



## COVID-19 Humor on Jordanian Social Media: A Diagnosis of Written Jokes on Facebook

Dr. Zeyad Al-Daher<sup>a\*</sup> , Dr. Othman Aref Al-Dala'ien<sup>b</sup> , Dr. Yasser Al-Shboul<sup>c</sup> , Dr. Mohammad Al-Rousan<sup>d</sup> , Dr. Meera B. Sahawneh<sup>e</sup> 

*a* Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan.  
E-mail: [aldaherz@bau.edu.jo](mailto:aldaherz@bau.edu.jo)

*b* Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan.  
E-mail: [Othman.dalain@bau.edu.jo](mailto:Othman.dalain@bau.edu.jo)

*c* Department of English Language and Literature, Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan.  
E-mail: [nowshboul@bau.edu.jo](mailto:nowshboul@bau.edu.jo)

*d* Department of English Language and Literature, Ajloun National University, Jordan.  
E-mail: [dr.mohammad-alrousan@anu.edu.jo](mailto:dr.mohammad-alrousan@anu.edu.jo)

*e* Department of English Language and Linguistics, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Jordan. E-mail: [mbsahawneh@just.edu.jo](mailto:mbsahawneh@just.edu.jo)

Received 06 March 2022 | Received in revised form 04 April 2022 | Accepted 05 May 2022

### APA Citation:

Al-Daher, Z., Al-Dala'ien, O., A., Al-Shboul, Y., Al-Rousan, M., Sahawneh, M., B. (2022). COVID-19 Humor on Jordanian Social Media: A Diagnosis of Written Jokes on Facebook. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 149-161.  
Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.911527>

### Abstract

This study investigates COVID-19 jokes created and circulated on Jordanian social media during the period between March to October 2020. The jokes used in this study were collected from several Facebook accounts. The study presents a content analysis and a linguistic analysis of 197 COVID-19 jokes in terms of the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) (Attardo, 1994, 2001; Attardo & Raskin, 1991) with the goal of uncovering the thematic and structural aspects of these jokes. A mixed quantitative and qualitative approach was adopted for the data analysis. The jokes were categorized into eight major groups and subgroups depending on the themes they target. Various topics featured in these jokes: ethnic jokes, government decisions, effects of restrictions, sexist jokes, the virus, miscellaneous offensive jokes, the year 2020, and remote education. The linguistic analysis of the jokes revealed that they obey the six Knowledge Resources of the GTVH. Moreover, it was found that lexical relations (i.e., synonymy, antonymy, Homophony) as well as wordplay (i.e., pun, metaphor, prosody) are crucial strategies in forming such jokes. This paper contributes to the literature on dark or disaster humor and furthers our understanding of jocular discourse during global crises.

© 2022 EJAL & the Authors. Published by Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics (EJAL). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY-NC-ND) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

**Keywords:** Coronavirus, COVID-19, dark humor, incongruity, Jordanians

\* Corresponding Author.

Email:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.911527>

## Introduction

The year 2020 will be remembered for the life-changing crisis, the spread of COVID-19 across the world. The pandemic brought the whole world to a standstill and created a heavy toll on people's daily life. People were forced to stay home and adjust their daily routines. New measures were imposed such as social distancing, mass mobility restrictions, curfews, quarantines, lockdowns, inter alia, which represent the substantial and rapid changes that have affected the daily lives of millions of people all over the world.

Although pandemics are by no means a good occasion for joking, many jokes were cracked by Jordanians during the pandemic. They exchanged jokes, parodies, funny posts, and videos, especially through Facebook and Instagram to express their frustrations of the status quo and to cope with social distancing, self-isolation, quarantine, nationwide lockdown, and curfews. They resorted to humor and joking in certain cases to raise skeptical questions as well as to criticize different abysmal social and economic circumstances of the country. People resorted to social media in order to exchange jokes and humorous items with the hope to mitigate the effects of these changes which have resulted in stress and uncertainty. The spread of the virus and its ambiguous nature had led to the emergence of feelings of vulnerability throughout the society.

According to Rod A. Martin (2007), humor can partially alleviate uncertainty and stress, at least in the short term. Managing stress and anxiety, handling depression and negative emotions, as well as maintaining emotional well-being are among the major reasons for turning to humor during crises (Abel, 2002; Fritz, 2020; Fritz, Russek, & Dillon, 2017; Hussein & Aljamili, 2020; Rod A. Martin, 2007; Rod A. Martin & Lefcourt, 1983; Menéndez-Aller, Postigo, Montes-Álvarez, González-Primo, & García-Cueto, 2020; Perchtold et al., 2019; Porterfield, 1987; Samson, Glassco, Lee, & Gross, 2014). More importantly, it is widely believed that humor is a coping mechanism (Abel, 2002; Rod A. Martin, 2007; Nezelek & Peter, 2001; Sultanoff, 1995), or a defense mechanism in the sense of Bischetti, Canal, and Bambini (2021); Dundes (1987); Freud (1960); Lefcourt and Martin (2012) that helps maintain mental health.

Non-tragedy-triggered humor in the Jordanian context has been addressed in a few studies (e.g., Al-Khatib (1999), Alzoubi (2012) and Barahmeh (2020)) that have little relevance to the present study. The focus of the current paper will however be on jokes which are generally defined as "short witty narratives with a punch line near the end defeating the expectations nurtured during the buildup" (Thielemann, 2011). Jokes are prepackaged humorous anecdotes that people memorize and pass on in their social interactions in order to amuse others (Rod A. Martin, 2007). The most important parts of a joke are the set up (or narrative) and the punch line. While the former represents a set of expectations about how the situation should be interpreted (Rod A. Martin, 2007), the latter is the final portion of the text, which causes surprises and humor (Attardo, 1994). In other words, jokes normally represent an opposition between two scripts: the actual script of the joke's subject and its presupposed script (Raskin, 1985).

However, there is still a dearth of studies on tragedy-inspired humor in Jordan, apart from Hussein and Aljamili's (2020) study which surveys Jordanians' opinions and impressions regarding humor during the pandemic using a questionnaire and analyzes some visual and pictorial characteristics of COVID-19 caricatures applying a semiotic approach. No study, to the researchers' best knowledge, has yet analyzed COVID-19 written jokes on Jordanian social media in terms of themes, linguistic structure, and the incongruous patterns they involve. The present study differs from Hussein and Aljamili's (2020) study in scope and approach; it examines COVID-19 written jokes circulated by Jordanians on Facebook during the pandemic and presents a linguistic analysis of their structure and a qualitative analysis of their content from sociocultural and thematic perspectives. As such, this paper represents a modest attempt towards bridging this gap in the literature of Jordanian humor and forms an addition to the growing body of studies in the field of linguistics on COVID-19.

The current study aimed at conducting a preliminary analysis of online jokes about COVID-19 as created and circulated by Jordanians on Facebook during the first few months of the pandemic. The study is peculiar for different reasons. First, it tackles the topic of humor in a particular newly emerging non-benign context, the pandemic, and in a crucial time for the humanity in general. Second, it investigates humor on social media which have become particularly relevant in light of social distancing, lockdown, quarantine, and the absence of direct communication between people. Third, the data collection technique adopted in this paper, depending on social media, might help identifying new topics that have been neglected due to several socio-cultural considerations such as embarrassment in the case of collecting conversational jokes. Finally, this study will hopefully open new avenues toward the socio-pragmatic analysis of humor in general and dark humor in particular.

## Literature Review and Theoretical background

- *Definition and Types of humor*

Humor is an everyday characteristic of human interactions that can serve several functions like entertaining, insulting, and informing (Raskin, 1985). It is generally defined as the positive emotion of mirth invoked in a social context by the perception of playful incongruity and expressed through laughter-related

behaviors (Rod A. Martin, 2007). In other words, humor is associated with its effect, namely, laughter, though not necessarily (Attardo, 1994). Humor has also been the subject of several studies in different domains such as psychology, sociology, linguistics, among others, which has resulted in “epistemological hairsplitting” (Attardo, 1994). Though several scholars have addressed the notion of humor, it is widely believed that the task of defining humor is not an easy one. Attardo (1994), for example, states that it is impossible to provide a completely unambiguous definition of humor. However, it still can be said that humor refers to whatever induces laughter or is felt to be funny. It refers to all laughable, funny, and amusing things (Singh, 2012).

Different types of humor can be identified in literature: positive, aggressive, national, or ethnic, sexist, self-defeating, and sexual humor (Apte, 1985; Davies, 1990; LaFrance & Woodzicka, 1998; Rod A Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003; Torres, Collantes, Astrero, Millan, & Gabriel, 2020). While positive (or clean) humor is inoffensive, the aggressive (or putdown) humor deplors, ridicules, criticizes, and teases others or their behavior; it involves resentment and enmity. National (or ethnic) humor targets certain ethnic or national groups and mocks their characteristics or behaviors. Sexist humor is offensive as it humiliates, stereotypes, and trivializes people based on their gender. Humor at one’s own expense to entertain others is known as self-deprecating (or self-defeating) humor. Sexual (or malicious) humor focuses on reproductive organs and bathroom-related topics (cf. Torres et al. (2020)).

The last decade has witnessed a clear shift from traditional humor to online humor (Chiaro, 2017), particularly humor on social media has been the focus of several recent studies in different contexts (Alzoubi, 2012; Barahmeh, 2020; Barry & Graça, 2018; Bischetti et al., 2021; Davis, Love, & Killen, 2018; El Khachab, 2017; Ge & Gretzel, 2018; Hussein & Aljamali, 2020; Mikhalkova, Tretyakov, Pupysheva, Ivanov, & Ganzherli, 2020; Neuendorf, Skalski, Jeffres, & Atkin, 2014). Online humor can serve the function of boosting optimism among the members of the community during severe situations such as sociopolitical calamities (see, e.g., Dynel and Poppi (2021); Tsakona (2018)) and can be a tool for resisting discourse on disasters (see, e.g., Chovanec (2019)).

- *Theoretical background*

The general theory of verbal humor (GTVH, henceforward), first developed by Attardo and Raskin (1991) and revised by Attardo (1994), might be considered the most influential linguistic theory of humor, and was adopted in this study. The GTVH includes textual linguistics, the theory of narrativity and pragmatics (Attardo, 2001). The GTVH views each joke as a 6-tuple; there are six knowledge resources (KRs) that must be tapped into when generating a joke: Language (LA), Narrative Strategy (NS), Target (TA), Situation (SI), Logical Mechanism (LM), Script Opposition (SO) (Attardo, 2001; Attardo & Raskin, 1991). The Knowledge Resources (KRs) are the linguistic elements comprising the joke. The following is a brief sketch on these knowledge resources as presented by Attardo and Raskin (1991):

1. Script Opposition (SO) is a Central parameter for creating a humorous effect. The script is a cognitive meaning suggested by a particular word. When the text involves two opposing scripts (e.g., usual/unusual, possible/impossible, normal/abnormal, logical/illogical, real/unreal, right/wrong), humorous effect ensues. Attardo (1994) indicates that a script involves all the intra-linguistic and extralinguistic information embodied in a lexical unit. Different scripts are typically linked together giving rise to "semantic networks" (see also Raskin (1985):199).
2. Logical Mechanism (LM) refers to the cognitive operation needed to (partially)resolve the incongruity. It is the mechanism in which the incongruity of the script opposition is playfully and/or partially explained. The logical mechanism can be complex errors in reasoning like false analogies, faulty logic, exaggeration, garden path phenomena, figure- ground reversal, and chiasitic arrangements. It can also be a simple verbal technique like pun or a straightforward juxtaposition.
3. Situation (SI) refers to the situational embedding of the joke such as characters, activities, objects, participants, instruments, inter alia. This parameter represents the "prop" of the joke.
4. Target (TA) is technically the butt of the joke, which can be a particular individual or group (e.g., ethnic group, social class, certain community), or even of a zero value (in the case of non-aggressive jokes). The butts of jokes can also be social stereotypes such as stupidity, ugliness, etc.
5. Narrative Strategy (NS) refers to the narrative structure of the humorous text or genre of the text (e.g., expository, simple narrative, riddle, question-and-answer dialogue).
6. Language (LA) refers to the verbalization of the text, which includes word choice, placement of functional elements, the position of the punch line, and the exact wording of the joke. The following subsection presents some empirical humor studies in the Jordanian context.

- *Empirical studies*

Al-Khatib (1999) conducted a sociolinguistic analysis of the social aspects of joke-telling in the Jordanian society, highlighting the sociological functions jokes can communicate and the psycho- sociological effect that jokes have on the listener. The study also probed the attitude of Jordanians toward joking via interviews and questionnaires and discussed the characteristics of a good joke-teller in Jordan. Furthermore, the study compared Arabic jokes with English jokes, concluding that Jordanians favored Arabic jokes. The phenomenon of joke-telling was explained socio-culturally building mainly on the notion of stereotype.

Alzoubi (2012) presented a linguistic analysis of humor in Jordanian Arabic colloquial animated cartoon building on GTVH. The study analyzed different humorous texts covering different topics like economics, politics, and social behaviors. The analysis highlighted linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural aspects of the texts.

Mashaqi (2019) analyzed the use of linguistic and paralinguistic strategies in Arabic verbal political satire in *As-Salit El-Ekhbari*. The analysis adopted the GTVH and the four maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975). The data analysis revealed that metaphor, pun, simile, exaggeration, and personification are employed to address political issues humorously. Grice's maxims were also found to be flouted to create humor.

Al-Sawaeer, Rabab'Ah, and Power (2022) investigated verbal humor in 60 seven-minute episodes taken from the Jordanian stand-up comedy show "N2O" with the goal of identifying which conversational maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle were flouted to create humor. They concluded that comedians flouted all the maxims with the maxims of quantity and quality being the most flouted ones. They also found that Jordanian comedians employed satire, pun, exaggeration and mocking to flout Grice's maxims of conversation.

The above studies clearly showed that COVID-19 jokes in the Jordanian context have been understudied thematically and structurally. Hence, it is essential to investigate the discursual and structural features of COVID-19 jokes in the Jordanian context to fill this gap in the literature of humor studies.

## Method

- *Purpose of the study*

The aim of this study was to thematically and structurally analyze COVID-19 jokes created and circulated on Jordanian social media during the period between March to October 2020. The analysis was built on the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) designed by Attardo and Raskin (1991). For this end, the following research questions were put forward:

1. What thematic categories do COVID-19 jokes refer to most often?
2. How are COVID-19 jokes analyzed according to the Knowledge Resources (KRs) of the GTVH?
3. How does incongruity contribute to humor in COVID-19 jokes?

- *Research Design:*

A mixed method research design was adopted for this study. Jokes were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. A content analysis of the jokes was first carried out to identify the major themes discussed in the jokes as well as frequency of each theme (the first research question). The posted jokes were screenshot, translated and categorized according to the themes they addressed. This led to the adoption of eight major thematic categories, which were in turn divided into subcategories according to the topics targeted in the jokes. These categories and subcategories have been described later in the results section. Next, a linguistic/structural analysis of sample jokes followed, whereby the different linguistic and rhetorical techniques employed for creating humor were highlighted. Jokes were also analyzed structurally according to the six Knowledge Resources (KRs) of the GTVH (the second research question)

Finally, representative jokes of each major category and subcategory were randomly selected and qualitatively analyzed in light of the dominant views in the Jordanian street. The jokes were examined in their immediate context. Most of these jokes were reactions to certain government decisions, orders, measures, news updates, and rumors about the virus. The cultural distinctiveness of the selected jokes was identified. Moreover, patterns of incongruity in these jokes were also identified and the implied messages they convey were highlighted. The double scripts expressed in the jokes were linguistically analyzed, and the verbal cues of the jokes were resolved associating them to the incongruity expressed in the two scripts (the third research question).

- *Data collection and analysis*

The jokes used in this study were collected by all the authors from the Facebook accounts of their friends, relatives, and students. These jokes were circulated and shared by Jordanians during the pandemic on social media. Facebook was used as the source of the jokes as it was the commonest social media platform among Jordanians (NapoleonCat, 2020; The Jordan Times, 2016). Informed consent was obtained from all contributors. However, we avoided mentioning the names of the owners of Facebook accounts for anonymity considerations. A content and linguistic analysis of all 197 COVID-19 jokes was made to achieve the study objectives.

- *Data Collection Methods*

The data was collected online due to lockdown and curfew considerations. The data of this study was collected during the period between March and October 2020 when Jordanian social media was flooded with humorous texts satirizing the governmental procedures and criticizing the status quo of the country under the laws of comprehensive quarantine.

- *Coding of jokes*

The jokes were coded by four raters: two researchers and two Jordanian professors of linguistics from Yarmouk University and the Hashemite University. The coding of the four coders was then compared. A variation in the nomenclatures used in describing the major categories/themes of the jokes was found. However, several discussions were held among the raters until they reached an agreement on how to classify these jokes. Measuring the coders' classification of the jokes using Cohen's (1996) Kappa (Norstrom & Sarna, 2021; Torres et al., 2020) showed that the kappa coefficient was over 0.9 between all the raters, which indicates that the rate of agreement was satisfactory.

The following is an example of a coded joke.

- (1) *After the end of the pandemic, I must wear a mask for two months on the back of my head in order to restore my ears to their normal position!* (Theme: Effects of restrictions; Subtopic: Changes in lifestyle (wearing facemasks))

This joke was classified under the theme "effects of restrictions" as it targeted an important instance of these restrictions, namely, the obligatory wearing of facemasks, which represented a new lifestyle dictated by these measures. More specifically, this joke parodied the new reality imposed by the pandemic: everyone was forced to comply with social distancing and wear a face mask. No one in Jordan could go out without wearing a facemask, which reflected a drastic change in Jordanians' daily habits. This had created annoyance among most people to the extent that many rejected the idea of wearing the facemask in the beginning.

This joke is humorous and a source of amusement as it is incongruous in some way (Shaw, 2010). Amusement is evoked here due to a contradiction between what is expected from this joke and what its punchline tells us. There is a contradiction between the actual reason for wearing facemasks (i.e., avoiding infection) and the reason mentioned in the punchline (adjusting the ears' position due to wearing facemasks for a long time). Furthermore, suggesting to wear facemasks on the back of the head instead of the face forms another source of incongruity or a cognitive clash. Two opposing things that do not fit together are juxtaposed in this joke (Clark, 1987; Schultz, 1976). The jocular comment involved in the final part of the joke "to make my ears adjust themselves into their original position" asserts how it was difficult for many Jordanians to get used to such new lifestyle.

## Results and discussion

The first phase of the analysis involved the assignment of jokes to eight main categories representing the themes they discussed: ethnic jokes, government decisions, effects of restrictions, sexist jokes, the virus, miscellaneous offensive jokes, the year 2020, and remote education. Table 1 presents these topics in terms of their occurrence and frequency in the data followed with ample exemplification.

**Table 1.** Number and Frequency of Jokes According to the Topics They Tackle

	Topic	Number of Jokes	Frequency of Jokes
1.	National and ethnic jokes	47	23.9%
2.	Government decisions	34	17.2%
3.	Effects of restrictions	31	15.7%
4.	Sexist jokes	24	12.1%
5.	The virus	21	10.7%
6.	Offensive jokes	16	8.1%
7.	The year 2020	15	7.6%
8.	Remote education	9	4.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100%</b>

### i. National and ethnic jokes

National jokes formed (23.9%) of the collected jokes. They mainly parodied certain social behaviors of Jordanians such as 'Not following' precautionary measures especially social distancing and wearing facemasks, exaggeration in hoarding food items and sanitizers, and exaggeration in cleaning and sterilizing houses. Consider the following example:

- (2) *Jordanians put their nose in everything except in the facemask. They claim they get suffocated!*

This joke was targeted at the behavior of some citizens who refused to wear facemasks claiming that facemasks suffocated them. The situation can be assumed to be a conversation with any Jordanian citizen who is not committed to facemask. The SOs of curious/uncurious and committed/uncommitted are clearly instantiated in this joke. Inferring consequences, Referential ambiguity and false analogy are the LMs used to resolve the incongruity in this joke. The joke is a simple narrative that ends with a punchline explaining why some Jordanians refuse wearing facemasks: they claim that they get suffocated. This indicates that the



use of the expression ‘put their nose’ is used literally when associated with facemasks, but it is used metaphorically in the setup of the joke to mean ‘to interfere in others’ affairs’. The amusement of this joke is thus the result of wordplay. It is also based on the incongruity which stems from the mismatch between the stereotypical behavior of Jordanians (i.e., putting their noses in others’ affairs) and their rejection of putting their noses in the facemask. This joke employs a communal stereotype (in the sense of Al-Khatib (1999)) about Jordanians, namely, being nosey and curious as they usually ask about things that are none of their business.

(3) *Dear Jordanians: the lockdown is only for 48 hours. There is no need to open a branch of Carrefour and a branch of Sameh Mall at your houses.*

This joke targets Jordanians’ unjustified behavior of hoarding food items and sanitizers during the lockdown. The situation inferred from the context is that a Jordanian citizen is advising other Jordanians not to exaggerate in hoarding food items as if they were establishing a shopping center at their places. The SOs found in this text can be the usual/unusual, acceptable/unacceptable, justified/unjustified, and logical/illogical. The incongruity resulting from the opposing scripts in this joke is resolved using the LMs of exaggeration and faulty reasoning. After the measures of staying at home and amidst the lack of entertainment activities for families during the quarantine, many Jordanians found that enjoying food is the best entertaining option. This joke represents implicit disparagement and complaint against such behavior. The contradiction between the primary script found in the setup of the joke and the secondary script found in the punch line yields incongruity and consequently mirth. The setup of the joke shows that the lockdown is just for a few hours, but the punch line indicates that Jordanians exaggerated in hoarding food items as if they were establishing a branch for a shopping center at their houses. There is a clear exaggeration in the extent to which Jordanians hoarded food items and sanitizers, falsely thinking that the lockdown is going to be too long (faulty reasoning). The joke took the form of a simple narrative.

(4) *The degree of sterilization at any Jordanian house allows for open-heart surgery in the kitchen!*

This joke is targeted at exaggeration in cleaning and sterilizing houses. The situation appears to be in a Jordanian extensively sterilized house. The SOs triggered in this joke are clean/unclean and normal/abnormal. The LMs used to resolve incongruity in this joke are exaggeration and analogy, where the kitchen is the place for preparing food, but it became suitable for carrying out open-heart surgeries due to the amount of sterilization. This simple-narrative joke ironically states that Jordanians’ kitchens are ready to receive any surgery due to the amount of sanitizers used there. Though such jokes assert Jordanians’ commitment to personal hygiene, the exaggeration of using the sanitizer is criticized. This joke also subjects itself to incongruity analysis. There is a cognitive clash with the audience expectations or beliefs (cf. Forabosco (1992); Rod A. Martin (2007)) since the kitchen, a place for preparing food, is portrayed as a suitable place for medical surgeries as a result of over sterilization.

## ii. Government decisions

Jokes classified under this category formed (17.2%) of the data. They carried playful remarks on certain governmental announcements and decisions and parodied how the government dealt with the pandemic. The announcements of government officials, especially the prime minister and the minister of health, occupied a special status in these texts. The following joke went viral in Jordan.

(5) *It is said that in the summer the virus dries up and dies. Hopefully, in winter, it will drown and die!*

Political jokes tend to convey certain implicit, and sometimes ambiguous, messages through the adoption of different rhetorical techniques like pun, irony, and wordplay. According to Shakir and Farghal (1992), the ambiguity of such jokes is usually solved by shared reference to schematic knowledge of contextual dimensions of the joke. For example, the above joke might be unclear for non-Jordanians. Nevertheless, the audience’s awareness of the socio-political background of the society to which this joke affiliates leads to easily resolving this ambiguity (see also Al-Khatib (1999)).

In an attempt to simplify technical medical terms, the former Jordanian Minister of health, Dr. Saad Jaber, announced on June 28, 2020, in an interview with *Al-Mamlaka* TV that the coronavirus “has dried up and died in Jordan” and there was no longer “internal transmission”. He also mentioned in one of his daily briefings that the “virus will dry up and die” if people stay home for two weeks. These announcements drew outrage on social media. Many people took the minister’s words as a mere attempt to convince people to adhere to social distancing and other containment measures. The above joke reflects how Jordanians mocked the minister’s words and considered his message non-convincing.

The target of this joke is the former Jordanian Minister of health, Dr. Saad Jaber, and the situation can be assumed to be any Jordanian gathering where people usually exchange such anecdotes. The SOs of summer/winter, dries up/drown, and actual/non-actual are employed in this joke. The LMs of inferring consequences and false analogy are used to resolve the incongruity. This joke is a simple narrative that contains two pairs of contradicting words: “summer/winter” and “dries up/drown”. The first member of each pair was actually used by the minister of health while the second member of each pair was employed by some

Jordanians to come up with such a corny joke utilizing the lexical relation of antonymy. The use of such antonymous pairs is indeed what forms the resolution phase of the incongruity attested in this joke.

(6) *Coronavirus caseworker: Jordanians' response to the vaccine will be similar to the response of humans!*

The objective of this joke was to ridicule government officials after a recent announcement. The situation is an interview with the Jordanian COVID caseworker. The opposing scripts identified in this joke include human/non-human, logical/illogical, right/wrong and aptitude/inaptitude. The LMs of inferring consequences and faulty reasoning take care of resolving the incongruity of the opposing scripts. Exaggeration was also used as a logical mechanism to point toward the inaptitude of governmental officials and the illogicality of their announcements. The punch line of this narrative joke employs a figure of speech, namely, simile, whereby the caseworker compares Jordanians' response to the vaccine to that of humans, which indicates his wrong belief that Jordanians are not humans (false reasoning). The primary setup interpretation in joke (10) contradicts the secondary punchline interpretation (Gimbel, 2018) creating a script opposition called irony. The incongruity here is the mismatch between our standard expectations and mental patterns on one hand and the punch line, in which the government official refers to Jordanians as non-humans, on the other hand.

### iii. Effects of restrictions

The effects of restrictions during curfew and lockdown formed a major topic (15.7%) of the jokes. Jokes categorized under this theme made fun of the negative psychological consequences of the pandemic (i.e., hopelessness, desperation, and boredom). Changes in different social habits like greeting habits as well as the new perceptions and lifestyle imposed by the new measures were also subsumed under such effects. The following joke went viral in Jordan:

(7) *COVID-19 vaccine is taken in two batches: in the first, you say, Oh God! In the second, you will be with God!*

This joke targets the hopelessness and desperation Jordanians reached during the outbreak of the pandemic. The SOs found in this joke are survival/death, and the incongruity is resolved through the use of the LMs of faulty reasoning and exaggeration. Besides being faulty, this reasoning exaggerates the effects of taking the vaccine. The vaccine is not expected to be harmful to the extent that it can cause death. The joke here is probably trying to depict the devastating effects of the pandemic on peoples' emotions as appears in their hopelessness, desperation, and depression. This joke reflects the pessimism of most Jordanians and their fear of the vaccine, hence believing that the second batch of the vaccine will lead to death. It reflects the uncertainty and desperation Jordanians and the whole world are facing due to the absence of any consensus on the nature of this disease and its treatment especially in light of the emergence of new variants like the Brazilian, British, and Indian ones.

This joke creates an incongruent concept, i.e., two things that do not fit together, but are, nevertheless, matched together. The primary setup interpretation contradicts the secondary punchline interpretation (Gimbel, 2018) creating a script opposition called irony. The setup of the joke indicates that the vaccine is taken to escape the virus, but the punchline leads to understanding the setup differently: taking the vaccine will lead to death.

Boredom is another negative effect of the quarantine that was directly touched upon by some jokes. The ways how people dealt with boredom during this hard time formed a rich material for such jokes as shown below.

(8) *I need the phone number of the garbage truck's driver to take me in a drive. I got bored of staying at home!*

The Jordanian prime minister Omar Razzaz refused adopting the notion of herd immunity that many countries implemented to face the pandemic, and instead enforced a stay-at-home order. The above joke employs self-deprecation as a technique to assert the degree of boredom Jordanians reached during house quarantine. No one was allowed to leave home during Quarantine; certain sectors, however, like doctors, policemen and garbage trucks' drivers were granted permits.

The target of this joke is boredom due to the mandate of stay-at-home. The situation is one in which a bored Jordanian citizen is looking for the phone number of any garbage truck's driver to take him in a drive to escape boredom. The SOs manifested in this joke are staying at home/going for a drive and usual/unusual. The incongruity in this joke stems from the unexpected request of the joke teller, namely, looking for the phone number of the garbage truck's driver, in order to escape the boredom resulting from house quarantine. This joke invokes humorous effects as it involves incongruity (cognitive clash) with the audience long-established ways of having fun (Forabosco, 1992; Rod A. Martin, 2007). The incongruity created is resolved through using the LM of inferring consequences. The joke is a simple narrative that ends with a punchline explaining the reason behind looking for the phone number of the garbage truck's driver, which creates humorous effect.

(9) *I expected everything in this world except that I sneeze secretly!*

A few jokes addressed the changes in certain perceptions. For example, this joke (9), used a self-deprecating technique, parodied the new perceptions people developed due to the pandemic. This joke is entertaining since it reflects how the virus changed people's perceptions of different things including bodily functions such as sneezing. The target of this joke is the change in societal perceptions of certain behaviors like sneezing. The situation is about Jordanian citizens who express their fear of sneezing in public due to people's fears of catching the virus. The SOs attested in this joke are expected/unexpected, usual/unusual, and secretly/publicly. This joke also subjects itself to incongruity analysis. Laughter arises as our expectations are violated or dashed; exaggeration in the peoples' behavior (i.e., sneezing secretly) is what created mirth here. The LM of exaggeration is employed to resolve the incongruity in this joke. People all over the world now perceive sneezing differently. This bodily function is equivalent to threat or even death in the time of COVID-19.

#### *iv. Sexist jokes*

Some jokes (12.1%) were coded as sexist. These jokes are aggressive as they are loaded with offensive content based on gender. Sexist jokes targeted women in general. Such jokes involved some stereotypical images of women like women's appearance without makeup during the pandemic as well as their annoying behavior. Antipathy against women is also subsumed under this category. The following is an illustrative example.

(10) *"Oh, my dear son! Get your mustache trimmed and your beard shaved! Even if you are quarantined, this will make you feel better," said the father. "I am Mariam, not Mohammed, daddy," the daughter replied.*

This aggressive joke mocks women's appearance during the pandemic in an offensive manner. It implicitly criticizes the exaggerated use of cosmetic products among Jordanian women. During quarantine, most women stopped using cosmetics and, as a result, became different, as appears in this joke where the father thought that his daughter is his son, an incongruity ensuing from juxtaposing two or more opposing things that do not fit together, namely, mustache, beard, and the daughter (Clark, 1987; Schultz, 1976).

This joke targets women's appearance without cosmetics. The situation is a father talking to his daughter and wrongly thinks that she is his son. He confused her for his son because she is not using cosmetics during the quarantine. The opposing scripts found in this joke are son/daughter and masculine/feminine. Incongruity created by the opposing scripts is partially resolved through the use of the LM of faulty reasoning where the father wrongly thinks that his daughter is his son. Exaggeration is also used as a logical mechanism indicating that women without cosmetics are no longer feminine but look like men. The joke takes the form of a dialogue. The daughter's reply represents the punchline that clears out the false assumption held by her father.

Other jokes entailed stereotypical images of women and depicted them as annoying, bothering, and harmful comparing them to the virus that caused trouble to the whole universe. Consider the following joke:

(11) *A daughter asks her father: "Daddy, is this coronavirus a man or a woman?"*

*The father responds: "My dear daughter, as long as it is bothering the whole world, then it is a woman."*

In the above joke, women are stereotyped as bothering and troublesome similar to the virus. The father asserts to his daughter that the coronavirus is a woman associating it with the fact that it has caused problems to the whole world. This joke targets women and portrays them as a source of trouble and annoyance. The situation is a conversation between a father and his daughter where she asks him about the gender of the coronavirus. The SOs of annoying/non-annoying, man/woman, and logical/illogical are instantiated in this joke. This joke is incongruous as it involves a logical impossibility or inappropriateness. It is illogical to talk about the gender of the virus in the first place and to claim that the coronavirus is a woman. The created incongruity is resolved using the LMs of inferring consequences and analogy. The joke is a dialogue that ends with a punchline (the father's response) which clears out the reasoning of the father for considering coronavirus a woman. The father associates it with the trouble the virus has caused to the whole world. Linguistically speaking, the father's reply involves an adverbial clause that expresses the reason, hence the possibility of inferring the logical result/consequence.

(12) *We must test the vaccine on women first. if it worked well, then it would be perfect. If it did not work, it would be completely perfect!*

In the above joke, the situation can be assumed to be a misogynist giving a suggestion. The SOs attested in this joke include care/non-care and perfect/imperfect. The LMs of inferring consequences took care of resolving the incongruity. The primary setup interpretation of this joke contradicts the secondary punchline interpretation (Gimbel, 2018). The joke setup gives the impression that the joke teller cares about women and thus prioritizes them in terms of vaccination, but the punchline does not correspond to this understanding. Rather, the punchline violates this expectation indicating that if the vaccine did not work after testing it on women, it would be completely perfect. From a linguistic perspective, the punchline involves a conditional which means that the logical consequence of this condition can be inferred. The joke is a simple narrative whose punchline highlights the antipathy against women.



As can be seen, all jokes that targeted women are aggressive jokes. Aggressive humor includes hostility, derision, disparagement, sarcasm, and mockery, which show, in a way or another, dominance to others (cf. Hay (2000); Holmes (2006); Kotthoff (2000); Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (2006); Rod A Martin et al. (2003); Robinson and Smith-Lovin (2001); Torres et al. (2020)).

#### v. *The pandemic or virus itself*

This category involved (10.7%) of the jokes. Such jokes involved jocular comments on the virus itself, its symptoms, and its ambiguity. The following joke, for example, employs the technique of personification where the virus appears as a man talking to people.

(13) *Coronavirus: Although I broke the boring routine and made 2020 full of actions, I received neither praise nor thanks from you guys!*

The target of this joke is the virus itself. The situation can be one in which the virus is speaking and complaining about the ingratitude of humans. The SOs of routine/action, possible/impossible, gratitude/ingratitude, and thanking/non-thanking are found in this joke. In this joke, the virus is depicted as a living creature capable of speaking and complaining—a personification incongruity. The virus is blaming the ingratitude of humans as they did not thank him for breaking the boring routine of their lives and turning 2020 into an action scene. The incongruity is resolved by using the LM of inferring consequences. The technique of personification creates amusement and serves the function of relieving pent-up nervous energy and releasing tension due to the current situation. The joke is a simple narrative that involves two antonymous words, 'routine' and 'action'.

Other jokes ironically addressed the symptoms of the disease as well as its vagueness as shown below.

(14) *It is said that the second wave of COVID-19 will be intestinal which means there will be pain in the stomach, and we will suffer from diarrhea. So, we have to wear Pampers instead of facemasks!*

The target of the joke is the symptoms of the virus. The inferred situation is one where a Jordanian citizen expresses his confusion and uncertainty regarding the symptoms of the disease. The SOs of intestinal/respiratory, pampers/facemasks, and normal/abnormal are instantiated in this joke. The incongruity is resolved by using the LMs of analogy and inferring consequences. The joke is a simple narrative whose punchline touches upon the symptoms of the disease and hilariously suggests that disposable diapers should be worn instead of facemasks in light of the new expected symptoms. The humorous effects arise as a result of the cognitive clash with the audience expectations (Forabosco, 1992; Rod A. Martin, 2007) and as a result of violating what is normal (Attardo, 1994, 2001). The goal of this joke is to create humorous effects which can be taken as a last resort to alleviate the consequences of the pandemic.

#### vi. *Offensive jokes*

A few jokes (8.1%) were loaded with offensive content. Such jokes tackled topics like the intentional spreading of infection to others especially bosses and enemies. They also targeted different butts such as restaurants' workers, children, and believers in the conspiracy theory. The following is an illustrative example:

(15) *For all those complaining about the change in the taste of falafel and shawarma these days, I reassure them! Do not worry, this is just because restaurants workers have just started washing their hands regularly because of COVID-19, but this is just a temporary issue, and the taste will return back to what it was before and even better! Hahaha.*

This aggressive joke makes fun of the endless instructions that have been circulated online telling people how to properly wash their hands. This has ironically led to a change in the taste of *falafel* and *shawarma*, common foods in Jordan, in an attempt to criticize the lack of hygiene among some restaurants' workers.

The target of this joke is the hygiene of restaurants' workers. The situation can be inferred from the context that Jordanians have concerns over the change in the taste of certain meals. The situation can be understood as one where a Jordanian citizen is assuring his fellow citizens that the change they noted in the taste of these meals is temporary and is due to the fact that restaurants' workers have just started washing their hands. The SOs of usual/unusual, clean/unclean and temporary/permanent are identified in this joke. Faulty reasoning and exaggeration are the LMs used to resolve the incongruity of this joke. The irony in this joke lies in the punch line of the joke as if restaurants workers never washed their hands before. The incongruity resulted from the SO is resolved using the LM of faulty reasoning where Jordanians failed to recognize that there is a change in the taste of these meals due to the fact that restaurants' workers have started washing their hands. Exaggeration is also at work here as it is illogical to believe that the change in the taste of these meals is the result of not washing hands. This joke is a simple narrative; the punchline employs the expression 'return back to what it was before' to assert that this change is 'temporary', thus explaining the false belief held by Jordanians.

Children were also the butt of some jokes subsumed under this category, as the following joke shows.

(16) *A quarantined woman says, "If my children survive the disease, it is me who will kill them."*

This and several other aggressive jokes address the distressful situation parents found themselves in during quarantine. Work from home has gained momentum worldwide. Most Jordanian employees started working from their places during the pandemic and were simultaneously required to teach their children and take care of them 24/7.

This joke reflects a mother's anger and anxiety stating that if the virus does not kill her children, she is going to do that herself. The target of this joke is children, and the situation that can be deduced here is a mother annoyed because of her children's stay at home. The SOs triggered by this joke are disease/mother and survive/kill. Such a joke invokes humorous effects as it involves incongruity (cognitive clash) with the audience expectations: it is far from the audience's expectations that the mother will herself kill her children. The LMs used to resolve incongruity of this joke are role reversal and exaggeration. Mothers are usually caring and warm-hearted especially when it comes to their children. However, in this joke mothers are portrayed as being murderers planning to kill their own children, if the coronavirus does not kill them (role reversal). There is also a clear exaggeration in the description of the mother's reaction. The joke appears in the form of a simple narrative and makes use of the lexical relation antonymy to create mirth: 'survive' vs. 'kill'.

### vii. The year 2020

The year 2020 with its problems and hardships as well as the negative attitudes is subsumed under this category. Jokes categorized under this theme formed (7.6%) of the data. Consider the following joke:

(17) *This year made us hate the letter /k/: Korona 'Corona', kamameh 'mask', kfoof 'gloves', Ka'aba 'depression', hopefully, the end will not be kafan 'shroud'!*

This joke sheds light on some of the problems that Jordanians have encountered during 2020. Amusement is evoked here due to a contradiction between what is expected from this joke and what occurs afterward. There is opposition between two scripts. All the problems this joke tackles are daily problems that start with the letter /k/. However, the joke teller violates the readers' expectation to find another daily problem starting with the letter /k/ in the punchline and sarcastically mentions another more serious and unexpected problem, namely, *kafan*, the "shroud" whose Arabic counterpart also starts with the letter /k/. This linguistic joke depends heavily on the initial sounds of words to create amusement.

The fears, hardships, and problems associate with the year 2020 have led to developing negative attitudes toward it, as shown in the following joke.

(18) *Imagine that the most positive word in 2020 is "Negative"!*

This joke involves a linguistic incongruity: the best thing in 2020 is the word "negative" (in reference to the result of COVID-19 test). The target of this joke is the year 2020. The situation can be understood as one where a Jordanian citizen is expressing his/her depression and frustration as a result of the hardships of 2020. The SOs of usual/unusual and positive/negative are instantiated in this joke. The interpretation of the joke punchline contradicts the reader's expectation as the joke setup is talking about a positive thing. The word "negative" appears to be a weak candidate for the punchline as it violates what is normal. Referential ambiguity is the LM used to resolve the incongruity of this joke. This joke is a simple narrative; the punchline involves the word 'negative' which is antonymous to another word used in the setup of the joke, namely, the word 'positive' to create too opposing scripts. This asserts that lexical relations, especially antonymy, are productive when it comes to creating incongruent, humorous texts.

### viii. Remote education

A few jokes (4.7%) targeted education in its new mode and its negative effects on the level of students in Jordan, as shown in the following joke.

(19) *A student who has never got 'A' except in online learning: "What is this lack of care for our souls? How should we go back to university in light of COVID-19? If your parents don't care, my parents will never risk my soul. No to university attendance, and yes to distance education"!*

This joke is targeted at online learning. The situation can be inferred from the context that people were demanding to end the lockdown and go back to their works and businesses except students who wanted the closure and distance education to continue. The SOs of like/dislike, care/non-care, face-to-face education/distance education are manifested in this joke. False analogy and inferring consequences are the LMs used to resolve incongruity. The joke is a simple narrative. The setup of this joke shows the lazy student's fear of catching the virus, but the punch line indicates that the real motif for his demand is his love of distance education. Many students felt the benefits of online learning as lots of friends started helping each other in online exams. All this have inevitably impacted the level of education as crystalizes in the following joke:

(20) *One student wrote: "My exams start next week. Pray for me please. "His mother replied: "Please don't pray for him. Let him fail and redo the whole year. This is much better for him!"*

The joke is targeted at online learning which is depicted as useless. The situation can be inferred from the context that families have concerns over the effectiveness of online learning. The SOs of good/bad, fail/succeed, face to face education/online education are manifested in this joke. This joke is incongruous as it appears in the mother's wish that her son should fail and redo the whole year as she believes that he learned nothing through the online mode. Inferring consequences is the LM used to resolve incongruity. The joke is a simple narrative that ends with a punchline explaining the mother's attitudes toward online learning.

## Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the themes and linguistic structure of Jordanian jokes cracked during the early stages of the pandemic. More specifically, this study explores the content and linguistic structure of 197 COVID-19 jokes shared and circulated among Jordanians with the goal of uncovering the precise nature of such jocular texts at the levels of linguistic structure, topics, and relevant sociocultural, sociopolitical, and psychological aspects. Content analysis was the main approach of this study. Moreover, the linguistic analysis of the jokes was couched in terms of the General Theory of Verbal Humor of Attardo and Raskin (1991). The incongruity involved in the production of such jokes was analyzed highlighting its potential meaning(s) and sociocultural function(s).

The data analysis revealed that national/ethnic jokes occupied the first rank among the eight categories, followed by government decisions, effects of restrictions, sexist jokes, the virus itself, other miscellaneous offensive topics, the year 2020, and remote education. It was also found that COVID-19 jokes conform to the six knowledge resources of the GTVH. Moreover, it was found that lexical relations (i.e., synonymy, antonymy, Homophony) as well as wordplay (i.e., pun, metaphor, prosody) were crucial strategies in forming such jokes.

Though the reported themes might not be unexpected, this thematic analysis can be an important long-term record of early COVID-19 collective reactions in Jordan especially that early reactions could be overlooked. Put differently, the analysis presented in this study can be taken as a report documenting the major themes prevailed in the Jordanian street during the first months of the pandemic. Although these Jordanian jokes can be taken as responses to the pandemic locally, they can as well be perceived globally in the sense that they are instances of the worldwide reaction (Sebba-Elran, 2021). Many Jordanian themes find their equivalents, albeit with variation, in the worldwide COVID-19 humor (Thelwall & Thelwall, 2020) for the main themes identified in English tweets; Cancelas-Ouviña (2021), Kertcher and Turin (2020), Akhlaq Khan, Ali, Hussain, and Noreen (2020), Msugheter (2020), and Norstrom and Sarna (2021) for topics in COVID-19 memes in Spain, Israel, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Poland, respectively.

A worldwide event (the pandemic) was unprecedentedly shared globally and concurrently for the first time asserting what humanity has in common irrespective of political borders and sociocultural differences. The similarity of topics attested in Jordanian jokes and the different forms of humor outside Jordan can be attributed to this global nature of both the social media and the pandemic (as well as its impact), besides the similarity among the regulations and policies implemented by different governments around the world (Sebba-Elran, 2021).

The findings of this study can give a general picture of online humor in the times of crises. It was found that some jokes carried culture-specific content and reflected the attitudes of certain societies toward COVID-19 attack. Most interesting for future research would thus be a cross-cultural comparison of COVID-19-related humor. It is recommended that COVID-19 jokes in different countries be investigated to find out the universal and particular features of jokes, which will enhance our understanding of cross-cultural humor.

As a practical implication that can be drawn from the analysis of these jokes, government officials, politicians, and public-health professionals should consider the content of their announcements on official TV channels as lots of these announcements were found to be mocked by a large number of Jordanians. It is thus recommended that humorous texts on social media be considered by the Jordanian government as they can be indicative of public attitudes toward the pandemic. A limitation of this study was its dependence upon only written jokes or posts. Future research may consider other humor genres such as memes, caricatures, cartoons, videos, and verbal jokes which are certainly germane in the field of communication studies. Albeit these limits, the findings of this study can give a wholistic image about the Jordanian scene during this crisis, and the approach adopted here is transferable in the sense that other researchers can replicate this study.

## References

- Abel, M. H. (2002). Humor, stress, and coping strategies. *Humor – International Journal of Humor Research*, 15(4), 365-381. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.15.4.365>
- Akhlaq Khan, L., Ali, G., Hussain, A., & Noreen, K. (2020). A Linguo-Cultural Analysis of COVID-19 Related Facebooks Jokes. *Linguistics and Literature Review*, 6(2), 95-108. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3819556>

- Al-Khatib, M. A. (1999). Joke-telling in Jordanian society: A sociolinguistic perspective. *Humor – International Journal of Humor Research*, 12(3), 261-288. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.1999.12.3.261>
- Al-Sawaer, S., Rabab'Ah, G., & Power, A. J. (2022). Humor in the Arabic comedy show, N2O. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 9(1), 2082019. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2082019>
- Alzoubi, E. (2012). *Linguistic Analysis of Humor in Jordanian Arabic Colloquial Animated Cartoon*. (Doctor of Philosophy). Indiana University, USA.
- Apte, M. L. (1985). *Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell university press.
- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic Theories of Humor*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. Retrieved from [https://www.degruyter.com/database/COGBIB/entry/cogbib\\_745/html](https://www.degruyter.com/database/COGBIB/entry/cogbib_745/html)
- Attardo, S. (2001). *Humorous Texts: A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. Retrieved from <https://www.degruyter.com/database/COGBIB/entry/cogbib.750/html>
- Attardo, S., & Raskin, V. (1991). Script theory revisited: Joke similarity and joke representation model. *Humor - International Journal of Humor Research* 4(3-4), 293-348. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.1991.4.3-4.293>
- Barahmeh, Y. (2020). *Carnavalesque politics and popular resistance: A Bakhtinian reading of contemporary Jordanian political humour*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Portsmouth.
- Barry, J. M., & Graça, S. S. (2018). Humor effectiveness in social video engagement. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 26(1-2), 158-180. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2017.1389247>
- Bischetti, L., Canal, P., & Bambini, V. (2021). Funny but aversive: A large-scale survey of the emotional response to Covid-19 humor in the Italian population during the lockdown. *Lingua*, 249, 102963. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2020.102963>
- Cancelas-Ouviña, L.-P. (2021). Humor in times of COVID-19 in Spain: Viewing coronavirus through memes disseminated via WhatsApp. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 611788. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.611788>
- Chiario, D. (2017). *The Language of Jokes in the Digital Age: #like #share #lol*. Routledge. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315146348>
- Chovanec, J. (2019). Early Titanic Jokes: A disaster for the theory of disaster jokes? *Humor - International Journal of Humor Research*, 32(2), 201-225. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2018-0090>
- Clark, M. (1987). Humor and incongruity. In *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*, edited by John Morreall (pp. 139-155): State University of New York Press, Albany.
- Cohen, A. (1996). Speech act. In *Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching*, edited by Sandra Lee McKay and Nancy H. Hornberger (pp. 393-420): Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davies, C. (1990). *Ethnic Humor around the World: A Comparative Analysis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Davis, J. L., Love, T. P., & Killen, G. (2018). Seriously funny: The political work of humor on social media. *New Media & Society*, 20(10), 3898-3916. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818762602>
- Dundes, A. (1987). At ease, disease—AIDS jokes as sick humor. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 30(3), 72-81. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/000276487030003006>
- Dynel, M., & Poppi, F. I. M. (2021). Caveat emptor: Boycott through digital humour on the wave of the 2019 Hong Kong protests. *Information, Communication & Society*, 24(15), 2323-2341. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2020.1757134>
- El Khachab, C. (2017). Compressing scales: characters and situations in Egyptian internet humor. *Middle East Critique*, 26(4), 331-353. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2017.1371905>
- Forabosco, G. (1992). Cognitive aspects of the humor process: the concept of incongruity. *Humor - International Journal of Humor Research*, 5(1-2), 45-68. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.1992.5.1-2.45>
- Freud, S. (1960). *Jokes and their relation to the unconscious*. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Fritz, H. L. (2020). Why are humor styles associated with well-being, and does social competence matter? Examining relations to psychological and physical well-being, reappraisal, and social support. *Personality and individual differences*, 154, 109641. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.109641>
- Fritz, H. L., Russek, L. N., & Dillon, M. M. (2017). Humor use moderates the relation of stressful life events with psychological distress. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, 43(6), 845-859. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167217699583>
- Ge, J., & Gretzel, U. (2018). Impact of humour on firm-initiated social media conversations. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 18(1), 61-83. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-017-0097-0>
- Gimbel, S. (2018). Take My Course, Please! The Philosophy of Humor: Course Guidebook. Retrieved from <https://www.thegreatcoursesplus.com/take-my-course-please-the-philosophy-of-humor>
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In *Speech acts* (pp. 41-58): Brill. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004368811\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004368811_003)
- Hay, J. (2000). Functions of humor in the conversations of men and women. *Journal of pragmatics*, 32(6), 709-742. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(99\)00069-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(99)00069-7)
- Holmes, J. (2006). Sharing a laugh: Pragmatic aspects of humor and gender in the workplace. *Journal of pragmatics*, 38(1), 26-50. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2005.06.007>
- Hussein, A. T., & Aljamali, L. N. (2020). COVID-19 humor in Jordanian social media: A socio-semiotic approach. *Heliyon*, 6(12), e05696. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05696>
- Kertcher, C., & Turin, O. (2020). 'Siege mentality' reaction to the pandemic: Israeli memes during Covid-19. *Postdigital Science and Education*, 2(3), 581-587. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-020-00175-8>
- Kotthoff, H. (2000). Gender and joking: On the complexities of women's image politics in humorous narratives. *Journal of pragmatics*, 32(1), 55-80. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(99\)00031-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(99)00031-4)



- LaFrance, M., & Woodzicka, J. A. (1998). No laughing matter: Women's verbal and nonverbal reactions to sexist humor. In J. K. Swim & C. Stangor (Eds.), *Prejudice: The Target's Perspective* (pp. 61-80): San Diego, CA: Academic Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012679130-3/50038-7>
- Lampert, M. D., & Ervin-Tripp, S. M. (2006). Risky laughter: Teasing and self-directed joking among male and female friends. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38(1), 51-72. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2005.06.004>
- Lefcourt, H. M., & Martin, R. A. (2012). *Humor and life stress: Antidote to adversity*. Springer Science & Business Media. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-4900-9>
- Martin, R. A. (2007). *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Martin, R. A., & Lefcourt, H. M. (1983). Sense of humor as a moderator of the relation between stressors and moods. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 45(6), 1313-1324. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.45.6.1313>
- Martin, R. A., Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J., & Weir, K. (2003). Individual differences in uses of humor and their relation to psychological well-being: Development of the Humor Styles Questionnaire. *Journal of research in personality*, 37(1), 48-75. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566\(02\)00534-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00534-2)
- Mashaqi, S. (2019). *Analysis of Arabic verbal political satire in AS-Salit el-Ekhbari Show*. (Unpublished M.A thesis). The Hashemite University, Jordan.
- Menéndez-Aller, Á., Postigo, Á., Montes-Álvarez, P., González-Primo, F. J., & García-Cueto, E. (2020). Humor as a protective factor against anxiety and depression. *International journal of clinical and health psychology*, 20(1), 38-45. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ichp.2019.12.002>
- Mikhalkova, E., Tretyakov, P., Pupyshcheva, I., Ivanov, A., & Ganzherli, N. (2020). Humor as a means of manipulating a social group's opinion in modern online communities (A case-study on 'the houses of 2ch and pikabu'). *KnE Social Sciences*, 4(2), 351-365. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v4i2.6353>
- Msugheter, A. E. (2020). Internet meme as a campaign tool to the fight against Covid-19 in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: A Arts & Humanities–Psychology*, 20(6), 27-39. Retrieved from [https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS\\_Volume20/4-Internet-Meme-as-a-Campaign.pdf](https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume20/4-Internet-Meme-as-a-Campaign.pdf)
- NapoleonCat. (2020). Facebook users in Jordan. Retrieved from <https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-jordan/2020/12/>
- Neuendorf, K. A., Skalski, P. D., Jeffres, L. W., & Atkin, D. (2014). Senses of humor, media use, and opinions about the treatment of marginalized groups. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 42, 65-76. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2014.06.005>
- Nezlek, J. B., & Peter, D. (2001). Use of humor as a coping mechanism, psychological adjustment, and social interaction. *Humor – International Journal of Humor Research*, 14(4), 395-413. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.2001.011>
- Norstrom, R., & Sarna, P. (2021). Internet memes in Covid-19 lockdown times in Poland. *Comunicar*, 29(67), 69-79. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3916/C67-2021-06>
- Perchtold, C. M., Weiss, E. M., Rominger, C., Feyaerts, K., Ruch, W., Fink, A., & Papousek, I. (2019). Humorous cognitive reappraisal: More benign humour and less "dark" humour is affiliated with more adaptive cognitive reappraisal strategies. *PLoS One*, 14(1), e0211618. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211618>
- Porterfield, A. L. (1987). Does sense of humor moderate the impact of life stress on psychological and physical well-being? *Journal of Research in Personality*, 21(3), 306-317. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566\(87\)90013-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566(87)90013-4)
- Raskin, V. (1985). *Semantic Mechanisms of Humour*. Dordrecht and Boston and Lancaster: D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- Robinson, D. T., & Smith-Lovin, L. (2001). Getting a laugh: Gender, status, and humor in task discussions. *Social forces*, 80(1), 123-158. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2002.0005>
- Samson, A. C., Glassco, A. L., Lee, I. A., & Gross, J. J. (2014). Humorous coping and serious reappraisal: Short-term and longer-term effects. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 10(3), 571-581. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v10i3.730>
- Schultz, T. R. (1976). A cognitive-developmental analysis of humor. In T. Chapman & H. Foot (Eds.), *Humor and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications* (pp. 12-13): Wiley, New York.
- Sebba-Elran, T. (2021). A pandemic of jokes? The Israeli COVID-19 meme and the construction of a collective response to risk. *Humor – International Journal of Humor Research*, 34(2), 229-257. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2021-0012>
- Shakir, A., & Farghal, M. (1992). Gulf War jokes: Cohesion and coherence. *Text - Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse*, 12(3), 447-468. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/text.1.1992.12.3.447>
- Shaw, J. (2010). Philosophy of humor. *Philosophy Compass*, 5(2), 112-126. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2009.00281.x>
- Singh, R. K. (2012). Humour, irony and satire in literature. *International Journal of English and Literature*, 3(4), 63-72. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/download/31925242/9\\_Humour\\_irony.full.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/download/31925242/9_Humour_irony.full.pdf)
- Sultanoff, S. (1995). Levity defies gravity: Using humor in crisis situations. *Therapeutic humor*, 9(3), 1-2.
- The Jordan Times. (2016). Facebook most popular social media site in Jordan report. Retrieved from <https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/facebook-most-popular-social-media-site-jordan-%E2%80%94-report>
- Thelwall, M., & Thelwall, S. (2020). A thematic analysis of highly retweeted early COVID-19 tweets: consensus, information, dissent and lockdown life. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 72(6), 945-962. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-05-2020-0134>

- Thielemann, N. (2011). Displays of “new” gender arrangements in Russian jokes. In *The Pragmatics of Humour across Discourse Domains* (pp. 147-172): John Benjamins. Retrieved from <https://www.ibepatform.com/content/books/9789027285225-pbns.210.11thi>
- Torres, J. M., Collantes, L. M., Astrero, E. T., Millan, A. R., & Gabriel, C. M. (2020). Pandemic humor: Inventory of the humor scripts produced during the COVID-19 outbreak. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 7(3.1), 138-164. doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3679473>
- Tsakona, V. (2018). Intertextuality and/in political jokes. *Lingua*, 203, 1-15. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2017.09.003>