

The Place Of Tamerlane In The Nasreddin Hodja's Jokes¹

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Abstract

Nasreddin Hodja is the most common type of joke in the Turkic world. For this reason, many studies have been done on Nasreddin Hodja type and his jokes both at home and abroad. In the researches, besides Nasreddin Hodja's historical personality, other problems were discussed. However, it has not been clearly established that he really lived and scientists have not reached an agreement on this issue. Indeed, some researchers say it might be Nasireddin Tusi; others claimed that he was a kadı (judge) who lived in Anatolia. On the other hand, some researchers have stated different ideas about the time when he lived from the anecdotes mentioned between him and Timur. However, it is understood that this has no historical basis.

The research material of this article consists of four jokes. Nasreddin Hodja and Tamerlane were examined in these jokes. For that reason, firstly general information about humor was given and then it is expressed that it has many subgenres such as joke, tale and philosophical phrases. Short information about the historical personalities about Tamerlane and Nasreddin Hodja were given by emphasizing that the humor has many functions on the basis of joke. Later, the emergence time and the partaking in the written sources of Nasreddin Hodja jokes were discussed. Moreover, how Tamerlane was reflected in the jokes was examined in the texts of these four jokes. As a result, it was seen that the basis of some jokes is the traveller theme and it was determined that Tamerlane was reflected negatively in the jokes as a result of "Ankara War". However, Tamerlane takes place in the jokes as a folkloric type but not a historical personality. For that reason, it is generally seen that there is an attitude against not only Tamerlane but also the rulers.

Key Words: Anatolian, folk, humor, Tamerlane, Nasreddin Hodja, anecdote.

Timur'un Nasreddin Hoca Fıkralarındaki Yeri

Öz

Nasreddin Hoca Türk dünyasında bilinen en yaygın fıkra tipidir. Onun için gerek yurtiçinde gerekse yurtdışında Nasreddin Hoca tipi ve fıkraları üzerine birçok

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çalışma yapılmıştır. Yapılan araştırmalarda Nasreddin Hoca'nın tarihî kişiliği yanı sıra başka problemler de ele alınmıştır. Ancak onun gerçekten yaşamış biri olduğu kesin olarak ortaya konulamamış ve bu konuda bilim adamları bir mutabakata varamamışlardır. Nitekim bazı araştırmacılar onu Nasıreddin Tusi olabileceğini söylerken bazıları ise Anadolu'da yaşamış bir kadı olduğunu ileri sürmüştür. Bazı araştırmacılar ise Timur ile onun arasında geçtiği söylenen fıkralardan hareketle yaşadığı zaman hakkında değişik fikirler beyan etmiştir. Ancak bunun da tarihsel bir temeli olmadığı anlaşılmıştır.

Bu makalenin araştırma malzemesini ise dört fıkra oluşturmaktadır. Bu fıkralarda Nasreddin Hoca ve Emir Timur incelenmektedir. Onun için makalede öncelikle mizah hakkında genel bilgiler verilmiş ve mizahın; fıkra, masal, hikmetli söz gibi birçok alt türünün bulunduğu ifade edilmiştir. Fıkra temelinde mizahın pek çok işlevi olduğu vurgulanarak Emir Timur ve Nasreddin Hoca'nın tarihsel kişilikleri hakkında kısaca bilgi verilmiştir. Daha sonra Nasreddin Hoca fıkralarının ne zaman ortaya çıktığı ve hangi tarihten itibaren yazılı kaynaklarda yer aldığı tartışılmıştır. Ayrıca Emir Timur'un bu fıkralarda nasıl yansıdığı dört fıkra metni üzerinden irdelenmiştir. Neticede bazı fıkralara seyyah süjelerin temel oluşturduğu görülmüş ve Timur'un "Ankara Savaşı" dolayısıyla fıkralara olumsuz yansıdığı tespit edilmiştir. Ancak fıkralarda Timur tarihsel bir şahsiyet olarak değil bir folklor tipi olarak yer almaktadır. Onun için fıkralarda sadece Timur değil genel olarak yöneticilere karşı bir tavır alınmış görünmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anadolu, halk, mizah, Timur, Nasreddin Hoca, fıkra.

Introduction

Humor² can be defined widely as the oral works which aim to make people think, entertain and laugh by reflecting the amusing, unusual or conflicting sides of the events. There are also some other definitions for humor, which is a large concept, that consists of the works such as joke³, tale and philosophical phrases. For instance, B. Aydın expressed that humor which means joke, amusement comes from Arabic word "müzah" and it found a place as a humor in Turkish and one of the widely used genres of humor is satire. In addition to this, he states that jokes are one of the most effective and the oldest works of oral humor in terms of satirizing a person or an event (Aydın, 2002, 25). Another researcher indicated that humor is an elocution which is stated in the most proper time and attitude briefly and thus, everything such as politics, social events, habits, daily life, current events

² For a few researches on humor and humor theories in our country, please see (Türkmen, 2013; Eker, 2014; Bayraktar, 2010).

³ It should be noted that the concepts such as witticism and anecdote in text are used in the same sense with joke.

can be the subject of the humor (Kılınç, 2007, 55). These works can arise verbally and they can be written out later.

In fact, İ. Pala states that humor works arose verbally then gained a literal identity by being written out (Pala, 2011, 324). However, the written works can be spread out later by telling among the people. So, it can be said that verbal and written traditions affected each other mutually.

In this case it can be said that humor is an umbrella notion which consists of many genres such as initially joke, gentle words and philosophical phrases. For that reason, every single event related to the life can be a subject of humor. Thus, humor is one of the important imagination components discovered by the human being throughout the history. There is no community without a sense of humor and each community can only be understood by the humor that it has. In other words, one of the ways to identify the communities is to understand their humor tradition. Based on this information, it can be said that like every nation, the Turks have a very old humor tradition. It is known that the first humor works of Anatolian folk literature are the genres such as tale, theatrical plays and jokes. Apart from two other genres, the jokes have an important place generally in all Turkish communities, specifically in Anatolian literature.

Although İ. Başgöz pointed Nasreddin Hodja as an anti-hero (Başgöz, 1999, 9) he is one of the most important joke heroes in Anatolia. The jokes of Nasreddin Hodja have played a key role in the tradition of Anatolian jokes since the 15th century. Moreover, this character is still the most important hero in today's Anatolian folk jokes. Of course, when it is talked about Nasreddin Hodja, it reminds of Tamerlane. He has an important role in Turkish world with his historical personality but at the same time he is mentioned with Nasreddin Hodja in the verbal or written jokes. So, we face Tamerlane frequently both in the real events in the history and some other adapted jokes attributed to Nasreddin Hodja. So, who are Tamerlane and Nasreddin Hodja that have come from the very ancient periods to today in Anatolian humor tradition and are alive in the community by taking place in the same joke texts? We need to take a glance at their historical personalities before touching upon their characteristics reflected in the jokes. Thus, it will be possible to comment on the jokes more truly.

1. The historical personalities of Tamerlane and Nasreddin Hodja⁴

Tamerlane is originally Mongolian. Three generations after Genghis Khan, the Mongols became Muslim and mixed with the Turks who were their neighbours. Tamerlane, whose mother tongue was Chagatai Turkish, was born in Shehrisebz (today in Uzbekistan) in 1336. His father, Turagay, the ruler of Chagatai Khanate would love Emir Kulal who was a famous Naqshbandi Sheikh. Emir Kulâl sent Shemseddin Kulal, one of his students, as a consultant to Tamerlane. When he was young, he fell off the horse and broke his foot during a conflict and his right foot became permanently disabled. He was called as Timur-Lenk (Lame Timur) by especially his opponents. At the age of 34, he became the ruler of Balkh and also known as Gûrgan since he got married a woman from the Genghis Khan dynasty (Ekinci, 2010, 18).

As he had seen himself as the heir of Genghis Khan, he conquered the whole Turkistan. However, Tamerlane revived the Muslim Turkish settlements which were ravaged by Genghis Khan previously. When two rulers escaped from him had resorted to Bayezid I, Tamerlane advanced upon Anatolia. Former Anatolian governors had visited him and provoked him against Bayezid I. When Bayezid I disdained Tamerlane and discountenanced his messengers, a great war occurred among these two sultans. As a result, Tamerlane defeated Bayezid I in Ankara war in 1402. For that reason, Tamerlane is not loved by the Anatolian Turks (Ekinci, 2010, 18). Moreover, he became the subject of jokes with his negative sides.

When it comes to Nasreddin Hodja, other important character in Turkish world, he is one of the most significant humor masters and scholars in Turkish literature and tradition according to some written sources in Anatolia (i.e. Lami-i Chelebi, Evliya Chelebi, etc.). He was born in Hortu Village of Sivrihisar in 1208, he was well-educated, he had the professions such as imam, mufti and judge and died in Akshehir in 1284. His father was Abdullah Efendi, the imam of Hortu Village and his mother was Sıdıka Hatun from the same village. He had madrasah education in Sivrihisar firstly, then he came back to Hortu village and became the imam after his father's death. He settled in Akshehir in 1237 and took courses from Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani and Seyyid Hacı İbrahim and kept his studies related to

⁴ The main purpose of this article is to examine the four jokes mentioned by connecting to Nasreddin Hodja. For him, very general information about these individuals will be given here. Because there are enough information in many researches about these individuals. For Nasreddin Hodja please see (Özkan, 1983; Türkmen, 1996; Köprülü, 2004; Boratav, 1996; Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009) and for Tamerlane see (Aka, 1991; Alan, 2007; Şimşirgil, 2017). In addition, for a local and foreign critical bibliography of Nasreddin Hodja, see (Türkmen, 2013, 12-26).

Islam (Banarlı, 1971, 304; Önder, 1986, 5; Tokmakçioğlu, 1991, 22; Köprülü, 2004, 21-22; Özkan, 1999, 18; Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009, 31-34; Türkmen, 2013, 11).

As he had given lectures at the madrasah and had become a judge, he was given the name Nasuriddin Hâce, later this name was converted to Nasreddin Hodja. The true information about his life was mixed with the rumours due to the extreme love of people. Among these rumours, it was related that he had met Seljuk sultans and talked to Tamerlane who had lived at least a hundred years later him (Banarlı, 1971, 304; Köprülü, 2004, 21-22; Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009, 23). Moreover, this character was adopted by the people from Afghans to Persians, from Uzbeks to Arabs (Köprülü, 2004, 20; Özkan, 1999, 17; Türkmen, 2013, 11) and he was remembered with the nicknames such as “Hodja Nasreddin”, “Molla”, “Hoca”, “Efendi”. In short, it is seen that, alike Tamerlane, Nasreddin Hodja is also an important person in Turkic world.

2. The Nasreddin Hodja jokes in the written sources

Tamerlane, also known with the nickname “Sahipkiran” is one of the important personalities who had played a great role in the history of Turkish people. Because, the empire that he founded once upon a time, almost united the borders of Turkish people. Moreover, this great empire had great contributions to both humanity civilizations and Turkish culture and history. For instance, he participated to the communions of the scholars, had Ahmet Yesevi's shrine repaired, and established a relation with Emir Seyyid Kulal and Seyyid Baraka. When all these are taken into consideration, it will be seen that he gave importance to moral/spiritual sciences. As Tamerlane was a ruler, the information about him is more realistic. In another words, there is no doubt that he was a real character.

On the other hand, it is impossible to give exact information about the historical identity of Nasreddin Hodja. For that reason, he was known as “Apendi”, “Afandi”, “Molla Nasreddin” “Hoca”⁵ in the Central Asia, moreover he was associated with Aldar Kose (Constantin, 1997, 70)⁶ and it

⁵ In previous studies, this issue has been examined in detail. Therefore, we did not feel the need to tell this issue long. For more information about name of Nasreddin Hodja in the Turkic World please see (bk. Özkan, 1983, 137; Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009, 27-28; Türkmen, 2013, 11).

⁶ In this research translated by A. O. Öztürk, the jokes of Nasreddin Hodja, printed in Kirghiz language, were compared with the themes in Uzbek, Ottoman, Kirghiz and Crimea Tatars.

can be said that Nasreddin Hodja can be a Turkmen, Uzbek, Azeri or Uyghur. For instance, H. Tehmasib and M. Sultanov from Azerbaijan state that he is Nasirüddin Tusi, the famous scholar of 13th century (Kafkasyalı, 2002; Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009, 59). In fact, his real name's being Hacı Nasirüddin in Anatolia (Banarlı, 1971, 305) confirms this claim. Some researches associated him with Ali Şir Neva-i (Biray, 1998, 57). As a result, Nasreddin Hodja was associated with historical personalities in the resources both in Anatolia and Central Asia, but there has not been certain information about his tribe. Because, he was known in every geography that the culture of Turkic people has lived from Central Asia to the Balkans⁷ and each community embraces him (Boratav, 1996, 87-88; Özkan, 1999, 18; Albayrak, 2006, 419; Türkmen, 2013, 26).

If so, why was Nasreddin Hodja who was storied to live in 13th century considered as coeval of Tamerlane who came to Anatolia 116 years after Hodja's death? (Banarlı, 1971, 304) One of the reasons of this is that the folk tradition wanted to see it so. The other reason is the dominance of Mongols in the period of Anatolian Seljuk (Banarlı, 1971, 304). In this case, Tamerlane, who came to Anatolia two centuries after the Mongols, was united with the negative sides of former Mongol commanders. Thus, Tamerlane emerged as a folkloric character alike the other important people in folk literature especially in the anecdotes.

The researches indicate that the jokes arose from the historical experience and gathered around Nasreddin Hodja emerged in Anatolia in 13th century (Kocatürk, 1970, 110; Banarlı, 1971, 304). However, Nasreddin Hodja was mentioned for the first time in "Saltukname" written by Sarı Saltuk in Anatolia in 1480 (Boratav, 1996, 21; Özkan, 1999, 18). The handwritten "Letaifname" written by Lamii Chelebi in 1581 and kept in Paris State Museum mentions about Nasreddin Hodja as well as Tamerlane (Özkan, 1983, 140; Halıcı, 1994, 2; Boratav, 1996, 22). In fact, V. Mahir Kocatürk also expresses that the jokes of Hodja can be seen in the written works after the 15th century and these can be found in "Letaifname", Yahya Bey and "Hamse" of Atayi (Kocatürk, 1970, 110). Some researchers say that Hodja's anecdotes were transcribed in 16th century (Tokmakçioğlu, 1991, 17; Türkmen, 2013, 14). Sakaoğlu and Alptekin (2009, 8-19) state that this date includes a wider period of time such as 14th-17th centuries.

Thus, the common Nasreddin Hodja jokes of Turkish people were partly determined in this article. For detailed information about this subject see (Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009, 63-83).

⁷ For more information about the place of Nasreddin Hodja in the Turkic World, please see (Özkan, 1999, 18-29; Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009, 63-83; Türkmen, 2013, 19-22).

Evliya Chelebi, who lived in 17th century, recorded the relation of Nasreddin Hodja with Tamerlane in his work "Seyahatname" (Özkan, 1983, 140; Duman, 2012, 61-62). If so, it can be said that Tamerlane's taking place in the Nasreddin Hodja's jokes for the first time in the borders of Anatolia comes across the 16th century. Moreover, some researchers postdate this date to further centuries. For instance, a researcher notes that Tamerlane took place in the jokes of Nasreddin Hodja in 17th century (Başgöz 1999: 36). Mehmet Ali Kılıçbay also says that Tamerlane took place in the jokes of Nasreddin Hodja in 17th century but not the 15th century when the incidents occurred (Kılıçbay, 1996, 8).

V. Mahir Kocatürk summarizes the entrance of Hodja jokes to the written works and how these jokes kept in the written tradition as follows:

"The stories of Nasreddin Hodja, which started from its own period, told among the community and spread around the world, had entered to our literary works after the 15th century. In these stories, the Hodja was mentioned with appreciation and respect and the nicknames such as "Hace-i devr-i zaman", "salik-i Hak", "Hace-i ukdegüşa" were given to him. His jokes were told in many works after the 17th century as well as in many handwritings gathering the folk story, tale and jokes. There are also similar printings printed in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century" (Kocatürk, 1970, 110).

So, this researcher also states that the Nasreddin Hodja jokes had emerged in the 13th century, entered to the written sources in the 15th century, he was mentioned very well in these sources, the genres such as story and tale beside the jokes took place in these kind of written works, similar works were written in the 19th and 20th centuries. According to this statement, the taking place of Tamerlane's in Nasreddin Hodja's jokes, as mentioned by other researchers as well, may be in the 17th century. Because, various genres were recorded together in the works related to the Hodja. Probably, Tamerlane who left a negative impression in Anatolian people also took place in these written works as a folkloric hero through the jokes.

3. The types of reflection of Tamerlane in the Nasreddin Hodja jokes

Tamerlane is generally confronted as a negative character in Nasreddin Hodja jokes which emerged in Anatolia and kept living in today. However, Tamerlane's confront as a negative character in Anatolian folk literature can only be seen in Nasreddin Hodja jokes. Yet, in the narratives living in the Anatolian community, for instance in the legends, it should be expressed that

Tamerlane is confronted as a positive folkloric hero or character.⁸ There are various reasons to see Tamerlane as a negative folkloric character in Nasreddin Hodja jokes. One of them is the governors and judges that torture the people (Banarlı, 1971, 304; Yıldırım, 1999, 5). In another words, they are the political developments (Aydın, 2002, 25). Thus, the people do not stay silent against the pressure and torture that they face and criticize them through the jokes.

Anatolian people on one hand criticize Tamerlane in Nasreddin Hodja jokes, on the other hand angry with all governors who see themselves over the people through the jokes. This issue can be explained by the “relief” theory. According to this theory, the ego under the pressure rejects exposure, experiencing the pain imposed by the outer world, beyond this, shows that these strikes can be converted to an opportunity for pleasure (Fenoglio, 2000, 8; Eker, 2014, 143). In short, the people give the required reply indirectly through the hero. In fact, Dursun Yıldırım (1999, 5) also stated that the Turkish jokes consist of the incidents that happened between the people and governors and the people do not confront the governors directly and express their ideas, attitudes and behaviours through the hero in these incidents.

According to this, the taking place of Tamerlane in Nasreddin Hodja jokes can be examined under two titles: 1. some themes written in different periods were associated with Nasreddin Hodja and Tamerlane (adaptation); 2. Invention jokes related to Tamerlane and his arrival at Anatolia. For the first one, the “old wine, new bottle” idiom defines the changing hero or themes. For the second one defines the works that came as a result of people’s understanding. In this context, 4 of Nasreddin Hodja jokes which are told among Anatolian Turks will be examined.

3.1. The old wine new bottle or new wine old bottle

The thing that is expressed under this title is an event that is faced in the folklore continuously. Namely, many old traditions find a narrative setting over time and comply with it. Or, some incidents which are newly occurred are associated with famous people. In this context, let us take a look to two jokes in which the heroes are Nasreddin Hodja and Tamerlane:

“One day Nasreddin Hodja goes to Turkish bath with Tamerlane. They sit on a stone. During the conversation, Tamerlane asks with pride: –

⁸ For the reflection of Tamerlane in Anatolian folk legends, please see (Yakın, 2017).

Hodja, if I were a slave, how much money would I worth? Nasreddin Hodja looks at him carefully: – Forty coins, he says. Tamerlane gets angry with him and furiously: – You, merciless man! My sash in my belly worth forty coins. Hodja replies: – I have already valorised it” (Başgöz, 1999, 37).⁹

If it is looked carefully, it can be seen that Tamerlane shows him kindness as a great ruler and takes an ordinary Hodja, Nasreddin Hodja, to the Turkish bath and his pride causes him to act in superior. Tamerlane wanted to leave Hodja in a lurch with the question he asked, but the reply of Hodja outclassed him. B. Aydın (2002, 27) evaluates “the presentation of Nasreddin Hodja as a smarter and more virtuous character in the jokes is a derogative action for the wrong” here, the wrong thing was Tamerlane’s acting superiority due to his pride.

According to the researchers, the things told in these jokes do not depend a historical event occurred between Nasreddin Hodja and Tamerlane. In fact, it was expressed by many researchers (Kocatürk, 1970, 110; Banarlı, 1971, 304; Köprülü, 2004, 21; Özkan, 1999, 21; Ertop, 1991, 10; Sakaoglu-Alptekin, 2009, 19) that this Turkish bath story belongs to Ahmedi who was a 16th century poet. According to these researchers, this event that poet Ahmedi experienced got involved in Nasreddin Hodja jokes. Briefly, it can be said that there is an adaptation here. Considering these hypotheses, Nasreddin Hodja took Ahmedi’s place and Tamerlane took a rich governor’s place. Thus, the people and incidents in the story were totally adapted to the others. Another joke similar to this one is famous elephant anecdote:

“Tamerlane sends one of the elephants in his army to the hometown of Nasreddin Hodja. The elephant was so big and glutton that it eats all grass and hays in the village. The peasants cannot stand to this situation. They set off to complain the situation to Tamerlane asking Nasreddin Hodja to accompany them. They promise to support Nasreddin Hodja but on the way they run away one by one. Hodja, being alone visits Tamerlane. Hodja sees that Tamerlane is very angry at the moment, so he waives the complaint and says: – All the villagers are very pleased with the elephant that you sent to our village. However, the poor animal is alone. We would like to ask you to send a female elephant. I came here to say it. Tamerlane feels very happy and orders his men to send a female elephant to Hodja’s village. Nasreddin Hodja returns his village alone. All the villagers were expecting the good news. They ask Hodja when Tamerlane will take the elephant back.

⁹ The variants of this joke are told as a legend in Kütahya. As Tamerlane gave his belt (sash) to the bath owner, the name of the bath in this legend is “Belt Bath”. Please see (Yakın, 2017).

Nasreddin Hodja smiles and says: -He will not take it back. He was so happy with the service that he will also send the female elephant” (Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009, 219-220).

In this joke, Nasreddin Hodja punishes the villager who does not keep his promise, is afraid of the ruling power and coward. Moreover, there is also a message that if the villager does not fulfil his responsibility and keeps silence, he deserves to be ruled so. Thus, Hodja gives the message that it is impossible to overcome bad situations by being coward and he shows their poor situation by leaving them to a worse situation. Again it should be expressed that this is not a historical event that occurred between Tamerlane and Nasreddin Hodja. It is also stated that this joke is not a historical case between Emir Timur and Nasreddin Efendi. This incident that happened in reality was associated with these two folkloric heroes later.

In fact, V. Mahir noted that the elephant story belongs to Hakkı Pasha, the governor of Edirne and this anecdote can be found in “Historical Jokes” written by Ali Fuat Türkgeldi (Kocatürk, 1970, 110). It is known that Hakkı Pasha had lived in 18th century (Güler, 2015). If so, there is an adaptation in this joke. In another words, some incidents that belong to some historical personalities were associated with the personalities that had lived in previous centuries. Sakaoğlu and Alptekin (2009, 8) express as “The joke does not belong to Hodja, but is attached to his name” this situation. Of course, it should be insicated that these people eluded from their real identities and converted to a folkloric hero. However, there is another issue related to this joke which should be noted: This joke can be a variant of an old joke which can be faced in the handwritings. In fact, this joke can be found in the written texts which were gathered by Boratav (1996, 150) in his book and it is told with some changes. So, this joke can be based on the event of Hakkı Pasha. In short, like Ahmedi’s situation, as the joke carries the traveler themes which can be a topic of a narrative, it seems to be was associated with Tamerlane and Nasreddin Hodja.

3.2. Understanding of people and joke

As it was mentioned before, there are some “invention”¹⁰ folk jokes which do not depend a historical event beside the traveler themes in the Nasreddin

¹⁰ Some researchers, based on Ahmet Rasim’s idea, use the term of “fitting joke” for the anecdotes they think not belong to Nasreddin Hodja (Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009, 25). The term we use here is rather should be understood as jokes that have no historical basis. Therefore, the “invention” term is preferred here.

Hodja jokes in which Tamerlane takes place. These are directly related to the invasion of Anatolia by Tamerlane. Thus, they are united with the Mongol pressures who vandalized Anatolia two centuries before. For instance, one of these jokes is as follows:

“Tamerlane was an ugly man. One day, while he was having a haircut in a barbershop, he looks at the mirror and sees his ugliness and starts to cry. Nasreddin Hodja is with him, too. When Hodja sees Tamerlane crying, he starts to cry as well. The people next to Tamerlane start to tell nice stories and Tamerlane stops crying. But Hodja keeps crying. Upon this Tamerlane asks: Hodja, why are you crying?” Hodja replies: “My sultan, you saw your face once in the mirror and cried. But we always see your face in daytime and at night. If we do not cry, who will cry?” (Boratav, 1996, 179-180).

As it is understood from the information given about Tamerlane, it is certain that he did not live in the same period with Tamerlane. Despite this; it is a factoid to illustrate these two personalities in the same period. Moreover, the people want to see these two folkloric heroes together. In fact, the reply of Nasreddin Hodja makes Tamerlane laugh in the end of joke. People love it to happen like this as well. For that reason these “invention” jokes were invented. However, it can be said that one of the reasons lying beneath it is the invasion of Anatolia by Tamerlane. Another joke is as follows:

“One day Hodja and Tamerlane were sitting face to face. There was only a cushion between them. Tamerlane was angry with Hodja and asked him “tell me Hodja, what is the difference between you and a donkey?” Hodja replied “just a cushion my sultan” (Başgöz, 1999, 38).

When this joke is examined, it is obvious to see exaggeration and invention together. In fact, it is difficult to give such a reply to a ruler whom everybody was scared. However, the people get their revenge from the unfair people by associating that they have in mind with Hodja. The reason why Hodja speaks in this way is, according to İ. Başgöz (1999, 36-37), Bayezid's committing suicide while he was a hostage of Tamerlane and this subject matter is valid for all governors and sultans, in short for all authorities. As a result Tamerlane becomes just a symbol for all cruel rulers. Here, how the knowledge of people converted the historical people to a folkloric hero is seen obviously. In fact, saying the word indirectly to someone without hurting him is expressed in one of our proverbs as follows: “I am telling to my daughter but my daughter-in-law, you also listen what I say”. In short the knowledge of people sends message to all negative rulers through Tamerlane.

Conclusion

There are jokes based on a historical event beside the “invention” ones. However, it is not easy to determine the person, time and place truly in the jokes as the jokes have an exploring and changeable structure. In fact, it is said that the Seljukian period Turkic civilization and the social situation of 13th century can be felt in most of the Nasreddin Hodja jokes and these are real Hodja jokes (Kocatürk, 1970, 110). But later, many jokes which do not belong to Hodja were added to them (Sakaoğlu-Alptekin, 2009, 122). Thus, the pleasure and idea of the people arrogated many jokes which they love to Hodja. The Nasreddin Hodja jokes fulfil many serious functions such as thinking and teaching. The Nasreddin Hodja character carries a criticizing wording in the jokes related to judgement and governing. For that reason, some of the jokes created directly related to Tamerlane are made-up by people; some of them were emerged from true incidents. If Nasreddin Hodja and Tamerlane are accepted as historical personalities, there is more than one century time difference between their deaths. Despite this, as Tamerlane had contacted to other scholars and poets, he was remembered with the name of Nasreddin Hodja and both of them became the topic of same jokes. Thus, these two historical personalities were converted to folk humor characters.

In short, the reflection types of Tamerlane in the jokes which are an important genre of Anatolian folk humor were examined in this article. As a result, it was determined that other Mongols who vandalized Anatolia two centuries and Tamerlane were united and moreover he was claimed to be a Mongol. However, Tamerlane was not a Mongolian but a Turkic ruler. He had a great role in the protection of Sunni belief. Despite Ottomans being Sunni, the brother struggle between them caused Tamerlane to be remembered as a cruel ruler among the Anatolian people. Thus, he took place in Nasreddin Hodja jokes in Anatolia rather a negative folkloric character. Besides, when historical sources are compared with the old works, it is seen that the heroes of some jokes in which Tamerlane takes place are other people. As a result, the Anatolian people discredited Tamerlane as a result of the unfortunate struggle between Tamerlane and Bayezid I. The people converted both his dream to advance upon Anatolia and the incidents that other people had to jokes which took place around Nasreddin Hodja and Tamerlane. Of course, the people of Anatolia had not ignored to send strong messages to cruel rulers through Tamerlane.

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