despise its listeners/readers. Since humor is inevitably connected to as a part of human nature, therefore many psychologists, Freud for instance, put emphasis on the phenomenon. We assume that humor has come to exist as old as human being.

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[1] John Bullard's thesis on *Biblical humor: Its nature and function* (Yale University, 1961) and B. Hayes' on *A Study of humor in the Old Testament* (Hebrew Union College, 1963).

[2] For example, TIC TALK no. 18 published by United Bible Societies (UBS) provides extensive bibliography up to 1992.

[3] According to Eisenberg (1973: 26-29), humor can be seriousness for examples: Jesus teaching about swallowing a camel, huge beam in eye and camel going through the needles.

Problems in investigating humor in the Hebrew bible

Ancient inscriptions discovered in Sumerian, Egyptian, Syrian and ancient Middle East recorded many pictures and humor texts.[4] These discoveries encourage modern biblical scholars to demonstrate the possibility of recorded humor texts in the Hebrew bible, since it is assumed belong to ancient time. Biblical scholars realize of the great chasm in both of psychology and time in regard of investigating the extent of humor in the Hebrew bible (Herion, 1992:325-326, cf. Singgih, 1999:132-144).

The chasm of time makes modern readers do not laugh as to the intended readers did in the past, or conversely. What was funny in the ancient time may not be funny for modern people.[5] I understand time as including many aspects such as culture, tradition and indexical reference/encyclopedic knowledge.[6] On the other hand, humor lost in translation because humorous expressions and the contexts that make them humorous are the most difficult items to convey from one language to another (Conrad, 1987:3, Trueblood, 1964:33 ff).

In a sense of psychology, the Hebrew bible is supposed to be a holy text, at least for Jews and Christians. Either ancient or modern readers will strike against psychology impression when a text is suspected as containing humors, which indicate unseriousness and unsacredness of the holy book (Conrad, 1987:4).[7]

Nevertheless, it is necessary to recognize that, although humors have many specific points due to of time and perspectives (psychological matters), they still keep universal elements which are not limited by time, culture, social life, education, economic, etc. Upon this ground, scholars work to delve humor in the Hebrew bible (Foster, 1974:328-330).[8]

Universal elements in humor

Universal elements in humor, I assume, are wrapped in types and linguistics features. It is because they can be clearly observed, at the same time, are able to give us the boundary/limitation of a text of humor. Hence, linguistics approach should be applied on searching of the elements, but on the other hand, linguistics approach is not able to

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[4] Edmund S. Meltzer (1992:326 ff) investigated humor notes and pictures in the ancient Egypt culture, meanwhile Benjamin R. Foster researched the ancient Mesopotamian culture (1992:328 ff).

[5] But it was recognized that humor is not always call for laughter, in some cases it brings only an appreciative smile (Eisenberg, 1973:26). More sharpened are Bullard, Luccock and Ellington who said that humor and the laughable are not identical (1991:303).

[6] I suppose indexical reference/encyclopedic knowledge may be classified either in culture or psycho logics. By the term, I mean, all experiences, learning or whatever one received and it becomes his or her knowledge, see in examples in point 9.

[7] On the New Testament area, according to Trueblood (1964:18-19, 21) the most reasonable for failure to laugh is readers extreme familiarity with the received text and secondly, gospels great stress upon the tragedy of the crucifixion and the events, then thirdly, a failure of logic.

[8] In the area of the New Testament study, Trueblood demonstrates that Jesus laughed and convinced that Jesus expected others to laugh (10). He analyzed the particulars ways in which Jesus' humor is employed that are in controversy, parables and short dialogue (15). Furthermore, he mentions that Jesus uses paradox, metaphor, preposterous, irony, parables, satire and dialogue as means if His humor (39-125). He also indicates, by agreeing William Hazlitt, that humor of Jesus containing universality that laid on intelligence and obtuseness (33).

precisely comprehend ancient humor texts; it is because humor is a complex problem.[9] However, in our investigation linguistics tools are avoidable since they bring us to know the universal element but also how to maintain the effect of humor in other language in the course of translation.

Humor in view of psychology approach

What is humor? Famous psychologist, Sigmund Freud uses psychology approach on comprehending humor. According to him, humor appears when deviation occurred (disequilibrium to equilibrium).[10] Deviation either in texts or conversation produces expressions but not all expression is humor. Expressions have to be economically in wordings and time, in other word, expressions that are not appropriate and not in the proper time will lose their funny. In short, Freud established that the prominent factor for humor is deviation on idea and expressed in proper time and proper way (economy of expression). Based on the theory, Freud classified humor according to the motivation and object. Comics, for instance, is classified as unmotivated humor, meanwhile, aggressivity, satire and dirty jokes are classified as humor with certain motivation. Division according to object is divided as humor of ethnic, sexual and politic which take place in the form of hyperbole, litotes and irony (Soedjatmiko, 1992:80).

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[9] Methodology in investigating humor is very important because it is related with many aspects such as human nature and cultural conventions (Herion, 1992:326). There are many approaches offered by scholars in proving the Hebrew bible contained texts of humor. Screech (xxii-xxiii) recognizes that some humor texts are explicit in the Hebrew Bible but some are uncovered by skilful exegesis. Zakovitch (1990:75-96), on the other hand, proposed 'closed reading' method in searching humor texts which was opposed by Cross (1990:99-104). The reason for the method is his awareness of oral tradition in the Hebrew bible. By 'closed reading' he means comparing the story to other instances of the same story type found in the Hebrew bible and determining its unique character *vis-à-vis* the other stories. In that way, humor expressions can be discovered. He found out that *incompatibles* and *incongruities* are often becoming the heart of humor. Furthermore, Avalos (1991:581) found out that the enumeration particularly in Daniel 3 is a sarcastic's humor, more clearly is seen as a socioreligious critique of pagan social institutions. He demonstrates that the enumeration is a satire on pagan culture and behavior (581) and serves as a most effective comedic device. He defined comedy as a mode of discourse that provides a social critique, exposes weakness in its target, and elicit laughter in the process (582). Thus, the function of comedy according to him bears a social significance. Daniel 3 is seen as a socioreligious critique of pagan social institutions. More extreme approach delivered by Conrad (1987:2) who sees the Bible as divine comedy by applying an interpretation of biblical materials in terms of comic themes. As the result, major biblical stories seen as use a similar pattern and offer a similar 'moral' to many a comedy, so the panorama of creation, revelation and redemption are witnesses to the humor of God. This idea had been started since his prior book, *The Comic Vision and the Christian Faith* that offered an interpretation of the religious importance of the comic tradition.

[10] If humor is X and contradiction meanings of the words are M-1 and M-2, thus we have:
M-1 = X = M-2
M-1 <> M-2 → produces imbalance cognitive (ketidakselarasan?)
X = M-1 > X = M-2 → causes amazement (keheranan?)
There are three alternatives to be balanced:
a. M-1 = X → M-1 <> X (M-1 wrong)
b. M-2 = X → M-2 <> X (M-2 wrong)
c. M-1 <> M-2 → M-1 =M-2
M-1 = M-2 → Funny (balance cognitive is reached) (keseimbangan tercapai?)
To make a joke, someone has quickly to change imbalance cognitive to be balance cognitive.

Freud's theory then is well developed by Wilson who systematizes it in three categories[11]: deliverance, conflict and desyncronization. By deliverance he means, humor takes place when emotion is not delivered as it should be, for example:

*A businessman is angry with his employee who always late to his office.*
*"Your tired was flat yesterday, two days ago you said your car broke. This morning, you had traffic jam. Tomorrow, maybe you will say that your car struck against a tree."*
*"Oh…don't say that Sir! Your company will suffer loss…"* (quoted by Soedjatmiko, 1992:71).

Conflict, according to Wilson, indicates behavioral implication between two contradict things, as follow:

*"Ma'am… your husband has just been run over by a steamroller."*
*"I'm in the bath tub. Slip him under the door"* (quoted by Soedjatmiko, 1992:71).

Then, desyncronization establishes to cognitive explanation where two different meaning or interpretation are united in a complicated meaning, for example, how word *English* is misinterpreted in a follow example (originally, italics letter is in Indonesian):

*In an interviewing for selecting new employee:*

*I (interviewer) : What is your name?*
*C (Candidate) : Prawoto, Ssir...*
*I             : Tell me about your blood relatives...*
*C             : I have one sibling, he is a university student in Jogya.*
*                    My parent lives in Surabaya. Grandpa and grandma from mother*
*                    side stay in Solo...*
I            : Do you speak English?
C            : Oh yes Sir...
I            : Good, now tell me about your family, in English...
C            : Sorry Sir ... I don't have family in English, they're all in
                Indonesia

      In the next interview:

I            : Where were you born?
C            : Central Java, Sir...
I            : Which part?
C            : All of me, Sir!

According to Soedjatmiko (1992:70-72), Wilson's theory is effective in pun, paronomasia and short humor consisted of one or two lines. But, according to him, in a

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[11] Raskin (1985) also classifies humor in three types: Cognitive Perception, Social Behavior and Psychoanalysis. The three divisions in fact are similar with the divisions done by Wilson.

longer form, humor takes place specifically because of connotation meaning, personal overview and general knowledge of hearer or reader.

Approaching that Freud did and then has been developed by Wilson touches the basic how humor takes place. It enriches us on what happening behind people mind and why humor becomes not funny, furthermore it describes how humor is formed and accommodated in linguistics aspect.

Humor in semantics theory

According to semantics theory (Soedjatmiko, 1992:73), humor takes place when "ambiguity" meanings applied in one of three Wilson's categories (deliverance, conflict and desyncronization). Either reader or hearer who picks up a meaning from some ambiguity meanings will laugh after realizing that he or she has taken up a wrong meaning. An ambiguity, according to the theory, may take place in the lexical level, sentence level and discourse.[12] Hence, in all levels of a text, humor may be formed.

Humor in pragmatic theory

According to Pragmatic humor theory (Soedjatmiko, 1992:76 ff.), humor occurs when people broke natural communication rule. As the result, misunderstanding will come up. Misunderstanding may be appeared due to using of word that causes misinterpretation. In a discourse, for instance, a meaning may be unclear if one of these principles is broken: co-operative principle,[13] politeness principle[14] and ironical principle.[15] 'Broken communication' may shift a speaker or reader in a "trap" of humor. Practically, broken communication usually takes place in a humor consisting of more than one line and relates with certain culture.

Humor in view of socio culture

Socio culture is the most important aspect to be considered in humor, since humor occasionally benefits socio culture aspects. Laver and Hutcheson mentioned socio culture information is needed to comprehend social function of language (Bell, 1976:72 ff.). Socio culture information might be found in word choice and word combination understood only by native. According to socio culture assessment, there are two kinds of humor: universal humor containing very few of socio culture aspects and, local humor that full loaded of socio culture aspects. Thus, when reader (or listener) does not recognize socio culture information (indexical reference), humor would not be funny at all (Soedjatmiko, 1992:79).

In addition, inconsistency of idea is a good vehicle in reflecting social dysfunction that generally occurs when social function is not filled up by hearer or reader. If social

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[12] The following example displays humor that uses paradoxical logic in a discourse: "Then there was the Old Testament prostitute who was arrested for trying to make a prophet."

[13] Co-operative principle means meaning determined by some elements (adequate and correct information, relevant and clear speaking) (Grice, 1975:45, cf. Leech, 1985: 100).

[14] Politeness principle depends on who are the speaker and listener (for example, teacher to students: could you answer all these questions?). Teacher will use co-operative principle but the student should reply with politeness principle.

[15] Ironical principle is deviation from both co-operative principle and politeness principle. Ironical principle enables speaker converse impolitely by pretending polite or pretending support but also reject, for example: That is a friend! (Leech, 1985:142).

function is satisfied, then meaning won't be ambiguous and humor won't take place. But, once social function is broken then humor show up. For example, ethnic humor which usually contains of social message.[16]

*A university student run very scare toward his campus, a friend of him asking what have been happening. He mentioned that he would fight a man, having seen his enemy he run as quickly as possible. His friend asks him again whether his enemy has taller and bigger than him. He answers, "No just a little boy…but Ambonese…"* (Dananjaya 1988:73).

In case, non-Ambonese reads the humor and laughs, that because he or she is able to pick up universal element in the humor. Generally, Indonesians will catch the laughter immediately, for Ambonese is known better to fight his enemy with help of friends. The social function of the humor is immediately clear for Indonesian that it is to despise Ambonese ethnic.[17]

Next example is not so simple for non-Indonesian, this time socio culture is more loaded with cultural aspects:

*A rich Madurese goes to luxury hotel and stay overnight there. Before going to bed, he calls a bell- boy to order his tomorrow breakfast.*

*Madurese (M) : I'm ordering my breakfast tomorrow, please note! I want you come with my breakfast at six o'clock next morning, don't be late, I have a meeting tomorrow.*
*Maid (P)        : What do you want to have, Sir?*
*M                  : I want 'bret jembret'*

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[16] Ausubel (1967) states clearly that humor appeared in a local context (conditions of life) or (patterns of) culture in which said folk-sage. Modern Jewish who experienced a hard life in which made them realist without illusions, comedy and tragedy are joined together, "laughter through tears". According to him, Jewish humor is in the role of comforter but also in a *krechtz* (groan) disclosed in so many faces. Jewish humor turns harsh and cruel is out of the line with the folk traditions of laughter among Jews, which grew out of Jewish ethical values which direct the individual to laugh *with* people rather than *at* them. In addition, Jewish humor has an intellectual character for it rooted in Talmud and sharpened on the logical grindstone, it take forms such as pun, comic situations and repartee which are usually formed in order to fill up pedagogic effort, moral teaching (against *meshuggeneh*-a crazy world). Irony, satire and caricature are among vehicles of humor in Jews and take place as self-criticism. Jewish wit is often a wolf in sheep's clothing where start laughing means fall right into a trap. Foibles and incongruities are among the Jewish characters humor and lead to admonition, not self-depreciation of Jewish character. Humor is a form of criticism.

[17] Take a look many ethnic humors, normally it despises a particular person or ethnic (due to dialect, behavior, attitude, etc: One of the favorite jokes in Germany was: "Why is television called a medium? Because it is neither rare nor well-done."
In France: "You're a high-priced lawyer! If I give you $500, will you answer two questions for me?" "Absolutely! What's the second question?"
Belgians laughed at: "Well, you see, there are basically three kinds of people in the world. Those who can count and those that can't."
Swedes found funny: "A guy phones the local hospital and yells, `you've gotta send help! My wife's in labor!" The nurse says, `calm down. Is this her first child?' He replies, `no! This is her husband!'"
And Canadians chortled at: "What do you call a woman who can balance four pints of beer on her head? Beatrix."

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|---|---|
| *P* | *: What, Sir???* |
| *M* | *: 'Bret jembret!!!!!!!!!'* |
| *P* | *: Sorry Sir, what is' bret jembret?????'* |
| *M* | *: What a stupid you are! Do you speak English?? What is 'roti' in English??* |
| *P* | *: Bread, Sir.* |
| *M* | *: Now, what is 'selai' in English???* |
| *P* | *: Jam, Sir* |
| *M* | *: Then if you have 'selai' in between of your 'roti', what should you call? Is that true you have to say 'bread jam bread' ............ugh poor you are!!!!!!!!!* |
| *P* | *: Oooooooooooh I see, Sir. And what do you want to drink, Sir??* |
| *M* | *: Soda Milk!!!!!!* |
| *P* | *: With ice, Sir???* |
| *M* | *: Certainly with ice, if not it will be u u oda, damn you!!!!!!!!!!!!!* |
| *P* | *: ????????!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!* |

In the latter, non-Indonesian have to be familiar with both Madurese dialect and Indonesian vocabulary and grammar. When the Madurese says "bret jembret," it may mean in Indonesian: 'a warning of robbery attack' but it is the way Madurese speaks by always repeating every last syllables. In the humor, 'bret jembret' explains how Madurese uses English in Indonesian grammar ('bread' means 'roti' which pronounced as 'bret', then 'jam' means 'selai' which pronounced as 'jem'). The Madurese put the words according to how usually Indonesian people eats bread by putting jam in between of bread. Then, when the Madurese order 'Soda Milk' with or without 'ice', there is another comedic. 'Soda Milk' is 'Susu Soda' in Indonesian, whereas 'Ice' (pronounced as 'S'). Here the humor uses word "Ice" (S = Es = Ice pronunciation matter) as the heart of witty. 'Susu Soda" without 'S' will leave 'U U Oda'.

As far as this, we have understanding humor in the area of meaning (semantics), pragmatics and social context/communication (socio culture). Let us turn to the types or form of humor in terms of its linguistic features, because as I have mentioned earlier that they can be clearly identified and observed in reaching the goal of the paper.

Linguistics description on humor in the bible

In searching of types of humor in the bible, Ellington us start with the definition of humor: A sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous or the mental faculty for discovering, expressing, or appreciating the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous (1991:302). Based on the definition, he proposed three levels of humors which are needed to be noticed such as: phonotactical (sounds) which refers to plays on words and rhymes, morpho-syntactical (words) which refers to ambiguity and double entendre, rhetorical (ideas) which refers to irony. Then, according to him, each levels produce specific form/s, for example: phonotactical may take form of puns, morpho-syntactical will use word division and blends, and rhetorical will have hyperbole, meiosis/litotes, caricature/parody and satire (Ellington, 1991:301-313).

Hence, according to Ellington, there are three areas can direct reader to humor, and inevitably the text is categorized as humor too, namely, sound, form and idea. Ellington's proposal is excellence in terms of linguistics area especially in translation purpose. However the division takes less notice of other aspects such as what is going on behind the mind of people who deliberately or undeliberately tries making humor (for example humor because of paradoxical logics), communications matters, genre of the texts and socio-cultural aspect at the time when the texts supposed to intend to (the history and the historicity of the text itself) and I am afraid the proposal cannot touch other forms of humor. Nevertheless, the levels proposed by Ellington are useful to clearly group the very fundamental categories of humor in linguistics point of view. It has also helpful in systematizing the features of linguistics that make easier in the course of translation. Now, let us turn to humor in the Hebrew bible.

Factors evoke humor in the Hebrew Bible

In the case of the Hebrew Bible, there are three factors occur together in humor that are a sense of the incongruous 'of the idea', a relaxed or lightheaded mood or attitude 'a festive', and an effect of suddenness or surprise or 'economy of expression' (Greenstein, 1992:330). I assume that Greenstein's division is not far from with Wilson and Raskin did. I do agree to divide the types of humor in the Hebrew bible according to casual factors (cognitive or logics, social or behavior, and expression or emotional effect), nevertheless without forcing the three categories take any kinds of linguistics features depending on how socio culture of the Hebrew bible redactors and his society in the past and forms (genre) where humor would be applied (cf. Soedjatmiko, 1992).

Greenstein, furthermore, gives example where the three casual factors should come together in catching the humor in Sarah's story, particularly when angel from the Lord visits her husband and tells about her pregnancy. He assesses that the story has possibility humorous; firstly, Sarah's incongruous situation would be a source of humor, secondly, Sarah laughs at the mere statement that she will give birth is economy of expression which must be immediately perceived; but thirdly, if anyone thinking about or analyzing the story it will kill the humor. In some cases, for instance Ehud's story, types of humor occasionally intermix such as dramatic irony, satire, visually comic image, verbal wit, pun, double entendre, trickery and entertainment for Jews (Greenstein, 1992:331).

Let us turn to some prominent linguistics features available in the Hebrew bible, and at the same time we will observe and assess genre of the texts, socio-cultural aspect, intended readers, the historicity of the text -if necessary- and how Indonesian New Translation done.

Categories of humor in the Hebrew Bible

The three common forms and, at the same time, prominent of all forms of humor in the Hebrew bible are pun, irony and satire. Casanowich (quoted by Stinespring, 1964:662) counted that there are approximately 500 puns in the Hebrew bible and Russel added about 200 in the New Testament, and they take role as the lowest form of Hebrew humor. The so many appearances mark that pun is so popular for Jews and oriental people in general (Stinespring, 1964:660). The book of Genesis provides best example of

pun in connection with proper name (paronomasia).[18] Most of pun occur in narrative, some in prophetic genre[19] and wisdom literatures,[20] take note on the following examples (from New Revised Standard Version and Indonesian New Translation unless mentioned):

Gen 2:7:
Then the LORD God formed *man* (*ādhām*) of dust from the *ground* (*ādhāmâ*), and out breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

"…TUHAN Allah membentuk manusia itu dari *debu tanah* dan...demikianlah *manusia* itu menjadi makhluk yang hidup."

Gen 2:23:
She shall be called *Woman* (*ishshâ*), because she was taken out of *Man* (*ish*).

Ia akan dinamai *perempuan*, sebab ia diambil dari laki-laki.

Gen 3:20:
The man called his wife's name *Eve* (*hawwâ*), because she was the mother of all *living* (*hay*).

Manusia itu memberi nama *Hawa*…sebab dialah yang menjadi ibu semua yang *hidup*.

Gen 11:9:
Therefore its name was called *Babel* (*bābhel*), because there the LORD *confused* (*bālal*) the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Itulah…..disebut *Babel*, karena di situlah *dikacaubalaukan* TUHAN bahasa seluruh bumi….

Amo 5:5:
But do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beer-sheba; for *Gilgal* (*gilgāl*) shall surely go into *exile* (*gālâ*), and Bethel shall come to nothing.

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[18] 17:5 Abram and Abraham *ābh* "father"; 17:17, 19, 21:6, 26:8 Isaac *yishaq* 'to laugh' or 'to enjoy oneself'; 16:11, 17:20 Ishmael 'to hear' or 'give heed'; 25:25 Esau 'hairy'; 25:30 Edom 'red'; 25:26, 27:36, Hos 12:2-3 Jacob 'heel-holder' and 'supplanter'; 30:23, 24 Joseph *'āsaph* 'take away' or 'add' *yāsaph*; 41:51 Manasseh 'forgetfulness'; 41:52, Hos 9:16, 14:8 Ephraim 'to be fruitful'.

[19] Hos 8:7 grain *qāmāh* meal *qemah*; Is 1:4 Ah *hôi* sinful nation *gôi*; 1:19-20 '*eat* the good' or 'be *eaten* by the sword'; 2:19 *'arōs* 'to terrify *'āres* 'the earth'; 17:12, 21:2; 29:2 moaning *ta'aniyyâ* groaning *wa'aniyyâ*; 34:6 a sacrifice *zebhah* a great slaughter *tebhah*; 34:14 wild beasts *siyyîm* hyenas *'iyyîm*; 41:2 stubble *qash* his bow *qashtô*; 54:6 a wife forsaken *'azubhâ* grieved *'asubhath*; 54:8 a rush *sheseph* wrath *qeseph*; Mic 1:10-14; Jer 1:11-12 (cf.Am 8:2) almond *shāqēdh* watching *shōqēdh*; 2:12 –in where horror takes role as a very grim form of humor- be appalled *shōmmû* heavens *shāmayim* –also 'living waters' and 'broken cisterns'; 3:12 'to turn' 'return' 'turn away' *shûbhâ* faithless *meshûbhâ*; 14 return *shûbhû* faithless *shôbhābhîm*, 22 *shûbhû shôbhābhîm meshûbōhth.*

[20] Job 11:12 stupid *nābhûbh* understanding *yillābhēbh*.

"…sebab *Gilgal* pasti masuk ke dalam *pembuangan*…

Amo 8:1-2:
This is what the Lord GOD showed me--a basket of *summer fruit* (*qayis*). He said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me, "The *end* (*qēs*) has come upon my people Israel; I will never again pass them by.

"…Tampak sebuah bakul berisi buah-buahan *musim kemarau*. Lalu…" Berfirmanlah TUHAN kepadaku: "*Kesudahan* telah datang…."

Isa 5:7:
For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected *justice* (*mishpāt*), but saw *bloodshed* (*mispāh*); *righteousness* (*sedaqâ*), but heard a *cry* (*se'āqâ*)!

Sebab kebun anggur TUHAN semesta alam ialah kaum Israel, dan orang Yehuda ialah tanam-tanaman kegemaran-Nya; dinanti-Nya *keadilan*, tetapi hanya ada *kelaliman*, dinanti-Nya *kebenaran* tetapi hanya ada *keonaran*.

Pro 13:20:
Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the *companion* (*rō'ê*) of fools suffers *harm* (*yērôa'*).

Siapa bergaul dengan orang bijak menjadi bijak, tetapi siapa *berteman* dengan orang bebal menjadi *malang*.

Pro 18:24:
Some *friends* (*rē'îm*) *play at friendship* (*hitrô'ēa'*) but a true friend sticks closer than one's nearest kin.

Ada *teman* yang mendatangkan *kecelakaan*, tetapi ada juga sahabat yang lebih karib dari pada seorang saudara.

   Both in creation and Babel narrative context above, we come across that how difficult for both NRSV and Indonesian New Translation (INT) maintain the hebrew pun. In Gen 2:7, neither one of NRSV nor INT maintains the pun there. Fortunately, in Gen 2:23, only NRSV keeps a little of the wordplay, it is by chance that NRSV has almost the same pronunciation to determine gender there. However, in Gen 3:20, neither NRSV nor INT can maintain the pun (but LXX does). Then in Gen 11:9, NRSV (and LXX) is succeed to keep the pun but not in INT. So far, there is none of the examples of pun can be maintained in INT.

   In prophetic context (Amos and Isaiah), NRSV keeps the wordplays but INT has. Notice how pairs of words *keadilan* (justice) - *kelaliman* (bloodshed) and *kebenaran* (righteousness) – *keonaran* (cry) keep nuance of pun. American translation and Moffat too, according to Stinespreing (661), are succeed to keep the effect of pun:

*Gilgal* shall go into *galling exile*.

In the wisdom literature examples, only NRSV might keep the wordplay particularly on the second example but INT has lost the pun.

It is clear that the limitation of vocabulary occasionally makes translation unable to maintain wordplay. And almost definitely, the examples above are not funny for modern readers moreover for those who just able to read its translations. A prosy literalism will have great opportunity to miss the wry humor and sometimes miss the point of the teaching too.[21] But, the redactors and authors of the Hebrew texts intended to share a sense of humor, at least wit, through pun they did.

Besides one way the Jews uttered their feeling of humor and to vivid their idea (Stinespring, 1964:660), pun may express deep pathos that is the range of moods from comedic to bitter feeling.[22] Stinespring (661) records at least there are 15 cases where the Hebrew bible uses the word "see" and "afraid" which actually the meaning of both are similar in Hebrew, for instance Zec. 9:5:

Ashkelon shall *see* (*tērê*) it, and be *afraid* (*têrâ*); Gaza too, and shall writhe in anguish; Ekron also, because its hopes are confounded. The king shall perish from Gaza; Ashkelon shall be uninhabited;

The mood and pun are not kept in Indonesian New Translation:

Askelon akan *melihat*nya, lalu *takut*; juga Gaza, lalu gemetar sangat; Ekronpun, sebab harapannya sudah kandas. Dari Gaza raja akan binasa dan Askelon tidak akan didiami lagi.

In many cases, it is difficult to distinguish between pun and satire, or it might be said satire in pun form, for example Proverbs 22:39:

Who has *woe* (*'ôy*)? Who has *sorrow* (*'abhôy*)? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

Siapa *mengaduh*? Siapa *mengeluh*? Siapa bertengkar? Siapa berkeluh kesah? Siapa mendapat cidera tanpa sebab? Siapa merah matanya?

INT succeeds to keep pun here. This example enlightens us how linguistics features often times mixed up, we may find many kinds of linguistics features in level of lexical, sentences and discourse.

Now, let us turn to irony question. Occasionally, irony, satire and sarcasm are difficult to distinguish. Generally speaking, satire is more harsh and sharp than irony, meanwhile sarcasm is irony with speech intonation. Even, according to Greenstein (330-332),[23] irony forms all things below, including *pun*:

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[21] In the New Testament for example is Mark 4:21.

[22] In Apocrypha for instance, the book of Susana gives examples how the word *schînon* (mastic tree) and *schisei* (split or cut), then *prînon* (liveoak tree) and *prisai* (to saw) have forms bitter pun (Stinespring, 661).

[23] Compare too Stinespring (662), Burrows (1970:80-107), Ackerman (1981:213-46), Fisher (1977:571-79), Robertson (1977).

a. *Sarcasm* (expressions which clearly mean the opposite of what is said) for example:

Gen 37:19:
"Here comes this dreamer."

"Lihat, *tukang mimpi* kita itu datang!…"

In the context of Joseph Story, it is clear that the statement is sarcasm in the purpose to entertain.

Amo 4:4:
"Come to Bethel, and *transgress*; to Gilgal, and *multiply transgression.*"

"Datanglah ke Betel dan lakukanlah *perbuatan jahat*, ke Gilgal dan *perhebatlah perbuatan jahat*!…"

In the context of Amos preaching, it is clear that he spoke sarcastic to the northern people of Israel for their transgression.

b. *Satire* (using of sarcasm or irony to expose foolishness or vice in attacking foreign's gods, cults and kings), for example:

Isa 14:11:
How you are fallen from heaven,
    O Day Star, son of Dawn!
How you are cut down to the ground,
    you who laid the nations low!

"Ke dunia orang mati sudah diturunkan kemegahanmu dan bunyi gambus-gambusmu; ulat-ulat dibentangkan sebagai lapik tidurmu, dan cacing-cacing sebagai selimutmu."

The text describes how humiliating end of Babylon's king than expected, therefore humor. Some texts such as Isa 44:9-20, Ezk 29, 31, Nah 2, Dan 4, Gen 3:9-13 and Jonah story are examples of satire too.

c. *Ridicule* (making fun of; laugh at unkindly; mock), for example:

Jud. 9:53-54 (compare with 2 Sam 11:21):

And a certain woman threw an upper millstone upon Abimelech's head, and crushed his skull. Then he called hastily to the young man his armor-bearer, and said to him, "*Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, 'A woman killed him'*."

"Tetapi seorang perempuan menimpakan sebuah batu kilangan kepada Abimelekh dan memecahkan batu kepalanya. Dengan segera dipanggilnya bujang pembawa senjatanya

dan berkata kepadanya: "*Hunuslah pedangmu dan bunuhlah aku, supaya jangan orang berkata tentang aku: Seorang perempuan membunuh dia*"."

The text is purposed to ridicule Israel's enemy for entertaining Israelites. The same occurrences are:

1 King 18:27:
At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "*Cry aloud! Surely he is a god; either he is meditating, or he has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.*"

"…Elia mulai mengejek mereka, katanya: "*Panggilah lebih keras, bukankah dia allah? Mungkin ia merenung, mungkin ada urusannya, mungkin ia bepergian; barangkali ia tidur, dan belum terjaga*."

Psalms 44:24:
Why dost thou hide thy face? Why dost thou forget our affliction and oppression? (RSV).

"Oleh karena Engkau kami ada dalam bahaya maut sepanjang hari, kami dianggap sebagai domba-domba sembelihan."

Jud 4-5 and 2 Sam 11:21 may be included to *ridicule* form.

d. *Parody* (an amusing imitation of a serious author's style or comic imitation), for example: Pharaoh story in Ex 9, 14-15, Jonah story (Miles, 1974-5:168-81), Esth 1-3 and its climax in 7:10, Gen 11:1-9, Balaam's talking ass in Num 22:21-35 and Jotham's fable in Jud 9:7-15, Lamech's boast in Gen 4:23-24, Noah's drunkenness in Gen 9:18-27, Abraham's bargaining with the Lord in Gen 18:22-33, etc.

e. *Trickery*, for example: Laban's deceit in Gen 29-30, Ehud story, Jael story, Gideon story, Samson story, Gen 12:10-20, 20).

f. *Proverbial humor*, for example: Pro 11:22, 26:17, 26:18-19.

Greenstein's point of view marks that overlapping features usually take place in a humor. In many cases, irony may refer to such list above but we have to be aware there are still specific features for each. Trickery, parody, proverbs for instance, are clearly different from irony in terms of form (trickery and parody usually take place in narrative, poems even prose meanwhile proverbs in parallelism form),[24] although ironic sense is exist.
Examples and information from category of humor above may not be all funny for modern people because of two great chasms mentioned. However, as I said before, they are intended primarily to entertain the reader and at the same time function as a

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[24] In the New Testament, Paradox, Metaphor, Preposterous, Irony, Parables, Satire and Dialogue are means of Christ's humor (Trueblood, 1964:39-125). I trust that comical moments and parody are kinds of parables.

vehicle for making important points (emphasis) in the past. Unfortunately, Indonesian translation (or all translations in the world) is unable to transferring the feeling of laughter. Almost definitely, comedic aspect left behind because of language problem such as Indonesian New Translation above. Then, at the same time socio-cultural problem contributes to the difficulty of transferring laughter. Let me describe how socio culture of Indonesian contributes to the categories of humor in Indonesian.

Categories of humor in Indonesian context

Semantics and pragmatics mechanism used by Indonesian's humor are the same with many other humors in the world. Like humor that comes from other different socio culture, Indonesian's has specific socio culture factor that influences its categories and contexts (who, when and where). Indonesian, like any nation in the eastern world, has sharpened vertical relationship between older people and younger, those in high ranking with low level people, man and woman. This culture makes impossible someone jokes openly and aggressive against certain level of people, or in man and woman relationship tell openly sex humor. Jokes on ethnics are more probably than jokes on personal matter. In this case, humor in category of irony and ridicule (despising some groups) are more popular (Soedjatmiko, 1992:83-84). Besides those two categories, pun is getting good place in Indonesian humor as found in many media in Indonesia.

Comparing between Hebrew bible's humor and Indonesian humors, they are more or less the same in terms of some socio culture factors such as old and young people relationship, man and woman relationship, high and low ranking of people. And it is great advantage since at least there are some basic understandings. However, loaded socio culture in Hebrew humors is impossible to be understood by many of people in everywhere, including Indonesian, or conversely.

Suggestions on translating humor to another language

Besides language and socio culture factors, a translator might causes the lost of laughter. It can be occurred because he or she is aware that some texts are intended to be humorous. Of course there are many aspects can be added such as education level of the readers and so on but how can we do in the course of translation to keep the feeling of humor?

Endeavors to translate humor's texts to contemporary readers in order that they are able to feel the comedic are very difficult. As we have noticed, language barriers and socio culture aspects and many other aspects explained above have made difficulty in transferring humor to different language and culture. The same problems take place when someone tries to translate humor from Hebrew bible to Indonesian. Since Indonesian has some kinds of the same categories with its counterpart in Hebrew bible, then the transferring humor is still possible. Even though Leacock has said, in translating humor in the Bible, that it is almost impossible (Leacock, 1935:226), but it does not mean we cannot do it as we have seen above. Stinespring (1964:662) tried to unite two English versions (RSV and Moffat) translation in order to get more humorous as follow:

With the jawbone of an *ass*,
  I have piled them in a *mass*!
With the jawbone of an *ass*,

I have slain a thousand *men*! (Jud 15:16)

Nevertheless, we cannot be as optimistic as Stinespring or Newmark (Cf. Newmark, 1981:107, 109), I assume, certainly we are able to translate almost every word of humor but the effect of the humor may not be rendered. We are limited by the translation itself (language, culture, emotions, etc), anyway, a translation is in certain boundary (Cf. Catford, 1965:93). I assume that, a translator firstly emphasizes the equivalent effect of humor in the target language rather than maintaining the wordings, for example what Indonesian has done in Jud. 15:16 below:

"With the jawbone of a donkey,
          heaps upon heaps,
with the jawbone of a donkey
          I have slain a thousand men."

Dengan rahang keledai
          bangsa keledai itu kuhajar
dengan rahang keledai
          seribu orang kupukul.

(literary:
With the jawbone of a donkey,
          A donkey nation I beat,
with the jawbone of a donkey
          Thousand men I hit).

In fact, Indonesian translation succeeds to maintain the Hebrew humor, at least the sound in the verse, although it has to add a phrase, which is not appeared in the Hebrew: "bangsa keledai itu kuhajar" (a donkey nation I beat). One has to be sure that any changing or addition is still in correspondence with the source language in meaning. In other words, it will not sacrifice the original meaning.

But there are many more cases where this is simply not possible, in these cases according to Ellington (1991:304), recourse to explanatory footnotes is about the only arm left in the translator's arsenal.

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