Irony in Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhat Al-Nufūs wa Muḍḥik Al-ʿabūs*: a Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

This paper investigates irony in selected verse and prose from Ibn Sūdūn's (1407 – 1464 AD) *Nuzhat Al-Nufūs wa Muḍḥik Al-ʿabūs* from a pragmatic perspective. It investigates what I have dubbed "ironic axioms," or IAS, as a new kind of verbal irony used by the author to create a hilarious ironic text. This technique is based on *taḥṣīl al-ḥāṣil*, which entails stating the obvious, explaining simple facts, using circular definitions, and defining a thing by itself. Ibn Sūdūn's strategy for developing ironic humor is predicated on preparing his audience for something serious, weird, and significant before stunning them with trifling facts and well-known adages. A hybrid method based on the combination of Attardo's (2000) theory of Irony as relevant inappropriateness and Giora's (1995, 1997, 1998) graded salience hypothesis (GSH) has been employed. This study established that Ibn Sūdūn used ironic axioms not only to elicit humor and provoke laughter, but also to send a message and express an opinion. The most significant findings of this study are that irony is nuanced, difficult, time-consuming, requires two-stage processing, and does not necessarily implicate the opposite. This study argues that Ibn Sūdūn's *Dīwān Nuzhat Al-Nufūs* parodies pedantic academia and mocks the social realities of his contemporaries.

المفارقة في نزهة النفوس ومضحك العبوس لابن سودون: دراسة تداولية

المستخلص:

تبحث هذه الورقة البحثية المفارقة في أبيات شعرية ونثرية مختارة من ديوان الشاعر ابن سودون (1407 - 1464 م) نزهة النفوس ومضحك العبوس من منظور تداولي. فهي تتناول بالدراسة والفحص ما اسماه الباحث "البديهيات الساخرة" وهو نوع جديد من السخرية اللفظية عمادها المفارقة ابتكره ابن سودون في كتاباته لإنشاء نص ساخر مضحك حافل بالمعاني والدلالات. تعتمد هذه البديهيات الساخرة على محاولة توضيح ما هو واضح، شرح الحقائق البسيطة، التعريفات الدائرية، وتعريف الشيء بنفسه أو ما يسمى بتحصيل الحاصل. تكمن استراتيجية ابن سودون في توليد الفكاهة على إعداد جمهوره لشيء جاد وغريب ومهم قبل أن يذهلهم بحقائق تافهة وأقوال معروفة. يعتمد التحليل في هذه الدراسة على دمج نظريتي أتاردو (2000) التي تقول بأن المفارقة تنجم عن اقوال غير متلائمة ومتناقضة يوجد بها شيء من الاتصال والمنطق ونظرية جيورا (1995، 1997، 1998) التي تقوم على أساس فرضية البروز المتدرج للعنصر الفكاهي وتحديدا الساخر. أحد اهداف هذا البحث هو اثبات ان المفارقة هي عملية دقيقة وصعبة وتستغرق وقتًا طويلاً وتتطلب معالجة ذهنية لفهمها على مرحلتين ولا تعني بالضرورة عكس الشيء أو ضده. استطاعت هذه الدراسة اثبات قيام ابن سودون باستخدام "البديهيات الساخرة" ليس فقط بغرض توليد الفكاهة واثارة الضحك، بل بغرض توصيل رسالة والتعبير عن رأى. تقول هذه الدراسة بأن ديوان نزهة النفوس لابن سودون يسخر في الحقيقة من المجلدات ذات الطابع الأكاديمي المتحذلق و الدراسات الركيكة التي انتشرت في ايامه و كذلك تنتقد بعض العادات الاجتماعية التي سادت في عصره وذلك عن طريق محاكاتها بشكل ساخر يكشف عيوبها و سطحيتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

المفارقة، البديهيات الساخرة، الفكاهة، ابن سودون، التداولية، الأدب المملوكى.

Irony in Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhat Al-Nufūs wa Muḍḥik Al-ʿabūs*: a Pragmatic Study

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1. Introduction

1.1 Irony

Irony is one of the most important and common tropes, which has attracted the attention of ancient philosophers, rhetoricians, and literary scholars since the times of Aristotle (Booth 1974: ix; Muecke 1970: 3-4; Bredin 1997:1). According to the classical view, irony is a figure of speech that communicates the opposite of what is said (Giora 1995: 239). In other words, it is the act of saying something, while meaning the opposite (Garmendia 2018: 17). However, recently this view has been criticized and modified by both pragmatists and cognitive psychologists alike (Giora 1998: 1). Many theories of irony were proposed like the Gricean approach (Grice 1989), the echoic account (Sperber and Wilson 1981, 1995 [1986]; Wilson 2006, 2009), and the pretense theory (Clark and Gerrig 1984). In brief, these theories state that irony consists in communicating the opposite, echoing, and pretending. (Garmendia 2014: 641).

Grice's account, for instance, is regarded by many scholars as a pragmatic reconstruction of the traditional view of irony, in which the speaker is perceived as saying something and meaning the opposite. However, according to Grice, the speaker is making *as if to say* the literal meaning of the utterance (Garmendia 2018: 22). Grice's account has been unique in capturing the classical and pre-theoretical conception of irony; however, it also exhibits some pivotal weaknesses. It has been empirically proved that Grice's machinery (or the classical view of irony in terms of opposition) cannot tackle specific instances of irony (Garmendia 2018: 28). However, Grice's ideas have been further developed by several theories. For instance, Irony has been explained as a form of insincere speech act (Amante 1981: 77-96; Haverkate 1990: 101), an *as if-phenomenon* (Garmendia 2011: 2013), or *an indirect negation* (Giora 1995; Giora et al. 1998), among others. However, it must be acknowledged that the Gricean account was the first pragmatic explanation of irony and that the echoic account was presented as an alternative. The 'pretence theory' of irony, as postulated by Herbert Clark

and Richard Gerrig (1984), can be regarded as an alternative to both the Gricean and the echoic approaches.

There are three major approaches to irony. According to Grice, irony consists in implicating the opposite of the literal meaning. Sperber and Wilson, on the other hand, claim that being ironic consists of echoing an attributed thought or utterance. Finally, Clark and Gerrig maintain that to speak ironically is to pretend. Both the echoic account and the 'pretence theory' of irony, agree that there is only one meaning in irony, in contrast to (neo- Gricean) approaches, which defend the idea of irony as a two-stage phenomenon. They both are positioned in favor of a single-stage view of irony and are at odds with the classical Gricean view, which posits two opposite meanings in irony. However, there has been a lot of debate where some scholars defend the echoic view and deny that pretence is required for irony, whereas others claim that it is pretence and not echo that we find in every ironic utterance. (Garmendia 2018: 65-66). Even though irony has been conceived differently by the competing theories, they all share the assumption that in irony, the speaker does not say (or properly assert) the literal meaning of the utterance; he does something different (Garmendia 2018: 88).

A hybrid method is based on combining Attardo's (2000) theory of Irony as relevant inappropriateness and his principle of least disruption with Giora's (1995, 1997, 1998) graded salience hypothesis (GSH), and her concept of indirect negation. The two theories are Gricean at the core, but they include several adaptations, modifications, and additions to Grice's original model. The results of this research are in accordance with Attardo's (2000) and Giora's argument of irony as a two-stage process against the proponents of the one-stage process by Sperber and Wilson (1981). The research supports Garmendia's (2014: 649-650) hypothesis that implicating the opposite, echoing, and pretending work as clues for irony. She develops her ideas further when she asserts that what tie together all instances of irony are not the notions of echo, opposition, and pretense, but something more basic –an overt clash between contents. (Garmendia 2014: 648).

According to Giora (1995, 1998) Dews & Winner (1995), Dews, Kaplan & Winner (1995), Barbe (1995), Brown & Levinson (1987), Jorgensen (1996) irony is a politeness strategy. In other words, it is a mitigated form of criticism relative to an alternative literal expression that could project the same attitude. According to Giora (1995), and Haiman

(1990), speakers resort to indirect devices to protect themselves: "Part of what I consider the aesthetic appeal of sarcasm, in fact, lies in its ambiguity, and its potential deniability" (Haiman 1990: 203). Therefore, irony has been used by powerless groups to transmit subversive ideas (Giroa 1998: 10). For instance, forms of indirection such as irony and fantasy have been used by Ibn Sūdūn to challenge the cultural assumptions and the florid artificial style of writing of his contemporaries without any fear of repercussions. Self-irony is another technique that is used by the author to divert mockery away from himself so that it targets the norms which he protests. Irony, in fact, is assumed to promote intimacy and group cohesiveness (Giroa 1998: 11).

1.2 Irony and humor

The connection between irony and humor is old and goes as far back as the superiority and incongruity theories of humor. Like humor, in irony, the speaker expresses a feeling of superiority towards the target of his irony, and this could be an elucidation of the link between irony and humor from the perspective of the superiority view. In irony, the speaker tends to criticize, ridicule, mock and make fun of someone or something and that it is why irony is funny, simply, because it often expresses a negative attitude that puts the speaker in a superior position, and this feeling of superiority is the main source of humor and laugh. While the superiority theory of irony may be the most ancient one, the 'incongruity theories' are probably the most acclaimed and accepted by modern theorists (Garmendia 2018:138-142). From the perspective of the incongruity theories, there is a clash in irony between what the speaker intends to say and what he actually says. This clash at the heart of ironic communication can explain why ironic examples are considered to be humorous. This paper points out that humor is created as a side effect of resolving the incongruity between what the speaker is putting forward and what he actually intends to communicate as we will see in Ibn Sūdūn's examples.

Modern scholars, on the other hand, have drawn attention to the intricate relationship between irony and humor. Humor and irony overlap, but they are distinct, and their relationship is subtle. First, irony and humor are regarded as figurative language forms (Ritchie 2005: 2). They can also be regarded as a part of the pragmatic process of contrast (Colston 2002: 57-80) or as an indirect negation (Giora 1995; Attardo 2001a; Hirsch 2011). In fact "irony may contribute to the perception of humor in a text" (Attardo 2001b: 122). Although they might meet

sometimes like when we say, for instance, "humorous irony" and "ironic humor", they are distinct phenomena. Humor, for instance, is simultaneously semantic and pragmatic, while irony is entirely a pragmatic phenomenon (Attardo 2001b: 111). Moreover, irony echoes explicitly communicated assumptions while humor echoes implicitly expressed ones (Curcó 1996). Irony additionally entails negative inferences, whereas humor requires a substitution of one script for another. More specifically, irony is understood as indirect negation, while humor basically revolves around a script-replacing antonymy mechanism (Ruiz 2013:5).

Regarding the inferences involved, irony primarily entails the violation of the principle of quantity. Instead, humor involves the infringement of the informativity principle (Ruiz Gurillo 2012: 131–141). Dews *et al.* (1995: 348) speculate that the element of surprise "yielded by the disparity between what is said and what is meant" may trigger humor. Giora (1995: 256-257) argues that humor and irony share some basic mechanisms. Namely, they both violate the "graded informativeness requirement," but they do so differently: a joke goes from an unmarked meaning to a marked one, while irony does the opposite. Furthermore, when discussing the similarities between humor and irony, Giora notes that in both phenomena "the passage from the least- to the most-informative message is abrupt and surprising" (1995: 256). It seems fairly clear that abrupt and surprising shifts in informativeness and contextual inappropriateness are very closely related concepts. Finally, this study postulates that the kind of Irony which is used in Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa muḍḥik al-ʿabūs* is an amusing form of irony full of playful humor and laughter.

1.3 Ironic axioms in Ibn Sūdūn's Nuzhat al-nufūs wa muḍḥik al-ʿabūs

Irony and parody are among the most important techniques employed in Arabic satire and they are used extensively by Ibn Sūdūn in his *Dīwān Nuzhat Al-Nufūs*. There is no exact equivalent in Arabic literary terminology for the previous terms. *Tahakkum* or *sukhriyya* ('mockery, derision'), for instance, are the nearest terms for 'irony'. In modern critical discourse, however, the word *mufāraqa* is sometimes used. The Arab literary critics and theorists discussed irony, parody, and related concepts in various contexts; in which an essential key term is used in this respect which is *hazl*. Ibn Sūdūn is among the specialists in parody (in prose and poetry). One of the most important characteristics of

irony and satire is that it may be missed or misunderstood, and the object of a satirical work may be ambiguous. *Dīwān Nuzhat Al-Nufūs* by Ibn Sūdūn seems to parody the contemporary pedantic scholarship, and it has also been read as a satirical attack on contemporary social conditions in general exactly like *Hazz al-quḥūf* by al-Shirbīnī (Meisami 1998: 694). This part explains the concept of ironic axioms as a new form of verbal humor used by the author to write a humorous text with ironic intent.

Al- ʿAqād (1956: 80) stated that Ibn Sūdūn was an Arabist who devised a matchless style that had no parallel either in the Arabic, Turkish, or even the western literature before him. He pointed out that the essence of irony and humor in Ibn Sūdūn's style could be attributed to his unique pedantic style of تحصيل الحاصل *taḥṣīl al-ḥāṣil* [1], stating the obvious, elucidating simple facts, circular definitions, and defining a thing by itself. Shawqi Ḍaif (1999:100-101) added that all humor and jokes in *Dīwān Nuzhat al-nufūs* can be attributed to *al-mufāraqa*. He pointed out that Ibn Sūdūn, has devised a technique that depends basically on preparing his audience to something serious and wonderful. Suddenly, the audience is exposed to axioms, truisms, well-known facts, and accepted truths, rather than anything serious, strange, or full of wonders. They believe that something is incorrect and illogical. As a result, they burst out laughing as they saw all the facts and logic violated and the order of things broken for the sake of chaos, and it is chaos alone that triumphs and prevails in the end.

Other scholars like (Najjār 2015; Amīn 2012; Baqlī 1976; ʿĀrif 2016; Al-ʾAnṣārī 1990) are not satisfied with the previous interpretation as they believe that Ibn Sūdūn's literary production has a more significant role than just triggering humor and eliciting laughter from the audience. They believed that the author used the previous verbal equilibrium to inject his literary production with a certain significant message that goes beyond the obvious goal of laughing. Najjār (2015: 205), for instance, claimed that Ibn Sūdūn's literary style is closely related to the modern concept of absurd in modern literature. His aim is not just to elicit humor and to trigger laughter through his use of a technique that depends basically on *taḥṣīl al-ḥāṣil*, but to generate an ironic joke which is rich

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[1] A common expression in Islamic philosophy and culture that what is already known cannot be acquired anew. This principle is exemplified in "unnecessary, underived, commonplace, and tautological statements. For instance, the statements of 'M is M' or 'M1+M2 is M1+M2' express only that a thing exists as itself. Those who read this sentence experience no increase in knowledge, just as those who read the definitions 'a human is a human' or 'a thinking animal is a thinking animal' find them of no avail (Özturan 2018: 113).

and complex at the same time. ʿĀrif (2016), on the other hand, asserted that Ibn Sūdūn's poetry was not absurd, but rather reflected a deep philosophy of a reality that was about to disintegrate and collapse. He lived in the late Mamlūk state and died only half a century before its fall. So, his poetry represented a state of social and political rejection of a meaningless reality in crisis at that time.

Bakrī Sheikh Amīn (2012: 283-288) assured that Ibn Sūdūn's literary production was, in fact, nothing but an expression of deep irony, sadness, astonishment, and weirdness many times. His aim was to make people laugh to express an attitude or a feeling about a situation or a cause. Amīn asserted that the author used his ironic language to serve two purposes. First, to please those who do not have good literal taste and to achieve some kind of financial gain in the process. Also, he used irony to implicitly criticize the fake language, the corrupted society, and the foreign rulers. His ironic style was characterized by deep social satire. For instance, he criticized the arrogance of some average men, who had only some basic knowledge known to all people, and yet they describe themselves as great scholars, great minds, thinkers, and intellectuals who knew everything. He created a beautiful linguistic formulation, but it was devoid of meaning and value. It was nothing but a restatement of the universally accepted tenets of reality.

Baqlī (1976: 26) explained that Irony is an essential element in all of Ibn Sūdūn's poems, irrespective of their *maqāms*. For instance, poems on the delights of the table are not written to amuse people who are enjoying them, but rather as a complaint against deprivation *ḥirmān* and poverty. Dhakāʾ Al-ʾAnṣārī (1990:65), on the other hand, pointed out that Ibn Sūdūn left for us a book full of *Mūjūn* 'profligacy' and humor. This book was a perfect example of vernacular literature, and it represented the artistic, aesthetic, and ideological features of the comic Egyptian vernacular literature in the 9th century AH (1397 CE – 1495 CE). The importance of studying and editing this book lies in the fact that Ibn Sūdūn has dealt ironically, perhaps for the first time in the history of Arabic literature, with the tradition of Arabic writing (Al-ʾAnṣārī, 1990: 65). In fact, Ibn Sūdūn's engagement and contribution to the shadow play (Guo 2020:8) and theatre after Ibn Daniel in Damascus, might be another proof that his literary output aimed at social, political, and economic criticism.

This research aims to prove that Ibn Sūdūn used a new technique of verbal humor which I have named *ironic axioms* not just to elicit humor and trigger laughter, but also to send a message and to express an opinion. The paper attempts to analyze Ibn Sūdūn's style in both his verse and prose step by step from a pragmatic perspective to find out not only humor but irony as well.

2. Background

2.1 Ibn Sūdūn

He was one of the most important literary figures of ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo. His full name was ʿAlī Ibn Sūdūn al-ʿAlāʾ al-Yashbughāwī al-Qāhirī thumma al-Dimashqī al-Ḥanafī, known as Ibn Sūdūn (Sakhāwī 1991: 229)[2]. Ibn al-ʿImād (1986: 455)[3], used al-Bashbughāwī instead of al-Yashbughāwī in his name and he described him as *al-Imām* 'religious leader' and *al-ʿAlāma* 'scholar'. He was an Egyptian poet and humorist, who was born in Cairo 810/1407 and died in Damascus 868/1464. It was Ibn Sūdūn who first reintroduced *khayal al-ẓill* 'the shadow play' (Ibn al-ʿImād 1986: 455)[4] after it had been banned by Sulṭān Jaqmaq in 855/1452 (Moreh 1992: 73).

He was the son of a foreign-born Mamlūk soldier, he belonged to the *awlād al-nās* (lit., Sons of the People, in other words of the Mamlūks), who could neither follow a military career nor completely merge with Egyptian society. However, sometimes *awlād al-nās* acted as cultural intermediaries between the Mamlūk elite and their Turkish subjects, and many of them married into Arab elite houses and wrote books. The ranks of *awlād al-nās* included such writers as Ibn al-Dawādārī, Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Jankalī al-Bābā, al-ṣafadī, Ibn al-Turkumānī, Ibn Manglī, Ibn Sūdūn, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and Ibn Iyās (Irwin 2003: 7).

Like many of his class, he pursued religious training, entering the Shaykhūniyya *madrasa* and Ṣūfī convent in Cairo. After his graduation from the Shaykhūniyya *madrasa*, he worked as an imām at several mosques. With his superb education, he had an excellent knowledge of Arabic grammar and prosody, so at the beginning of his youth, he decided to become a poet and to write poetry. However, he failed to make his

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[2] Sakhāwī, al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ, vol. v, pp.229.
[3] Ibn al-ʿImād, Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab, vol. ix, pp.455.
[4] Ibn al-ʿImād, Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab, vol. ix, pp.455.

mark as a conventional poet. Finding no market for his poetry, he had to work as a copyist and a tailor in a futile attempt to make ends meet. Ibn Sūdūn could not bear the circumstances of poverty and hard work. So, he overcame his moral reservations and started composing poetry of a more frivolous nature. He turned to compose satiric and parodic pieces in prose and poetry and achieved considerable fame for his wit. Winning for himself the reputation of a buffoon and a Ḥashish addict, he was thrown out of Cairo by the authorities at the end of his life because of his evil ways and died in exile in Damascus, the second city of the Mamluk realm (Vrolijk 1998: 9-20).

2.2 His works

In *Arabic Literature*, Sir Hamilton Gibb described the literary production of the Mamlūk age as follows: "the output was enormous throughout, but the qualities of originality, virility, and imagination, weak from the first, die away completely by the sixteenth century." (Gibb 1962: 142). Ibn Sūdūn believed that fine literature should be an original artistic creation, while the formal literature during his age was a mere rhymed speech void of any purpose, message, aesthetic, or ideological value after being plagued with sterility and rigidity. Ibn Sūdūn ridiculed the sterile Arab mentality which was incapable of producing something new and original.

His collected work, which he published himself under the title *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa muḍḥik al-ʿabūs*" ("The Diversion of the Souls, Bringing a Laugh to a Scowling Face")*,* is divided into two parts, serious and frivolous, the latter containing colloquial poems, parodic sermons, funny stories, and similar material. It is a typical *adab* work, consisting of mixed prose and rhyme and written for the purpose of entertainment. Its contents are delightfully unpresumptuous: devout poems in praise of the Prophet Muhammad, and pieces written on the occasion of births, circumcisions and weddings. Food has an important place in it, with detailed descriptions of all sorts of sweet delicacies. This *Diwian* enjoyed enormous popularity during the author's lifetime and continued to be read at least until the mid-eighteenth century, and as late as 1863 a – rather primitive – lithographed edition was published in Cairo (Vrolijk 1998: Introduction).

Ibn Sūdūn's humor was broad, silly, and sometimes obscene and was reminiscent of that of al-Waharānī and Ibn Danīyāl, and later inspired al-Shirbini (Irwin 2003: 13). For instance, the only author

acknowledged by al-Shirbīnī as a model is the Mamlūk writer ʿAlī Ibn Sūdūn al-Bashbughāwī. Al-Shirbīnī indicates at the beginning of *Brains Confounded* that he will provide the reader with "license and buffoonery, with just a touch of Ibn Sūdūn-ery". Al-Shirbīnī quoted twice from Ibn Sūdūn works. The first quotation was of Funayn's letter and the second quotation from Ibn Sūdūn might have provided direct inspiration for Brains Confounded, in that it consisted of a commentary on four lines of colloquial verse ("Abū Qurdān / sowed a feddan…") followed by a zany explanation of the etymology of the word *mulūkhīyyā* ("Jew's mallow") (Al-Shirbīnī 2019: xxxv).

In modern times, Ibn Sūdūn has now and then attracted scholarly attention. The German scholar Friedrich Kern wrote on him in his article *Neuere ägyptische Humoristern and Satriker* (1906). In Egypt, scholars like Shawqi Ḍaif (1999), Muḥammad Qandil al-Baqli (1971, 1976), Dhakāʾ al-Anṣāri (1990), Bakrī Sheikh Amīn (2012), Maḥmūd Khalaf Al-Badi (2017), and ʿAbas Bin ʿAli al-Sawsawa (2007). Vrolijk points out that the true value of Ibn Sūdūn's literary contribution from the perspective of mild critics does not lie in its literary merit, but as a source of information on numerous aspects of language and material culture in 15th century Cairo (Vrolijk 1998: x-xi). Shawqi Ḍaif (1999:100-101) stated that *Dīwān Nuzhat al-nufūs* was mainly composed of *hazl wa duʿāba* (humor and jokes). There was not a poet who specialized in this kind of humorous writing like Ibn Sūdūn at least in Egypt. In fact, Ibn Sūdūn was a funny character in the history of Egyptian literature, and he has been able, in one way or another, to depict faithfully the humorous nature of the Egyptian people which is famous over all the different Islamic eras. Ibn Sūdūn depicted in his *Dīwān* many features of life in Egyptian society from political, social, and economic perspectives.

In modern times, Ibn Sūdūn has also been a source of inspiration for many modern poets. It should be noted that *al-Shiʿr al-ḥalamantīshī* 'ḥalamantīshī poetry'[5], which was popular in Egypt during the first half of the twentieth century, had antecedents, roots, and firm traditions in the Mamlūk-era literature of *al-muʿāraḍat al-hazlīya*, or "parodic comedy." The two types of literature addressed the political, economic, and social issues of their age. The poet Ḥusayn Shafīq Miṣrī (1882-1948) is one of the most important literary figures of this type of literature in our modern age. He was the author of the most famous two *Muʿāraḍat* collections,

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[5] The 'ḥalamantīshī poetry' is recognized as a new form of modern literature that combines classical fuṣḥā 'standard language' and al-ʿāmiyyah 'colloquial language.' (Balāwī 2020: 39).

one in which he parodied the classical Arabic *Al-Muʿalaqāt* with his *Al-Mushaʿalaqāt* and the other in which he parodied the famous classics of Arabic poetry with his *Al-Mashhurāt*. There are other important literary figures such as Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥamām (1904-1964), Bayram al-Tunisī (1893-1961), ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Dīb (1898-1943), and others (Najjār 2015:196).

2.3 Egypt during the 15ᵗʰ century

After the establishment of the Cricassian Mamlūk dynasty under Barqūq (r.1382-1399), the Egyptian economy began a slow decline that lasted until the collapse of the empire in 1517. The cost of maintaining a large army is usually cited as the primary reason. The army was larger than technically required to safeguard the nation's independence, and the only conceivable alternative for maintaining it was to increase its drain on national resources. (Vrolijk 1998: 10). These resources themselves were already in the decline on a larger scale than before because of a decreasing population. Recurring bouts of the plague (ṭāʿūn) were the main reason for this. During Ibn Sūdūn's lifetime (810-868 AH), major outbreaks occurred in the years 819, 822, 824, 833, 841, 848, 853, and 864. Although none of these outbreaks had been as severe as those during the preceding century, their increased frequency had a devastating effect (Ayalon 1946: 68-69). A second reason was famine: in the years when the Nile failed to rise to a sufficient level the crops failed, and grain prices soared to levels beyond the reach of the common people. In 854/1451, a year of famine, the price of grain was twenty times as high as in 1445. With fewer people available to work the land, the income from feudal holdings and waqfs fell as a result. The dwindling resources were redistributed in accordance with the current pecking order. As Ayalon (1958:58) puts it:

> " the curtailing of payments, pensions and salaries was a time-honoured practice in the Mamluk sultanate. Its first victims were the orphans, the widows, the ladies (*khawandāt* and *sittāt*), the learned and the religious (*al-fuqahāʾ*) and the civilian officials of the administration ("the people of the pen": *arbāb al-qalām*). Its second victims were the non- Mamluk units of the army (*al-ḥalqa and awlād al-nās*). Every effort was made to ensure full pay to the pure Mamluk units…"

This indicates that an imām like Ibn Sūdūn could barely maintain body and soul, let alone support a family, on such a meagre income (Vrolijk 1998: 11).

3. Data and Methods

I have found more than one edition of the *Nuzha* such as Arnoud Vrolijik's (1998), Maḥmūd Sālem (2001), and Manāl ʿabd al-Majīd's (2003). The data of this study is based on Arnoud Vrolijik's edition which I believe is more faithful to the original. I have also greatly benefited from Vrolijik's seminal research in the introduction to his edition. All Arabic samples have been translated by me and are cited with page and line numbers from Vrolijik's edition.

3.1 Data

The *Nuzha* is divided into two major sections according to the content of the book. The author explains in his introduction (Ed. 3:8-15), that the first section of his book is dedicated to serious poems *Jiddiyyāt* in which he deals with genres such as: *Ghazal* and *Madḥ*. On the other hand, the second section contains humorous pieces of prose and poetry or what he calls *Hazliyyāt*. One of the most important linguistic features of the second section is the use of non-inflected language or the vernaculars of the 15th century in Egypt. The titles and subtitles of the book are ironic. For instance, the second part is subdivided into five chapters:

1. On [funny] Qaṣida's and [mock] Doxologies ("*taṣādīq*").
2. On Trumped-up Stories ("*fī al-ḥikāyāt al-malāfīq*").
3. On Silly *Muwashḥāt*.
4. On poems known as Dūbayt, Ghazal and Mawāliyya.
5. On Wondrous Curiosities ("*tuḥaf*") and Strange Novelties ("*ṭuraf*").

(Vrolijk 1998: 21)

Ibn Sūdūn has roughly divided his book into "serious" versus "funny." Serious poems do not fall within the scope of this study. This study focuses only on the second section of the book which is dedicated to humorous pieces of prose and verse or what the author calls *Hazliyyāt*. In my analysis, I have decided to divide the second section into two major categories: verse and prose. This corpus includes 138 narratives, 100 poems, and 38 prose passages. There are 33 classical poems and 67 colloquial poems in this collection. There are 17 Mawāliyyas, 46 Muwashḥāt, and 4 dūbayts among the colloquial poems. There are 16

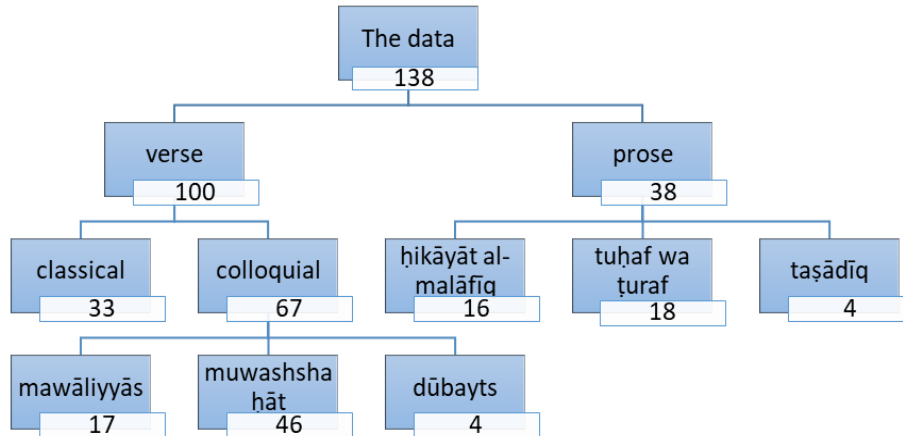ḥikāyāt al-malāfīq, 18 tuḥaf and ṭuraf, and 4 taṣādīq in prose. A classification of data is shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. Classification of data

The preceding corpus contains all five chapters from the second section of *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa muḍḥik al-ʿabūs*. Only two Ghazali poems are excluded from the corpus of this study since they do not contain any IAS.

3.2 Methods

According to the traditional definition, irony is a figure of speech that communicates the opposite of what is said. By exclaiming "What a lovely party!" in the middle of a lousy party, the speaker communicates "what a lousy party." According to Grice (1975), this constitutes a violation of the quality maxim. The overt violation compels the addressee to reject the literal surface meaning and develop an implicature in an effort to determine the speaker's intention. According to this viewpoint, irony is more difficult to comprehend than nonironic language. It requires two stages of processing. First, the addressee realizes that a norm has been violated because the ironic utterance is literally unacceptable. As a result, another interpretation is generated that is consistent with the speaker's implied intention (Giora 1995:239).

Giora's theory is based on the concepts of "indirect negation" and "graded salience." (Attardo 2000: 799). The view of irony as indirect negation is similar to the traditional account of irony. It argues that irony is a figure of speech that involves a breach of a norm. Irony breaches the graded informative requirement (Giora, 1988) and hence initiates a two-step processing phase. It makes the addressee process the surface meaning while simultaneously generating the implicature. The view of

irony as indirect negation, however, differs from the conventional account. It argues that irony does not necessarily imply its opposite. Rather than canceling the indirectly negated message and replacing it with another (Clark& Gerrig, 1984; Grice, 1975), Giora (1995: 244) have argued that irony retains both the explicit and implicated messages so that the difference between them may be computed. According to this account, the surface meaning of an ironic utterance is involved in both its processing and implicature. It also implies that the implicated message is weaker or less potent than the "opposite of what is said." (Giora 1995:261). Irony, according to this viewpoint, is more difficult to process than literal language. In this regard, it represents a radical divergence from the echoic perspective, which thinks irony has only one interpretation and entails processing only one meaning. According to the echoic-mention theory, irony does not involve a two-stage procedure because no norm is violated and thus no implicature is generated. As a result, irony is as simple to grasp as nonironic language. (Giora 1995:261).

According to the graded salient hypothesis comprehension of irony involves two main processes. The first process is an initial phase that involves activating any information available, bottom-up (lexical access) as well as top-down (world knowledge, contextual information), with the bottom-up process being automatic. Nonetheless, the premise that salient meanings are always activated when the linguistic stimulus is encountered is crucial (Giora 2003:69-70). The second contextual integration phrase which follows the initial phase immediately involves a number of processes. The first process is called the retention hypothesis. It assumes that if an activated meaning is instrumental in constructing the interpretation, it will be retained, regardless of contextual fit. If it is, on the other hand, disruptive, it will be suppressed (Giora 2003:72). Finally, Attardo (2000:821) argues that 'contextual salience' may be triggered by contextual inappropriateness.

Salvatore Attardo (2000) has provided us with a model of irony, which is "Gricean at the core, but includes several significant departures from Grice's own model" (Attardo 2001b: 111) and he calls it the principle of least disruption (LDP). In other words, the LDP warns the speaker to limit his/her violation of the CP to the least amount necessary. Violation of a maxim creates an inappropriate utterance. Therefore, an ironic utterance can be defined as while maintaining relevance, the ironic utterance "explicitly or implicitly violates the conditions for contextual

appropriateness, either deictically or more broadly in terms of the knowledge by the participants of the opinions and belief systems of the speakers." (Attardo 2001b: 116). Consequently, an utterance *u* is ironical if:

1. *u* is contextually inappropriate,
2. *u* is (at the same time) relevant,
3. *u* is construed as having been uttered intentionally and with awareness of
    the contextual inappropriateness by the speaker, and
4. the speaker intends that (part of) his/her audience recognize points 1 – 3
5. unless the hearer construes *u* as being unintentional irony, in which case 3 –
    4 do not apply.

Attardo (2000, 2001) provides a more comprehensive account of irony by going beyond the rule violation condition posited by Grice (1975). According to Attardo, irony need not violate any maxim. Rather, while assuming the maxim of relevance for the second, integration phase, it should breach contextual appropriateness ostensibly at the initial phase, so that the comprehender may detect the intended violation and derive the ironic interpretation. For example, when in a drought-stricken area, one farmer says to another Don't you just love a nice spring rain? the utterance may be true, yet inappropriate, given the situation of utterance (it is not raining) (Giora 2003:67). A similar thing happens when Ibn Sūdūn introduces the ironic axioms in his narratives. The ironic axioms might be true, yet they are inappropriate, regarding the situation of narratives that promises the readers something serious, interesting, and fascinating not funny, naïve, and ridiculous.

I have attempted to merge Attardo's (2000) inappropriateness theory with Giora's (1997-1995) Graded Salience Hypothesis (GSH) in my analysis. I believe that Ibn Sūdūn intentionally inserts linguistic serious incentives at the beginning of his narratives to grab the attention of his audience. These incentives are activated first, and they form what Giora's call the salient meaning. IAS is a technique that is used by the author to disrupt the salient meaning and to create a state of contextual inappropriateness, because of a novel interpretation of the salient meaning. Due to the state of chaos created by the IAS, the audience has to reject the salient meaning and reinterpret it in a sequential process. The

state of chaos engendered by IAS in the text creates a state of wonder in the audience's minds that degenerate after a while into humor and laughter. In order to get Ibn Sūdūn's irony, we have to look for contextual clues which are always hidden carefully by the sarcastic author who is fond of playing and jester.

4. Data analysis and discussion

This part can be divided into two major sections. The first section examines ironic axioms in selected poems by Ibn Sūdūn including examples from his monorhymed Qaṣīda-style poems, *dūbayts*, *muwashshaḥāt*, and *mawāliyyās*. The second section, on the other hand, examines the use of IAS in variant forms of Ibn Sūdūn's prose, such as *taṣādīq* "doxologies", *al-tuḥaf al-ʿjība and al-ṭuraf al-gharība* "wondrous curiosities" and "strange novelties", and *ḥikāyāt al-malāfīq* "Trumped-up Stories".

4.1 Ibn Sūdūn's poetry

Larkin (2006: 228-9) pointed out that Ibn Sūdūn's poetry "seems to illustrate perfectly the intersection between the literature of the elite and that of the common people". Al- Sakhāwī mentioned that the *ẓurafāʾ* competed with one another over having Ibn Sūdūn's *dīwān* (Sakhāwī 1991: 229)[6]. The *ẓurafāʾ* were the cultural and social elite that included young people from diverse professions (Larkin 2006: 228-9). The first part begins with examining IAS in selected classical *Qaṣīdas* which to some extent, adhere to the rules of classical Arabic. The second part, on the other hand, examines IAS in other forms of colloquial poetry such as *muwashshaḥāt*, *dūbayts*, and *mawāliyyās*.

4.1.1 IAS in Qaṣīda-style poems

Ibn Sūdūn divided the second section of his work into five chapters on the basis of form, not content. This section is primarily composed of poetry, alternating with prose narratives. All the thirty-three poems in this section are modelled on the metrical form of classical *Qaṣīdas*, in the inflected language, in monorhyme and *khalīlian* meters. Ibn Sūdūn uses the classical Arabic meter *al-Basīṭ* in about 45.5% of all his funny poems with a percentage even higher than his poems in the serious section. This meter was a favorite of the famous classical Arabic poet Abū Nuwās who used it in one out of every four wine poems (Vrolijk 1998: 119). Ibn

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[6] Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ*, vol. V, pp.229.

Sūdūn used an interesting technique in both his verse and prose to elicit laughter from his audience. He has used "the perfectly obvious as an unexpected novelty" in several poems (Vrolijk 1998: 28). Before introducing the IAS, the poet sometimes begins his poems by boasting and bragging about his bright reason and unfaulty logic. For instance,

1. 'a young man, considered by his people as unusually bright' (*Ed.* 58:9)[7]
2. 'I will impart some of my knowledge.' (*Ed.* 58: 11)
3. 'to know that I am a man of knowledge and sense' (*Ed.* 58: 11)
4. 'I had too much knowledge' (*Ed.* 58: 4)

Before employing IAS, Ibn Sūdūn also utilized language words that evoked astonishment and surprise to grab his audience's attention. After asserting intellectual superiority, he begins to prepare them for something beneficial, uncommon, and extraordinary, relying primarily on language devices such as,

5. 'How many wonders in Egypt and other countries, I can say.' (*Ed.* 58:14)
6. Wow, this female cow is a marvel, and she has a tail. (*Ed.* 47:11)
7. 'Strange things from me you will hear' (*Ed.* 59:9)
8. The most amazing thing in Egypt you can see. (*Ed.* 47:15)

The poet then begins to tell amazing stories and recount miraculous events from his own life. Instead of providing his readers with something valuable or intriguing, the poet provides them with well-known facts and axioms, such as

9. 'the sky lies on top of the Earth' (*Ed.* 58:9)
10. 'the Earth is always under the sky' (*Ed.* 58:10)
11. 'people are Adam's descendants' (*Ed.* 58:12)
12. 'my father is my mother's husband, and I am their son' (*Ed.* 58:13)
13. 'The Nile in Egypt flows with clay' (*Ed.* 58:14)
14. 'The morning precedes the sunrise, while midday precedes the afternoon.' (*Ed.* 58:15)
15. 'grapes can be found in the vineyards' (*Ed.* 47:15)
16. 'dates can be seen in palms' (*Ed.* 47:16)

Only simple and unimportant facts are given, such as the sky being above the earth and the earth being beneath the sky. As he describes himself as a guy of 'sense' and 'science,' he insists on enumerating additional examples that demonstrate the superiority of his knowledge

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[7] Vrolijk's translation.

and intellect. He explained, for example, that men are Adam's descendants, that his father is his mother's husband, and that he is the offspring of his father and mother. The poet continues to describe marvels in Egypt and other regions, such as the Levant, based on his rich knowledge. In Egypt, for instance, the Nile is muddy. Dawn occurs before sunrise, and midday before the afternoon. In contrast, in the Levant, the full moon is obscured by clouds and the sun rises in clear weather.

In another of his monorhymed Qaṣīda-style, he begins by expressing shock and delight at the sight of a cow with a tail (Vrolijk 1998: 47). The poet continues his description of Egypt's many marvels, including grapes that grow in vineyards and dates that hang from palm trees. Then, drawing on his vast knowledge, he describes a number of marvels in the Egyptian area of Bulāq (Vrolijk 1998: 59), including:

17. 'if the sun one day rises, the people will see it with their eyes' (*Ed*. 59:11)

18. 'Day and night, water pours over the surface of the earth.' (*Ed*. 59:12)

The poet continues to narrate insignificant truths (Vrolijk 1998: 45), such as the sea is the sea; the palm is a tree; the elephant is an elephant; giraffes are tall; the earth is the earth; the birds fly in lines between the earth and the sky; and so forth. The poet then shows his affection for delectable fruits and pastries such as the banana and the *kunāfa*[8] in two poem lines. In three additional lines of a poem, he describes the benefits of using narcotics, particularly *ḥashīsh*[9]. Sometimes he would open a poem with an axiom or well-known truth without giving his readers any notice, as in:

19. The sea is a sea, and palms are palms, (*Ed*. 45:10)

20. The elephant is an elephant, and giraffes are tall. (*Ed*. 45:10)

The previous IAS (examples 9-20) have been used by the author to serve more than one function. First and foremost, to elicit laughter from the audience, which is the immediate result. However, there are other functions as well. Through this elaborate parody, I believe the author intends to mock and satirize all the classical approaches of producing poetry at the time. It should not be forgotten that the author indicated in his introduction (Vrolijk 1998: 2) that he struggled to grasp traditional and classical poetry writing techniques. It became necessary for him to do

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[8] A Middle Eastern dessert composed of pastry soaked in syrup.
[9] ("dried herb"), that is smoked, chewed, or drunk for its intoxicating effect derived from the resin secreted by the flowering tops of cultivated female plants of the genus Cannabis.

something different to earn a living. He accomplished his goal by penning these poems as amusements and satirizing people who did not recognize his brilliance in the first place.

Despite the fact that the previous poems are written for a variety of purposes and situations, I have identified the sarcastic tone as the common thread that binds them all together. Ibn Sūdūn's unique ironic style can be interpreted in terms of both Giora's GSH and Attardo's inappropriateness theory. There are two meanings in the previous poems. The first meaning is the literal meaning which can be accessed literally. Ibn Sūdūn has been aware of the powerful effect of this meaning which is activated at the very beginning of his poems. The poet begins his poems with several linguistic stimuli (Examples 1–8) that demonstrate his brilliance and mental and logical supremacy in order to intoxicate his viewers and prepare them for the miracles he will narrate. As a result, the *salient meaning* is the serious meaning, and the poet succeeds from the start in capturing the hearts and minds of his readers. A state of contextual inappropriateness is created in the poems with the sudden appearance of the IAS. The poet succeeds in creating a state of mental and contextual confusion through the use of ironic axioms. The reader must reprocess the meaning from the beginning in search of an explanation that may be concealed in the text by looking for linguistic clues. As a result, the second sarcastic meaning is activated, and the first serious meaning is deemed invalid. Even if the reader is unable of absorbing and comprehending the author's ironic aim, ironic axioms are capable of inciting humor and generating laughter.

In some poems, irony can be perceived and felt through language cues that the author has planted carefully and deftly. For instance, in one of his poems (Vrolijk 1998: 45), Ibn Sūdūn ironically asks his audience to listen carefully to people of experience who transmitted these valuable pieces of information to them. The irony lies in the fact that all this knowledge, information, and experience mentioned by the poet were nothing at the cognitive level but mere simple facts and axioms. The last line was revealing especially in the use of the Arabic word منقول *manqūl* 'transmitted' which referred directly to the ancient wisdom and that was the first superficial meaning. Another meaning can be inferred from the previous line which is in harmony with the general context of the poet's narrative and other poems as well. Ibn Sūdūn was, in fact, ridiculing the fake, artificial, sterile style of all his contemporaries. In their writings, there was no creativity or innovation; they were just imitators of their

predecessors, and their contribution to knowledge and culture was just like the contribution of his frivolous facts and axioms. At the end of another poem, the poet assures us that he has gained this knowledge, not from his father or his mother, his wife, or even his father-in-law. He gained this knowledge through his matchless wit, comprehension, and intelligence (*Ed*. 59:5-6). The author, finally, envies his mother's fortune for having such a brilliant child who even surpassed the famous *Juḥā* himself. I believe that Ibn Sūdūn cunningly made use of the pun between the word الحجا *alḥijā* 'intelligence' (*Ed*. 58:11) and the word جحا Juḥā (*Ed*. 59:7) who is a famous trickster in Arabic folklore to ridicule both himself and his contemporaries.

4.1.2 Ironic axioms in Ibn Sūdūn's muwashḥāt, dūbayts, and mawāliyyās

Ibn Sūdūn used the *Muwashshaḥ* and the *Zajal* which were two close genres of traditional oral strophic poetry declaimed in a colloquial dialect. The third chapter is on foolish or Silly *Muwashḥāt*. The fourth chapter, on the other hand, contains a limited number of poems in the genres *Dūbayt*, and *Mawāliyya*. The *Muwashḥāt* reached Egypt in the course of the eleventh century CE (Stern 1974:72-74) and it began to flourish at the hands of the Egyptian poet Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk (1155-1211). It was generally acknowledged that the early ancestors of Levantine dialectical poetry were the Andalusian *Zajal* and *Muwashshaḥah*. They were brought to Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean by Moors fleeing Spain in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Yaqub 2007:58-9).

The *Dūbayt* was a form that came to Arabic from the Persian poetic tradition. It was also called *rubāʿī* (quatrain). Its rhyme scheme is mostly a a a a but a variation, a a b a, also exists (Radwan 2012: 21; Khulūṣī 1977: 291). *Mawāliyyā*, on the other hand, is a popular poetic form alongside the *Muwashshaḥ* and the *Zajal*. It may be composed in either classical or colloquial Arabic. The earliest examples dated back to the seventh/thirteenth century and were all comprised of four rhyming hemistichs in the *basīṭ* meter (Hammond 2018) "with the last foot reduced to two long syllables" (Cachia 1977: 83). According to Vrolijk (1998), all *Mawāliyyās* given by Ibn Sūdūn in his book *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa muḍḥik al-ʿabūs* meet these requirements.

If we take a closer look at Ibn Sūdūn's poems, brought together under the heading *Muwashḥāt hubāliyya*, it becomes evident that the author did not really explore the boundaries of the genre where metrical matters are concerned. It is not likely that he should ever

have wished so, given the fact that he modeled many of his poems on pre-existing examples, a practice known as *muʿāraḍa* "imitation": almost every poem in this chapter is preceded by the indication of the proper *maqām* or musical mode, the expression "*wa-min hādhā al-wazn …*" ("in the same meter as…") and the first words of the poem that served as an example. None of the examples in question could be traced, but it stands to reason that they referred to well-known, popular poems. This practice of imitation, which is common enough in post-classical poetry, must have facilitated the reception of Ibn Sūdūn's poetry by his public (Vrolijk 1998: 122).

Ibn Sūdūn has used IAS many times in this part in a manner that is quite similar to his classical *Qaṣīdas*. Sometimes he begins his poem by expressing amazement and wonder in a very serious style. In one of his Dūbayt's, for instance, he claims that one of the most wondrous things in their age is that newly born baby girls are drinking the milk from their mother's breasts without teeth (*Ed*. 118:10-11). In one of his *Muwashḥāt* he began his poem by stating that one of the most baffling and mind-boggling experiences in his life was when he saw a father calling his son (*Ed*. 86:16-17). In one of his poems, he called the people to witness the water running under the bridge (*Ed*. 95:20). Other times he begins his poem in a classical way adopting a serious style, and then the style degenerates into statements like men in *ʾAswān*[10] like women had teeth, whoever sleeps naked on the roof he will get cold (*Ed*. 113:12-14), in *ʾAswān* there are people, and they have families (*Ed*. 116:13), my ear is my ear and I use it in hearing my son (*Ed*. 117: 3). In another *Muwashḥ* the poet expresses his astonishment and amazement at seeing a man with his son hear with their ears and eat with their teeth (*Ed*. 87:20-21).

In one of his *Muwashḥāt,* the poet begins by listing trivial facts, such as: my house is next to my neighbor's, the water runs in the Nile, the waterwheel pumps the water into the canal, the boats sail on the Nile, the boats are propelled either by the oars or the masts, in the countryside, the harvest is stored in granaries, berries are eaten without peeling, and bananas should be peeled. The poet humorously concludes his poem with the ironic statement that all the preceding facts are well-known, well-tried, and well-tested, and that anyone who tries to deny them will be an ass or a fool (*Ed*. 86:7-14). In another *Muwashḥ* the poet expresses his

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[10] A city in southern Egypt. (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (5th ed.). HarperCollins. Retrieved August 22, 2022.

astonishment and amazement at the sight of a bull with a tail pulling a waterwheel to irrigate fruit-bearing trees (*Ed*. 95:7-8). In one of his *Mawāliyya's*, the poet began his poem by expressing genuine admiration for observing something extraordinary. On the evening of the feast, he observed a minaret exquisitely illuminated by lanterns (*Ed*. 132:19-20). Ibn Sūdūn's irony is predicated on the contradiction between the apparent seriousness at the beginning of his poems and his humorous and ridiculous treatment of these facts until they have been reduced to absurd results and simple, meaningless trivialities (Najjār 2015: 211-12). Using what I call IAS, the preceding method is utilized to distort the truth in order to generate humor and laughter.

His poems that imitate animal sounds, cries, and speech are filled with axiomatic humor. Sometimes he imitates the sound of the rooster among the hens and chicks, the lambs among the rams and ewes, and the bull among the cows. Occasionally, he imitates pet sounds and focuses on their relationship to humans (Najjār 2015: 211-12). For instance, the poet began this *Muwashshaḥ* with the description of a little chick that he bought from the market:

> 21. I bought a chick with a mouth that squeaks
> Crying and naked from the cold, it creaks
> With a beep in the throat and a jaw that has a peak
> Pecking and beeping, in swiftness and grace
> (*Ed*. 110:5-8)

The small chick possessed nothing unusual. It had a squeaking mouth, was naked, crying, pecking, and beeping, and possessed a chin and a peak. The poet continued to describe the small bird.

> 22. When I call it chicky, chicking it comes to me
> Fluttering and chirping, licking and squawking
> Has wings on its side, when cheering, it waves them beside
> With a belly so big, and a thin leg (*Ed*. 110:9-12)

The bird responded to its master's calls when he called it "chicky." Again, like any ordinary domestic bird, the little chick was fluttering, chirping, licking, and squawking. It had wings on its side, a big belly, and a thin leg. As the chick grew older, the author began to attribute more human characteristics to its behavior, and he described it as شـويطين *shuwaīṭīn* 'a little devil'. The chick's ugly and aggressive behavior manifested itself in the form of attacks on his younger siblings.

In one of his *Zajal's* poems (*Ed.* 132:4-7), Ibn Sūdūn described both the bull and the cow in Egypt, the Levant, and Gaza. The cow became pregnant and delivered calves. The bull, on the other hand, pulled the waterwheel while it was beaten by الفرقله *al-Farqala* 'a huge whip with a leather thong' (Dozy 1979: 58)[11]. In the following four lines, the poet addresses a grieving cow who has just lost her calf.

> 23. O my little cow, why I hear you saying *ambūh*
> As if the people took your son and did not bring him back too
> O, your son was lucky as with love the people did chew
> He no longer needed *mamah* or an *ambūh*. (*Ed.* 132:9-12)

The poet addressed the cow as if it were a human by employing anthropomorphism, a well-known technique in Greek mythology. It is a literary device that attributes human traits, emotions, or intentions to non-human entities, such as plants and animals, or inanimate objects.[12] The poet mourned the cow's little calf using the language of little children such as أمبـوه *ambūh* and ممـه *mamah*. I have noticed that the poet has used *al-Taşghīr* (the diminutive form of) بقرة *baqara* which is بقيره *buqaīra* 'cow' and of كتكـوت *katkūt* which is كتيكت *kutīykt* 'a chick'. In addition to denoting diminutive size, one of the most important functions of the previous form is to lavish excessive care and attention on the addressed person.

In many of his poems, the poet employs the technique of imitating the speech of animals and children while also employing IAS. This type of mimicry is employed to provoke humor and laughter on a superficial level. On a deeper level, however, they are easily interpreted as social and political symbols (Najjār 2015: 211-12). Using IAS with these social and political symbols might be good proof that our author has intended to mix his humor with irony and sarcasm. Authors can imitate an earlier textual structure, for example, an old genre like classical Arabic poetry, and update the text's content to comment on a contemporary occurrence. Thomas Rosenlöcher and Volker Braun, for instance, parody previous literary models in this way to comment on post-*Wende* Germany. Neither author parodies the style of his forebear in order to mock him; both call the reader's attention to these forebears' earlier works in order to broaden the scope of the commentary in their own texts and enable a coming-to-terms with the present (Twark 2007:22).

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[11] Volume 8.

[12] Oxford English Dictionary, 1st ed. "anthropomorphism, n." Oxford University Press (Oxford), 1885.

4.2 Ibn Sūdūn's prose

In his prose, Ibn Sūdūn parodied all writing styles of his time by imitating them, exposing their flaws, and ridiculing them. In order to connect with the common people, he created a new form of ironic hybrid writing by combining the polar opposites of high classical *fuṣḥā* and the vernacular. In this type of entertaining prose, whether it was a story, an explanation, questions, or messages, there was irony and humor, as well as social and intellectual criticism. By employing this new style, Ibn Sūdūn planned for his literature a method that no one shared with him (Sālim 2001: 43-4). This part examines IAS in *taṣādīq* "doxologies", *in al-tuḥaf al-ʿjība and al-ṭuraf al-gharība* "wondrous curiosities and strange novelties", and *ḥikāyāt al-malāfīq* "Trumped-up Stories".

4.2.1 Ironic axioms in Taṣādīq "doxologies"

The first chapter contains four examples of so-called *taṣādīq* (singular *taṣdīq*), "doxologies" (Ed. 43-44; 50; 52;56). A *taṣdīq* is a piece of laudatory rhyme prose containing a "credo" or confirmation of the faith. A *katīb* or Friday Preacher usually opens his sermons with one, and it is usual to find them at the beginning of Arabic classical texts, whatever the genre. In fact, the *Nuzha* itself has one (Ed.2: 1-7). The doxologies are used by Ibn Sūdūn as parodies and Faith is not the theme. For instance,

> 24. Glory be to God the Great who created man and mentioned him after being nothing at all[13]. He endowed him with hearing and sight and made him hearing and sighting[14]. He created Man in the best of stature[15]. Made him knowledgeable about calendar calculations. Made him excel in the art of divination. Made him able to see with the eye of wisdom, acumen, and grace. (Ed.52: 10-13)

In the previous passage, the author classically began his introduction with Qur'anic verses praising God the Almighty, who created man from nothing and endowed him with many blessings such as hearing, sighting, knowledge, and wisdom. All the Arab audience are familiar with the previous 'credo' or confirmation of faith which must be

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[13] The author is influenced by the Qur'anic verse 1 in Sūrat Al-Insān 'Has there not been over Man a long period of Time, when he was nothing - (not even) mentioned?' Yusuf Ali

[14] The author is influenced by *duʿāʾ al-Sujūd* (supplication to God during prostration) mentioned in *At-Tirmidhi 2/474, Ahmad 6/30, and Al-Hakim.* " I have prostrated my face to the One Who created it, and gave it hearing and sight by His might and His power. Glory is to Allah, the Best of creators".

[15] The author is influenced by the Qur'anic verse Chapter 95 The Fig سورة التين - At-Tin: Verse 4. "We have certainly created **man** in the **best** of stature".

put in any book's introduction even today. The previous credo is related more to sermons and books of religion which are considered by many readers as sacred and serious texts. Ibn Sūdūn uses the serious and holy issues of religion to capture the audience's attention at the beginning of his paragraph. He quoted some words, for instance, from *Sūrat Al-Insān* and *At-Tin*. He imitated the style of books of Ḥadīth in *duʿāʾ al-Sujūd* (supplication to God during prostration) mentioned in *At-Tirmidhi 2/474, Ahmad 6/30, and Al-Hakim.* The serious meaning was the salient meaning and it had been activated by the author of the previous lines. However, the texture of the salient meaning in the previous discourse was disturbed by the following consecutive IAS:

> 25. Made him know that giraffes are tall. Made him know that he was descended from his ancestry. He brought him to life from his mother's womb naked, helpless, and weak. He gave him a mother, a father, a babysitter, and a *lālah*[16]. Being born dumb, however, He taught his mother the meanings of his languages. She lays him down if he says *nanūā* [17], she sits him down if he says *tatūā*[18] and walks him if he says *tāta*[19]. The baby rejoices with the word *daḥ*[20] and likes *al-naḥ*[21] and hates whoever says *baḥ*[22] . He laughs at the sight of his *bizah*[23]. Bites it if the word *kazah* is said to him. He neither shows mercy to young ones nor respect to the elderly[24]. He was not accountable for any of those things. (Ed.52: 13-19).

According to the author, the source of man's intelligence and insight is that he was taught that giraffes are tall, that he is descended from his ancestors, and that he was born naked, defenseless, and vulnerable. A mother, a father, a babysitter, and an anemone were given to him. He was born dumb, and he was taught to speak by his mother. Ibn Sūdūn brilliantly introduced the funny language of children talk like *nanūā, tatūā, tata, daḥ, al-naḥ, baḥ, bizah,* and *kazah.* The IAS have created a state of contextual inappropriateness, because of a novel interpretation of the salient meaning. The state of chaos engendered by

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[16] Anemone.

[17] The author imitates the voice of little babies when they lie down.

[18] The author imitates the voice of little babies when they sit down.

[19] The author imitates the voice of little babies when they walk.

[20] Funny word they say to little boys. (Dozy1979: 297).

[21] To repeat the words *naḥ* and *naḥ* for the baby. (Ibn Manẓūr, volume 2, pp.612).

[22] It is said to children with the meaning of empty and finished (Taimur 2002, volume 2, pp. 113).

[23] Suit.

[24] The author is influenced by one of the Prophet's sayings "The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Those who do not show mercy to our young ones and do not realize the right of our elders are not from us." Sunan Abi Dawud 4943, Book 43, Hadith 171, translated at Book 42, Hadith 4925. https://sunnah.com/abudawud:4943.

the IAS in the text creates a state of wonder in the audiences' minds that degenerate after a while into humor and laughter. While laughing at the IAS the reader's mind works hard in the background in an attempt to reject the salient deceptive introduction and try to reinterpret it in the light of the novel meanings. Introducing the previous IAS accompanied by the funny language of little kids is used by the author to ridicule the sterile, old-fashioned, redundant styles of writing especially in some religious books which are naïve and childish without any creativity or real value.

4.2.2 Ironic axioms in al-tuḥaf al-ʿjība and al-ṭuraf al-gharība

The fifth chapter is on *al-tuḥaf al-ʿjība* 'wondrous curiosities' and *al-ṭuraf al-gharība* 'strange novelties.' It contains prose narratives of various forms and content. Among them are *maqāma*'s and mock "learned opinions" on nonsensical questions such as the difference between a horse and a boat, or "which came first, the chicken or the egg"? The fifth chapter focuses on food, Ḥashish, occasions, celebrations, the world of children, places, drama, and humor. Ibn Sūdūn begins this chapter by explicating a colloquial expression in the manner of the grammarians and interpreters of his time. He assigned a symbol for the *matn* (the text of the book) and another one for the *sharḥ* (explanations) with a classical introduction showing the seriousness and the grimness of classical books. Like the scholars of his age, Ibn Sūdūn received questions from Egypt and other countries as well. Only prominent scholars have this privilege and like them, he answers verse with verse and prose with prose. Ibn Sūdūn prepares his audience for something not only serious but also useful, practical, and wise. However, the important questions appear to be nothing but simple, childish, and naïve questions, and their answers are provided without evidence, proof, or even logic. For instance, in his explanation of the word *bādhinjān* 'aubergine', Ibn Sūdūn states,

> 26. Wa-Bādhinjān وباذنجان 'and aubergine': As you know the letter 'و' *wāw* is the letter 'و' *wāw*. Regarding the با *bā* it consists of *b* + *ā* as known by the boys at schools. ' دن' *din*, on the other hand, is pottery and in Arabic جان *jān* is a Persian word that means 'soul' and it refers to the heart in this context, because the heart is red and long like the aubergine, and the aubergine is red and long as it has been written in this text. In the text, I have found contradictory additions which I have discarded due to their invalidity. For instance, some of them narrated after that 'ʿaīyyaṭ ʿīṭa falaq al-

ḥīṭa'[25] ; another one said, 'qāl al-Jundi āiysh lak ʿandī'; and another one said, 'rāḥ al-Shām ʿabr al-ḥmām' 'sarq thiyyabū kharja ʿurīyān'; and other narrations and God knows best.[26] (Ed.136-37).

In his explanations, Ibn Sūdūn divides وباذنجـان Wa-Bādhinjān into small combinations of letters and attempts to interpret and analyze them through a process devoid of logical significance. He employs his favorite and most amusing IAS technique, which consists primarily of deconstructing the argument and the logic with simple trivial facts. For instance, the letter 'و' wāw is the letter 'و' wāw. The بـا bā consists of b + ā as known by the boys at schools. The 'دن' din means pottery and جـان jān is a Persian word that means 'soul' and it refers to the heart in this context. The previous analysis is funny and ridiculous at the same time. The author goes on to make a false analogy between the heart and the aubergine as they are both red and long. Like classical grammarians, he asserts that he has found some contradictory additions that have been discarded by the author due to their invalidity. These additions are nothing but quotes from some traditional lullabies and nursery rhymes such as, عيط عيطه فلق الحيطـه ' ' ʿaīyyaṭ ʿīṭa falaq al-ḥīṭa' (cry your eyes out), راح الشام عبـر الحمـام 'rāḥ al-Shām ʿabr al-ḥmām' (he traveled to the Levant by pigeons), سرق ثيابو خرج عريان 'sarq thiyyabū kharja ʿurīyān' (his clothes are robbed, and he went out naked). Finally, the author concludes his discussion classically by asserting that there are other invalid narrations and God knows best.

Ibn Sūdūn ridiculed the trivial books of grammar and language at his age which were devoid of originality and creativity. Their ways of tackling knowledge and science are obscure. They stir up empty controversy about simple things and trivial axioms. They interpret simple issues strangely without reason or logic and they have lacked the power of persuasion. Ibn Sūdūn parodies their stilted styles of writing and their fake arguments in order to expose them. He shows the superficiality of literary critics and their literary criticism at his time and makes his audience laugh at their follies. The inappropriateness is created by disrupting the serious and grim introduction through the technique of IAS. The audience is provided with plain inconsequential facts and concepts instead of something profound and classic. Ibn Sūdūn included

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[25] Looks like a traditional lullaby or nursery rhymes during that period.
[26] A traditional expression used to express uncertainty about a question.

the names of great Arabic grammarians such as *Sībawayh*[27] and *Aljawhari*[28] on purpose into his humorous argument to emulate and mock the style of his contemporaries.

In the fifth chapter, Ibn Sūdūn parodies the art of writing *maqāmāt,* which is greatly influenced by al-Harīrī's pretentious style. He composed two maqāmahs, the first of which is known as *al-Maqāmah al-Jiziyya,* and the second one as *al-Maqāmah al-Jisriyya.* Al-Maqāma is a classical Arabic literary genre in which entertaining stories and anecdotes, often about rogues and beggars, are written in an elegant, ornamental rhymed prose *saj ʿ* with verse insertions. They are presented in a dramatic or a narrative context most suitable for the display of the author's eloquence, wit, and erudition. (Drory 2000:190). The *maqāmāt* genre originated in Khurasan, where al-Hamadhānī first composed his *maqāmāt* in 387/997, in Nishapur. The first pieces of 'maqāma texts' were created with an obvious humorist intent. These were composed by Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008) as a sort of 'comic relief' at learned *adab* sessions in which serious *adab* materials were circulated and discussed (Drory 2000:191). At the end of such sessions, al-Hamadhānī used to challenge his fellow companions by requesting them to suggest a theme, on which he would improvise '*a maqāma*'. His texts were thus created as parodic variations on familiar, often well-chewed pieces of *adab* knowledge (Meisami 1998: 508).

Maqāmāt al-Hamadhānī remained on the fringe of the canonical literature for over a century until the *maqāmāt* of al-Harīrī (d. 516/1122) appeared and quickly captivated the literary taste of the age (Meisami 1998: 508). Al-Ḥarīrī's (d. 516/1122) *Maqāmāt* became a symbol of Arabic eloquence and stylistic virtuosity and have maintained its prominence until modern times. Al-Ḥarīrī's model overshadowed all previous models and was followed by subsequent writers who focused on language, style, and edifying subject matter rather than fiction, parody, or satire. The *Maqāma's* successful incorporation into Arabic literature was thus accompanied by a significant blurring of the genre's self-proclaimed fictionality. Its fictional world gradually became only a skeleton, and its plot was used to link larger and more important presentations of information on a wide range of subjects (Meisami 1998: 508). The function of the *Maqāma* also changed with the appearance of al-Harīrī's model. For instance, al-Hamadhānī's maqāmāt were created as parodies

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[27] A famous Persian grammarian and the author of the earliest book on Arabic grammar and linguistics (Versteegh 1997: 4).

[28] A lexicographer and grammarian, the compiler of the famous Arabic dictionary 'as-Sihāh fil-lugha'

on high literature circulated in courtly circles, whereas al-Harīrī's maqāmāt became scholarly material from the moment of their inception and were studied and transmitted as such. As a result, their amusement function became subordinate to their instruction function. (Drory 2000:191-2).

In *al-Maqāmah al-Jiziyya*, Ibn Sūdūn called his *maqāma* after the city of Giza, a renowned Egyptian area at the time and a well-known metropolis today[29]. The name of his tramp-hero was *Kujaīj Bīn Mahlān* as he was the narrator of the story and leader of his group in this adventure as well. *Kujaīj* began his *Maqāma* by following the rules of the classical Arabic *maqāma* especially in using ornamental rhymed prose *sajʿ* in his introduction. He recounted his meeting with some of his friends at a certain location in *Al-Jīzah* on a dewy night with a magical mist while taking *Ḥashish* to forget about the stresses of daily life, soothe their fears, and experience new forms of consciousness. After a brief consultation with his followers, they decided to go to *Al-Qanāṭir*[30]. They went there and sat by the Nile, where they fell asleep while engaged in nocturnal conversation. Their midnight dreams were interrupted by feelings of hunger, and they had to wake up again to look for food. They found a man cooking meat on the stove and the air was filled with the delicious-smelling smoke of fried meat. The man told them that he could not offer them any food without the permission of his master - the owner of the banquet - who was both kind and generous.

They went to the banquet's owner who verified the cook's story and added that his banquet would be offered as an annual prize only for those who excelled in knowledge exploration and science navigation to know "why is the letter ع 'ʿ' dotted in the word *al-Maghrafa* 'scoop' and dotless in *al-Maʾrifa* 'knowledge'?; and why is the letter ج 'j' dotted in the word *al-Majrafa* 'shovel' and dotless in *al-Muḥarafa* 'interpolated'?". The first two words are similar in orthography and with only one difference in one dot ع 'ʿ' and غ 'gh'. The Arabic letter 'ghayn' غ is, in fact, a variant of ʿayn (ع), and scribes often confused them in writings at that time. However, this dot is crucial for distinguishing the preceding two words. Finding an explanation for a simple dot that has been established and agreed upon by grammarians and calligraphers for a long time could confuse the audience because it is not a valid inquiry.

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[29] Giza is the second-largest city in Egypt after Cairo and the fourth-largest city in Africa after Kinshasa, Lagos, and Cairo.

[30] Qanāṭir Al-Jīzah was mentioned in Al-Maqrīzī's *Al-Khiṭaṭ* (vol.2, 151).

Our tramp-hero was cunning enough to find a ridiculous answer to a stupid question:

> 27. why is the letter ع ''' dotted in the word *al-Maghrafa* 'scoop or ladle' and dotless in *al-Maʾrifa* 'knowledge'?; and why is the letter ج 'j' dotted in the word *al-Majrafa* 'shovel' and dotless in *al-Muḥarafa* 'interpolated'? whoever knows the answer will be well-fed and given whatever his heart desires. My friends were unable to answer and replied, "God knows!". Then, they retreated and put me forward to answer these difficult questions. So, I said, O people, these questions, as you know, are really problematic, but with God's help and assistance I would answer them. I say that[31] the word *al-Maghrafa* 'scoop or ladle' is dotted during *al-Ighitirāf* 'scooping or ladling' and so is the word *al'-Majrafa* 'shovel' during *al-Ijtirāf* 'shoveling'. Those who scoop and shovel know what I mean. After being dotted the two words had a stroke[32] as retribution by time. For you reap what you sow. (Ed.147: 5-11).

After the retreat of his comrades, *Bīn Mahlān,* first asserted the difficulty of the questions. Then, he immediately defines the words by themselves, the word *al-Maghrafa* 'scoop' is dotted during *al-Ighitirāf* 'scooping'. The word *al-Majrafa* 'shovel', on the other hand, is dotted during *al-Ijtirāf* 'shoveling'. In a sarcastic twist, *Bīn Mahlān* exploited the double entendre in the word نقطا and added another meaning to 'a dot' which is 'a stroke'. After being dotted the two words *al-Maghrafa* and *al-Majrafa* had a stroke because of the devastating effect of time and in the end, they reaped what they saw.

Surely, no one can miss the delicious glints of humor in the previous narrative which is the primary objective of the book. However, there is an ironic train of thoughts in the background as well. Comparing the dots in the words *al-Maʾrifa,* and *al-Maghrafa; al-Majrafa,* and *al-Muḥarafa* might have been done for another reason. I think, Ibn Sūdūn, was throwing light on the stupidity of the questions at his time and the triviality of the scholar's answers due to the absence of real knowledge and the virtue of *ijtihād* [33] and the existence of *taqlid* "imitation" at the expense of creativity. Scholars in Ibn Sūdūn's age lost their predecessor's golden touch and knowledge was limited to imitating ancient texts and spinning in an old-fashioned way. Even the structure of Ibn Sūdūn's

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[31] "My reply to your questions".

[32] By the second dot the author refers to the colloquial Arabic (نُقطة، أو نَقطة) 'having a stroke'.

[33] It is a technical term of Islamic law that describes the process of making a legal decision by independent interpretation of the legal sources, the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Maqāmah was a revolt against the new bounds and techniques which were imposed on them later on by later writers, who focused on language, style, and edifying subject matter rather than on fiction, parody, or satire. Unlike Ibn Sūdūn's Maqāmah, which depended basically on fiction, the fictional world of the *Maqāmāt* at his age was reduced to a mere skeleton, with weak plots serving to connect larger and more important presentations of information on a wide range of subjects. The author used more ironic axioms in *al-Maqāmah al-Jiziyya* than in *al-Maqāmah al-Jisriyya*, which focused more on a historical accident that occurred during that time.

4.2.3 Ironic axioms in ḥikāyāt al-malāfīq "Trumped-up Stories"

The second chapter is dedicated to *ḥikāyāt al-malāfīq* "Trumped-up Stories" (Ed. 65-79). The stories are short, no longer than thirty lines. The "narrator" is a person with a fictitious name. In form and style, they are reminiscent of some of the stories in the Arabian Nights. The word *al-malāfīq* which means 'made up, fabricated, and fictional' in the title itself denotes the nature of the following stories and anecdotes. They are ancient stories that have never happened or occurred. For instance,

> 28. *Ibn Hāfid al-Hijīly*, once said, "one day as I passed by *al-Baḥṭala*, a man was addressing a crowd with the words, 'O people, may God have mercy on you. You should know that the past has passed, and the future has not yet arrived. Some people are gone, while others are still alive. According to the wise of those who have lived and died, silver is not the same as gold; and the whale is a fish, even if it catches the nets; and whoever pursues knowledge, and his thoughts are mixed with wisdom's grains; he knew that *Kunāfa's* 'Knafeh'[34] threads do not twist, and Zalabiyeh 'dumplings' was longer than *Qaṭāʾif*[35]. You are now at *al-Baḥṭala*, and directly in front of you is a luxuriant meadow with young leafy twigs. On its outskirts, the palm fronds are cool and wet. Between you and this meadow looms the Nile. Even if an elephant drinks, the Nile does not decrease. On the way to and from the meadow, non-swimmers must traverse an (Ark) constructed of wide planks

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[34] A traditional and popular Middle Eastern dessert, especially in Egypt and the Levant. It is made with spun pastry, soaked in sweet, sugar-based syrup, and typically layered with cheese, or with other ingredients such as clotted cream, pistachio or nuts, depending on the region (Davidson 2014: 33; 661-662).

[35] Pancakes folded around a sweet nut filling (Lewicka 2011:56).   .

and palm-fibre[36] caulking. It will prevent him and his clothing from becoming drenched. Whoever disobeys these directions by walking on water, penetrating it, and getting wet or drowning is not to blame. (Ed.74: 3-12).

Listening to a wise sage is one of the most prominent themes in traditional Arabic storytelling. It implies that you must sit and listen to the ancient wisdom with the utmost care and focus. There are numerous examples of such narratives brimming with insightful phrases, sayings, maxims, and aphorisms in Arabic literature. In the previous narrative, Ibn Sūdūn recounts the story of a man called *Ibn Hāfid al-Hijīly*. The name itself was unfamiliar to the people at the time. Also, there is no exact locality with the name *al-Bahṭala*, hence the name of the location is likewise peculiar. However, *al-Bahṭala* was a unique form of women's attire. It was a fashion in the Mamlūk era in 751 AH/1374 AD during the ministry of prince *Minjik al-yūsify*. One dress cost over one thousand dirhams. It was a deluxe garment with a lengthy train and three cubit-wide sleeves (Ibrāhīm 2002: 82).

The introduction of new names and locales at the beginning of Ibn Sūdūn's narrative is sufficient to capture the attention of his audience and establish an atmosphere of gravity, solemnity, and seriousness. The scene of a man delivering a speech in Arabic is simultaneously solemn and grave. *Ibn Hāfid al-Hijīly* begins his sermon by discussing the past, future, living, and deceased. There is nothing more captivating and affecting than a lecture on life and death. By introducing the previous lexical and contextual information, Ibn Sūdūn succeeds in activating the initial phase according to the graded salient hypothesis. Then, he mentioned that only the wise from those who are gone (the dead people) and those who stayed alive agree that silver is not like gold, the whale is a fish, *Kunāfa's* 'Knafeh' threads do not twist, Zalabiyeh 'dumplings' is longer than *Qaṭāʾif*, the Nile does not decrease by drinking even if an elephant drinks, you need a boat to cross the river and others. The grave and solemn atmosphere at the beginning of the narrative is disturbed by a long series of unexpected IAS. According to Attardo's (2000) theory of Irony, Ibn Sūdūn succeeds in creating an extreme case of inappropriateness inside the minds of his audience who will try to reinterpret the content of the message again and again looking for the

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[36] The author is quoting the Qur'anic verses وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَدُسُرٍ 'But We bore him on an (Ark) made of broad planks and caulked with palm-fibre'. Surah al-Qamar: verses 13. Translated by Yusuf Ali.

intended meaning. While searching for the missing meaning, the audience will be unable to do anything other than laugh at the IAS.

The second contextual integration phase follows and, only good readers will understand that Ibn Sūdūn uses some contextual clues, especially his use of exaggeration in his narrative such as العقلا *alʿuqlā* 'the wise', ومن عرف العلم بتحقيقه وانعجنت فكرته بدقيقه *waman ʿarifa alʿlim bitaḥqīqīh wanʿajanat fikritih bidaqīqh* 'whoever pursues knowledge, and his thoughts are mixed with wisdom's grains'. According to Muecke (1973:41) exaggeration is the most commonly employed stylistic marker of irony. Through his use of IAS and exaggerations, Ibn Sūdūn ridicules some scholars of his age who brag about their intellect, knowledge, and logic while in fact, they are nothing but imposters, pretenders, and phony imitators. Also, some scholars believe that Ibn Sūdūn's literary style is closely related to the modern concept of the absurd in modern literature (Najjār 2015: 213). His aim is not just to elicit humor and to trigger laughter through his use of a technique that depends basically on *taḥṣīl al-ḥāṣil*, but to generate an ironic joke that is rich and complex at the same time.

The author's technique in the following story depends on adopting a serious style at the beginning of his narrative, accumulating many features of serious literature such as mentioning the name of the narrator, *ʿindabah Bin Abi Al-ḥakam*, the name of the book *Zabid Al-ḥukm* which both denote ingenuity and depth of knowledge. Also, his deliberate use of exaggeration in his description of his main character *Damsarah Bin Al-Dimistiq* as 'the brightest', 'the wisest', and 'the greatest'. For instance,

> 29. Abū riḥlah reported that ʿindabah Bin Abi Al-ḥakam mentioned in his book Zabid Al-ḥukm that the brightest and the wisest man of his time Damsarah Bin Al-Dimistiq the greatest sage of Greece, when he was on his deathbed, said, "Oh, my son, listen to my words with the utmost care and commit them to memory. Even if no one tells you, you should recognize a human if he walks upright, has a head above his shoulders, sees with his eyes, and eats with his right hand (if he was not in a hurry)." (Ed.69: 10-14).

To capture his audience's attention, the author introduces a pivotal moment in Damsarah Bin Al-Dimistiq's life, namely his grave and agonizing death. The greatest sage of Greece was imparting his final words or last will to his son and heir, which encapsulated all of his life's knowledge and wisdom. The on-his-deathbed sage pleaded with his son to "listen carefully with the utmost care" to his final words in a scene that

has been repeated numerous times in elite literature. By implanting all the previous lexical and contextual incentives, Ibn Sūdūn succeeds in activating the initial phase according to the graded salient hypothesis. However, such a pure and truthful moment, which would contain the essence of a father's advice to his son, was abruptly and violently disrupted by the message's content.

After much anticipation and excitement, the old sage's will contained nothing new or unusual. The long-awaited message was nothing more than a narration of trivial, well-known facts and truisms, such as the narrator's description of the human being as a simple individual who walks on his feet, has a head above his shoulders, sees with his eyes, and eats with his right hand. That's all? Where is the wisdom here? What happened to the greatest sage of Greece? Has he gone insane? The audience is surprised and has so many questions. This moment of surprise, thought, hesitation, and wonder can be explained by Attardo's theory of irony as relevant inappropriateness. Despite being contextually inappropriate, the previous statements are still pertinent. For example, the message's content was extremely inappropriate and did not meet the expectations of the audience, who had anticipated something unique and extraordinary. However, despite their triviality, the simple facts stated by the old sage cannot be denied or refuted because they were still relevant to the literal context.

By employing the IAS in the preceding narrative, Ibn Sūdūn successfully creates a state of contextual inappropriateness, initiating the second phase of contextual integration in Giora's GSH. I acknowledge that the preceding text is challenging and puzzling for the audience. I describe it as ironic because irony is difficult and requires thought and consideration. The recipient, who in this case is the audience, may be surprised or even dissatisfied because the "norm" or general atmosphere, which in this case is solemn gravity, is violated. The audience realizes a problem with the literal utterance, and he must seek a different interpretation that may be compatible with the speaker's implied intent. This paper postulates that irony and humor run together in Ibn Sūdūn's narratives. According to Giora (1995: 256), "the passage from the least-to the most-informative message is abrupt and surprising." In the preceding narrative, the transition from seriousness to humor was "abrupt and surprising". This process which happens inside the audience's minds, involves a two-stage processing. Therefore, this paper defends the (neo-Gricean) approaches that irony is a two-stage phenomenon. Unlike, the

echoic account and the 'pretence theory' of irony that are positioned in favor of a single-stage view of irony, and they claim that there is only one meaning in irony.

According to the graded salience hypothesis (GSH) and the appropriateness theory which are, in fact, "incompatible" (Attardo 2000: 821) the most appropriate element in the previous narrative which is seriousness is likely to be the least informative and the most predictable because it is only used to deceive the audience and to attract his attention to the least appropriate element which will tend to be the most informative and the most unpredictable. The concealed irony in the ludicrous message will not be understood by all readers and listeners. The irony in Ibn Sūdūn's definition of 'human being' lies in the fact that he was stripped of all human characteristics. He focused more on the physical characteristics he shared with animals, such as walking, seeing, and eating. Nevertheless, he was distinct from them in that he had shoulders and ate with his right hand. Oh! Sorry! He occasionally used his left hand to eat, but only when he was in a hurry. Where is the wisdom here? Human beings are depicted as machines by Ibn Sūdūn. Does Ibn Sūdūn, at his age, express his dissatisfaction with humanity and humans in general for their fervent pursuit of material, artificial, and fake things and their complete disregard for true knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual values? I believe that Ibn Sūdūn's use of irony is deliberate, intentional, and difficult and is not easily processed, and many readers might miss it. Another similar story goes as follows:

> 30. Before the flood, according to Ibn Dhmasha al-Mashriqī, there was a king who ruled over our country for more than 520 years. He was considered the wisest sage of his time. When he sensed his death was near, he directed his son and successor to open his safes. He saw a red glass box containing a green silk bag. In the bag was a sapphire slab with gold inscriptions reading: 'Know, O man endowed with reason and eloquence, that the wisdom confirmed by reason and religion was that whoever was hungry and ate enough would be satisfied. Those who were not deaf would listen if spoken to. Those who tossed their garments into the fire would be burnt. Whoever threw stones into the water sank it. Whoever hurt his right leg's thumb would eat with his teeth. Whoever covered his eyes would not be able to see the person sitting next to him with his eyebrows. Whoever refuted any of the preceding assertions would be foolish. (Ed.74: 13-20).

The author generated a dramatic mood by combining a number of significant linguistic stimuli to grab the audience's attention initiating the first phase in Giora's GSH. Ibn Sūdūn, for instance, began his account with a standard classical introduction that included the name of the narrator, Ibn Dhmasha al-Mashriqī. The story took place "before the flood," which signified ancient times in the past, and such tales typically convey ancient knowledge. The protagonist was "a king" who lived for about "five hundred and twenty years." In addition to his great age, which was another indicator of his knowledge, he was also the "wisest sage of his day" and not just an average monarch. The author reintroduces the moment of death to increase the gravity of his narrative. On his deathbed, the king requested that his son and heir bring his "safes" as a further vital and serious incentive. Undoubtedly, the king's safe housed priceless and expensive items such as gold, silver, gems, etc. In contrast, the safe contained "a red glass box with a green silk bag" and "inside the bag was a sapphire slab with gold writing." What kind of message could have been maintained in such a secure and secret location?!

Ibn Sūdūn succeeded in captivating the minds and hearts of his audience and he kept them on the alert. By using this technique, I think he won half of the battle. Now is the time of revelation! The moment we have waited so long for! The message which was written in gold on a sapphire slab and kept in a safe inside a glass box covered carefully with a green silk bag was nothing but basic trivial facts well-known to everybody such as: "whoever was hungry and ate enough would get full. Whoever was spoken to would listen if he had not deafness. Whoever threw his clothes into the fire would be burned. Whoever threw stones in the water it would be sunk. Whoever injured the thumb of his right leg, he would eat with his teeth. Whoever covered his eyes, he would not see with his eyebrows the person who sat next to him…". Was this the ancient wisdom which was attested by both "reason" and "religion" and carefully passed down from one generation to the next among kings and was kept in secure secretive places among the most precious treasures?!

According to the GSH, the second phase of contextual integration is activated when the IAS violently disrupts the general atmosphere of gravity, solemnity, and seriousness. The previous narrative is contextually inappropriate due to the disparity between the elegance of form 'words' and the frivolity of the message's content 'meaning' (Najjār 2015: 205). On the surface, the previous narrative's relevant inappropriateness creates a state of humor and laughter. However, irony and sarcasm might run at a

deeper level as well. In the previous narrative, words like "reason", "eloquence", and "wisdom" might have been chosen carefully by Ibn Sūdūn to refer indirectly to various forms of arts and literature during his era. They were shiny and attractive from the outside but empty, vague, and meaningless from the inside exactly like the message which was carved on the "sapphire slab". The author wishes to convey that not all flashy and seemingly appealing objects are worthwhile and that not all that glitters is gold.

5. Results and discussion

This paper investigates verbal irony in selected verse and prose from Ibn Sūdūn's *Nuzhat Al-Nufūs wa Muḍḥik Al-ʿabūs* from a pragmatic perspective. It examines what I have called "ironic axioms" or IAS as a new kind of verbal irony used by the author to compose a humorous text with ironic intent. This technique is based on *taḥṣīl al-ḥāṣil* which involves stating the obvious, explaining simple facts, circular definitions, and defining a thing by itself. In order to make the best use of this technique, Ibn Sūdūn begins his verse and prose with something serious and wonderful. Instead of something serious, strange, and full of wonders, the audience is exposed to axioms, truisms, well-known facts, and accepted truths. This research has proved that Ibn Sūdūn used the technique of *ironic axioms* not just to elicit humor and trigger laughter, but also to send a message and to express an opinion.

In my analysis, I have sought to combine Attardo's (2000) theory of relevant inappropriateness with Giora's (1997-1995) Graded Salience Hypothesis (GSH). I believe that Ibn Sūdūn deliberately used linguistic incentives to grab the attention of his audience at the opening of his narratives. The activation of these linguistic incentives at the beginning of Ibn Sūdūn's narratives forms what Giora describes as the salient meaning. Ironic axioms, on the other hand, is a technique that is used by the author to disrupt the salient meaning and to create a state of contextual inappropriateness. The chaos generated by IAS induces in the minds of the audience a sense of perplexity that degenerates into humor and laughter. The audience has to reject the salient meaning and reinterpret it in a sequential process. In order to get Ibn Sūdūn's irony, they have to look for contextual clues which are always hidden carefully by the sarcastic author who is fond of playing and jester. In my analysis, I have decided to divide the data into two major categories: poetry and prose.

The poet opens his poems with a variety of linguistic stimuli (Examples 1–8) that demonstrate his brilliance and mental and logical superiority in order to intoxicate his audience and prepare them for the wonders he will describe. By doing so, the poet is able to immediately capture the hearts and minds of his audience. The sudden appearance of the IAS creates a state of contextual inappropriateness in the poems. The audience must reprocess the text's meaning from the beginning, searching for any linguistic hints that may be contained within it. As a result, the second sarcastic meaning is activated, and the first serious meaning is deemed invalid. Even if the reader is unable of absorbing and comprehending the author's ironic aim, ironic axioms are capable of inciting humor and generating laughter. In a number of his colloquial poems, the poet imitates the speech of animals and children and also uses IAS. On a superficial level, this sort of mimicking is done to elicit humor and laughter. On a deeper level, however, it is readily interpretable as social and political symbols (Najjār 2015: 211-12). Using IAS with these symbols is likely evidence that the author meant to combine irony and sarcasm with his humor. In fact, Ibn Sūdūn's vernacular poetry demonstrates "the intersection between the literature of the elite and that of the common people" (Larkin 2006: 228-9). Larking pointed out that the main intent of *Nuzhat al-nufūs* is to mock and ridicule through his use of *muʿāraḍa* "imitation".

In the Mamlūk period, the boundaries between high and low culture became fluid, almost to the point of disappearance. This is possibly what caused contemporary popular literature to be written down, to be preserved, and to be considered classics of their kind (Chipman 2010: 161). Ibn Sūdūn was drawn to the popular literary trend of his time, which was to write in colorful language. It was the people's everyday language that expressed their attitudes, pain, and hopes. Folk literature would have been more appealing to classical *fuṣḥā* writers during the Mamlūk period due to its prevalence and effectiveness. The distinction between vernacular literature and eloquent literature is no longer stark; rather, they are mixed and equal. The *fuṣḥā* writers wrote in the colloquial language and the colloquial writers wrote in *fuṣḥā* 'classical or standard' or *al-ʿāmiyyah al-mufṣḥā* 'standardized colloquial.' The forms and shapes of eloquent literature resembled those of informal literature. Thus, literature as a whole became more accessible to the masses, and the fortunes of classical writers from kings and wealthy, prestigious individuals diminished (Sālim 2001: 37-8).

This study traces IAS in several pieces of prose, including *taṣādīq* "doxologies", *maqāmas*, mock "learned opinions", and *ḥikāyāt al-malāfīq* "Trumped-up Stories". In his *taṣādīq* "doxologies", for instance, Ibn Sūdūn employs the ironic axioms accompanied by the funny language of little kids to ridicule the sterile, old-fashioned, redundant styles of writing especially in some religious books which are naïve and childish without any creativity or real value. on *al-tuḥaf al-ʿjība* 'wondrous curiosities' and *al-ṭuraf al-gharība* 'strange novelties' which contain prose narratives of various forms and content, Ibn Sūdūn ridiculed the trivial books of grammar and language at his age which were devoid of originality and creativity. In his *maqāmāt*, Ibn Sūdūn's developed the art of *maqāmah* writing from the constraints of al-Hamadhānī and al-Harīrī. His maqāmahs are written without any educational purpose and they lacked the use of grand style with an artificial and ostentatious elegance. However, it contained criticism of the negative aspects of his society, such as fundamental flaws in cultural activity and rejected customs and traditions. They reflected the aspirations of the poor and condemned cannabis use (Sālim 2001: 27-8). In *ḥikāyāt al-malāfīq*, Ibn Sūdūn criticized various forms of arts and literature during his era which were shiny and attractive from the outside but empty, vague, and meaningless from the inside. He expressed his dissatisfaction with humanity and humans in general for their fervent pursuit of material, artificial, and fake things and their complete disregard for true knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual values. Through his use of IAS and exaggerations, Ibn Sūdūn ridicules some scholars of his age who brag about their intellect, knowledge, and logic while in fact, they are nothing but imposters, pretenders, and phony imitators.

Speaking like a fool or a simpleton, reiterating axioms, and claiming expertise with childlike knowledge are the main characteristics of Ibn Sūdūn's style. During the Mamlūk period, this writing style was known as the social absurdity approach and was characterized by rejection and social discontentment. It was based on messing around, jesting, fake heroism, expressing amazement at nothing, and making a big fuss about it. It was in fact a revolutionary movement against the sterility of thought. Life became meaningless nonsense without any purpose or organization. Its peculiarities and marvels are obvious, whereas its axioms and postulates are mysteries and enigmas. These poets consider this to be the pinnacle of social absurdity. It originated from an underlying sense of meaninglessness, the banality of life, the futility of thought, the absurdity of conflict, and the absurdity of purpose and

existence. This school of thought began with Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī bin ʿAbd Alwaḥid, knowns as *dhī al-riqāʿatīn* (died in 412 AH/1021 AD), Ibn sukarat al-Hashimī (died 385 AH/995 AD), Ibn al-Ḥajaj (died 391 AH/1001 AD), ʿAlī bin jābir al-Maghrabī (died 684 AH/1285 AD), Muḥamad bin ʿAlī al-Harirī al-Miʿarī (died 516 AH/1122 AD) and other like al-Jazār and ibn danyāl (Najjār 2015:197-201).

Ibn Sūdūn was not the originator of this type of literature; rather, he benefited from the experiences of his predecessors, responded to the needs of his time, and nurtured this art form until it reached its full maturity. The outcome was this absurd poetry that departs from logic and reason and approaches the realm of fantasy (surrealism). Therefore, he rejected the social, economic, and political structures of his period, as well as the culture, education, and way of thinking (Sālim 2001: 22-25). The poets in the Mamlūk era suffered from poverty more than any other epoch and they finally found themselves in a state of spatial, psychological and material alienation like al-Sarāj al-Warāq, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Jazār, ibn al-Khayāṭ, Al-Naṣīr al-Ḥammāmī, Ibn Danīyāl Al-Kaḥāl, and Ibn Sūdūn. Even their names such as al-Sarāj al-Warāq, al-Jazār, implied that they had to work on more than one job in order to live in these difficult times (Najjār 2015:179-80). They used irony, denial, and cynicism as defense mechanisms to forget the bitter reality making fun of their names, their professions, their titles, their fortunes, and their bankruptcy. I believe that Ibn Sūdūn was able to observe the social, cultural, and economic absurdities in the Egyptian society as everything got mixed up and was in a state of mess, chaos, and confusion. By using ironic axioms, he was able to record the incongruities and contradictions in the Egyptian society.

Ibn Sūdūn's life is full of irony. His dreams and expectations were vastly different from his bitter reality. His hopes of inheriting wealth due to his birth are dashed. Being born to a second generation of Mamlūks or *awlād al-nās*, he was descended from an "ethnically alien group" or an "alien ruling class" to which he can no longer belong. He lost the privileges of his birthright, and he became no longer a Mamlūk nor an ordinary Egyptian citizen and he had to find his new place in Egyptian society. All of his dreams of becoming a great poet were dashed because he was simply not good enough in terms of literary taste and age criteria. As a bachelor, he made the decision to become a poet. Finding no market for his work and no audience appreciation, he chose to marry and start a family. To make ends meet, he was forced to work as a copywriter and a

tailor. In his quest for knowledge, he was trained to be a great scholar which at the end turns out to be the humble profession of an *imām* or prayer leader at several mosques. According to Ashtor (1966:335), an Egyptian *imām* during the Circassian period received an average of 2.66 dinars, subsequently less than the 3.66 dinars of an unskilled laborer. Therefore, it can be easily inferred that an *imām* like Ibn Sūdūn could not expect to live with his family on a low-income like this (Vrolijk 1998: 11). Poverty and hard work forced him to "loosen the reins of his natural disposition". In other words, he overcame his moral reservations and started composing poetry of a more frivolous nature. It was quite expected that this kind of poetry would find a wide market with a much wider audience and Ibn Sūdūn became a celebrity. However, his new poems and songs which became trendy at his time were stolen by other people and he remained as poor as ever. He, therefore, committed everything to writing (Vrolijk 1998: 9-20).

I believe that the title *Nuzhat al-Nufūs wa muḍḥik al-ʿabūs*, translated by Vrolijk as "The Diversion of the Souls, Bringing a Laugh to a Scowling Face," was suggestive. The primary purpose of the book, as suggested by its title, was to heal and divert the anguish in people's spirits and thoughts and to bring a slight smile to their cheeks, which were perpetually scowling due to poverty and injustice. It was read for entertainment and to escape from the harsh reality. A function was similar to that of drugs such as *Ḥashish*, which was widely used by the Egyptian people and the author of this book. Ibn Sūdūn mentioned *Ḥashish* so many times in his book and he explained directly and indirectly the symptoms of intoxication and its harmful effect on both the human body and on money ironically fooling around until he was accused by some of his contemporaries of "promiscuity" and "debauchery" (Sakhāwī 1991: 229)[37]. This was his way of escaping from the bitter reality in a futile attempt to ignore and forget it.

I believe that the author did not write the book for pleasure or financial gain alone. Ibn Sūdūn decided to criticize and ridicule everything and everyone in his book. He used a new ironic style in order to convey a message to future generations. He intended to convey that he had lived in a period rife with dishonesty, paradoxes, and injustices, and he was astute enough to leave us his message while we were laughing. The book depicted many social ills in Egyptian society during that time, like hypocrisy and false religiosity which were nothing but a mere

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[37] Sakhāwī, al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ, vol.V,pp.229.

reflection of the general atmosphere of oppression and tyranny. For instance, many Mamlūk Sultans, Amirs and their soldiers derived the legitimacy of their ruthless rule from the pretense that they were the defenders of Islam and the builders of mosques and religious institutions at that time like *Khānqāhs, zawiyas*[38]*, madāris* and *tikiyas*[39]. They believed that building a *madrasa, bīmārestān*[40]*,* mosque, *sabil*[41] guaranteed the forgiveness of their crimes and sins even if the funding of this charity was *ḥarām* 'forbidden' and collected by illegal practices like looting, aggression, and confiscation (Najjār 2015:33).

According to figure 1 above, the paper has examined 138 narratives, 100 poems, and 38 prose passages. Figure 2 below shows that Ironic axioms have been employed by the author in 52 poems out of 100 poems with a percentage of 52%. In prose, on the other hand, figure 3 shows that the IAS have been utilized by the author in 31 narratives out of 38 with a percentage of 82%. The percentage of IAS in verse and prose across the corpus of 138 texts is 60%, as shown in Figure 4. The preceding percentage is strong statistical evidence that Ibn Sūdūn's use of ironic axioms is one of his most essential techniques for creating hilarious texts with an ironic aim. Figures 2, 3, and 4 below also indicate that the IAS are used more frequently in the author's prose than in his poetry. I believe this is to be expected because the freedom of prose writing allows the author to develop his style and construct a potent ironic tale without being constrained by the more concise requirements of poetry.
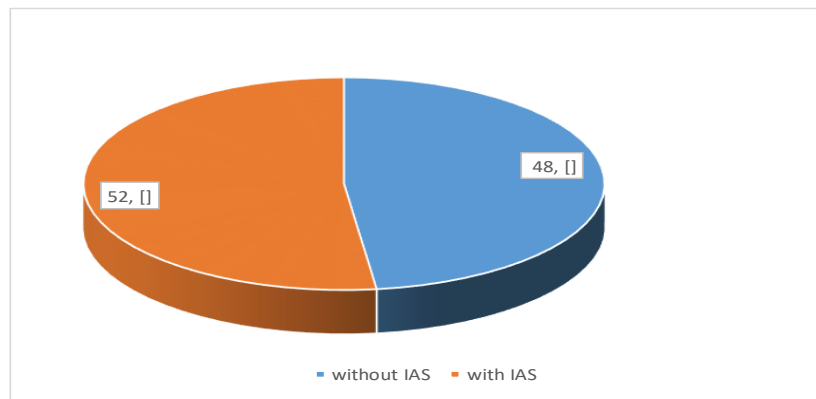

Figure 2. Frequencies and percentage of poems with and without IAS

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[38] Places of worship and holding Sufi rituals.
[39] Hospices.
[40] Hospital.
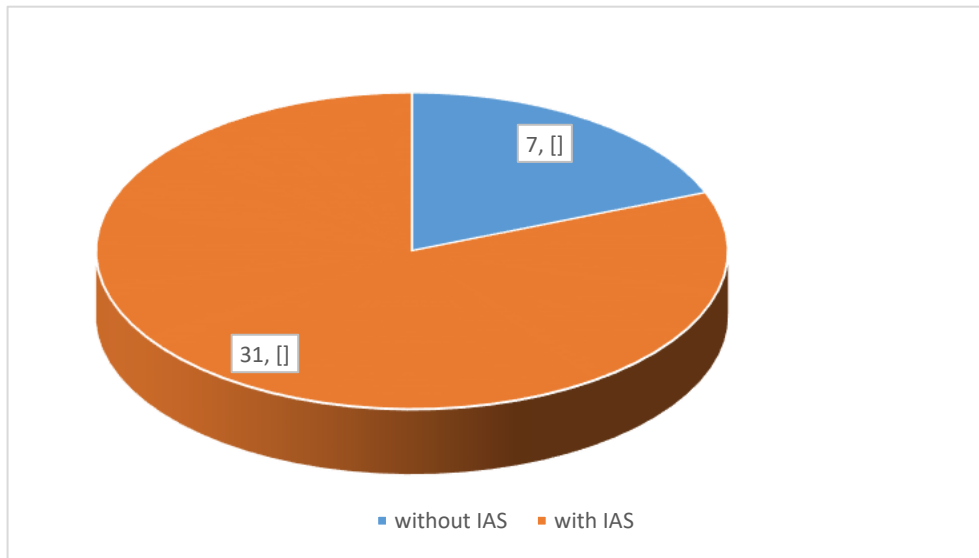[41] charitable water fountains.

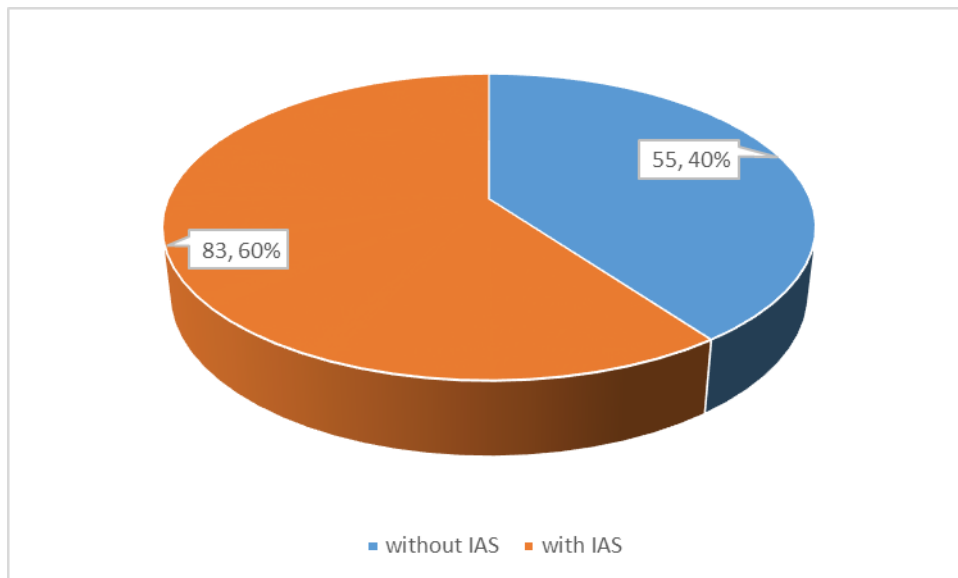Figure 3. Frequencies and percentage of IAS in prose narratives

Figure 4. Frequencies and percentage of IAS in verse and prose across the corpus

The results of this research are in accordance with Attardo's (2000) and Giora's argument of irony as a two-stage process against the proponents of the one-stage process by Sperber and Wilson (1981). Ibn Sūdūn's irony is derived from the disparity between what might be expected and what actually happens (Muecke 1970:53). I simply regard the ironic axioms as an important irony marker in *Dīwān Nuzhat Al-Nufūs* by Ibn Sūdūn. Irony is challenging and requires thought and deliberation. Like many ironists, Ibn Sūdūn aimed to minimize the evidence that enables us to draw the correct inference. Some, such as Ariosto, intended their irony to be too subtle for a portion of their audience. Others, such as Nabokov,

attempt to make us question whether they are being ironic or not (Muecke 1973:35). As we have seen in Ibn Sūdūn's examples, humor is created as a byproduct of resolving the incongruity between what the speaker is putting forward and what he actually intends to communicate. Irony has been used by Ibn Sūdūn to achieve some purposes. First, it builds in-group solidarity through shared play. Second, it has been used to express a negative judgment about certain beliefs and ideologies. Finally, it has been used as a face-saving strategy to avoid direct criticism. Sometimes Ibn Sūdūn conceals his attack behind a mask of naiveté, as if to imply that intelligence and sensitivity are not required to destroy such a weak opponent (Muecke 1970:53).

Conclusion

In his verse and prose, Ibn Sūdūn has utilized a new kind of verbal irony, which I have dubbed ironic axioms, not only to elicit humor and generate laughter, but also to communicate a message and express an opinion. The technique of ironic axioms is based on superfluous, underived, common, and tautological statements, which include stating the obvious, describing simple facts, employing circular definitions, and defining a thing by itself. Ibn Sūdūn's strategy for creating ironic humor is predicated on preparing his audience for something serious, bizarre, and significant before shocking them with trivial facts and cliches. A hybrid method combining Attardo's (2000) theory of Irony as relevant inappropriateness and Giora's (1995, 1997, 1998) graded salience hypothesis (GSH) has been utilized. This study's most important findings are that irony is complex, difficult, time-consuming, requires two-stage processing, and does not necessarily imply the opposite. It has been used by the author to express a negative judgment about certain beliefs and ideologies. In fact, this study contends that Ibn Sūdūn's *Dīwān Nuzhat Al-Nufūs* parodies academic obscurantism and mocks the social, economic, and political realities of his era. Finally, axiomatic irony, in my opinion, should be classified alongside other types of verbal irony such as sarcasm, Socratic irony, understatement, overstatement, and others.

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Appendix 1
Transliteration System for the Arabic Words used in the Paper
Consonants

ء	ʾ
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	D
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	ʿ
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y
ى	ā
ة	a

Vowels

Long ا or ىا	ā
Long و	ū
Long ي	ī
Doubled ِي kasrah	iyy (final form ī)
Doubled ُو ḍammah	uww (final form ū)
Diphthongs َو	au *or* aw
Diphthongs َي	ai *or* ay
Short َ	a
Short ُ	u
Short ِ	i